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NOTES OF THE MONTH

WALLACE AND THE PEOPLE'S WAR

ENGLAND'S POLITICAL CRISIS

By Henry Judd

JAMES CONNOLLY, IRISH REBEL

By Albert Gates

WORLD WAR I IN RETROSPECT

By Allen & Stone

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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VOLUME VIII

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Wallace and the People's War

The speech of Henry Agard Wallace, Vice-President of the United States, was obviously made to strengthen the faltering ideological war of the United Nations against the Axis.

It has become clear to the New Dealers that up to now the war has been fought along purely military lines without evoking the kind of mass support which the Administration hoped it would obtain. Despite the studied references by the President to World War II as a genuine democratic revolution against militarism and fascism, no large sections of the population in this country took him seriously—certainly the powerful bloc of big business felt no compulsion to accept the presidential characterization of the war when, in fact, it knew and acted on the premise that the conflict, in the last analysis, is really fought to determine which country shall be the dominant economic power of the world.

Before December 7th and since, nothing in the conduct of the Allies warranted any belief but that the war is an imperialist conflict. There is no need to convince anyone that the aims of the Axis are imperialist, i.e., they seek a redivision of the possessions of the earth and economic domination of the world. The narrowing bases of their national capitalisms brought into existence the most frightful régimes of totalitarianism. Dominated by Germany, the Axis draws out of their ideological baggage the barbarous concepts and practices of economic, political and moral degeneration. They fight an economic, national and racial war, but it does not require a great deal of intelligence to realize that the basis of the existence of these totalitarian régimes is the poverty and strangulation of their national economies.

Just as there is no genuine unity in the camp of the Axis, there is none in the camp of the United Nations. They are bound together by the common need of defending possessions which are universally threatened by Germany, in the first place, and Japan and Italy. It is this common need of defense which holds together the Allies. Once this is understood, it becomes infinitely clearer why there is no great mass enthusiasm for the war. Moreover, there is nothing in the conduct of the war by the United Nations to lead to any other kind of mass reaction.

What Are the Allies Fighting For?

What kind of freedom is it the United Nations are fighting for? Economic freedom? Race freedom? National liberation and independence? Economic and racial equality? The ideological defenders of the United Nations would be hard

put to explain themselves. As we have pointed out so often before, there is no need for the Axis to justify itself (even though it is sometimes attempted) since it does not cover itself with many pretensions.

In concretizing this point, let us briefly recount some of the main pretensions in the Allied camp and how they were actually carried out:

As a democratic war of the peoples against militarism and totalitarianism, the United Nations' governments decreed that this will not be a war for profit under the slogan that "there shall be no new war millionaires." The fact: the capitalists in all countries earn enormous profits, over and above all restrictions and taxes. Their living standards rise while the living standards of the peoples are precipitously declining. New war millionaires are being created in the very heat of the war!

The war in the Far East, where almost the entire population of a billion people live as colonial slaves of the big powers, was fought under the ideological and military concepts of conquerors. No offer of freedom was made to the colonials of the United Nations. No arms were given to the people to increase the possibility of their support in resisting the Japanese imperialists. On the contrary, the colonial peoples remained indifferent to the war. Why? Because in their eyes there was no fundamental distinction to be drawn between their present overlords and their impending conquerors.

Imperialist prerogatives ruled the conduct of the United Nations in Asia. Observe the results: Malaya lost, Burma lost, the Dutch East Indies lost and finally the débâcle in India. The question can be asked: Would this have happened if the Allies were fighting a war of genuine freedom for the colonial peoples?

The War On the Home Front

Let us come back a little closer home. The United States is the leading power in the United Nations' bloc. It is presumed to be the ideological leader of its allies. There is no doubt that Roosevelt is responsible for the promulgation of the "Four Freedoms." Yet, in fact, none of these things operate at home. The antagonism to and discriminatory treatment of the Negro people has been intensified precisely since the outbreak of war. Big business enriches itself many times. It is not particular how it does so, whether on the basis of the exploitation of the American workers, evasion of taxes, or in league with the Axis big business. And so long as a monopoly, such as the Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey, can absolve itself of the "sin" of acting like a true capitalist business, by paying a fine of \$50,000 for breaking the anti-trust and patent laws, nothing has changed.

The economic war is dominated by big business. The ideological war is dominated by the big business press. Race discrimination is rampant. Congress is dominated by the most reactionary labor-haters, Jew-baiters and Jim Crow artists in its history. Moreover, it has given one example after another that it is nothing but the rubber stamp of big business and the most reactionary elements in the country.

We have not the slightest doubt that the real situation has caused no little worry to the genuine New Deal reformists, who have seen the New Deal vanish from sight with the opening shots of World War II. This is the real background to the speech by Wallace.

Wallace's War and the Realities

What did Wallace say? "This is a fight between a slave world and a free world." As a student with some knowledge of history, the Vice-President sought to generalize the war and give it world significance. "Just as the United States in 1862 could not remain half slave and half free, so in 1942 the world must make its decision for a complete victory one way or the other." The trouble is that this high sounding phraseology has no relation to the reality of the world. Does Wallace propose that the United Nations give up their colonies? Does he condone or reject British colonial policy? Or the Dutch, the Free French, and even the United States?

Wallace places this war in history, as part of the continuous march of mankind toward freedom, as "derived from the Bible" and with emphasis that "democracy is the only true expression of Christianity." But he will be hard put to prove his thesis. This Midwestern "populist," speaking the language of an era long ago past, still lives with the thoughts of "good and evil," the "common man" against the "demagogue." The demagogue represents "Satan," who would "change the signposts and lure the people back into slavery of the most degraded kind." Hitler is really the "supreme devil." But against the demagogue and the devil:

The people are on the march toward even fuller freedom than the most fortunate people of the world have hitherto enjoyed. No Nazi counter-revolutionist will stop it. The common man will smoke the Hitler stooges out into the open in the United States, in Latin America and in India. He will destroy their influence. No Laval, no Mussolinis will be tolerated in a free world.

The Vice-President knows that the ideological war will not greatly interest the mass of people, especially the working class which bears the brunt of the war, if it is not offered economic succor. Thus, he adds to his speech some economic aims. These are, briefly, the need for a vast increase in the post-war period, of the production of consumers' goods to raise the economic level of existence of all mankind. At this point he quoted his remark to Madame Litvinoff, made "half in fun and half seriously," that "the object of this war is to make sure that everybody in the world has the privilege of drinking a quart of milk a day."

He turns next to the post-war century and regards it as one in which the "common man" will dominate; it will be his world of plenty. How? As in all the other cases, there is no answer. Wallace himself does not really know, or if he knows, fears to state it.

The aftermath of the Wallace speech, made with the sanction of the President, was interesting to observe. A handful of the great number of papers in the country printed the speech; a few more made reference to it. But the "democratic" press as a whole ignored it! Even the Vice-President's harmless generalities were too much for the big business press. The fear that some of his vacuous phrases might infect readers by its veiled "class" character frightened the stolid thinking, profit-mad business rulers and their editorial office boys.

Ralph Ingersoll, the playboy editor of PM, screeched himself hoarse at the sabotage by the bourgeois press of Wallace's speech. He opened up a one-man, or one-paper campaign to popularize it. This is just what PM needed in its general ef-

forts to convince the country, despite the facts, that this is a "people's war" for freedom, democracy and plenty. Yes, says Ingersoll, this is a war for a daily quart of milk to every man, woman and child in the world, thus believing that he had brought home the main aim of the war in such plain language that everyone might understand. But Ingersoll is regarded as a buffoon in the newspaper world. Except for the Stalinists, who have become his bosom pals since Hitler tore up his pact of blood with Stalin, and since he began to pursue the party line, Ingersoll has no great influence. He does have the reputation of being an outstanding muddle-head.

Two new warriors for the "common man" took to the podium. First we had that notorious "liberal" and fighter for the common man, Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, of Cuba fame. Mr. Welles, in his Memorial Day address at the Arlington National Amphitheater said:

Our victory must bring in its train the liberation of all people... Discrimination between peoples because of their race, creed or color must be abolished... The age of imperialism is ended... The problem (post-war) is rather one of distribution and purchasing power; of providing the mechanism whereby what the world produces may be fairly distributed among the nations of the world...

Another person to come to the aid of Wallace is the great humanitarian, Donald M. Nelson. In his speech to the graduating class of the University of Missouri, the chief of the War Production Board uttered this epoch-making statement: "Poverty is not inevitable any more." We can produce enough for the whole world, the good man said, and he called for "pliancy and resiliency of mind" to abolish poverty!

"Poverty Is Not Inevitable"

The thing that stands out in their speeches is the complete avoidance at stating facts and the imperious necessity they feel for speaking in generalities. The reason for this is clear: to match their phraseology with concrete illustrations of the general "theories," to present a true program of economic, political and social democracy means to attack capitalism as a social order. This none of them will do.

"Poverty is not inevitable any more!" Since when, and why not? All that these men are saying is that capitalism is ready to do things in wartime that it will never concede to in times of peace. But whatever it is that big business does, such as allowing greater government interference in its operations, it makes certain that its profits are large and above all insured! It makes certain that nothing shall change the fundamental character of the existing social order.

Poverty is not inevitable; that is true. But it is inevitable so long as capitalism exists, so long as the profit-economy reigns. An improvement of the world standard of living is possible, but not on the basis of capitalism. Freedom of the colonial peoples is possible and necessary, but it cannot be achieved under the system of imperialism. The elimination of race discrimination is possible but not in a class society where the reality of the social order increases discrimination and racial antagonism as the means of keeping the ruling class in power. Genuine freedom of speech, assembly and organization are possible, but only in a free economic society. And not even these gentlemen are willing to say that we now live under a social order making these things possible.

The speeches of Wallace, the writings of Ingersoll and the speeches of Welles and Nelson only prove what we have been saying again and again: Capitalism is bankrupt! Its ideological war has a hollow ring when faced with the real war. Big business chuckles to itself as it observes these gentlemen

describe this war which does not exist. So long as the "people's war" is confined to the speeches of Vice-President Wallace and the writings of the enraged Ingersoll, there is nothing much to worry about. Let the "theorists" concern themselves with post-war problems. The only reality that exists for monopoly capitalism is the living present. They'll concern themselves with the post-war period when they come to it. If, in the meantime, impractical visionaries want to talk about a new order of things to come, let them amuse themselves in their harmless enterprise.

Therein lies the crux of the matter. New Deal reformism sounds stale and impractical because it avoids striking at the root of the social problems of the present epoch. The generalities of a Wallace can be meaningful only on the basis of a

fundamental alteration of the economic system, by the transformation of society into a socialist order, by the abolition of a private property in the means of production—the profit system—and the establishment of genuine economic, political and social equality.

The real subject matter which is the concern of Wallace will be considered in other articles devoted to the problem of the economics of the war and the post-war problems already discussed by the New Dealers through the pen of Alva Hansen. We propose to examine them and show that all the panaceas thought up by social reformism in the era of decay capitalism is so much badinage without an iota of concrete significance.

A. G.

England's Political Crisis

The people who inhabit the island kingdom of Great Britain, now at war for three years, draw rapidly toward the greatest internal revolutionary crisis in their long history. This crisis, reflecting the internal difficulties of English capitalism, has been brought to a head by the historic decline and break-up of the world British Empire. Because of its sharpness, the current crisis is hardly comparable to previous political crises in England's history.

This is fundamental, organic. It affects the motherland, the organizing center of the empire, which is itself, in turn, dependent upon its colonies. Among the more important factors accounting for the acuteness of the crisis are the following: (1) The catastrophic defeats suffered by the empire, which have driven it out of the European continent, expelled it completely from the Far East and now threaten the mid-Eastern imperial heart, India. (2) The further development toward autonomy and assumption of greater independence on the part of the dominions, or their turning toward American imperialism (a process vastly speeded up since the war in the Pacific began). (3) The political and economic inroads made by American imperialism into the empire itself. (4) The inability of the British ruling class to strike a bargain with the bourgeoisie or any section of the bourgeoisie in its colonies. (5) The bankruptcy and inability for leadership displayed by the metropolitan ruling class of England itself (a bankruptcy which, comparable to that of the English colonial ruling class itself, has a specific importance of its own). (6) And lastly, the restlessness, uneasiness and discomfort of the English working class *vis-à-vis* the bankruptcy of its leadership (both bourgeois and proletarian); a growing feeling that continuation of the present situation can only bring disaster upon its head.

It is necessary to elaborate further on the causes and details behind the approaching crisis. The accumulated effect cannot but be profound, nor will it fail to shake metropolitan England from head to foot, placing the English proletariat in the most difficult position of its career.

Britain's military reversals are known to all. Without Russia's war front, first of all and the steadily increasing military strength of America, the English war effort would be far more disastrous. As it is, the entire Pacific-Asiatic war action is in American hands, with England restricted to performing limited tasks: bombing the Continent, guarding the Middle East, patrolling sections of the Atlantic lanes, etc. That is, the British military machine occupies a secondary place in the

Allied camp and the subordinate nature of this place will become clearer with each passing day as American imperialism assumes, in theory and practice, the direction of the war.

How the Empire Is Disrupted

But these defeats have a far more serious economic than military effect. *They destroy the material basis upon which England rests.* The fields for capital investment in Asia, Africa, etc., are wiped out; the sources of raw materials (rubber, tin, metals, etc.) fall into enemy hands; the profits and riches of trade, commerce, exploitation of slave colonial plantation labor flow into the vaults of the rivals; the *rentiers* and coupon clippers of the English ruling class and middle class lose their holdings, dividends and interest in the scorched ruins of Malaya, Burma, Hong Kong, etc. (they must fall back on banking reserves, or, worse yet, seek honest employment!). The entire structure of England—an industrial center with octopus tentacles sucking the resources of its imperialist empire—begins to grow weak and staggers as the sources of its plunder-nourishment trickle away.

Of the so-called "white dominions," Australia and New Zealand have drawn away most rapidly from the motherland in recent months. Canada's position, of course, has remained stationary since it is already completely dependent upon the United States, with whom its economy is linked; while South Africa's internal situation grows more precarious with the possibility of a Nazi-fascist Boer Party revolt aiming at a *coup d'état* if Hitler wins on the Russian front.

The situation of Australia is clearest of all. Militarily, its existence depends upon American support and American control of supply routes; politically its population has turned against the British and its public opinion advocates either independence or federation with America after the war. With American lend-lease aid, troops and naval protection, it is understood in British circles that Australia's post-war status will be well within the American imperialist orbit. As for the island dominion of New Zealand, with its minute population, its position with respect to America is revealed in the recently adopted war budget for 1942. Over 10 per cent of the budget (\$40,000,000) is financed directly by lend-lease aid! New Zealand's rulers have already indicated their willingness to fit their pastoral economy to the needs of America by repaying lend-lease loans with exports of their food, shoes, hemp, timber and labor for American military projects on the

islands. The four dominions appear to be lost, even in a "spiritual" sense, to the motherland.

As for American inroads into the British Empire, this matter was described in great detail in the September and October, 1941, issues of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*. Since that time a very heavy black veil has been drawn over the entire problem, particularly with respect to such *concrete* matters as liquidation of British holdings in America and South America, taking over of supply routes, bankruptcy of British export companies, extent of lend-lease aid to Britain directly, etc. It is therefore only possible to point out various tendencies and directions, without the advantages of concrete figures or statistics. Certain factors are obvious, as, for example, the fact that the military directive center has shifted to the United States with Washington as the center. In addition, the lend-lease program has continued to mount steadily, with Britain rolling up a huge debt bill to American imperialism. In recent months, with a growing shortage of raw material, a system of international "priorities" has been put into effect. Under this system, America receives first choice of available materials and then, provided its needs are satisfied, balances are sent to England or its colonies. This is an elaboration of the program by which England's industrial machine is subordinated to that of the United States.

Britain's Bourgeoisie Is Bankrupt

The recently adopted lend-lease post-war treaty is ominous for British capitalism. Lend-lease articles not lost or destroyed in the process of war are to be returned to the United States. This will hit Britain hardest in shipping. "In the case of shipping it will leave Britain in a very embarrassed position." (*London Economist*.) The already existing shipping shortage will become even more serious as Britain struggles to regain its economic position as against America. Furthermore, the balance owing from the lend-lease indebtedness is to be repaid in empire goods and values. It is already acknowledged in London circles that, for the accomplishment of this task, America will demand the end of "imperial preference" and the establishment of free trade in the British Empire, or its remnants. The destruction of the existing anti-American trade barriers and the establishment of an imperial free trade system would about complete the economic undermining of the empire, and insure the victory of rival American capital.

Fourth of the factors contributing to England's crisis has been the inability of the Tory imperialists who head the empire to make an effective agent out of a single one of the colonial bourgeoisies. So intense, so greedy and so short-sighted has been the historic exploitation of the colonial empire by the metropolitan imperialists that the development of a native bourgeois class, sufficiently strong and with enough at stake to make it join hands with Britain against impending aggression, has been prevented. This is what lies behind the failure of the Cripps mission to India. The bourgeoisie of Britain's empire is either neutral to the fate of the master class (Malaya, India)—preferring to take its chances with Axis imperialism—or it is openly pro-Axis (Burma).

The bankruptcy and lack of leadership displayed by the ruling class of Great Britain is apparent to everyone. We come now to internal causes of this crisis, which requires some elaboration and detail.

"We must break loose from the stupefying magic of Churchill's oratory. . . . Whenever we suffer a reverse and whenever news is bad we are treated to a superb example of the mastery of the English language. The nation is being drugged by high-sounding phrases."

(Robert Wallis, Secretary, London Trades Council.)

Raymond Daniel of the *New York Times* has described the current dissatisfaction in British bourgeois and middle class circles with Churchill and his National Government in such terms as "official muddling," "procrastination," "hesitation," etc. Churchill, says this trained observer, is threatened first and most of all by "bad management" at home.

Naturally, the crisis of the English ruling class has far more profound roots than inefficiency and bungling. It lies in the crisis of capitalism itself and the exhaustion of the empire. But this exhaustion expresses itself in many varying forms. In England, the inability to win serious military victories and then to "make them stick"; the inability to organize a war economy and war production and the inability to formulate a concrete political program around which the bourgeoisie itself and its staunchest middle class backers can rally—all these illustrate and underscore the bankruptcy of the rulers who remain in power *solely* (a) through the support of the Labor Party and trade union leadership and (b) through the failure of the English proletariat to push them out of power.

What could be more revealing of the true mentality and state of affairs than the fact that *after three years of warfare the National Government has yet to say what its war aims are, what it is fighting for, what it intends to do with a reconquered Europe?* Can a patriotic Englishman give any other answer than "pious platitudes and glittering generalities" to the simple, specific question: "What is England fighting for?" The England capitalist class and Churchill, its Tory spokesman, have no political or social program for the war, for the post-war period, or even to facilitate the winning of the war. The 464-to-1 vote of confidence recently obtained by Churchill in the House of Commons was, in reality, not a vote of confidence, but a "vote of no confidence," that is, in the ability of the other parties (Liberal, Labor and Conservative) to offer anything else but Churchill and his John Bull-muddles-through program. The two cabinet reshufflings (with the balance of forces turning up the same in the end—a strong Conservative majority) deceived no one, not even when his nibs, Sir Stafford Cripps was added. The addition of a few Liberals in unimportant posts and the dropping of the most fanatic Conservative-Tories has not advanced the English bourgeoisie a step further toward what, for it, is a dire necessity: the formulation of a political program beyond that of preserving the empire.

The Inefficiency of the Ruling Class

The disorganization and mismanagement of British war industry is a notorious scandal in England. Outbursts in Parliament speak of the "silent sabotage" by the mine operators. For example, a labor conference in Lancashire-Cheshire speaks about the chaos and inefficiency in the coal fields where "coal production was being deliberately hindered by the employers to maintain profits and keep pits sound for after the war." Coal owners prefer "to work seams where coal was hardest to get, the productive seams being left for peacetime working."

As the *Socialist Appeal* of England states: "The real root of the trouble is the stranglehold of monopoly ownership over industry, inefficient management and domination of the state machinery by big business. . . . To take only a very minor item: the pooling of technical knowledge—even such a person as Sir Walter Citrine had to complain that such is the lust of these people for profit that not even the pooling of their technical knowledge has taken place after nearly three years of war. In almost all big factories, extensive alterations are being

undertaken and additional structures being built at the expense of a tremendous amount of labor and raw material simply in order to secure new factories at government expense" (April, 1942).

Endless time lost through absenteeism due to over-long hours of labor; idle labor due to mishandling of the supply of labor; increase in industrial accidents; all-around inefficiency and inability to plan raw material needs; disorganization within the factories—these are the leading characteristics of English capitalism's failure to evolve an effective war industry.

And finally, we have mentioned as the basic cause of the crisis the restlessness, uneasiness and revolutionary stirring of the English working class, now that it is confronted with the shameful bankruptcy of the old order. Many reasons lie behind this sharpening of the political and class lines in England. Some we have already indicated: the lack of confidence in the political and military leadership of the National Government; the indecisiveness of the bourgeoisie even within its own ranks and the cowardly capitulation of the trade union and Labor Party leadership to the demands of the English ruling class.

But the workers have been stirred to their depths by other and more pressing problems—primarily the collapse in their standards of livelihood; the disparity and contrast between *their* war burdens and hardships and those of the ruling class and their doubts and gnawing fears about the post-war England (shall we pass through this terror in vain? What will be our lot in the post-victory period?)

When Hugh Dalton, Churchill's Labor Minister of Economic Warfare, stated recently that "one more year and then the standard of living will be down to a strict war-economy level," he struck a chill in the heart of every English worker. To understand this it is necessary to give a brief description of the immense collapse in the level of life that has already occurred. Then we shall contrast this with the effect of the war upon the imperialist ruling class. This will give us the answer to 95 per cent of the problem!

How the Masses Fare

Here are the facts with respect to living conditions in a great imperialist nation whose population has had thirteen colonial slaves laboring for each member of it for two centuries. As the *New York Times* of March 1 expressed it, the problem of England for the first year of war was "blackouts and boredom"; for the second year "bombs and fear" and for the third year "*food and the Black Market.*"

Wholesale prices, which stood at 96.6 in 1939—before the war—had risen to 158.8 by March of 1942. This 64 per cent rise had the following effect upon retail (that is, consumers') prices: Standing at 70.3 in September, 1939 (the outbreak of the war) they had risen to 108.5 by February, 1942, an increase of 55 per cent! In a word, not only has there been a terrific rise in the cost of living; not only has the burden been shifted completely to the consumer but the avowed program of the National Government to stabilize prices is clearly a total failure. The most that can be said for Churchill's efforts is that it slowed up the *rate* of the rise, but had little effect upon the rise itself.

Here are a few prices in England today. Textile and clothing prices have doubled since the war (clothing rations listed below). Cigarettes, 40 cents a pack; lettuce, 20 cents a head; cauliflower, 32 cents; a good steak, or a good meal, \$4.00; as for commodity shortages and rationing, there is no

more white flour for bread (a standardized "national loaf" has just been instituted); the *weekly* meat ration amounts to 25 cents; (horse meat shops are now opening throughout England); a quarter pound per week is the sugar ration; four ounces of soap per person each week; milk is obtainable only for children; three eggs per month are allotted; fish, game and poultry are sold only on certain days of the week; no fresh fruits are at all available.

In addition, coal supplies for heating were restricted as the London winter drew to a close, presaging a severe 1942-43 winter; fuel and electric light are soon to be rationed (and also hot water). The present gas ration expires in July and probably will not be renewed (most private cars are out, anyway); even bicycles are becoming rare! The latest 10 per cent cut in newsprint consumption brought the weekly use of newsprint to a low of 4,350 tons per week as compared with 23,000 tons in the pre-war period. The fifth war budget just adopted (amounting to \$21,000,000,000, or two-thirds of England's annual national income) doubled the so-called "luxury sales tax" on such things as tobacco, drinks, entertainment of all varieties, etc. This sales tax now amounts to 66-2/3 per cent on objects taxed.

Here is what the clothing ration (60 units) permits a man to purchase during the course of *one year*:

1 suit	_____	26 units
1 coat	_____	18 units
1 pair shoes	_____	7 units
1 suit underwear	_____	8 units
1 pair socks	_____	1 unit
Total	_____	60 units

For women, the allotment is similarly shrunken.

With a continuation of merchant shipping shortages and losses (the *New York Times* estimates that Britain has lost 40 per cent of her pre-war tonnage—March 1, 1942); and with the growing militarization of the island in preparation for invasion of the Continent, it is clear that the situation can only grow tighter and more restrictive.

Nothing has caused greater indignation among the workers than two major factors which incontestably prove the class character of England's war and give the lie to the myth of a wartime "socialized" England, in which all classes alike share the burden of the war. These two factors are (1) the *Black Market* and (2) the question of the *excess profits tax*.

The Black Market and Profits

The Black Market in England has become a gigantic war racket by means of which the rich manage to retain fairly well their pre-war standard of luxury. It is estimated now that the Black Market has a yearly cash turnover amounting to \$600,000,000—and this business is definitely on the up-and-up! All sorts of foods, clothing, textiles, gasoline, cigarettes, whiskey, cooking fats, etc., are handled on the Black Market. Naturally, the prices are prohibitive to the working class (cigarettes, 50 cents a pack; a bottle of Scotch, \$7.00, are a couple examples). One of the cleverest (and these British aristocrats are clever) means devised to evade the stringencies of rationing is *hotel life*. A member of the English bourgeoisie, with money, can live almost in accord with his customary standards by moving to a hotel "for the duration." The hotels have become a beehive of Black Market and illicit sales activities. In addition, the characteristic pleasures of the British ruling class, dog racing, horse racing, fox hunting, boxing, etc., have been restricted and curtailed, but not liquidated. All in all,

the Tory set thrive infinitely better when it comes to eating, housing conditions, entertainment and special privileges.

"Profits," we are informed, "have practically vanished in England." Dorothy Thompson and her "White Cliffs of Dover" crew have sung us the song of Britain's all-out war production, for use only.

All of this is so much cynical lying. Every week the British *New Leader*—as does *Labor Action* in the United States—publishes long lists of English monopolist concerns (Imperial Chemicals, Ltd., Vickers-Armstrong, etc.) with reports of their annual profits, dividend payments, etc. *The New Leader* has proved that, so far as the combines are concerned, their gross profits have steadily increased since the war.

More important is the myth of the 100 per cent excess profits tax. According to this law, all profits above a given amount are taxed 100 per cent, that is, taken by the government. But the English *Socialist Appeal*, publication of the English Fourth Internationalists, has neatly exposed this fraud:

(1) This law does not affect "normal," "below excess" profits. As pointed out above, these continue to flow in for the big companies.

(2) Excess profit consists of all profits above the following three methods of computation (that is, the company has three choices or ways of picking out what is most favorable to it): (a) Average profit for the years 1935, 1936 and 1937; (b) average profit for the years 1936 and 1937, or (c) profit for the year 1935, or 1936.

It is noteworthy that the (c) method gives two years (1935 and 1936) when English industry had pulled out of the decline and had a good record for profits!

(3) The government is to pay back 20 per cent of the total excess profits collected when the war is over. That is, a one-fifth rebate!

(4) The companies are permitted to set aside 20 per cent of their gross profits in the name of "depreciation." This contributes to reducing the "excess profits."

(5) "Excess profits" are likewise reduced by putting relatives on the payrolls; voting enormous salary increases to presidents and firm executives; running entertainments and establishing "general expense" accounts; building unnecessary plants or making unnecessary expansions, etc. Our British cousins are no less shrewd than the American business man when it comes to the question of tax evasions and profiteering on war contracts.

The effect of having this imperialist inequality and capitalist robbery practiced upon them for three years of war has made the English proletariat increasingly skeptical about the "New England" that will exist when the bloody struggle is concluded. Probably more than any other people the English have insisted upon discussing the problem of what will be in the future. Questions of post-war unemployment, wage and hour conditions, housing reconstruction, indemnification of the soldiers who fought, have constantly agitated their minds. Naturally, the National Government has never attempted to provide any specific answer but has, instead, relied upon the Labor Party bosses and the trade union functionaries to smooth the rough edges of the workers' doubts with honeyed promises. "Never shall we return to pre-war England, with its class and caste rule," guarantee the lieutenants of the Churchill government. They will find this is more true than their hypocritical expectations.

Acting as a brake on the workers' restlessness, the official labor representatives have completely merged and compro-

mised themselves with the Tory-Conservative government. Among the masses of workers, particularly among the rank and file Labor Party men, this surrender and appeasement of Churchill has not gone unnoticed. Bevin, Attlee, Greenwood, Morrison and the other mediocrities of the labor movement are well aware of this, but can propose nothing. This profound distrust of labor's rôle in the National Government is a contributing factor to the dissatisfaction among the English working class.

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English political and social life at the moment is marked by comparative quiet and peace. The professional journalists in England attribute this to the character of the English people, and their "determination to see it through," despite "family" differences. But they are simply fooled by the temporary quiet that precedes every revolutionary crisis, when the opposing class forces (and groups within the classes) probe out one another's positions and deliberately strive to formulate programs of action and combat. It is a quiet before the storm.

Yet even within this relative calm there have been many signs and symptoms, all of which point to a turbulent future. The crisis in the National Government, with the ousting of Lord Beaverbrook and the hocus-pocus cabinet re-shuffling, has been England's most significant political event since the war. In addition, the large popular vote received in three by-elections by the British Independent Labor Party candidates and the popularity of the ILP's "Socialist Britain Now" campaign; the resounding defeats administered by voters to two government Churchill-endorsed candidates on April 30; the releasing of the Welsh coal miners who were imprisoned for strike action; the nationwide proletarian indignation when the trade union bureaucrats accepted the shameful decision of the National Arbitration Tribunal granting the munition workers a weekly wage increase of five shillings (\$1.00); the resignations of various Labor Party leaders from the parliamentary bloc; the insistence of others upon more freedom of criticism and less dictation of Labor Party policy by the National Government—all of these are facts indicating the growing tempo. It is not generally known in America, but the English proletariat has not abandoned strike action despite the strike-breaking "labor-management committees" the Stalinists have vainly tried to impose upon the unions. In 1940 there were 850 strikes involving 284,000 workers; in 1941 this had increased to 1,162 (30 per cent rise) involving 334,800 workers. The 1942 record shows no signs of any abatement and will probably surpass the 1942 statistics.

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Basis for a Workers' Victory

It remains to be seen how England will take the Russian success. But one has a feeling now—to me it is a very painful one—that England will take anything; that overcautious and somewhat sordid counsels will always prevail. On the Continent, certainly, her ancient "prestige" is gone. But I must say that even the decline of England seems to me a tremendous and, even, almost an inspiring spectacle, and if the British Empire is once more to shrink up into that plethoric little island, the process will be the greatest drama in history. (Henry James, 1877.)

Like every great ruling power and imperial class whose sun is setting, the English bourgeoisie suffers from an amazing blindness and lack of perspective. Assuming its eternal existence, it lives upon the glories and achievements of its past. In its outermost reaches (the distant colonies of Asia and Africa), it first reveals the startling degree of its decrepitude and impotence. This phenomenon, well described by

Gibbons in his study of the Roman decline, has taken place with a particular sharpness and brazenness in the colonial Empire of Great Britain, the rapidity and facility of whose loss (Malaya, Burma, etc.) only underscored the extent of the imperialist decay and filth. No world empire ever felt the grave's chill in so short a space. Every political ideology in the world today recognizes this extinction. The question is: what shall replace it?

Naturally, England's crisis has special features of its own. Writing from America, without access to much valuable material and without the needed first-hand acquaintance with the situation, it is difficult to probe into these special characteristics. Some are obvious and have already been mentioned—the political impotence of the ruling class. This ideologic castration (best exemplified by the windy Churchill) has led to another special feature: *the complete dependence of the state upon the English proletariat*. Other factors helped this along: the tremendous industrialization of the islands, plus the fact that the working class is the overwhelming and decisive section of the population—but it is mainly due to the bankruptcy of the ruling strata that the proletariat is in the featured position of “running the country”; actually keeping it going, despite the sabotage of the bourgeoisie.

For rarely has a proletariat been so powerful and so essential in the economy of a capitalist nation as that of England! It runs all the war industry and transportation; its agricultural laborers keep the small agricultural industry alive; it mans the divisions and forces of the war; it constitutes the bulk of the ARP forces; it suffers under the bombing raids; it puts out the fires; it takes the volunteer posts, etc. Its specific weight in the life of England is more than decisive, it is crushing. All the more criminal and treacherous then, are those Labor Party and trade union fakers who bind this mighty class to a comparatively insignificant group of dodo Tories and imperialist bankrupts. These “labor lieutenants of capital” are truly responsible for keeping capital in power!

An additional factor in England's crisis is the absence of a fascist movement with either a mass-appeal program, or a base in the middle class. The fact that there is no fascist organization worthy of the name at the moment is decidedly an advantage in favor of the English workers, provided they utilize it. Regardless of the reasons for it, it is enough that there is neither a fascist party nor tradition favoring one, nor does a favorable field seem to be developing for its birth. The existence and continued practice of democratic liberties during England's war period (not due, as the petty bourgeois intellectuals inform us, to the generosity and “superior culture” of the English ruling gentry but to the power of the working class) is another indication of the special importance, alertness and combativity of the English proletariat. The rulers dare not yet impose fascism upon the masses, let alone the fact that they as yet have no homogeneous, seriously organized fascist group to which to turn. But they will not hesitate for a moment to take that path.

The Impending Class Crisis

A section of the monopolist British bourgeoisie is actively engaged in formulating its plans to meet the internal crisis. The beaverlike-energies of the supremely reactionary Lord Beaverbrook, lately ousted from the war cabinet, are bent in this direction and already bear close resemblance to the sinister plottings of the ex-Kaiser's officerdom against the Weimar Republic. (Secret meetings with high army officials, sensa-

tional speeches putting out “sensational” ideas, gathering together of the anti-Churchill, anti-Labor cliques, etc.)

It is possible that the plotting of the bourgeoisie, and even the discontent of the workers, may momentarily be safely channelized by American imperialism along the lines of the establishment of a “second front.” The pouring in of American troops, offensive war weapons and supplies (transforming the islands into the European invasion base) can slow up the development of the crisis, but the reactionary imperialists will continue to lay their plans for the inevitable assault on labor. If their dictatorial and militarist plans are not needed for today, then tomorrow will do. *For, it is around the objective of establishing a military dictatorship over England that the bourgeoisie will seek to rally its confused and hesitant groups.* Fascist-minded politicians, army and naval chiefs, banker-monopolists, etc., these are the individuals who will attempt to destroy the English labor movement as a preliminary to its inevitable post-war economic struggle with American imperialism.

Sir William Beveridge, a banker's economist of repute, has tentatively outlined the “program” for such a combined military-political movement, whose leading aspirant today is Beaverbrook. (1) Give up party government and Parliament; (2) Abolish the profit system for the duration of the war and run industry on totalitarian production lines; (3) Do away with autonomous trade unions. Here is a typical military-fascist program, meant to appeal to the imperialist vanguard of the British bourgeoisie.

Forces of the Left

In this situation there are only two working class political organizations in Great Britain—the Independent Labor Party and the Workers International League (Fourth International)—that have shown any grasp of matters. Unfortunately, neither group (although the ILP has grown considerably in numbers and influence) has the necessary revolutionary socialist clarity, without which there can be no revolutionary success.

The ILP—the original “grandfather” of confused, centrist political organizations—has shown little sign of learning from the great and tragic lessons imposed by history upon the Spanish POUM and the French PSOP. Its composition is as heterogeneous as ever; its domination by the Parliamentary group (Maxton, McGovern, etc.) in combination with the Fenner Brockway group continues; its multitude of conflicting tendencies (including English patriots, pacifists and conscientious objectors) has failed to jell into a majority revolutionary tendency.

The English Trotskyists (WIL) are correct when they criticize the “Socialist Britain Now” campaign for the opportunist and reformist manner in which it is conducted (that is, aiming primarily to increase the electoral vote of the ILP). The WIL, for its part, doubly misguided by its blind “orthodoxy” and adherence to the policies of the Cannon group in America, has centered its program around the slogans of “Arms to Russia,” and “Military Training Under Trade Union Control.” It has failed to work out a program specifically applicable to the crisis in England itself and has allowed its political sectarianism to throw it considerably off the track. This alone can account for its failure to grow during a very favorable period. A program of mutual revolutionary collaboration and clarification between the Workers International League and the left wing of the ILP is needed if another favorable revolutionary situation is not to be tossed into the laps of reaction.

HENRY JUDD.

James Connolly, Irish Socialist Rebel

One of the greatest figures of the international socialist movement and yet one of the least known, is James Connolly, who was, until his execution, the organizer and leader of the Irish socialist movement. The lives and works of the Continental and American socialist leaders and thinkers are rather well known to the old and new generations of revolutionary socialists. This is indeed a paradox, for James Connolly was one of the most talented of the socialist theoreticians of the new century. Unlike so many socialist thinkers, his theoretical work was not an end in itself, but corresponded to the requirements of the Irish labor and independence movements, i.e., to concrete revolutionary aims. It is not strange, therefore, that this great leader should have met his death in a rôle, regarded as romantic by those whose lives are completely intellectualized and cloistered, of commandant of the Irish Citizen Army, which he helped to organize for the concrete task of seizing power in Ireland and proclaiming the Irish Republic free and independent from British imperialism.

The life of James Connolly is not easy to assay, for the general pattern out of which judgment is drawn in analysing and describing the lives of other outstanding revolutionary socialists is, in this case, greatly complicated by the specific peculiarities of the country which gave birth to him. American and European socialist leaders grew up and developed in a bourgeois milieu of fully developed capitalism. At the turn of the century, the main processes of national unification in Europe were completed. Even the backward countries of the Continent were drawn into the vortex of bourgeois economy and became entirely dependent upon the welfare, the ebbs and flows of capitalism. Despite the intense nationalism engendered by the era of imperialism, it is possible to speak of European capitalism as connoting one sector of that universal order.

The reaction of the masses to the bitter exploitation which accompanied the rising power of industrial and finance capitalism led directly to the formation of the economic and political organizations of struggle of the proletariat and peasantry. Thus, by the year 1900, socialist and trade union organizations made their appearance in all of the advanced countries of the world. Certainly the trade union movement had already made its mark, and in most European countries the trade union movement, heavily indebted to the efforts of the socialist movement to establish it, remained under socialist influence.

While part of the general process of industrialization was visited upon Ireland, it was complicated, altered, influenced and diverted by the singular fact that Ireland was a colonial country, under the heel of British imperialism, for over seven hundred years. As a predominantly peasant country, it had experienced the ravages of an industrialization introduced by a foreign power, but in agriculture and industry the overlords were interlopers from the center of the empire, England.

As a Young Socialist

James Connolly was born near Cloves, County Monaghan, in Northern Ireland, on June 5, 1870. His proletarian family migrated to Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1880 in the hope of improving their economic position. It was there that Connolly first began to work in the printing trade. Under age

(he was scarcely more than ten) and undersized, he and his conniving boss would outwit government inspectors by having him placed on a box, which permitted him to peer over the type cases, giving the illusion of height and age. A more wily inspector caused his discharge and he thereafter became a baker's apprentice, an occupation which he dreaded. The early morning hours and long days of labor made him always dream and hope that the bakery would burn before his day's work began. From the baking trade he drifted into a mosaic tiling factory to learn another type of work.

During the entire period of his early youth and adolescence, Connolly was an indefatigable student who educated himself. He studied languages, history and economics and at an early age became active in the Scottish socialist movement. John Leslie, the Scottish socialist, greatly influenced the young Irishman and it was he who prevailed upon Connolly to return to Ireland to organize an Irish socialist movement. In 1896, at the age of 26, James Connolly, with his newly married wife, arrived in Dublin, where he was to embark on a career of socialist agitation and organization destined to culminate in the great Easter Rebellion of 1916.

A Résumé History of Ireland

Before one is able to evaluate the life and rôle of James Connolly it is an indispensable requirement to trace, no matter how briefly, the historical development of Ireland. Only by such a review will one be enabled to understand the "peculiarities" of Connolly's ideas, his writings and his deeds.

Ireland was the oldest colonial possession in the world, having been subjected by the British as early as the 12th century. English domination of the island was not accomplished at once. The Irish clans were a fighting people and for more than 500 years they resisted the occupation of their island by the Norman and Anglo-Saxon marauders. But each successive revolt was brutally suppressed. The struggles became weaker and weaker, while the power of the invader grew. Finally, in 1798, the last great revolt was crushed. In 1801 the forced union of England and Ireland was "legally" established under the Crown.

The multiplying decades of the 19th century witnessed the painful spoliation of that beautiful country by British landlordism. The communal lands of the Irish peasants were long ago destroyed. The land, which for many centuries had belonged to the people, was now in the hands of foreign landlords, native landowners who made their peace with the invader and who helped him in his conquest, and the Catholic Church, which played its usual insidious rôle in support of the enslavement of a people which had followed its religion. (It was Connolly's opinion that the Church had hoped by this union to bring about a return of Catholicism to England. It therefore supported any and all indignities heaped upon the Irish people.)

The economic reasons behind the terrifying exploitation of the Irish peasantry is to be found in the profitability of cattle raising and breeding in the latter half of the 18th century. It was this single fact which led the British conquerors to uproot the many-sided agricultural production of the Irish peasant and to reduce it to a secondary position in the island's economy. Ground landlords fenced in small farms to form large grazing farms, including the commons. Small farmers

lost their means of existence. (See M. Beer, *History of British Socialism*, vol. 1.) This annihilation of the Irish peasantry gave rise to a multitude of organizations, all basing themselves on the necessity of unending struggle against England, for the restoration of the farming lands to the peasants and for the restoration of Irish independence.

The destruction of the farm lands in favor of grazing pastures usurped by the rich gave rise to the formation of the "Whiteboys." This organization, which existed until about 1830, employed violence in the struggle against the great landlords, tearing down the fences which had marked off the lands of the conquerors. They had hoped to reestablish the peasant ownership of the land.

There, in brief, is the background to the situation which brought about a change of relations between a section of the Irish Protestants and Catholics. More and more they joined hands in a common struggle against England. They were influenced by the radical movement in England, by the American War of Independence and by the French Revolution. The Protestant Irish furnished many thinkers and leaders for the insurrectionary struggle against England. In October, 1791, they formed the United Irishmen, sent messages to Rousseau, Thomas Paine and Locke, contacted the London Corresponding Society and conspired with the French government to free Ireland. But their insurrection failed, too.

For the next fifty years, the Irish continued to struggle against hopeless odds. But the destruction of their agriculture, the exploitation and impoverishment of the entire population in order to enrich the British, led to successive famines and physical deterioration of the race. As in Britain, during the "industrial revolution," the British ruling classes and progenitors of the present British aristocracy were interested in only one thing: profit. The treatment of the Irish people left the world aghast.

World Interest in Ireland's Plight

It was not merely a question of the brutality of English rule in Ireland. The movement of liberalism, which made its appearance under various guises, the new labor organizations, the socialists, at the head of whom stood Marx and Engels, were all interested in the struggles of the Irish people for their liberation, as a social question of paramount importance for all the peoples of the world. This is not difficult to understand, for England, the most powerful industrial nation in the world, was setting the pattern for future imperialist conquest as it set the pace for industrial exploitation.

The chartist movement of England was also involved in the movement for Irish freedom. While there was no chartist movement in Ireland, with its poor and backward proletariat, it was that country which gave chartism its greatest orator in Feargus O'Connor, and in "most trenchant writer" in Bronterre O'Brien. These individuals focused the attention of the British workers on the Irish question. The intensity of the struggle for the island's freedom led to the second national petition of the chartist movement, issued April 12 to May 12, 1842, and signed by 3,315,752 workers. The document declared:

Your petitioners complain of the many grievances borne by the people of Ireland and contend that they are fully entitled to a repeal of the legislative union. (*History of British Socialism*, by M. Beer; vol. 2, p. 130.)

Only the Scottish and London delegates opposed the inclusion of a demand for repeal of the forced union upon Ireland.

Marx and Engels on Ireland

Friedrich Engels, who visited Ireland several times to gain a first-hand knowledge of conditions on the Island, wrote a great deal on the nature of the British conquest. He described the effect of British exploitation of the Irish people in stirring detail and won Marx's deep interest in the question which, during their lifetime, was constantly brought before the British labor movement and the First International.

In a letter to Marx dated May 23, 1856, Engels graphically described the painful conditions in Ireland in the following way:

Gendarmes, priests, lawyers, bureaucrats, squires, in pleasing profusion and a total absence of any and every industry, so that it would be difficult to understand what all these parasitic growths found to live on if the misery of the peasants did not supply the other half of the picture.

Ireland may be regarded as the first English colony and as one which because of its proximity is still governed exactly in the old way, and here one can already observe that the so-called liberty of English citizens is based on the oppression of the colonies. I have never seen so many gendarme in any country, and the drink-sodden expression of the Prussian gendarme is developed to its highest perfection here among the constabulary, who are armed with carbines, bayonets and handcuffs.

The country has been completely ruined by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850 (for in reality both the war and the state of siege lasted as long as that). How often have the Irish started to try and achieve something, and every time they have been crushed, politically and industrially. (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Correspondence*, 1846-1895.)

In contrast to the host of "friends" of Ireland, Marx and Engels approached the question of her liberation from a class point of view. They saw the struggle for Irish freedom as an integral part of the struggle against capitalism, against all forms of exploitation, as part of the liberative struggle for the emancipation of all humanity and as a forerunner in the struggle for socialism. On the basis of their observations, the founders of scientific socialism knew that the Irish would continue to fight for freedom no matter how many defeats they suffered. It was this conviction which led Marx to say in a letter of November 2, 1867, to Engels:

I used to think the separation of Ireland from England impossible. I now think it is inevitable. (Marx-Engels, *Correspondence*, p. 228.)

Several weeks later we find Marx, still occupied with the Irish question, writing to Engels on the needs of the island and saying:

The next question is, what shall we advise the English workers? In my opinion they must make the repeal of the Union (in short the affair of 1783, only democratized and adapted to the conditions of the time) into an article of their *pronunziamento*. . . . What the Irish need it:

- (1) Self-government and independence from England.
- (2) An agrarian revolution. With the best will in the world the English cannot accomplish this for them, but they can give them the legal means of accomplishing it for themselves. . . . (Marx-Engels, *Correspondence*, p. 229.)

Marx and Engels endeavored to orient the British working class movement to struggle for Irish freedom, without which they could not hope to achieve their own emancipation. On November 29, 1869, writing from London, Marx said to his friend Kugelmann:

I have become more and more convinced—and the only question is to bring this conviction home to the English working class—that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland in the most definite way from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801 and replacing it by a free federal relationship. And, indeed, this must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland, but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading-strings of the ruling classes, because it must

join them in a common front against Ireland. Every one of its movements in England itself is crippled by the disunion with the Irish, who form a very important section of the working class in England. *The primary condition of emancipation here—the overthrow of the English landed oligarchy—remains impossible because its position here cannot be stormed so long as it maintains its strongly entrenched outposts in Ireland.* (Marx-Engels, *Correspondence*, pp. 278-279.)

A further illustration of how keenly Marx regarded the Irish question, especially when considering the question of freedom of the English workers, is his letter to Engels of December 10, 1869. He wrote:

As to the *Irish question*... The way I shall put forward the matter next Tuesday [meeting of the general council of the International] is this: that quite apart from all phrases about "international" and "humane" justice for Ireland—which are to be taken for granted in the *International Council—it is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland.* And this is my most complete conviction and for reasons which in part I cannot tell the English workers themselves. For a long time I believed that it would be possible to overthrow the Irish régime by English working class ascendancy. I always expressed this point of view in the *New York Tribune*. Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The English working class will *never accomplish anything* before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general. (Marx-Engels, *Correspondence*, pp. 280-821.)

The Arrival of Connolly in Ireland

No great progress was made in the liberation of Ireland during the 19th century. There was no lack of struggles, however. Sinn Feinianism, despite heroic campaigns against British imperialism, was defeated at all decisive turns of the struggle. The Feinian organization, a petty bourgeois "socialistic" movement, vainly sought the establishment of a republic and the overthrow of the tenant system. The story is the same when one examines the history of the Irish Land League. Their self-sacrificing battles were unavailing. No small reason for these defeats, although by no means the principal one, was the absence of a clear social doctrine around which these purely nationalist movements could grow and join their struggle to those of other oppressed peoples against common exploiters.

The first effort to turn the Irish people in other directions was made by James Connolly. As a Marxian socialist he sought to combine the nationalist aims of the Irish people with socialist theory, toward economic, political and social emancipation. Thus, he came to Ireland in 1896 with the single purpose of establishing a *socialist organization* to accomplish the freedom of the Irish people.

Immediately upon his arrival on the island he proceeded to form the Irish Socialist Republican Party. Note the name he gave to the party. It was his way of surmounting the obstacles which a socialist organization inevitably encounters in a country where nationalism is the dominant spirit. As he often said, he sought a union of genuine nationalism to socialist theory and practice on the ground that they were compatible under Irish conditions. The program of the Irish Socialist Republican Party written by him with the above in mind, he summarized as follows:

The establishment of an Irish socialist republic based upon the public ownership by the people of Ireland of the land and instruments of production, distribution and exchange. Agriculture to be administered as a public function, under boards of management elected by the agricultural population and responsible to them and to the nation at large. All other forms of labor necessary to the well-being of the community to be conducted on the same principles. (*The Irish Labor Movement*, by W. P. Ryan, p. 166.)

The demands he appended to the program, and which

exclusively applied to Ireland, are not unlike those propagated by the Fourth Internationalist movement of the present era.

In organizing an Irish socialist movement, he began a campaign against the "politicians" and "nationalists" who were conservative on the question of property and who opposed every effort of the proletariat to improve its economic and social position. Realizing the tremendous obstacles which pure nationalism created in the building of the party, he always insisted on posing the social as well as the nationalist aspects of Ireland's struggle—its completely dual character. In an introduction to *Erin's Hope*, reprinted in the Harp Library, he summarizes his view of the Irish question in the following words:

The ISRP was founded in Dublin in 1896 by a few workingmen whom the writer had succeeded in interesting in his proposition that the two currents of revolutionary thought in Ireland—the socialist and the nationalist—were not antagonistic but complementary, and that the Irish socialist was in reality the best Irish patriot, but in order to convince the Irish people of that fact he must rest his arguments upon the facts of Irish history and be champion against the subjection of Ireland and all that it implies. That the Irish question was at bottom an economic question and that the economic struggle must first be able to function freely nationally before it could function internationally, and as socialists were opposed to all oppression, so should they ever be foremost in the daily battle against all its manifestations, social and political. (*Ibid.*, p. 169.)

The First Appearance of Socialism

The early years of the Irish socialist movement were extremely difficult. In this sense, the organization merely experienced the same problems of poverty, isolation and opposition which always characterized the history of other socialist movements originating under identical conditions.

Connolly was its single functionary. He was its theoretician, political director, agitator and writer. As a pioneer movement, all menial tasks of party organization fell upon his shoulders. But these he accepted with infectious cheerfulness and discharged them all with high spirit.

In pursuit of the single aim of establishing a Marxian socialist party and yet combining its theories with the revolutionary traditions of Irish nationalism, he based himself upon the experiences and struggle of Wolfe Tone and James Fintan Lalor. But always the appeal was directly to the Irish working class as the one section of the Irish people which could lead the struggle for freedom.

During the Boer War, the party, under Connolly's leadership, opposed British imperialism and announced its support of the Dutch settlers. On the occasion of Queen Victoria's visit to Dublin in 1900, he sought to address the people in the streets, attacking Her Majesty's government. Despite arrest, he maintained an anti-imperialist agitation in the columns of the *Workers Republic*, the organ of the Irish Socialist Republican Party which first appeared in 1898.

The issuance of the paper was a difficult task. Beginning in 1898, it ran for eleven numbers and then stopped. Publication was resumed in 1899 and it continued irregularly until 1903, when it ceased altogether. Its final reappearance came in 1915, the crucial years of the Irish struggle, and the final issue was the eighty-fifth in its lifespan.

The backwardness of Ireland and the problems it created in building a socialist movement was strikingly described by Connolly in his introduction to the American edition of *Erin's Hope*. But its accomplishments were unmistakable:

It is no exaggeration to say that this organization and its policy completely revolutionized advanced politics in Ireland. When it was first initiated the word 'republic' was looked upon as a word to be only whis-

pered among intimates; the socialists boldly advised the driving from public life of all who would not accept it. The thought of revolution was the exclusive possession of a few remnants of the secret societies of a past generation and was never mentioned by them except with heads closely together and eyes fearfully glancing round; the socialists broke through this ridiculous secrecy and in hundreds of thousands of pieces of literature scattered through the country announced their purpose to muster all the forces of labor for a revolutionary reconstruction.

Life in the United States

In 1903, Connolly was invited to the United States for a lecture tour. The fortunes of the party in Ireland were indeed low and he had hoped through his tour to win interest and support from the American socialist movement and the militant Irish who migrated to the New World. His return to Ireland was short-lived. The progress of the movement was indeed slow and discouraging. When disintegration followed and Connolly found himself black-listed throughout Ireland, he decided to take his family to the United States.

While in the United States he worked as an insurance agent in Troy and factory hand in Newark. But these jobs were merely interludes until he could once again resume his full-time work for socialism. His activity and agitation for socialism always led to a search for new means of employment. In the fluid state of the political movement of the American working class, he, like so many others, was a member of the IWW, the Socialist Labor Party and finally the Socialist Party. In 1908 he moved to New York City to take up his duties as the organizer of the Irish Socialist Federation and editor of its paper, *The Harp*. Each new venture meant additional problems of moving his family, which now included three daughters and one boy. But there were no family difficulties, for it seemed that everyone in the Connolly household was as much concerned with the building of the movement and Jim's activities as he himself.

Internationalist though he was, the problem of the Irish revolution was to him paramount. Even his work among the American Irish bore the influence of the problems of the homeland. In his advice to them, he wrote in *The Harp*, in 1908:

We propose to show all the workers of our fighting race that socialism will make them better fighters without being less Irish; we propose to advise the Irish who are socialists now to organize their forces as Irish and get again in touch with the organized bodies of literary, educational and revolutionary Irish; we propose to make a campaign among our countrymen and to rely for our method mainly on imparting to them a correct interpretation of the facts of Irish history, past and present; we propose to take control of the Irish vote out of the hands of the slimy *seoinini*, who use it to boost their political and business interests, to the undoing of the Irish as well as the American toiler."

There is a great similarity in the conduct of Connolly during his stay in the United States and that of the Bolsheviks in exile. While he carried on a literary and speaking campaign to advance the socialist movement and industrial unionism in America, his real interest was Ireland and the development of the Irish revolution. As a matter of fact, Connolly never once regarded his migration to the United States as anything permanent. And when the labor movement in Ireland began to manifest a new restlessness, when new forces made their appearance, when the objective situation became more tense, his return to Ireland was only a matter of days.

Connolly's Return to Ireland

Again, in 1910, the Connolly family was on the move; they returned to Dublin. *The Harp* was transferred with them and now Connolly found a sub-editor in old Jim Larkin and their

coöperation marked one of the brightest periods in Irish history.

Upon his return to Ireland, Connolly embarked on a new tactic of cooperation with any militant nationalists for Irish freedom, whether or not they were socialists. The single thought behind this tactic was the realization of the need for the involvement of all elements of the Irish nation for the coming revolution which he regarded as inevitable!

He now organized the Irish Socialist Party and became a member of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, which Jim Larkin had established. In this period, Connolly regarded the unionization of the Irish working class as indispensable to the accomplishment of the Irish liberation and together with Larkin insisted that this unionization must be carried out on an industrial basis. Membership in the Irish Transport and General Workers Union was open to all who toiled and it was this single fact which was responsible for the rapid growth of militant trade unionism. From that moment, the tide of the class struggle moved on unabated.

The growth of the union struck fear in the hearts of the Irish bourgeoisie, whose existence was based upon coöperation with England. They were determined to smash the proletarian organizations lest they become so powerful that nothing could impede their road to power. In the several years since Connolly's return, he carried on an uninterrupted agitation for the Irish rebellion, not merely as a struggle for nationalist liberation, but as a social revolution. It was this singular fact that led the Dublin employers in 1913 to combine their resources and strength for the purpose of destroying the Transport and General Workers Union. If they could succeed in this, "Connollyism," i.e., Larkin's militancy and Connolly's doctrine of industrial unionism, would be rendered helpless.

The Offensive of the Bourgeoisie

The Dublin employers announced a lockout against the working class of the city. In retaliation the union declared a strike against the employers. The importation of strike-breakers was a direct demonstration that the bosses were determined to starve the organized workers into submission in a situation where the liquidation of the union and the dismissal of its leaders were demanded.

Connolly was no cloistered theoretician of Irish independence. He was an active participant in the strike and shortly afterward was arrested. As a protest against the action of the employers and their government, Connolly went on a hunger strike. This act had the effect of gaining widespread sympathy and support, finally reaching the shores of England and enlisting the aid of the workers there.

The real culprit behind the Dublin employers was the British government. It understood the deep significance of Connolly's activities and saw in the union the material source for the realization of Irish independence. That is why the rulers of Ireland were always so vicious and adamant in any struggle involving the working class. Connolly had with some degree of success taught the most advanced elements of the Irish people that their struggle for independence was linked to the class struggle, that every act in behalf of an improvement of the position of the working class would hasten by the degree of that improvement the independence of their country. So that, even though the workers suffered a defeat in struggles of 1913, they were prepared by those battles for the more fateful days of 1916.

The Formation of the Irish Citizen Army

At a time when war threatened Europe's peace, with England being inevitably drawn into the conflict and occupied with the problem of defending its empire, and out of the strike which had fired the determination of the workers to struggle, there arose the Irish Citizen Army. The formation of the army on March 22, 1914, under the ideological leadership of James Connolly, marked a turning point in modern Irish history. The twofold purpose of the army was heralded throughout the island: it was to defend the workers, the people, against the brutality of the bosses, landlords and the British; it was to organize the armed struggle for independence!

The Irish Citizen Army began at once to grow. At its head stood Connolly, the Countess Markievicz, W. Partridge, P. T. Daly, Sean O' Cathasaigh and the venerable Captain White, who directed its military training. The army could be seen daily in Croydon Park taking its drills and marching through Dublin's streets. Its headquarters was at Liberty Hall, which housed the Transport and General Workers Union.

In the midst of a revolutionary internal situation which threatened to assume proportions of a social upheaval, the First World War broke out on the Continent. The war did not come as a surprise to Connolly and his closest followers. But he was sadly affected by the manner in which the Socialist International, of which he was an adherent, betrayed its principles of proletarian internationalism and class solidarity. The wretched conduct of the parties of the International, wherein the leadership of the national sections, in a frenzied wave of social patriotism, rallied to the support of their imperialist governments, drove Connolly deeper into the Irish movement.

Connolly remained, nonetheless, an impeccable revolutionary internationalist. His life in this period served as an answer to the craven reformists in all countries. His attitude toward the war was acute and was stated in simple terms. He regarded the war as imperialist and deplored the bloodbath of the proletariat. If one must die, he would say, it would be better to die for a new world than in the trenches of an imperialist war in the interests of tyrants and profiteers.

On August 15, 1914, in the article "A Continental Revolution," he counseled the Irish people to continue the fight for independence, to utilize Britain's involvement in the hostilities to secure this freedom. One can observe from his writings a feverish haste to quickly achieve this freedom. All his writings were now devoted to orienting the Irish people toward a struggle for power. In the above mentioned article he wrote:

I make no war on patriotism, never have done. But against the patriotism of capitalism—the patriotism which makes the interest of capitalism the supreme test of right and duty—I place the patriotism of the working class, the patriotism which judges every public act by its effect on the fortunes of those who toil. That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic. . . . I regard each nation as the possessor of a definite contribution to the common stock of civilization, and I regard the capitalist class of each nation as being the logical and natural enemy of the national culture which constitutes that definite contribution. Therefore, the stronger I am in my affection for national tradition, literature, language and sympathies, the more firmly rooted am I in my opposition to that capitalist class which in its soulless lust for power and gold would bronze the nation as in a mortar.

And this was not mere rhetoric. He meant every word he wrote. He brilliantly explained his political program from week to week and from month to month, until the clash of arms became the reality which determined who would rule his nation. On August 22, 1914, in *Forward*, he wrote:

The war of a subject nation for independence, for its right to live its own life in its own way, may and can be justified as holy and righteous;

the war of a subject class to free itself from the debasing conditions of economic and political slavery should at all times choose its own weapons and esteem all as sacred instruments of righteousness; but the war of nation against nation in the interest of royal freebooters and cosmopolitan brigands is a thing accursed.

The brilliance of his dialectics stood out in a world of confusion and chaos. His work and his writings matched the efforts of the small band of internationalists in Switzerland who were also engaged in the great struggle for liberation from capitalism and imperialist war. But the heroism of Connolly is all the more remarkable in that his development and work took place in isolation from his ideological comrades in Switzerland and other parts of Europe. Yet their writings, thoughts and actions were identical. This is not difficult to understand since they all proceeded from the same set of principles, the theories of Marxism.

As a man of action Connolly was able to translate theory into practice and, more important than that, to apply to the specific conditions under which he lived, the most trenchant thoughts of Marx and Engels. Having already characterized the war in Europe as imperialist, he proceeded to concretize his analysis for the purpose of directing the Irish labor movement toward the insurrectionary struggle for national liberation. Thus he wrote:

The true revolutionist should ever call into action on his side the entire sum of all the forces and factors of political and social discontent.

We believe that in times of peace we should work along the lines of peace to strengthen the nation . . . but we also believe that in times of war we should act as in war.

Moreover, he viewed the Irish Revolution, not as an isolated act of an oppressed people, but as a forerunner and as part of the international, colonial and class revolution for freedom. He wrote:

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 on the funeral pyre of the last warlord.

Both 1914 and 1915 were preparatory years for what Connolly regarded as a certainty: the military struggle for national independence. The fortunes of the Irish Citizen Army were varied. The class conflict became more intense as the war worsened the economic conditions of the people as a whole and the tremendous dissatisfaction of the people, arising from their poverty, stood out in sharp contrast to the well-being of the Irish upper classes and their English overlords. The army continued its drilling for battle. Arms were procured. Under Connolly the aim of the movement was made public: The union and the army were preparing to seize power, to establish the republic and proclaim the separation of Ireland from England, to set up the United Irish Republic.

The Inevitability of a Clash

But the Irish people were not alone in their preparations. The ruling classes, in their desperate fright, called upon the British for aid and this aid came in the form of armed battalions with superior weapons. As Easter, 1916, approached, a clash was inevitable! Here the movement was faced with a choice: Either surrender without a struggle and thus postpone the fight for national independence for many decades or prepare for the struggle, no matter what the consequence might be, in the hope that the commencement of the fight for freedom might impel such a momentous conflict as would result in freedom for Ireland.

Connolly fully understood the dilemma which confronted

his movement. He knew that the failure to fight would result in the disintegration of the entire movement for liberation. A split in the Volunteers, the conservative middle class military organization for Irish independence, made possible collaboration with its militant majority under the leadership of P. H. Pearse. In the few days of doubt, Connolly supplied the leadership and reminded the population of what he had written in his three-act play which explained why it was necessary for the movement to fight. He wrote:

The Irish Citizen Army in its constitution pledges its members to fight for a republican freedom for Ireland. Its members are, therefore, of the number who believe that at the call of duty they may have to lay down their lives for Ireland, and have so trained themselves that at the worst the laying down of their lives shall constitute the starting point of another glorious tradition—a tradition that will keep alive the soul of the nation.

The fateful week of Easter, 1916, had arrived. The ruling classes had gone over to the offensive, seeking to wipe out the Citizen Army and the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. Jim Larkin, who was in the United States to raise funds and material support for the army, was prevented from returning to Ireland by the authorities. It is not difficult to surmise at whose request this refusal was granted. But the situation would not wait. The question was no longer: shall we fight or retreat? In the situation where surrender meant annihilation, only one course remained: wage the fight in the hope of victory, or, at worst, keep alive the revolutionary traditions of the Irish struggle for independence. The choice was not difficult to foresee. Connolly was keenly aware of the historic import of the situation and in his position of commandant called for the mobilization of the army, mapped the campaign for the occupation of Dublin and began to rally the workers to paralyze the efficiency of the ruling class to resist.

Bourgeois Desperation and the Easter Rebellion

The battle broke out with the army under Connolly seizing various parts of central Dublin and occupying the main post office. For one week the Dublin proletariat kept up its heroic fight against overwhelming military odds. Remnants of the army were being rounded up and finally the British surrounded the post office, which housed the squadrons under Connolly's command. The fight was a bitter one. Many of his closest friends and collaborators had given up their lives in this monumental demonstration against class and national oppression. And Connolly, too, was critically wounded and suffering from the excessive loss of blood. Constant shelling and the desire to save his men compelled him to surrender.

The aftermath was dreadful to behold. The bloody British tyrants proceeded to wreak their vengeance on the small band of faithfuls. All the leading personalities were sought out and indicted for taking arms against His Majesty's government. And while some amnesties were granted, the real leaders, especially Connolly, were doomed. World-wide protests in behalf of the revolutionists were unavailing. Special intercessions in behalf of Connolly were rejected. The royal government demanded his life and his life it took. On Easter Sunday, 1916, the wounded Connolly, unable to stand or walk, was wheeled out in a chair to face his executioners. This great and good man was serene and composed in the knowledge that even though he lost, the battles were not over and victory would yet come.

And so the riflemen took aim at this glorious proletarian martyr as he sat in a chair, propped up to make the aim easier and his death certain. At the command of the executioner, the

Irish people lost their greatest figure of the twentieth century and the world socialist movement was deprived of one of its most engaging theoreticians and leaders.

* * *

In Defense of the Irish Martyrs

A great deal has been written on the Irish rebellion deploring the road taken by Connolly. To many it is unthinkable that such an astute person could have gone into the battle against insurmountable odds. Yet they do not truly understand Ireland, its revolutionary traditions, nor needs of the world movement of proletarian emancipation. For there is no doubt that the Easter Rebellion was one of the decisive elements which led to the subsequent spurious independence granted to Ireland, an independence which divided the island on religious grounds (actually to preserve British interests).

In his analysis and defense of the Irish Rebellion, Lenin demonstrated that the immaturity of the revolt was an immaturity based on the fact that the European proletariat failed to respond to the lead given it by Connolly and his movement. But beyond that Lenin very aptly places the Rebellion in its proper historical place. In the article, "The Results of the Discussion on Self-Determination," contained in the book, *Against the Stream*, he wrote:

Those who can term such a rising a putsch are either the worst kind of reactionaries or hopelessly doctrinaire, incapable of imagining the social revolution as a living phenomenon. . . . The misfortune of the Irish lay in the fact that their rising was untimely, since the rising of the European proletariat was *not yet* ripe. Capitalism is not so harmoniously constructed that separate sources of risings can suddenly unite without failure of overthrow. On the contrary, the difference in time, the difference and dissimilarity in the place of the risings act as a guarantee for the greatness and depth of the joint movement; it is only by untimely, partially and consequently unsuccessful attempts at revolutionary risings that the masses will again experience, learn, assemble their forces, recognize their true leaders, the socialist proletarians, and thereby prepare the joint attack; just as isolated strikes, town and national demonstrations, mutinies in the army, peasant uprisings, etc., prepared the general attack in 1905.

That Connolly understood the meaning of Lenin's position is clear from the manner in which he prepared the Irish rebellion and explained its relation to an impending European revolution. Certainly there was something peculiarly Irish in the determination with which he pursued his single aim. As an admirer and interpreter of James Fintan Lalor he must have known of and accepted Lalor's defense of the many defeated Irish rebellions when the latter wrote:

Any man who tells you that an act of armed resistance—even if offered by ten men only—even if offered by men armed only with stones—any man who tells you that such an act of resistance is premature, imprudent or dangerous—any and every such man should at once be spurned and spat at. For, remark you this and recollect it, that *somewhere*, and *somehow*, and by *somebody*, a *beginning* must be made and the *first* act of resistance is always, and must be ever, premature, imprudent and dangerous. Lexington was premature, Bunker's Hill was imprudent, and even Trenton was dangerous."

I have tried, in this brief sketch, to compress a study of the life of James Connolly. Mindful of its many shortcomings, it is hoped that it may serve toward a better acquaintance with one of the truly heroic figures of the international working class movement in the struggle for socialism.

ALBERT GATES.

World War I in Retrospect

An Historical Examination

These articles endeavor to review the acts and conduct of the leading forces, individuals and organizations of the labor and revolutionary movement in Europe, particularly France. It is to be hoped that a knowledge of the period of the First World War, sunk deep into the minds of the working class movement, together with the kaleidoscopic and catastrophic events of the past two and a half years, will help prevent gross repetitions by the American workers in the present war; will give an impetus to further growth and development of a powerful, militant labor movement, with a corresponding revolutionary wing; and, lastly, will develop, out of the war itself, a mass movement to abolish war and bring lasting peace by the socialist transformation of society.

The period covered is roughly from the beginning of the war, August 2, 1914, to the Zimmerwald Conference, September, 1915. The period covered has (1) a dramatic beginning, showing the great strength of the workers' movement; (2) a lull with the complete capitulation of the leaders when national unity was the only slogan; and (3) a time of rising hope when the Zimmerwald Conference brings together a very few internationalists who are opposed to the war.

Prior to the outbreak of the First World War, on August 2, 1914, the greater European powers—Germany, France, England, Austria-Hungary, Italy and others—had witnessed the development of powerful movements of the working class, in their trade unions and their political organizations. Great confidence and hope was placed in the European labor movement. The belief grew that any attempts by the European ruling classes—the Germany of the Kaiser and the Junkers; the Russia of the Czar and landlords; the France of Poincaré and the Third Estate; the England of the King and the "City" et al.—to resolve their imperialist rivalries by war, would be defeated by the mass power of the working classes in all the countries of Europe, even as an earlier outbreak of the World War had been prevented by the mass threats of the working class, and the consequent danger, to the ruling classes, of social revolution itself.

Yet immediately following upon truly dramatic and dynamic signs of working class power or strength, we find a swift backward unfoldment of the workers' movement, once war has been declared. First, resentment; then despair; a lulling of the class feelings and protests; and then the final complete surrender or capitulation of the official leadership of the European labor and political movements to social-patriotism, supine submission to the war-mad bourgeoisie in each country. *National Unity* ("*Union Sacrée*" in France), rather than class struggle, became the guiding star of a once great movement of the masses. Europe was drenched in blood for more than four years until the Armistice of November 11, 1918, finally brought an end to the horror.

The brightest and greatest beacon light of the working class that emerged from this holocaust was of course the historic Bolshevik Russian Revolution, beginning November 7, 1917, and it was its emergence which really terminated the slaughter which bourgeois commentators expected to last five years more. During all these years only a tiny force of revolutionary internationalists expressed and rendered revolutionary opposition to the war. Only a handful of them were able in the early days of the war to convene at the now historic Zimmerwald conference from September 5 to 8, 1915, to draw up a balance of the war and pass resolutions calling upon the working people once again to pursue a class struggle policy against the war.

What men did and why, in great moments and periods of history, is important. Not as information or knowledge alone, but in the lessons that are thereby offered to us for today, a time of even greater significance and decisiveness for the future of labor and the peoples of all the world. The First World War is now history. The Second World War is making history, but not yet history that can be recorded as finished. The working class and exploited peoples of all countries, of all the continents, of all colors, have it within their power to set the sign and seal on this history in its making, and to decide the course of history in their favor. The story of the First World War, in respect to the labor and revolutionary movement, can be a definite aid in the positive determining of labor's course and destiny in the future.

Wars for "Democracy"

The First World War, history has firmly established, had its basis and deep roots in the economic-political rivalries of the contending military powers or nations. It was never, in its origins, prosecution or consequences, a "war for democracy." Marxists had long demonstrated the contradictions in the capitalist mode of production and distribution in national and social relations. Hence they accurately predicted an explosion of the capitalist productive forces in the form of imperialist war. Imperialist war is an expression of the necessity of the rival imperialist nations or rival groups of imperialist nations to break through the economic and political boundaries of national states. The constant and self-perpetuating economic and social convulsions culminating in imperialist war are direct proof of the necessity for the workers to struggle against the limitations of the system of private property and the social order of capitalism itself. In their own interests the working class should be the first to learn this lesson. Its interests lie in combatting the outbreak of war; and failing to prevent war, not to support the imperialist war while it lasts, but to strive to convert such a war toward its own ends, namely, the social revolution.

The First World War, by its very nature, failed to resolve the imperialist contradictions that were the basic causes for its outbreak in 1914. The Second World War, begun 25 years later, is now in its third year attempting with the same futile methods to resolve the same fundamental contradictions, under far more severe and aggravated economic, political and military conditions. The imperialist nations, whichever group may win a military victory, will fail again. The insoluble remains insoluble—on the basis of capitalist relations of society.

In the First World War the leadership of the working class, and thus also the working class, failed to achieve its historic destiny. In the Second World War the task of the revolutionists and the working class is again the same. Will the masses succeed this time, where they failed before? More certainly than at any time in history the fate of humanity depends on the answer to this question.

The history of the official labor and revolutionary movement, immediately preceding and during the First World War, represents a crushing indictment of the syndicalist (trade union) and socialist leaders in their respective coun-

tries. Their traitorous acts, their betrayals of the working class, their complete support of the First World Imperialist War—these things are known in large part by the European masses, and the revolutionaries in all countries. But a knowledge of their acts, and their reasons therefor, can be of value today to the American labor and revolutionary movement in laying out the course of labor here.

One may begin with the French labor movement as an outstanding illustration of the curse of opportunism that struck off the arm of revolutionary opposition and resistance to the war from the body of the French working class. It provides a potent illustration that militancy and desire for class action by the masses are easily frustrated or nullified unless the labor and political arms of the working class are guided always by a well-defined, clear-cut set of principles (theory) as their guide to action. The lack of such a consistent theory and principles in both the trade union movement and the French Socialist Party made inevitable a general policy of opportunism and then capitulation to social-patriotism on their part.

Between the syndicalists (General Confederation of Labor—known as the CGT), led by Leon Jouhaux, and the Socialist Party of France, led by Jean Jaurès, there had existed through the year a sharp division and a most intense antagonism.

French CGT—Hybrid of Unionism and Politics

The syndicalists had no doctrine or theory of the labor movement; that is, *they professed none*, endeavoring thus not to be “doctrinaire.” This lack itself boded ill to the organized French workers. The syndicalists wanted to be as broad as possible in order to avoid even any suspicion of sectarianism. This, in a trade union sense, is correct, if, by this, it is meant that the labor movement—its unions—are made up of the broad mass organizations of the working class. Such bodies admit any worker to their ranks irrespective of his political, economic, religious views or lack of them; provided only that such a worker observes the elementary principles of class solidarity and united union action and loyalty in strikes, etc. Such broadness—embracing and organizing *every* worker into a labor union—is a basic requirement for mass action and striking power for either economic or political purposes by the workers. No question of sectarianism as to the tactics and strategy of the labor movement is involved here, but just common sense. However, every job, every task of the working class requires its particular tools or equipment. Lenin commented succinctly on such matters by pointing out that while ordinary thin shoes may be used on smooth roads, rough roads or mountain climbing require cob-heeled boots. The course of the class struggle also demonstrates the need for ideas (theory) and weapons (tactics and strategy) to fit the situation.

The unique feature of the French Syndicalist Federation* (CGT) was not that it was a labor organization that professed no interest, concern or belief in politics, “politicians” and political organizations (as for instance the American IWW). That would be comprehensible, even if woefully wrong and disastrous in results. The *unique feature of the CGT was that it was a hybrid of unionism and politics.*** As a result

*For a comprehensive review of French Syndicalism and the rôle of revolutionaries in the labor unions, see *Communism and Syndicalism* by L. D. Trotsky.

**We are not discussing here the imperative need for the labor unions to enter as an organized force into politics, and their relations to working class political parties. For example, the Workers Party is an advocate of the formation of an Independent Labor Party of the American workers, based on the labor unions. What is discussed above is why the mixed and confused character and outlook of the CGT regarding politics and political organization caused friction and finally disastrous consequences for the French working class with the outbreak of the First World War.

of this hybrid or mixed character, the French syndicalists were unable to get along with the International Labor Union (International Labor Secretariat) or vice versa, since the latter was, in fact, a body limited to exchange information pertinent to the labor movement, wages, hours, etc.

On the other hand, the French syndicalist organization, *professing* no set theories or “doctrines,” actually had very definite views on working class political strategy and tactics. These unfortunately were not of a consistent or rounded character, as will be shown below. The CGT thus failed to follow through with the logic of its position, views or “politics.” The CGT, forced to react as a living labor organism to life and to the class struggle, put forward its politics or views in the International Labor Secretariat on such significant issues as working class anti-militarism and the general strike. The ILS, regarding itself as only an information body, rebuffed the initiative of the CGT.

French SP—Parliamentarians

The Socialist Party of France could fittingly be described as a party of parliamentarians, its people leaning more and more on electioneering methods and pressure to achieve the objectives of their party. This trend and emphasis on and toward parliamentarianism had continued and increased enormously since the entry of the socialist leader, Millerand,* into the French government, as Premier, in June, 1899, and of Briand in January, 1913. With this early acceptance in essence of the idea of coalition government (which has become known in the contemporary period as the Popular Front), there followed unavoidably more and more general accord with methods of class collaboration on the economic and political fields, finally culminating in the easy surrender by the Socialist Party of France to the crassest and most disastrous expression of class collaboration, namely, social-patriotism.

There were, of course, differences in the French Socialist Party between various groups and individuals, but not of a fundamental character. These divisions were generally ironed out whenever the French parliamentarians wanted to unite against the syndicalists, whom they opposed with great vigor. The best expression of the parliamentarians was Jean Jaurès,** the highly popular leader of the French Socialist Party, who can be described more accurately as a democrat than a socialist.

Belief in the utilization of the democratic state to advance the cause of socialism and to prevent the scourge of war was not confined to France but was characteristic of the other socialist or social democratic parties of Europe. Revisionism had taken a dominating hold on the European socialist parties since Eduard Bernstein had, with considerable skill, programmatized the concepts of reformism or evolutionary socialism in his book, *Evolutionary Socialism*. These concepts more and more were *accepted in life*, if not always in theory, by

*Millerand, socialist leader, entered the cabinet of the bourgeois government of Waldeck-Rousseau and Gallifet, the butcher of the Paris Communards of 1871, forgetting or ignoring that a socialist who joins a capitalist government either goes over to the enemy or puts himself in the power of the class enemy. In 1910 Millerand helped Briand break the railroad strike. By 1920 he had become President of France and was recognizing and aiding the counter-revolutionary General Wrangel in the latter's fight against the Bolsheviks.

**“A composite of national traditions, of the metaphysics of moral principles, of love for the oppressed, and of poetic imagination” (Trotsky's description), Jaurès was truly a popular figure of the masses. Little is it to be wondered at, therefore, that the assassination of Jaurès so greatly affected the common people of France and internally hastened the demoralization of the French Socialist Party.

both the leadership and ranks of the social democracy. With diminishing success small groups of orthodox Marxists in the various parties struggled to maintain the banner of Marxist theory and practice as the First World War approached. The "Possibilists," as the revisionists were known in France, came steadily to dominate the life of the French party.

Why the Second International Collapsed

In dealing in this article largely with the French labor and revolutionary movement of the war period, we are, therefore, not singling out an exception. Much is known by the working class of the perfidious rôle of the large and powerful German social democracy in the First World War—abject surrender to the commands of the Kaiser and the Junkers; calling upon the German workers to fight for the Fatherland!—actions that caused consternation in the working class movements throughout Europe.

The *entire* Second International, excepting the small genuine left wings that existed in the respective parties, was permeated, in fact, saturated through and through, with cretinist thought, with illusions of parliamentarianism as the sure and peaceful path to socialism and as the weapon with which to prevent any imperialist conflict. Even as the syndicalists, with their non-political and anti-parliamentary outlook, surrendered to the state, so likewise the European socialist movement, with the limited outlook of parliamentarianism as the proletarian instrument, capitulated before the bourgeois state when war was at their throats.

The split and wreck of the Second International were rooted in the division among socialists on the theories of reformist and revolutionary socialism; even as the splits and wreck of the First International were already rooted in the diverse doctrines of anarchism and scientific socialism and in the modern period the split and wreck of the Third (Communist) International are rooted in the division on the theory of socialism in one country—national socialism or Stalinism—and the theory of international socialism, the permanent revolution, as expounded by Trotsky and the Fourth Internationalists.*

Even as the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the fall of the Paris Commune in 1871 were the great objective or external factors that sealed the doom of the First International, the First World War sealed the doom of the Second International; and the rise of fascism and the Second World War will seal irrevocably the doom of the Third International.

The Second International, after the demise of the First, continued to concern itself to such an extent with the anarchist groups, that, indeed, about the only thing that the Second International and its component parts agreed on was the elimination of the anarchist groups. Actually, anarchist doctrine had received smashing blows after the Paris Commune and had ceased to be an important influence in European working class matters, except in Spain,** and to a small extent in Italy. In France, the anti-Marxist doctrines were primarily syndicalist and only tinged with anarchist doctrine.

That the Second International could preoccupy its mind with the anarchist groups was evidence of its failure to deal with the living issues of labor and the *paramount issue of the*

war in a class and revolutionary manner. This preoccupation helped to turn these "socialists" in revulsion from anarchism and "direct action" to even cruder and, in its consequences, equally criminal reformist doctrine and parliamentary cretinism.

The Second International, moreover, could hardly be regarded as an International, except in form. It is now easy to say it is euphemistic to have called the Second International an International at all. Like its respective parties, the Second International was only superficially united on basic principles. Its units consisted of large amorphous bodies or memberships, mainly right wing or reformist, with centrist and small left wings.

Impotence Due to False Theory of State

What can be stated at this point, without anticipating the course of events, is accepted as axiomatic by the revolutionary Marxists (Fourth Internationalists) of today. That is, that the *theory or principles of a movement are decisive for its life*. A theory-less movement or a movement which rejects the known basic tenets of revolutionary Marxism is doomed in advance to defeat, either in surrender or futile struggle. Most surely is this the fate of such movements on the central question that faces them and the working class; that is, war. The French syndicalists, for example, with their lack and outright rejection of explicit and consistent political theory finally found themselves, from top to bottom, unable to move cohesively and able only to spout anti-militarist phrases and to talk about the general strike against war. But, as Trotsky said, "*a general strike, be it ever so distinguished by mass strength, does not decide the question of power as yet, but only raises it.*" The syndicalists denied or ignored the essential question: *what should they and the masses they influenced do about the state power*, the very real government of the French bourgeoisie—the very real and not at all fictitious instrument for oppression and control of the masses; and especially for corralling or driving the French workers into the imperialist carnage. The syndicalists did not concern themselves with the fundamental question: how were the masses to destroy the state power of the bourgeoisie and to establish their own political or state power—a workers' state? Therefore, on the burning immediate issue of war or peace in Europe, all that the French syndicalists in the last analysis could do was to *call for peace and declare themselves against war*. In *denying the state, they came at last to capitulate or kneel before the state*; and not, alas, before a workers' government (which has yet to materialize) but before the French bourgeois state they professed so strongly either to ignore or despise.

Likewise, the Socialist Party of France, because of its concept of the theory and practice of socialism also inevitably capitulated in the war crisis to the bourgeois state, to the French bourgeoisie. The revisionist concept that the capitalist state would grow by the process of peaceful development into the Socialist Peoples State, was ingrained in the minds and temper of the French Socialist Party. The great speed of development toward war in the months of 1914 entirely engulfed the organization and quickly paralyzed any appeals or action that the French organization could or did contemplate. Revisionist or reformist doctrines on the rôle of the Party and the road to socialist power resulted in early and swift demoralization of the party, its leadership and ranks, when the bourgeois war machinery began to smoke and then to roar its fires.

*The anarchists, under the dynamic leadership of Michael Bakunin, had been significant instruments in wrecking the First International despite the heroic efforts of the scientific socialists, Marx, Engels and others, to prevent the theoretical and actual disintegration of this—the first important international organization of the proletariat.

**Only in Spain, in the revolution of 1936 and in the recent civil war, did anarchism, with roots in the labor movement, again raise its head. Here again, because of its anti-statist theory, it could only bow in fact before the bourgeois republic and help cause confusion in the struggle against Franco's fascists.

Masses Need Leadership Against War

The masses of Europe were against the First World War and had the power of numbers as well as of inclination against the war that finally engulfed them. (For example, in 1906 the proletariat of Sweden and Norway were powerful enough to prevent the outbreak of war between Sweden and Norway by a general strike.) It is clear today that the First World War represented the great defeat of the international proletariat. The masses, it can be repeated, were against the war. They had the power of numbers. They had the inclination to struggle against the war. *But the masses cannot spontaneously achieve the defeat of the war objectives of the ruling imperialist class and the masses did not have a revolutionary leadership to guide their efforts.* A force was lacking which could see the imperialist conflict in its true light and could advise the proletariat and peasants on a correct course of action.

What has been said for the European workers and peasants as a whole could be said particularly of the French labor movement. The workers' movement had become strong and powerful numerically and had the potentialities of enormous striking power in whatever direction it decided to move. Both the trade union movement, the CGT, and the Socialist Party of France had had to live and grow up under the continual threat and menace of war. There may be cited the "Tangier Incident" in 1905; the Agadir affair in 1911, and the wearing and devastating Balkan wars. It is a calamity of the first order, therefore, that this potential great strength of the French masses against war and for workers' power was nullified by the woeful lack of revolutionary theory and policy of the dominant leadership of the CGT and the Socialist Party.

In the French CGT, strong resolutions against war had been adopted at its various congresses, in 1904, 1906 and 1908. The resolutions each time grew more vigorous in tone. The 1908 congress asserted that the only boundaries that existed were not geographical, i.e., not between the nations, but between the classes. It was necessary, the congress concluded, to prepare for a general strike against war. Pamphlets in this direction had been issued and many demonstrations against war had been held. In the French Socialist Party the danger of war was constantly in the forefront of socialist discussion, literally from 1905 onward.

The last conference of the French Socialist Party before the outbreak of the war took place in Paris in the middle of July, 1914, just three weeks before the war actually broke. The French conference considered a resolution for a general strike, which had been submitted to it jointly by Keir Hardie of the Independent Labor Party of England and Vaillant (the old Communard) of the French Socialist Party, for final adoption by the International Congress. Jean Jaurès, A. Thomas and M. Sembat supported the resolution, but Jules Guesde, leader of the left wing of the French SP, contended that general strike could not be decided upon because, first, the resolution under discussion *specified the means to be employed* to prevent war, whereas the previous International Congress had decided that *all means* were to be used. Second, Guesde stated, the general strike could not be decided upon as the weapon because inequality (in standards of living, strength, etc.) prevailed between the workers' organizations in the various countries.

"Masses Won't Cooperate"

Howsoever motivated, this argument is specious. Reformists have put forward such arguments through the years to

justify upholding the practices and attitude of their own labor and political organizations and of their own government, as against the economically and socially weaker and less advanced countries elsewhere. People like Norman Thomas (see the *Socialist Call*, January 17, 1942) of the American Socialist Party have done so. So-called left wingers have used this argument to justify support of the present imperialist war against Germany since, ostensibly, the United Nations, while concerned mainly with their imperialist interests, are "more progressive" than Nazism. These are the kinds of arguments that have always been the bridge from class struggle and opposition to the imperialist war, to class collaboration and social patriotism. Their presentation by the "left" Guesde foreshadowed his complete capitulation less than a month after the beginning of the war when he entered the defense cabinet. Gustave Hervé, who for so many years had been a vociferous leader against militarism, also came forward against the proposal for a general strike of labor against the war. Said he, the future rabid social-patriot and red-baiter, the general strike could not be supported *because the masses would not cooperate.* All the features of the renegade, of renegacy, of compromise and vacillation are here revealed. Blame the masses; they aren't ready; they won't cooperate. Before the battle, as the bugle itself is to be heard, the leaders say the masses won't struggle, whereas in fact the masses but await the call to struggle, and direction by their leaders. How often have these arguments and excuses been used by labor and political leaders to betray their supporters and followers just at the crucial periods!

It may be pointed out here, once again, the better to understand the apperception and real confusion among the leaders, had without exception the various socialist parties of Europe had strong beliefs, even conviction, that their respective governments would not attempt war out of fear of social revolution. Would that history had proved true their faith!

We may return, however, to an earlier period than the French SP Conference of July, 1914, to give the graphic picture of the attitude and actions of respective labor and political organizations in the various countries with respect to the growing war menace. On several occasions, international solidarity and action had been achieved.

International Conference and Acts Against War

The international congresses of the Second International had passed resolutions against war. In 1907, the Stuttgart Conference unanimously declared that *all means possible against war must be employed, and that war must be used as the opportunity to precipitate the end of capitalism. These are big words, meaningful words, coming from an international congress of socialists.* Yet time was to demonstrate, only a short seven years later, that only a very few small groups here and there—for example, among the Russians, Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev; a few in France, Rosmer, Souveraine, Lorient; in Germany, Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht; in the Independent Labor Party of England; in Switzerland, Fritz Platten—*understood and characterized the war as imperialist on both sides and not worthy of support by the working people; advocated the continuation of the class struggle by the workers during the imperialist conflict; and consciously aimed to achieve the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war and the struggle for workers' power* (successfully achieved finally and only in 1917 by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia). It was this handful of left or revolutionary groups in the various countries who, *because of their sound historical and*

theoretical conception of the nature of capitalism and imperialist war, were alone able to view the European conflict in its true imperialist light and to advise the working people accordingly on their duties and tasks. But unfortunately, they were only a handful. Theoretical confusion and lack of revolutionary objective and will dominated the overwhelming bulk of the leadership of the trade unions and socialist parties of Europe. Chauvinism, social-patriotism won. Europe was drenched in blood for more than four years. Today, more than twenty-five years later, these same fundamental principles have yet to be grasped on a wide scale and a revolutionary and dominant leadership developed in the course of the Second World War.

In 1910, the international conference at Copenhagen considered the question of a general strike against war, but postponed decision until the next international congress, which would have taken place in August, 1914. Already between 1907 and 1910 a change in attitude on the policy toward war was reflected in the important question of the general strike. The chief opposition at the Copenhagen conference to the general strike came from the German socialists. The workers of France, Germany and Great Britain had held *joint demonstrations against war*. When there was danger of war between France and Great Britain,* the French and English workers had held such a demonstration. From 1911 on, demonstrations against war became a regular feature. Moreover, in 1912, the French CGT and Socialist Party, despite the differences and frictions previously described, had undertaken joint action.

In March, 1913, the German Social Democracy and the French Socialist Party issued a joint manifesto on militarism and war. The outstanding features of this joint manifesto were the following: The people wish peace. The ruling classes create national hate. The socialists wish to resolve the danger of military conflict, of war, by *arbitration*. A militia (people's army) should be substituted for the regular armies. (With the exception of England's, all the armed forces were conscript armies). The burden of maintenance of the military machinery, of "defense," should fall on the rich. The socialists of Germany and France, the manifesto went on to say, are aware of the misuse of the term "militarism" by the respective ruling classes, to incite the people against one another, and to cover their own sins, crimes and persistent preparation and drive for war. Hence the socialists of both countries will fight militarism.

The resolution was an interesting and significant one, both because of what it contained (*viz.*, the above positive propositions) and because of its equally or even more significant omissions. The *joint resolution* of the great mass socialist parties of Germany and France against war, *does not mention capitalism, the class struggle, imperialism*. Thereby, these omissions, expressly and implicitly, with or without design, laid the political foundation for the abandonment of *class action and solidarity*, when the respective governments declared war; and for the passing over of the socialist leaders to "defense of the Fatherland"; to national unity and social-patriotism. When one speaks of "the people" only, and forgets the "working class"; when one speaks of "militarism" and ignores "capitalism and imperialism"; when one speaks of "struggle against war" and forgets "class struggle"—one may state that the militant struggle against capitalist war will not be consummated. This proved to be true in 1914. It has also been proved true in the period leading up to and during the

present war with respect to the Comintern's policy of a "popular front," "people's war" and "collective security" against fascism. Where the concept of the class struggle does not prevail, there is guaranteed the betrayal of the masses into war and, as a corollary, the gradual diminution or loss of their democratic and labor rights as well.

It stands out clearly, as we observe the variety of developments in the pre-First World War Period and the manifestations of strength and growth of the labor movement; and as we observe the evidences of weakness and uncertainty on the part of the various governments, that the masses were ready to respond to dynamic, militant leadership in the struggle against war, even as in the lesser struggles they had already carried through. The masses definitely expected international social democracy to give them the necessary leadership at the crucial time.

Capitalist Governments Fear Workers' Movements

During this period there was evidenced the instability and uncertainty of the bourgeois regimes in their attitude and relations with the laboring masses. Ireland's long struggle with the British ruling class was about to break into open civil war. In England the "Triple Alliance" (the alliance of the coal miners, railroad and transport workers) of the powerful trade unions was regarded by the British government and The City (the financiers) as a greater menace to its existence and future than the European Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria and Italy) of the powerful bourgeois nations.

Italy, scene of many-sided fights—anti-clerical, republican, peasant struggles and proletarian growth—was growing up politically under the direction of a strong Socialist Party. (Today one may recall that Mussolini was establishing his base for future strength and popularity and for his fascist "March on Rome" through editorial participation on a left socialist newspaper and in the socialist movement itself.) Italy's famous "Red Week" had approached close to insurrection and the direct struggle for power by the masses. Two million workers had gone on strike. With the nearness of war, the Italian labor movement threatened another general strike unless Italy remained neutral.

Belgium's labor movement was driving forward for its democratic rights and had engaged in a general strike to achieve universal suffrage. The Austrian Empire was beset and menaced by the various nations under her hegemony. The social democracy of Germany was growing almost from day to day, increasing its strength and influence over millions of workers and peasants, and even over large layers of the petty bourgeois or lower middle classes, as Zinoviev's article* has so well established. Its numerical growth and representation in the National Reichstag, and in the states and municipalities throughout the German Empire was not just steady but phenomenal.

Only by a vote of 358 to 204 was the French government able to adopt the three-year conscription law.

In Czarist Russia the labor and revolutionary movement continued to find ways and means to manifest its growth and increasing strength. In 1912 numerous strikes took place throughout Russia. Perhaps the most significant action of the Russian workers was upon the occasion of the visit of Poincaré, President of France, to Russia in July, 1914, to confer with his imperialist ally. The workers of St. Petersburg greeted the presence of this French imperialist warmonger on Russian soil with a great strike and demonstration against the Czar and Czarism.

*Cf. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, March, April and May, 1942, "The Social Roots of Opportunism."

The various governments well knew that they could not pursue a course toward war unless they could achieve a considerable degree of unanimity of the people behind them. The French government time and again insisted that it was for peace and that war was not in its mind or objective. Yet all the responsible bourgeois leaders of the various countries were fully aware that a compromise of the imperialist rivalries between the capitalist nations, short of war, was receding further and further into the background. Several times already incidents had been compromised by diplomacy immediately before the powder keg of the war exploded. Almost anything, just an incident, could precipitate the delayed imperialism. (That incident, "an affair of honor," was soon to come with the historic assassination of Duke Ferdinand of Austria by a Serbian.) *So, loudly, the bourgeois government heads shouted and proclaimed a policy of peace. And feverishly they prepared behind the scenes for the inevitable war.* The anxious populations of France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, England, all the countries, were constantly tossed between assurances

of peace and predictions of the inevitability of war. It would almost appear that the hearts and minds of the common people were shuttled between war and peace so mercilessly that any conclusive decision, whether war or peace, might be a relief.

With only weeks (as history showed) before the outbreak of the war, the labor leaders began to place more and more reliance on the respective governments and their promises. With Austria putting pressure on little Serbia, the German social democracy found it possible merely to ask the German government to use its influence and good offices with the Austrian government to desist from its pressure and provocations.

[In the next section of this article we deal with the period of "national unity," i.e., the first days and months of the outbreak of war. Unable, because of inadequate and false theory, to meet the onrush of the war events, the labor leadership capitulates almost immediately, the majority in the European political and labor organizations cowering on their bellies before the imperialist governments.]

H. ALLEN AND R. STONE.

The Meaning of National Liberation

A Discussion Article

In recent years Marxism as a method of social analysis and political forecast has lost the confidence of many people. One of the reasons for this is that Marxists forgot that we cannot give old answers to new questions. The new problems in a changed and changing world need a new approach to them. It is not sufficient to refer to what Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky said about any problem without having seriously determined whether the problem is still the same. We possess a great Marxian inheritance, it is true, and we shall make use of it, but it does not consist of ready-made answers.

Marxism is a method of thinking which enables us to understand what is really happening in a class society. A problem of today may look like a problem treated by Marx or Lenin. However, if other important circumstances have changed we have to examine this problem anew. The main principle of the dialectic is that you have to understand the whole situation of which a problem in which you are concerned is only a part. Thus, for instance, we cannot simply repeat what Lenin said of the national struggle. We have to analyze the situation in which this struggle is going on and to overhaul our own thoughts about it.

From this point of view I want to set forth some remarks on J. W. Smith's article, "Socialism and National Liberation," which appeared in *The New Internationalist* of March. The point of departure for this article is the opinion that "history often develops backward" and that, therefore, "the struggle for national liberation is today again on the order of the day in Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium and France, and in many respects even in Italy." That is a mistake. History never develops backward. Dictatorship, war, national oppression were already present in previous historical epochs, but they did not have the same social and historical significance as they do today because the economic and social structure of the society never is the same. Thus far, the present struggle for national liberation in Europe does not have the same aspects as those of any other times.

The nations oppressed by the Austrian monarchy, for example, had an entirely different situation to face than those mentioned by Smith. The Hungarians and the Italians, who were fighting for their national liberation from Austria in the 19th century, and the Czechs, who obtained their independence at the end of World War I, joined, more or less, their bourgeois revolution with the national struggle. The aim of an independent national state involved fighting against the absolute monarchy and for the developing of their own capitalist productive system to a higher level. The political aim of this struggle had to be a democratic one. It sought the establishment of a bourgeois democratic state. The demand for an independent national culture meant the development of the culture of the whole nation from a backward and low level to the height of bourgeois culture.

All this was very progressive. (Of course, the character of the national bourgeois revolution was no longer the classic one during and after World War I.) The victory of the national bourgeoisie produced many important advantages for the working class. Only in a state able to develop its own industry can the working class grow and develop. (In India, for example, England hampered the development of a heavy industry and the working class today makes up no more than 1 per cent of the population.) Only with the national liberation was the oppressed nation able to shed its agrarian character and become industrialized. And in such a society only a national bourgeois culture can arise and create the conditions for the independent development of the proletariat. Finally, the working class was interested in a bourgeois-democratic state because it offered the opportunity to create labor organizations. Thus the bourgeois democratic revolution was a success if the workers could compel their own cowardly bourgeoisie to go ahead for national independence.

The German Experience of 1923

We have to distinguish this struggle for national independence from a situation where a bourgeois state is invaded dur-

ing an imperialist war. Of course, here we have "national oppression" too, but of an entirely different character. We had a classic example when, in 1923, the French army occupied Germany's heavy industrial region of the Ruhr. And the great errors committed by the Comintern at that time should not be forgotten.

The occupation of the "Ruhrgebiet" was the direct continuation of the World War. Germany's big business attempted to continue the war with a passive resistance based on the nationalism of the petty bourgeoisie. At the same time, the exploitation, not only of the workers but also of the petty bourgeoisie (with the aid of a managed inflation), increased in a manner unknown up to that time.

What did the Comintern do? It developed a theory about the colonial character of Germany and urged the German Communist Party to participate in the national resistance against the occupation. The workers were told that they had to fight against national oppression and had to go ahead in this struggle because national liberation is a democratic demand. Thus the German CP followed politics which were often similar to those of the Nazis (at this time still divided in several groups). Communist proletarians worked together with Nazis in order to commit sabotage, to blow up bridges, etc. In Moscow, Karl Radek glorified the Nazi, Schlageter, who was shot by the French for sabotage, and the Nazi leader, Count Reventlow, was allowed to set forth his views in *Rote Fahne*, the official organ of the CP. Although the German CP of 1923 was not the Stalinist party of today, but a revolutionary workers' party, this policy could only lead to failure.

The French invasion was an imperialist action and the Comintern had to fight against it, but the German workers should have acted according to Liebknecht's slogan: "The main enemy is in our own country." The invasion was a continuation of the war, and the military defeat of the German bourgeoisie had not changed its social character. Of course, it never is the task of a revolutionary party to in any way help the other imperialist camp; it must proceed in the struggle in the interests of the working class and cannot follow the "national" aims of the bourgeoisie. The policy of national liberation in 1923 allowed the industrial magnates of the Ruhr to profit from the troubled situation and finally led the petty bourgeoisie to the conviction that the Versailles Treaty was the root of all evil. It contributed to the later victory of the Nazis because of the belief that the main question was national liberation, which required a strong state and a mass army.

The lesson of 1923 is that a workers' party cannot win influence over the masses in nationalist competition with a bourgeois or fascist party. The victory of socialism will not be the result of a clever calculation or a clever exploitation of prevailing moods of the masses; it can only be reached by the class maturity of the proletariat. Above all, we learn from this short review that all types of national oppression are not feudal and therefore Marxists, in fighting against it, cannot act by consulting a Marxian dictionary, but only by a Marxian analysis of a concrete situation.

The New Situation in Europe

Today we have a third situation in Europe, distinct from the classical form, as from 1923, and we cannot just repeat the lessons of yesterday. Smith correctly wrote in his article that the social power of the bourgeoisie in Europe constantly shrinks and at the time an independent labor movement is non-existent. These two facts certainly are the main features

of the new situation. However, there are small illegal socialist circles throughout Europe and it will be of great importance in the time to come to know what they are thinking and doing now, for their present conduct will have a decisive effect on the future.

Of course, we are the implacable enemies of fascist oppression. But because socialists are enemies of fascism they develop special attitudes. They are not only for the liberation of their own nation from German fascism, they are against any kind of fascism. Therefore, they recognize that Germany is not less oppressed than other nations and that the national liberation would be no liberation at all if it gave way to another form of national fascism. However, in the national movement which is oppressed by German fascism the danger lies in the masses turning against Germany rather than fascism, while fascist movements conquer in the occupied countries. Since national independence, even of a state like France is today economically and politically no longer possible, such states could be the basis for the domination over Europe by one of the great powers. The "clever" statesmen-in-exile know that very well. The Norwegian Foreign Minister, for example, launched the idea of an Atlantic Federation, which "could not be of purely economic nature," but requires collaboration of a military character. After the war Norway should become a link between the Atlantic world and the European continent. (See *American Scandinavian Review*, December, 1941, pp. 318-23.)

Thus, the British agents who organize national resistance in France are only doing a war job and socialists must take care not to become a simple tool of another belligerent camp in taking part in the struggle for national liberation. In this struggle two tendencies are involved: (1) The continuation of the war by other means, and (2) the struggle for liberation from the totalitarian state slavery.

The struggle for liberation from totalitarian state slavery has, at present, the form of a struggle for national liberation. However, there is no similarity with the classic struggle for national liberation. The "liberals" of today, who want to return to an independent democratic bourgeois state, are in reality reactionaries. After the collapse of the world market and the changes in the economic and social structure brought about by the war, an independent democratic capitalist state is impossible in Europe. Those whose policies point to such an independence are in a position similar to the romantic reactionaries after the French Revolution who were enemies of capitalism and desired a return to the political structure of the Middle Ages. Therefore, the various "democratic" governments-in-exile which offer themselves as national liberators, could only be different types of Quislings, forced to rule in a completely totalitarian manner.

What Kind of National Liberation?

In such a situation it is insufficient to say that socialists must take part in the national movements in Europe. The main question remains: what is their task within these movements; what policies must determine their actions?

Socialists must endeavor to direct the struggle against the totalitarian state and not against Germany as a nation. They must show that the interests of the masses is a united Europe without domination of any power, i.e., a democratic socialist Europe. We want to give one example of what this means in practice. The assassination of German soldiers in France is the expression of one type of "struggle for national liberation," but the attempt to work together with German soldiers

against Hitlerism is the expression of the other type. To write on the walls: "Down with the Boches," corresponds to the first type; to write: "Fraternization for a Workers and Soldiers Peace!" corresponds to the second type.

Such a policy would not be utopian in any way. It is the answer to a situation where the slogan of mere national independence is utopian and reactionary. It also corresponds to some of the ideas which is part of the thinking of the masses, and it full of contradictions. When the war broke out in 1939 there was not the hatred or national enthusiasm that existed in 1914, either in France or in Germany. There is also a general feeling today that this type of nationalism is out of date (at least in France) and has a reactionary significance; that national frontiers are less compatible than ever with modern production and that what Hitler knocked down without great effort was already rotten and weak. Even such a liberal observer as Joseph C. Harsch wrote in the *Christian Science Monitor* that he believes it is obvious that a psychological potential of unification exists and can be penalized. Of course the hatred provoked by the crimes of Nazism threatens once more to animate reactionary nationalism and the propaganda of the U. S. Britain and Russia tries to develop this nationalist feeling in their own respective interests. Socialists therefore must emphasize that the liberation of Europe is not possible without the German workers. There are several symptoms to indicate that an international united front of workers will be created in the German factories and mines

where millions of foreign workers are exploited and oppressed together with German workers. (Europacus in his article in *Labor Action* of April 12 already quoted from letters where Norwegian workers report that German workers summoned them to work slowly in the German factories, etc.) Because the basis for a revolt against the Nazis can lie only in the masses of workers and peasants, social revolutionary tendencies will come to the surface. This already proved true in Yugoslavia where, according to the *New York Times* of March 22, "General Draja Mikhailowitch, Yugoslavia's guerrilla leader, is conducting a political revolution inside Yugoslavia while he manages a military revolt against the invaders" and where at some places "the populace set up a soviet republic."

The danger, seen by Smith, that a Marxist would refuse to concern himself with the struggle for the oppressed nations and treat it with disdainful contempt, seems to me not very great. A greater and more real danger is that Marxists will remain behind the masses when a spontaneous mass movement actually begins, because they have based their policy on the "low consciousness" which seems to prevail at the present time. The task, therefore, consists not only of "taking part" in this struggle but, above all, of developing the consciousness of the masses. Marxists must not drop behind the masses; they must lead them. In order to be able to do that, they must carefully analyze the present situation and work out a political conception which really answers the demands of the time.

ZACHARY JACKSON.

Don Basilio Replies

"Calumny, Doctor, calumny! We must use it again and again."

—Don Basilio, in the *Barber of Seville*.

In our April, 1942, issue, we pilloried Felix Morrow, editor of the monthly magazine of the Cannonites, as a common slanderer. Too unwise to retreat into shamefaced silence, Morrow decided to play "double or nothing," that is, to come forward in the May, 1942, *Fourth International* with a still more monstrous slander against us.

In his March introduction to the thesis of the Indian Trotskyists, Morrow charged that we had been "spreading false stories about the position of the Indian and Ceylonese comrades." We confidently challenged him to cite a single false story. His reply is: "We shall name not one but two." And he quotes two passages of a report by Sherman Stanley of his visit to Asia, issued in a bulletin dated October, 1940. The first quotation deals with the Indian Trotskyists:

On the question of Russia's participation in the World War, all of them were and remain in absolute agreement with our position. They had come to these conclusions long before my arrival—and although unacquainted with Trotsky's attitude from the public press—could not understand or approve it for a moment. Their political statements are in accordance with our policy.

By "our policy" Stanley of course referred to the policy of the Workers Party. The second quotation deals with Trotskyists in Ceylon:

On the political issue of the American factional dispute, namely, the question of Russia's participation in the war, the entire leadership was and remains in accord with our views on the matter. Specifically, as between the minority and majority resolutions on the Soviet-Finnish war—both of which they have studied—they openly support ours. Because of circumstances no formal declaration has been made, but I am authorized

to state that they do not support the position advocated by Trotsky and the SWP.

Whereupon Morrow comments: "I called the Shachtmanite statements false stories spread by them. What else are they?"

That question is easily answered: The "Shachtmanite statements" (that is, the quotations from our comrade Stanley's report), are the *simple truth!* We reiterate the truth here: *When Stanley's report was printed here, the Ceylonese and Indian comrades supported our position on the rôle of Russia in the war as against the position of Trotsky and the Cannonites.* Moreover, so far as we know and unless we hear otherwise the comrades still hold that their position of that period was correct. Does Morrow deny this? Then let him say, simply and directly and without cunning journalistic locutions, that the two passages he quoted from Stanley's report of October, 1940, were lies . . . and prove it.

We doubt if even Morrow will dare say this in public print. He and his friends know—and have known for some two years—that Stanley merely reported the fact. The Cannonites knew it so well that they "revenged" themselves upon the Indian and Ceylonese comrades for their opposition to the SWP standpoint by printing in their own international bulletin a denunciation of the former as "*the stockbrokers of Calcutta*" and of the latter as "*the aristocratic planters of Ceylon.*" In April we made public this quotation from the Cannonite bulletin. We asked then: Who spread "false stories about the Indian and the Ceylonese comrades—those who told the simple truth about their stand at the time, or those who calumniated them as Calcutta stockbrokers and aristocratic planters? On this understandably delicate question the bold calumniator is silent. Don Basilio takes a hot potato in his

mouth and has not a word to say about how his bulletin characterized the comrades in Asia in the very period of the Stanley report.

But don't these comrades *now* support the Cannonite position? At any rate, they are now for the defense of Russia in the war. But this fact we never thought of denying. Indeed, the possibility of the Ceylonese comrades taking such a position at one stage or another of the World War was indicated in the Stanley report. In the sentence following right after the last passage quoted by Morrow, Stanley wrote:

It should be made clear, however, that the [Ceylonese] party considers Russia to still be a workers' state and that it would advocate unconditional defense in a progressive war, regardless of who leads it.

Morrow does not quote this sentence. The hot potato is still in his mouth. He finds it a convenient vegetable to have there when his lies are hurled back into his teeth.

We pilloried Morrow as a slanderer, in the second place, for trying to identify a capitulator to fascism, Burnham, with a revolutionary opponent of fascism, Shachtman. We pointed out that this was just as much a slander as it would be to link Trotsky or Cannon with Rous, Zeller and Dague, once the leaders of the French and Belgian Trotskyist movements, *former* co-thinkers of Trotsky and Cannon, but who recently went over to fascism. But Morrow keeps a firm grip on the hot potato for a while longer: he has not a word to say about Rous or Zeller or Dague; he does not even mention them in his reply.

Instead he rehashes Burnham's two-year-old letter of resignation from the Workers Party. He repeats the "clever" factional fable that Burnham was "the leader" of the opposition in the SWP and that he led the "split" of the comrades of the Workers Party. He quotes scraps from the letter—not from the Rous letter, you understand, but from Burnham—in which Burnham declares again and again that he is not a Marxist and does not belong in a Marxist organization. Toward what clarifying and educational end? *In order to argue that Burnham's evolution in the direction of fascism was only a logical (that is, an internally consistent) outcome of the struggle and the program of the Workers Party!* Monstrously unbelievable—but only to those who do not know the man we are dealing with.

Burnham is indeed worth quoting on the character of the Workers Party. In his letter he has this to say:

The newly formed Workers Party is a Marxist party, and more particularly a Bolshevik, a Leninist party. This is not a mere matter of definition. It is guaranteed alike by its programmatic documents (especially the key document on "The Aims, the Tasks, and the Structure of the Workers Party"), by the statements and convictions of the overwhelming majority of its leadership and of a substantial majority of its membership, and by the habits of action of this majority. It is strikingly symbolized by the statement on the masthead of *Labor Action* that the party is a section of the Fourth International, by the definition of its theoretical magazine as "an organ of revolutionary Marxism," by the reiterated appeal in the key document above mentioned to "the revolutionary traditions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky" and to the "principles of Marxism," and by the convention episode of the cable to Trotsky. *Nothing whatever in the faction fight indicated a decisive tendency away from this orientation; on the contrary, every sharp suggestion in such a direction was at once blocked.* In reality, the split from the Socialist Workers Party was not based upon anything fundamental, and the Workers Party exists now as a faction of the Trotskyist movement. This was the actual cause of the extreme difficulty which the faction found in drawing up its position on "the nature of the party" and in differentiating that position from Cannon's. This was hard to do, was in fact not done, because the two positions, except in details and emphases, did not really differ. (My emphasis.—M. S.)

Not one word of this is quoted by Morrow. (Long ago he

learned in a very special school what and when to quote and what and when not to quote.) He omits any reference to this revealing paragraph from Burnham because it does not suit his book. He is out to prove nothing less than that *the Workers Party is on the road to fascism!* For Morrow that's a job to be knocked off in a few lines. Burnham, says he, was the "ideological leader" of our group; and wrote its documents; and reported for it at the SWP convention; and founded the Workers Party; and left it two months later. Why? asks Morrow.

Because he had drawn the consequences of his ideology further than had Shachtman.

But surely Morrow doesn't mean that the Workers Party is an *inconsistent fascist* organization; in other words, that the Workers Party has not yet taken Burnham's quasi-fascist position only because it is less logical and consequent than he was? That is exactly what Morrow does mean. He says it in so many words, so that even dull people can catch on:

The pre-fascist but thoroughly anti-Marxist stage of Burnham's ideology remains indelibly impressed upon the group he founded with Shachtman. This is not a slander it is an elementary political truth.

To remove any doubts from the reader's mind, we declare most emphatically that this did not appear in Stalin's *Pravda* or in Browder's *Daily Worker*, but was written by the editor of a magazine called the *Fourth International*.

"Calumny, Doctor, calumny! We must use it again and again."

Only, this time Don Basilio is so zealous in his task that he does not notice what a gift he has presented the GPU. Following right on the heels of Morrow, this is what the *Daily Worker* can now say:

"Burnham's evolution toward fascism did not start only two years ago! nor did Shachtman's. These two were the majority of the political leadership of the American Trotskyists for years before the split in the SWP. Burnham wrote all the important ideological and political attacks upon Comrade Stalin and the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. He wrote the official Trotskyist pamphlet against the great People's Front. He was the Trotskyist spokesman and writer against us on the war question. He even wrote virtually the entire program, the Declaration of Principles, of the Socialist Workers Party. He helped found it together with Cannon and Shachtman. Shortly afterward, he left it. He went to fascism openly, after a logical and organic evolution. Morrow now admits it. Shachtman, the other Trotskyist spokesman, is moving in the same direction. Morrow admits that, too. Soon, Cannon will move more openly in the same direction. We say more openly, because, as we have always argued, Trotskyism is only an agent of Hitlerism," etc., etc.

How does it happen that Morrow's arguments would fit so easily into the traditional pattern of a *Daily Worker* slander? Simple: Morrow received his basic education in politics and above all his polemical method and journalistic style in the exclusively Stalinist period of the Communist Party. His reeducation in the Trotskyist movement only covered him with a very thin veneer. This is evident whenever you hit him—the maggotty wood underneath shows right through.

That is what is basically responsible for Morrow's abominable attack upon us—his Stalinist training. For this reason, we hinted, in our first comment on him, at the advisability of self-restraint on his part. His reply makes it necessary to be less obscure:

For his journalistic irresponsibility, Morrow was uncer-

moniously kicked out of the editorship of a working class paper a few years ago—not by political enemies, but by his closest political friends.

Does he now think he can be even more irresponsible in

his new editorial post and try the tolerance of his own party membership with impunity, just because he happens to be a victim of class justice? If he does, we think we can guarantee that he will find himself mistaken.

M. S.

ARCHIVES OF THE REVOLUTION

Documents Relating to the History and
Doctrine of Revolutionary Marxism

The Social Roots of Opportunism—IV

[Continued from Last Issue]

We have already said that the entire theory of modern social chauvinism is contained essentially in the quoted passages from Walterhausen and Schmolzer. The “theoreticians” of social chauvinism today draw almost exclusively from this imperialist source. “Truths” such as those propagated by imperialists like Walterhausen for years are recast by them somewhat and painted over with a Marxist veneer to serve for use among the workers. What the Messrs. social chauvinists dish up for the masses as socialism today is in reality little more than the perfected theory of the community of interests between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the “little bourgeoisie,” the labor aristocrats.

What, indeed, is the basic thesis of Cunow, Legien, Winnig, Lensch, Scheidemann and their consorts? We, they say, support “our” government and “our” bourgeoisie, not at all because we like its looks; no, the interests of the German *working class* demand an ever stronger development of “our” fatherland’s capitalism, demand that the economic progress of our country proceed as rapidly and as freely as possible, that “we” find a sufficiently great number of export markets, of sources of raw materials, of spheres of influence of “our” capital, etc. Only then will the demand for labor power be big enough, only then will the living standard of the workers rise. When our capitalists make more profits there will be something left over for the workers as well.

But the same picture unfolds before us on the opposite side. It is not only “we” alone that are interested in the profits of “our” bourgeoisie; the workers of other countries that compete with “us” have identical interests in relation to “their” bourgeoisie. When the contest for colonies, for the “freedom of the seas,” has been sharpened to its highest pitch, war breaks out. What is to be done? It is a tragic necessity. The workers would naturally prefer to settle such matters peacefully, but that is not always possible. War has become a fact. What shall the German workers do? Shall they refuse to support their government and their bourgeoisie? But in that case, Germany will suffer defeat. And that will mean that the development of capitalism in Germany will be retarded, that the demand for labor power will decline, that the German workers will be forced to emigrate in order to earn their bread on foreign shores, to content themselves with low wages. What else can the German workers do if they are to avoid this misfortune? Only one thing: support “their” government, “their” imperialism. We know, Legien, Lensch and Winnig say, that imperialism has its bad features, that it is bound up with wars, etc. But these are far outweighed by its good features. Thanks to imperialism, the living standard of our working class has been rising. We know, say these leaders of the official German social democracy, that when we support our imperialism, we

thereby take up arms against the workers of other countries. That is truly very sad—but we have no choice in the matter. A tragic necessity remains a necessity nevertheless.

Reconciling Imperialism and Socialism

And what does this tragic necessity really prove? Only that in practice, in living reality, the actual interests of the workers of the various countries do not at all coincide. Often the interests of the workers in one country stand in an irreconcilable conflict with the interests of the workers of another country. “Workers of all countries, unite!” That sounds very good, but what can be done if the economic interests, practically speaking, do not unite the proletarians of the various countries, but rather divide them?

Lensch writes:

We are thus in a position to recognize also the historic causes which led to the collapse of the International. *Theoretically the solidarity of interests among the proletariat of the great industrial countries did exist, to be sure, but not yet practically.* . . . International solidarity of the proletariat was valid only as a slogan in the social democracy. But this solidarity—and this is one of the great new realizations brought home to us by the war—is by no means to be determined in advance. . . . It presupposes a certain equality of status among the powers involved. As long as one nation is so superior to another as to be regarded as a world dominion, this contrast, in so far as it is a matter of the other nations standing in opposition to a single world dominion, is transposed upon their respective working classes as well. The war opened the eyes of the German social democracy to this fact: that, historically considered, it is still too early to speak of an international solidarity of the working class. (Paul Lensch: *Die Sozialdemokratie, ihr Glück und ihr Ende.*)

The standpoint of consistent social chauvinism is so clearly formulated here as to leave nothing more to be desired in the way of clarity. International solidarity is a great ideal. But in practice the economic interests of the working classes in the individual countries “still” require their solidarity with “their” bourgeoisie, with “their” imperialism.

It is necessary to investigate only one small matter yet: *is it true*, as the social chauvinists contend, that the whole working class benefits from a boom on the part of its domestic imperialism, that its economic living standard actually rises and that its wages are raised? Or have not Legien, Lensch (as well as their imitators) perhaps *confused the working class with the labor aristocracy*? And, in the case of the latter, have they not also confused a transitory material advantage with much more profound and more permanent interests?

But first, another question: Have Marxists dealt with these problems *before* the war and what answer did they give then? When we ask ourselves this question we must say: *yes*, of course these problems were dealt with before the war; it was impossible to avoid them because all these “proofs” of the social chauvinists for the necessity of supporting imperialism were at that time zealously propagated by the *bour-*

geoisie itself, because the politicians and ideologists of imperialism disseminated them far and wide. And what must now be directed as a reply to the Lensches of all countries was cited back at that time in the polemics against the Walterhausens of all languages. Let us, for example, hear what Otto Bauer has to say on the subject—we purposely refrain from quoting theoreticians belonging to the Marxist left wing; we pick, instead, a representative of the moderate “Marxist center.”

The struggle for export markets serves this same purpose, just as in the case of the struggle for spheres of influence. The decrease in fixed capital, the speeding up of its circulation into the sphere of production, the extension of the period of production inside of the period of the turnover as a whole, all these appear to be the common interests of all the classes. The working class also appears to have a stage in this process: if the mass of monetary capital withdrawn from capital circulation at a given moment is decreased, the demand for labor power grows, the position of the worker on the labor market is strengthened, wages are raised. It is therefore taken for granted that the worker's interest as a producer favors protective tariffs and expansion policy. (Otto Bauer: *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*. Marxstudien, vol. 2.)

Otto Bauer and the Functionaries

Otto Bauer analyzes thoroughly this whole chain of syllogisms characteristic of bourgeois political economy (we know that all these “socialist” officials have made this bourgeois political economy their own) and reaches the following conclusion:

Bourgeois economics has observed that modern tariff policy and colonial policy changes the *circulation* of capital and that these changes emphasize the tendency toward a rise in prices, profits and wages. That is why capitalist expansion policy appears, from that point of view, to be just as advantageous to the interests of the workers as it is to the interests of the capitalist class.

But that is *not* so, says Bauer, adding:

“Protective tariffs force society to produce such commodities for which the conditions of production are less favorable in a particular country. Thus the tariff reduces the productivity of social labor. This is evident from the high prices of the commodities thus produced. In this wise the purchasing power of money, wages remaining stationary, these are the working class actually loses. . . . Higher commodity prices, a decreased purchasing power of money wages remaining stationary, these are the first effects of capitalist tariff policy in so far as the working class is concerned.

If we compare the distribution of productive capital under the influence of the protective tariff with the distribution of productive capital under the conditions of free trade, we find a far greater share of social capital flowing into branches of production which, capital investments remaining equal, employ less labor power than the other industries. The protective tariff, therefore, reduces the demand for labor power and deteriorates the position of the worker on the labor market. More than that! The industries favored by the trust-protecting tariff are such in which capital has reached the highest point of concentration, in which the mobility of the workers has been almost abolished and the trades union struggle extraordinarily impeded. . . . By favoring the heavy industries, by damaging the industries using iron and steel as raw materials, the protective tariff transposes capital into branches of production that offer the least advantageous conditions for the struggle of the trade unions.

Furthermore, imperialism requires immense military resources. Tremendous sums must be sacrificed for military and naval purposes. The sober observer will only be able to justify imperialist policies if the economic advantages resulting from them outweigh these economic sacrifices. This question also is posed differently for the working class than it is for the bourgeoisie. *For everywhere a far greater part of labor's wages than of surplus value is sacrificed to militarism. . . .* The capitalist states . . . are determined to impose the costs of military armaments upon the working class. Thus the decline in the rate of accumulation is prevented, for a far smaller part is accumulated from labor's wages than from surplus value. When the worker has to surrender a considerable part of his wages as taxes to the state, then the individual consumption of the worker cedes to state consumption in the form of expenditures for militarism. . . . The concern over the level of the rate of accumulation alone instigates

all capitalist states . . . to balance the budget for the army and the navy by means of indirect taxes and revenues which burden the working class far more heavily than the owning classes.

Capital exports effect a sinking demand on the European labor market. . . . A decrease in the nation's desire for work signifies in capitalist society, a decline in the demand for its labor forces, a deterioration of the condition of the workers on the labor market. In so far as imperialism favors the emigration of European capital to foreign parts of the globe, it threatens altogether too directly the workers' “interests as producers.” By extending the arena for the leveling of the rate of profit to the entire face of the earth, imperialism aims at the displacement of European labor by the cheaper labor of the less advanced nations, which therefore signifies—as Kurt Eisner once said—a tendency toward a general lock-out of the European working class. . . . Does not the exploitation of the most impoverished and most despised worker in the entire world, the Chinese coolie, directly detrimental as it is to the cause of the workers in all countries, indeed furnish us with a remarkable example of the international solidarity of the workers' interests?

Imperialism thus decreases the share of the working class in social wealth, transforms the relationship between the amount of values accruing to the possessing classes and those appropriated by the working class to the detriment of the proletariat, thus increasing the *exploitation* of the workers.

This is the conclusion Otto Bauer reaches. Schippel's views, shared today by the whole social chauvinist cult from Lensch to Maslow, are characterized by Bauer as bourgeois views. Schippel is carrying on “*not proletarian, but capitalist, not social democratic, but national-liberal policies.*”

It is of no use to the proletariat in an economic sense, that is quite beyond questioning. However, “(imperialism) furnishes the ruling classes with ever greater masses of armed men serving as their involuntary instruments. Thereby it becomes a danger to democracy. . . . The working class youth forms the backbone of the modern (conscript people's) armies; how can workers overlook the question whether an increase of profits is really of such an invaluable benefit that it must be paid for with the lives of thousands upon thousands (today we must add millions) of hopeful young men?”

All this was a self-evident truth recognized by all adherents to the labor movement before the war, by all—save that little band of gentlemen who even at that time openly served the bourgeoisie, like Schippel & Co. And now? What can the Messrs. social chauvinists reply to the proofs furnished by Otto Bauer? Absolutely nothing! They do not even attempt to refute these proofs, which were once flung in the face of the bourgeoisie, but which today apply so perfectly to the official “theory” of the modern also-socialists.

Imperialism and the Labor Aristocracy

There can be no question that imperialism does not result in any advantages whatsoever *for the working class as a whole*. But it cannot be denied that for a *certain minority* of skilled workers, for the *labor aristocracy*, a few crumbs may fall off from the imperialist table. Bauer came quite close to such a conclusion when he wrote: “Certainly the protective tariff has the effect of channelizing a greater share of capital into branches of production with a highly organic composition, that is, with a far lower capacity for the absorption of labor forces than that which would ordinarily have found a place for itself in these branches of industry. The branches of production which require a great deal of constant, but very little variable, capital (i.e., few workers—G. Z.) are most mature for trustification. The export practices of these trusts, based upon the protective tariffs, aim to *strike* at similar branches of production abroad with a low organic composition” (i.e., a relatively greater number of workers.—G. Z.).

A small minority of skilled workers, those employed in

the branches of industry enumerated by Bauer (and in several other), actually do feed on imperialism. But it is a *dwindling minority* of the working class. The experience of the World War has proved this in particularly striking fashion. The condition of the great mass of workers has—due to the frightfully high cost of living and the suspension of the protective labor laws, etc.—become considerably more *miserable*. Millions of women and children working at starvation wages have been drawn into the process of production. The economic situation of the entire great mass of, let us say, the British workers has undergone an absolute deterioration. Only a small minority—some two million workers—have succeeded in retaining their former real wages (i.e., an increase in wages corresponding to the rise in the prices of the necessities most in demand); only in the rarest cases are present-day wages higher than those of pre-war days.

Imperialism Divides the Proletariat

Yet there can be no doubt as to the existence of a small layer of labor aristocrats whom the cannon and munition kings do throw a bone occasionally from their rich feast of war profits. This minority made good wages even before the war and has enjoyed still higher wages during the war. All kinds of privileges were granted this minority before the war, also. During the course of the war these privileges have become far more valuable for these aristocrats of labor. It is sufficient to point out that this labor aristocracy *has not been sent to the front* in most cases. The industrialists need them at home; they are indispensable as the element under whose direction the ordinary workers, the women, the youth and the children are carrying on their work in the factories and in the mills and mines.

It is these very narrow, corporate interests of this minority of privileged labor aristocrats that the social chauvinists have confused with the interests of the working class. This confusion is quite understandable when we grasp the fact that the leaders of the trade unions and of the official social democracy hail, in their majority, from that very same environment of the labor aristocracy. The labor aristocracy and the labor bureaucracy are two blood brothers. When the social chauvinists speak of the interests of the working class, they have in mind—often quite unconsciously—the interests of the labor aristocracy. But here too, it is not really a matter of veritable interests in the broader meaning of the word, so much as of immediate material advantages. This is absolutely not one and the same thing. Marxists have never held the view that the realization of the interests of the workers means to fill their pockets as much as possible. From the point of view of interests, understood in the more profound sense of the term, the labor aristocracy is committing *treason against itself*. . . . For, the “aristocrats of labor” remain wage slaves for all that. Temporarily they do enjoy a certain advantage, to be sure, but they undermine thereby their own position and violate the unity of the working class. They sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. They retard the erection of a new order in society which will of necessity free them, the “aristocrats” themselves, from wage slavery. They become a tool of reaction.

Look at the bourgeoisie. We are inclined to believe that its basic principle is the immediate interest in the fate of its pocketbook. But the bourgeoisie understands only too well that it must subordinate this “principle” to its *general* class interests. It would be easy to prove to the bourgeoisie that a people’s militia is considerably less expensive than a standing

army, that it is much more preferable from the point of view of immediate interests. But the bourgeoisie will nevertheless prefer, as a rule, the much more expensive standing army. And in doing so, its point of departure will always be the more important *class interest* of the bourgeoisie.

To foster splits between the various strata of the working class, to promote competition among them, to segregate the upper stratum from the rest by corrupting it and by making it an agency for bourgeois “respectability”—that is entirely in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Even if we were to disregard the *political* interests of the working class, the social chauvinists would still be traitors to the cause of the workers. For even in the field of protecting the *economic* interests they cannot see further than their noses. They identify economic interests with a temporary advantage amounting to a few more pennies. They split the working class inside of every country and thereby intensify and aggravate the split between the working classes of the various countries. Thanks to the common efforts of the bourgeoisie and the social chauvinists, the world proletariat is being split horizontally as well as vertically, if we may be permitted to use these terms.

* * *

We have said that the official “European” labor organizations—particularly its leading strata—are recruited in the main from the better-paid workers, from the labor aristocracy. Is that correct? Are there sufficient objective and well-founded proofs to substantiate this contention? These proofs are, beyond a doubt, at hand.

Let us turn once more to the *German* labor movement as the classic example of a labor movement in this past epoch. The composition of the German Social Democratic Party and of the German trade unions is certainly more proletarian in character than that of any other “European” party. And what do we see? The German social democracy has not provided for extensive statistics regarding the social composition of its whole party organization. But such statistics do exist and may, to a certain extent, be regarded as symptomatic for the entire party.

We have before us an excellent piece of statistical research regarding the composition of the Berlin social democratic organization; it was compiled some eight or nine years ago, but may still be considered as quite valid even today.

Berlin is the largest labor center and the strongest pillar of German social democracy. The data relates to the years 1906 and 1907; they encompass some 53,106 organized workers, members of the Social Democratic Party (81 per cent of all the members organized into the Social Democratic Party in Berlin at that time). At first glance two circumstances command our attention in this extremely interesting piece of statistical research. First, the existence of a numerically strong group of non-workers in the social democratic organization, who are designated as “independents.” Second, the relatively *poor* percentage of party members recruited from the mass of unskilled workers. The group of “independents,” that is, people who do not live by the sale of their labor power, consists of some 5,228 men (out of 53,106), i.e., amounts to 9.8 per cent of all the party members under investigation. Nearly 10 per cent of all the organized social democrats in the city of Berlin and its environs are, therefore, not workers. Of the 5,228 “independents,” nearly half are saloon keepers. They are 2,528 men strong in this group. Then there are 452 independent barbers, 310 merchants and shop keepers and 74 factory owners. The others “independents” are recruited from among owners of printshops and artisans, commission agents,

artists, etc. Thus, at least one out of every ten members of the Berlin organization of the social democracy belongs to the petty bourgeoisie. The owners of saloons, barber shops, etc., are in most cases intimately linked with the working class population. Workers are the chief customers of this sort of commercial enterprise. Nevertheless, the interests of the workers and the interests of these groups often diverge.

Class Composition of Social Democracy

Undoubtedly a distinct petty bourgeois current is introduced into the Social Democratic Party by this stratum of so-called "independents." Thousands of saloon keepers, hundreds of small manufacturers, merchants and independent tradesmen—these are not individuals who have adopted the point of view of the proletariat. This is an entire, distinct stratum which has retained its own interests, its own psychology, its own mode of thinking.

On the other hand, we find the following things worthy of note in these Berlin statistics: The authors of the work have segregated the unskilled workers into a separate category under the classification of "workers"—without any further supplementary description. And what is the result? The unskilled workers amounted to 14.9 per cent, all told, of the entire number of members of the Berlin social democratic organization under investigation. In the First Electoral District of Berlin they amount to 2.5 per cent of all the organized; in the Third District, to 5.6 per cent; in the Fifth, to 7.9 per cent; in the Second, to 9 per cent. Thus it follows that the predominant mass of the membership of the Berlin social democratic organization is composed of *trained*, of *skilled workers*. In other words, *the predominant mass of the membership of the social democratic organization consists of the better-paid strata of labor—of those strata from which the greatest section of the labor aristocracy arises.*

This conclusion is also confirmed by the statistics regarding the trade unions, which are particularly thorough-going in the research work we have mentioned. What branches show the highest percentages in trade union organization? Among the compositors and pressmen, 90.6 per cent or organized (of the 10,986 printers employed in Berlin, 9,850 are members of the free trade unions). Among the lithographers, 90.5 per cent are organized; among the engravers, 75.6 per cent; among the metal workers, 68.7 per cent. In the textile industry, on the other hand, the organized workers are only 21.4 per cent of the total. Of the garment workers, only 10 per cent are organized; of the transport workers, only 25.3 per cent; of the tobacco workers, 34.3 per cent; of the bakers, 34.1 per cent; of the shoe workers, 34.7 per cent. The picture is the same throughout. No matter how big the membership of the free trade unions may be (before the outbreak of the war they comprised over 3,000,000 organized workers)—they do *not* include in their ranks the great mass of the unskilled workers. The free trade unions have succeeded in organizing only a small minority (one-fifth) of the workers. The predominant mass of their workers are likewise recruited from among the skilled, the better-paid, category of workers.

Returning once more to the statistics covering the membership of the Social Democratic Party of Greater Berlin, we can draw the following balance sheet: The great mass of the unskilled workers, of the most exploited and most oppressed section of the proletariat, is very feebly represented in the German Social Democratic Party. It constitutes within it a group of no more than 15 per cent in strength, at best. On the opposite pole to this group we have a numerically almost as

strong (10 per cent) group of non-workers, namely, saloon keepers, barbers, merchants, etc. This group may be smaller in number than that of the unskilled workers. But its influence on party affairs—that may be said *a priori*—is incomparably bigger. The "independent" elements are far more mobile; far less preoccupied with physical labor; dispose of a far greater amount of free time; are in a position to offer the party material services; their social position is on a much higher plane, they are the ones that are put up as the party's candidates in the elections, etc. *Between* these two groups, which represent opposite poles, stand the better situated, more skilled workers, the real props of the Social Democratic Party organization. The main body, the central organism of the party, is thus formed of these strata of *skilled workers*.

Petty Bourgeois Dominates Party

In the previous section we have acquainted ourselves with the social composition of the electorate of the German social democracy and discovered the existence of a large group of petty bourgeois among it. The same symptoms—even though of a different numerical relationship, perhaps—can be established in the composition of the party organization as well.

Among the petty bourgeois elements of the German Social Democratic Party organization, the saloon keepers, particularly, play an important rôle. We have already seen how strongly they are represented in the Berlin party organization. In the province of Leipzig the number of "organized" social democratic saloon keepers amounted to 87 (1.7 per cent of all members of the local organization) in 1900; in the city of Leipzig, to 63 (3.4 per cent of all the members) in 1905; in Offenbach, to 76 (4.6 per cent) in 1905; in Munich, to 39 (5.5 per cent); in Frankfort O.M., to 25 (1 per cent); in Rejnckendorf (near Berlin), to 18 (5.9 per cent). According to Michels' figures, there is, in the various localities, one "social democratic" saloon keeper to every 20 party members. In the social democratic Reichstag fraction there were four saloon keepers (out of 35 deputies) in 1892; five saloon keepers (out of 58) in 1903; six (out of 81) in 1905. In Berlin there has been organized a special—and very strong—association of social democratic saloon keepers. Workers constitute the greatest bulk of their customers and that draws the owners of saloons and restaurants much closer to the workers. On the other hand, the workers need meeting halls. The cheaper restaurants in the working class neighborhoods, the saloons, therefore, serve the organized workers as hangouts and as meeting places. According to their economic position, however, many saloon keepers are much closer in their relationship to the petty and middle bourgeoisie than they are to the proletariat. Often they themselves exploit the wage workers. Often their interests are opposed to the interests of the organized workers, and hostile clashes occur between them—as, for example, in the case of workers boycotting breweries or when workers carry on anti-alcoholic propaganda.

The influence of this whole group of members of the Social Democratic Party is often quite substantial. Particularly in the smaller cities, a good deal of the social democratic organization, if not all of it, depends upon them. Professor Schmoller contends that anywhere from one-third to one-half of the entire Social Democratic Party are not workers at all. That they are radical petty bourgeois. That the party has therefore tended to become more and more of a radical-democratic coalition party. In so far as the quantitative side of the whole matter is concerned, Professor Schmoller may be painting things a bit too thick. But in relation to its qualitative side,

his evaluation is correct. The official German social democracy has actually become more and more of a radical-democratic coalition party. That is just what the opportunists wanted and they have led the party on this path with full consciousness. Bernstein was right in one respect, when he said at the beginning of his campaign against Marxism: we need not fear to call things by their right names—to say that we are simply a party of democratic reforms.

The petty bourgeois elements have laid their stakes in the ranks of the official social democracy—they constitute one of the sources of opportunism. The labor aristocracy—that is the second source, the second channel, through which the contagion of opportunism penetrated the party. Often one is struck point blank by this very insistence of the labor aristocracy on taking the path of opportunism. Take the printers, for example. It is noteworthy that in Germany—as well as in France, Italy, Holland, Switzerland, etc.—the typographical unions stand far more to the right than the general run of the already quite conservative trade union movements of these different countries. In Germany, the opportunist Rexhauser heads the printing crafts, in France it is the opportunist Keufer. In Belgium and Holland the workers engaged in the diamond cutting industry form the bulwark of opportunism. And these are not isolated examples.

A Conservative Social Democracy

The bourgeois opponents of socialism know that only too well. "The more the worker gains in importance, the more realistic he is inclined to be; he places his laurel wreath on the unforgettable head of Karl Marx in its fine marble cast and pays higher dues into the trade union treasury," writes Pastor Nauman, not without a touch of irony, in his article entitled "The Fortunes of Marxism." In the same article this Nauman, one of the ideological leaders of German imperialism, writes: "The word, 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!' have had their effect. We are now faced with numbers of organized people whom no one had previously given a thought. There is money in the treasuries—as much as one could want. . . . Are there still not enough organized? Why is everything so quiet all around us? Where is the even step of those brass boots?"

Maximilian Harden, Ludwig Stein, Werner Sombart and the others mock at the German social democracy in a much similar vein. In the course of its development the German social democracy is losing more and more of its revolutionary "venom." Its need for peace and for order is becoming constantly greater. It is becoming a *conservative* party.

The more far-sighted bourgeois have long ago noted this process. They know "their" social democracy only too well. One of the social-liberal German professors, Max Weber, a colleague of Sombart's, once turned with this counsel to the German princes: if you want to be radically cursed of your fright from social democracy, you should attend one of the Social Democratic Party conventions. He advised them to look over the delegates at these conventions from the spectators' gallery and become convinced that among these revolutionaries, among these overthrowers of the state, it is the physiognomies of good-natured saloon keepers and typical petty bourgeois that predominate. They would soon become convinced that there is not a trace of revolutionary enthusiasm among them.

Unfortunately, the social-liberal professor was right. The crisis of the World War has proved that the official German social democracy is not only not revolutionary, but directly

counter-revolutionary. Only *in opposition* to this official social democracy, only in the struggle against the specific "interests" of the labor aristocracy, can the road be paved for a truly socialist movement in Germany as well as in the other countries.

GREGORY ZINOVIEV.

Hartenstein, Switzerland, August 4, 1916.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Theory of the Offensive

DEFENSE WILL NOT WIN THE WAR, by W. F. Kernan, Lieutenant-Colonel, U. S. Army. Little, Brown & Co., Boston. \$1.50.

Ever since the outbreak of World War II the Allies have taken their share of blows from the Axis powers. Since Pearl Harbor, America, too, has tasted defeat. Those who expected that the Japs would be push-overs, or that victories would be quick and cheap, now pound the table and holler that it is a "goddam shame the way we are knuckling under to those lousy Japs," and that "it's about time that we did something about it."

This book is compounded of so much ignorance and prejudice that it is only natural that it should meet with the acclaim of bourgeois mentalities. Still the book is so obviously full of holes that even those critics who are entirely in sympathy with Kernan's "do something" attitude are obliged to say that outside of the title of the book there is little to recommend it.

And it is true that, from the point of view of the war makers, the title is a slogan that serves a macabre purpose. Psychologically it squares well with the dispatch of AEFs to Australia and Ireland. Compared to the mass AEFs that are still to go, these are only "token payments." The people of this country are being prepared to accept a mountainous toll of American youth on foreign battlefields. As Kernan puts it: "It has now been brought home to us that the Nazi system means war to the death for America, and that the only way to win the war is by shooting; that the relentless advance of Germany will continue until it is stopped by the interposition of an insurmountable obstacle."

The "insurmountable obstacle" that Kernan has in mind is, of course, American manpower. He makes this deadly clear. He says: "The attack on Hitler which is bound to take our armies to Europe is simply a tremendous movement of extending the American frontier which is about to begin in the teeth of the most implacable foe that any nation has yet encountered."

Nor does Kernan have any illusions about the terrible price that the American people will have to pay. "Due to the blind folly and invitational weakness of the past ten years," says the author, "the price for the defeat of these enemies has been steadily raised until it stands today at a sum undreamed of in the annals of military history. . . . The price is high, so high indeed, that of all the nations still unchained America alone has the wherewithal to pay it."

Only as a psychological preparative does *Defense Will Not Win the War* gibe with reality. Otherwise the book is so completely a misreading of history and an outpouring of prejudice, that it is entirely logical that the only practical proposal

for an offensive made by the author should be preposterous on the face of it.

THE LESSONS OF WORLD WAR I ARE LOST

One would think that a serious discussion on the question of offense versus defense would take all this as a starting point. Instead Kernan discusses completely secondary factors, such as the interference of the Allied politicians in army matters and the prevention of Foch's ascendancy until the last year of the war. In fact Kernan's discussion of the First World War is almost entirely limited to his idol, Foch, of whom he says: "Long before Foch was given supreme command he had demonstrated his strategical ability, his objectivity, his sense of the thing being done, his cool, clear rationality, his unshakable will, his faith in God."

Leaving aside the question of Lloyd George's, Churchill's or Clemenceau's military intervention, of which much can be said not altogether as Kernan would wish, and basing ourselves upon his own ground, that of the incompetence of the Allied generals, why then did not the offensives of the relatively competent German generals succeed? To answer this question Kernan would have to deal with the fundamental factors, that of the equality of the opposing armies, the masses involved, the rôle of the machine gun, the underdevelopment of such offensive weapons as the tank and the airplane, etc. Actually Kernan, for all his praise of Foch, indirectly acknowledges the general defensive character of the last world war by claiming that it was American intervention which broke the stalemate on the Western Front and won the war.

Kernan simply does not see the "defensive" mentality of the Allies in all the years following the war of 1914-18. It is of course easy to be wise after Hitler's successful demonstration of the blitzkrieg. But prior to this, the outlook of the Allies is perfectly understandable. Basing themselves on the war they won, they perfected the arms with which they won that war. At the same time they disarmed Germany and surrounded her with a *cordon sanitaire* of Allied satellite nations. With their Maginot Lines and strategic frontiers, the "have" nations thought themselves secure. There was only one trouble with this situation. Capitalism was bankrupt, capitalist rivalry was rampant and the world revolution, in the fore of which was the Russian Revolution, threatened. That is why the French, British and American capitalists backed and strengthened the German Junkers, Mussolini and Hitler.

KERNAN'S "ANALYSIS" OF FASCISM

There is not a word of this in his book. Trash is substituted for analysis. We quote a typical example dealing with the rise of fascism in Italy. "*The Italians*," writes Kernan, "*are clowns, that is to say, buffoons, mimes, imitators, and it is this quality—it is, in a manner of speaking, a histrionic quality—that is responsible for the mushroom growth of fascism and the rapidity with which Mussolini rose to power.*" (Emphasis mine—S.)

This is less an insult to the heroic and talented descendants of Galileo, Leonardo Da Vinci, Bruno and Copernicus than it is a key to Kernan's mental crassness. Does not Kernan know that plain Italian people, the workers and peasants, died by the thousands in their villages and factories in years of bloody fighting against the gangster bands of Mussolini? Does he not know that American gold propped up the tottering fascist régime?

In the same stupid way Kernan avoids explanation of the adoration of Hitler by the ruling classes of Great Britain and

the United States. How they hailed a degenerate Fuehrer as the barrier to the rise of Bolshevism! If Hitler was permitted to arm, was it not in order better to keep down the German workers and to turn him against Russia as the super-Wrangel of world capitalism? Was not England also interested in a strong Germany as a balance against French claims to European hegemony?

HOW WARS ARE REALLY FOUGHT

But capitalist wars are not at all conceived in this way. The capitalist nations resort to war only when their profit-making in peacetime is threatened by the rabid rivalry of capitalist competitor nations or by the threat of revolution against the capitalist system as such. The entire political life of a nation prior to the outbreak of war conditions the war itself.

It was otherwise with the German general staff. They too saw themselves doomed in a war of attrition. That is why they concentrated on the development of these offensive weapons which were still in their infancy at the end of the last World War. These they massed for a swift, crushing blow against defensive walls that were not strong enough to stand the impact. To this military power Hitler added his political weapons. Stark necessity produced the German war machine and German capitalism concentrated on it because for it there was no other road.

If Kernan followed the development of German arms and political policy he would be in a position to understand their value. From the purely military point of view the German offensive registered victories because its power to break through was greater than the power to hold. For all we know it is entirely conceivable that had the Allies had equality in tanks and airplanes the result would be another war of attrition, very likely after the manner of Lybia.

Hence, serious discussion about an offensive must take at its starting point a preponderance of mechanized armies and air fleets at the point of contact with the enemy. If the Allies were anywhere on any of the war fronts in such a position Kernan would be credited with something more than just hot air. The problem that confronts the Allies today is not the offensive. Their problem is that of immediate reinforcement of their positions and the attainment of as near an equality with the Axis as is possible in order to keep from being pushed off the African, Asiatic and Australian continents. In a word, at this stage, the problem of the Allies is a defensive one. The dispatch of a large enough AEF to Australia, Ireland and the Middle East over thousands of miles of ocean for this purpose is so big an order that if it were accomplished in time it would more than satisfy the Allied generals and statesmen.

SEA POWER AND INVASION

Kernan's discussion of sea power is as stupid as the rest of his propositions. "We must remember," he says, "that navies are powerful and decisive in large dynastic national wars (England and Spain, 16th century) as well as in small pseudo-imperialistic wars (Japan and Russia, 19th century) but in a really imperialistic total world war, such as we are now fighting, they are not by any possible stretch of the imagination, decisive, and are only powerful when they are used, with proper air support, for the convoy and supply of armies."

Aside from the fact that great navies, with their bases, garrisons and air arms are an absolutely essential element for control of the world's colonies, one minute of thinking can demonstrate that sea power could have played a decisive rôle

against a power such as Japan. Had the Allies overwhelming sea power in the Pacific (naturally, the air support that goes with that is also included), Japan could never have gotten to first base against the Allied bases, the Philippines, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. The Japanese, on the other hand, so valued sea power that they made certain to deliver their first blow against Pearl Harbor in order to assure for themselves the control of the seas in the Southwest Pacific. No nation is more vulnerable to sea power than the island nation of Japan. If the Japanese fleet were to be sunk that would be the finish of Japan, for a blockade would then be complete and Japanese life brought to a standstill. From the Allied viewpoint, the trouble with the war against Japan is that the latter has what the Allies lacked—a preponderance of sea power.

What to do with Germany after an Allied victory seems simple enough to Kernan. Without mincing any words he demands the "classic" Roman solution. "Carthage must be destroyed," he repeats, and the German soldier who hears this will certainly redouble his efforts to resist to the death. There are so many inanities and stupidities that it is impossible for even a lengthy review to deal with them. However, it is not the obtuse, out-and-out sabre rattlers who have to be exposed. Their bankruptcy is obvious. The ones who have to be watched are the more subtle exponents and supporters of the imperialist war, those who try to sell the same rotten bill of goods wrapped up in tinsel and bright colored ribbons.

MICHAEL GORDON.

Comrade Granville's 'Hicks'

ONLY ONE STORM, by Granville Hicks.
The MacMillan Co., New York. \$2.75.

Lem Parsons leaned back heavily against the wall of Ed's bargain grocery and aimed an over-chewed cud of Prince Albert at the wood stove.

"Say, any of you fellas heard who drove into town last night?"

Ben Ward, busy sorting out the morning mail, vaguely shook his head. The other men sitting and standing around the stove didn't bother to answer. They kept their eyes on Ben to see if any mail was coming for them. Jim Oaks got his Sears catalogue.

Lem's cud fell short, but Ed Tabor scraped it under the stove with his foot. Lem's suspenders were on too tight and he scratched himself vigorously. He was waiting to be asked who came to town, but nobody spoke up. They were all watching Ben with the mail.

"By cripes," said Lem, "ain't none o' you fellas care about what's goin' on in your own town?"

Still there was no response, so Lem thought he might as well let on to what he knew.

"Oh, heck, I'll tell you anyway. Granville's come back home."

Canby Marsh, who'd been adding a few blocks of cut-up wood onto the stove, turned half around to look at Lem.

"You mean that son of old man Hicks that had the farm out over Sap Suckertown way?"

"That's him, all right. Went off to college long time ago, I reckon. Some summer folks said he'd got to be one of them an-archist writers."

Old Jesse Turk, sitting with his back up against the stove,

almost stirred in his seat when he spoke to Canby. He'd known old man Hicks long ago and was suspicious.

"What's he want up here?"

"Gosh a'mighty, I dunno."

Old Jesse got more fidgety and suspicious than before. When he turned to Lem he twisted his chair around with him.

"Consarned city slicker! Bet he wants to run against me next election for town moderator."

Lem was busy stocking up for another try at that hot wood stove. He liked to hear the sizzle when his chaw hit the hot iron. He let one go before answering old Jesse Turk.

"Gosh, you reckon so?"

* * *

This book is a novel. It was written by the ex-literary editor of *The New Masses* and an ex-leading Communist Party intellectual. But don't let that frighten you. Nobody is excommunicated, nobody is damned, nobody is sent to political Hades.

It's about a town in New England which, according to Mr. Hicks, is "...decadent, narrow, suspicious, uncharitable, immoral and stupid" (page 137). But don't let that frighten you either, because, according to Mr. Hicks, it's also "...humorous, shrewd, honest, generous" (page 137).

In case you don't think there is much excitement going on in this novel, don't blame Mr. Hicks. Because, as the hero answers when his wife complains about all the cemeteries in the town, "Well, it was hard to get around in the old days, and then Pendleton's (that's the town, folks) been growing smaller for a long time. The dead are bound to take up a lot of space in a town like this." (You said it, Granville.)

Is this a good novel? Simple candor compels me to say that it stinks. Frankly, I haven't been so bored since the last time I heard Lord Halifax extolling the virtues of the British Empire.

Its characters are all colorless and stereotyped; its prose is as drab, monotonous and inhibited as a *Daily Worker* patriotic editorial; its situations are as unembarrassing as a Sunday School picnic (as a matter of fact, you'd probably take the picnic!).

There are two sets of protagonists in the novel, and Hicks "protagonizes" them for all he's worth. One group, the Stalinists & Co., symbolize "evil." (Party member Stalinists are *really* evil; the simps are merely potential victims of evil.) The other group, the New Englanders, represent "...good." Of course, Hicks has read too many realistic novels (in his sinful youth) so his farmers are not really pure angels. They indulge (not in the pages of his novel, it goes without saying) in a little country carnal pleasure, adultery, sodomy, etc. Granville delicately (and how he can be delicate!) implies this. But at heart they are the real Americans, the salted earth of our nation.

Well, folks, this goes on for 427 pages.

I put a question for all of you to answer. It's a tough one. Personally, I couldn't figure it out.

Would the world (humanity in general) have been better off if Mr. Hicks had remained as Party Pontiff in charge of "executions" for *The New Masses*?

Or are we better off since he became a novelist?

That one's pretty ticklish, eh?

H. J.

Steinbeck Goes to Norway

THE MOON IS DOWN, by John Steinbeck.
Viking Press, New York. \$2.00.

Cheapness and bad taste are repulsive regardless of their literary application. But when they are characteristic of a book which deals with a theme so close to the sensitivities and passions of contemporary life—the struggle in underground Europe against the Nazi conquerors—there is no language too harsh with which to criticize the writer.

Nobody expects anything better from Hollywood. When "Joan of Paris" or "Mr. X" or John Garfield defeat the Gestapo single-handed, there is at least that opiate compensation which is the major reason for the great popularity of the motion pictures. But when Steinbeck writes a novel about the underground in exactly the same preciously stylized grotesquerie as when writing of Georgie and the rabbits, anyone with a modicum of literary taste and a flicker of sensitivity must be instantly repelled.

There is perhaps no better way to describe this novel than by comparing it with a certain type of motion picture in which the hero—say, some aggressively masculine type like Tyrone Power—beats up seven or eight villains in a violent rough-and-tumble—and then proceeds to kiss the heroine with his profile about three inches from the camera, his hair immaculately spiffed, not a scratch on his Lux Toilet Soap skin and not a tear in his English worsted suit.

This novel has a theatrical cheapness that is positively appalling. Imagine, if you will, a small town Norwegian mayor (we are not sure that it is Norway; Steinbeck is incapable of making anything concrete or real) who goes to his death at the hands of the Nazis . . . reciting Socrates' final speech!

(What an effective third act curtain!)

Steinbeck is unable to etch one real, living character. They are all abstractions, types, puppets: the slow, but heroic mayor who is the "personification of freedom"; the small town philosopher of whose wisdom we are, fortunately, not given any samples; the cracked-up Nazi lieutenants (has anyone ever written a war book in which the lieutenants didn't crack up?); the fanatical Norwegian woman whose husband has been shot by the Nazis. . . .

When three of these presumably Norwegian youths make their way secretly to England, they are given an anti-appeasement speech by the mayor which might have been written by Mike Gold in one of his sober moments!

There is no hint in this book of the motivations which might impel resistance to the Nazi conquerors. What does this "freedom" mean to these Norwegian people? Why is the local grocer a Quisling?

It is all enacted in the realm of airy abstractions and wordy pomposities—about as lifelike and individual as a Stalinist manifesto calling for a second front in Europe. Edmund Wilson some time ago pointed out that Steinbeck has a fatal inability to create real characters, that all his figures are vegetarian abstractions. But when this crucial literary inability is topped off by a theatrical vulgarity. . . .

Somewhere or other Steinbeck has read that a "good style" consists of writing "lean, nervous sentences." He therefore writes "lean, nervous sentences," with the result that his style is as preciously self-conscious as that of a high school sophomore trying to imitate Hemingway.

Well, it is all a colossal literary fraud which will be (and already has been) hailed by every critic and woman's club in

the country and will probably make a small fortune for Steinbeck, which is probably as good a reason as any for writing this book.

IRVING HOWE.

Factories and Colonies

INDUSTRY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, by Jack Shepherd.
Published by the Institute of Pacific Relations, 133 pp.

This pamphlet study, published as one of the International Research Series brochures concerned with the problems of the Pacific areas, is a catalogue of industry in Southeast Asia. The author describes in detail the industries (handicraft and modern) of French Indo-China, Netherlands Indies, the Philippine Islands and other smaller territories such as Taiwan (Formosa), Thailand, Burma, etc.

As Shepherd admits in his introduction, ". . . the Western colonial powers (were) primarily concerned with drawing off the tropical products and industrial raw materials in which Southeast Asia abounds, it is not surprising that this region should have remained predominantly agricultural in character, even in an industrial age." Whatever industry that did develop was extremely lop-sided and distorted in character and was based solely upon the imperialist interests of the ruling powers. Thus, large-scale plantations (rubber, tea, etc.); mining and smelting operations connected with extractive industries (rubber, tin ore, oil, etc.) were about the only industrial advances made in this part of the world.

The pamphlet is useful for those who need to be convinced that the imperialists were little concerned about industrializing and advancing the productive capacities of their colonies by introducing modern, heavy industry, but deeply concerned about the unmitigated exploitation of those sections of colonial economy that would line their pockets most rapidly. Of course, Mr. Shepherd is not concerned with these political questions, but nevertheless his facts and catalogues prove incontestably that the colonial areas conquered by Japan were completely unequipped to wage modern warfare in their own defense.

H. J.

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CHINA IN THE WORLD WAR

**Marxism on the Wars of Colonies
For Independence**

and

**The Wars of Imperialism
For Colonies**

By

MAX SHACHTMAN

• **PART TWO** •

China in the World War

Marxism on the Wars of Colonies for Independence and the Wars of Imperialism for Colonies

John G. Wright does not approve of the position adopted by the Workers Party on China following the spread of the World War to Asia and the Pacific. That much is fairly clear from his article in the April, 1942, *Fourth International*, a typical example of the snort-sneer-and-snarl school of polemics to which he is devoted. To an ordinary reader, nothing else in the article is very clear. We venture to say this because we are dealing with the man known as the whirling dervish of the Socialist Workers Party. He starts every argument—witness the article in question—with a piercing shriek which rises in a shattering crescendo while he executes furious pirouettes and leaps into space; his chest heaves violently and there is foam on his lips; finally, as Beck described the original Ottoman twirlers, “worn out and perspiring, with glazing eyes and pale face, he falls into the sacred convulsion (*haluk*).” Wright’s article on China was obviously written in a *haluk*. There is no other way of explaining how he got the courage to invoke Lenin in justifica-

tion of the present social-patriotic position of the SWP on China which he expounds and defends.

Wright’s entire argument is based upon a cool distortion of Lenin’s position on the question. We say “distortion” rather than “misunderstanding” because it is utterly impossible for anyone to misunderstand Lenin’s views once he has read them, and Wright has at least read them. In the course of irrefutably demonstrating this charge, it will be possible, we believe, for the reader to gain a deeper insight into the Leninist view of the national and colonial question as it relates to the imperialist war and to understand why the Workers Party took the position it did in its resolution on China and the World War printed in *Labor Action* (March 16, 1942). This is the resolution for which Wright takes us to task. Briefly, it declares that with the spread of the World War to the East, the just struggle for national independence of China has been decisively *integrated* into and *subordinated* to the reactionary inter-imperialist war and that it can therefore no longer be supported by the revolutionary Marxists.

Why Lenin Distinguished Three Types of Countries

Wright begins his elucidation of the “Leninist policy on the national question” by quoting from Lenin’s article in 1916 in which he distinguished three types of countries. First, “the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the United States of America” where “the bourgeois, progressive national movements came to an end long ago”; secondly, “Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans and particularly Russia,” where the tasks of the proletariat “cannot be achieved unless it champions the right of nations to self-determination”; and thirdly, “the semi-colonial countries, like China, Persia, Turkey and all the colonies,” whose liberation is demanded by socialists who “must render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their rebellion—and if need be, their revolutionary war—against the imperialist powers that oppress them.” (*Works*, vol. XIX, p. 55.) The national movement in the first type of country, wrote Lenin, is a thing of the past; in the second—a thing of the present; in the third—a thing of the future.

“In the most advanced countries of Europe and America and in Japan,” says Wright about the first type, “the national issue is today simply a reactionary cover for the imperialist bourgeoisie. The national problem has been solved in these nations long ago.” This statement, like many others made by Wright, is thoughtless parroting of what Lenin wrote a quarter of a century ago, and has little in common with Marxism applied to the real situation in Europe today. The national issue in such advanced countries of Europe as France, Norway, Holland, Bohemia and others is not *simply* a “reactionary cover for the imperialist bourgeoisie,” but is, or should be, made into an issue by the revolutionary proletarian vanguard, precisely in order that it does not remain a cover for all kinds

of de Gaulles and Wilhelmíns and Haakons and Beneses, but rather one of the bridges to the socialist struggle for power. Every thinking Marxist understands this; people suffering from pseudo-Leninist *psittacosis* do not. That is undoubtedly why the Cannonites continue to suppress the views of the German Trotskyists on this question. However, since a discussion of this aspect of the national question today would lead us too far afield, and since it does not constitute the essence of Wright’s distortion of Lenin’s position, we reluctantly leave it for another occasion.

It is to a comparison between the second and third types of countries listed by Lenin that Wright really addresses himself, and it is this comparison that leads us to the heart of the problem.

The First World War was an imperialist war, but like all other great and therefore complex social phenomena, it was not “pure” in type. Involved in it were other, contradictory elements, like the just struggle of national minorities and small nations against their oppressors. One example was the struggle of the Poles against their Russian oppressors; another was the struggle of the Serbs against their Austrian oppressors. Lenin regarded these struggles (“wars”) as *just* and, given certain conditions about which more will be said herein, worthy of the support of both honest democrats and revolutionary socialists. He argued that if the war were confined to an isolated duel between the Serbs and Austro-Hungarian imperialism, the Marxists would support the Serbs and even work for the victory of the Serbian bourgeoisie. Similarly, if there were an isolated struggle between the Poles and the Great Russian Empire.

But under the concrete conditions of the European war, the inter-imperialist conflict (the Entente versus the Central

Powers) and not the national struggle of the Serbs or the Poles was the decisive element. That is why it would be *exactly* correct to speak of the First World War (and the Second, for that matter) as a *decisively* or a *predominantly* imperialist war. Since the decisive dominates the subordinate, the character of the latter is determined by the former. That is why Lenin refused to support even Serbia or Poland in the war, because he knew that such support meant at least partial support to the reactionary imperialist war.

Now let us see how Wright presents Lenin's views on this aspect of the question, and then check with what Lenin's views really were. According to Wright, Lenin said that in countries of the second type, where Czechs, Poles, Serbs, Finns, etc., were fighting for national independence,

... the question of national independence plays a different rôle from that in advanced countries. Under certain circumstances it is progressive; under other conditions reactionary. What decides is whether or not in every given situation a small country plays an *independent* rôle in its struggle for national existence. If it does, then the Marxists say: Support of a national struggle in such a case is obligatory upon all workers. Thus, in an *isolated* struggle between a small country like Serbia and an oppressor nation like Austria, Lenin and the Serbian socialists supported Serbia. However, because of the overwhelming economic and political preponderance of the imperialist bourgeoisie, the small European countries cannot play such an independent rôle in the conditions of an imperialist war. They are too closely integrated economically and politically with the great powers to pursue their own nationalist goals at a time when the full power of the imperialists is unleashed.

This formulation of Lenin's views will do as a model of a first-rate muddle until something bigger is provided—and we

may calmly rely on Wright to produce even more fantastic muddles as he twirls around. Lenin *at no time* declared that "what decides" the progressive or reactionary character of the struggle for national independence of an oppressed European nation or people was "whether or not in every given situation a small country plays an *independent* rôle in its struggle for national existence." In fact, he said exactly the opposite, that is, that these small nations *could not play an independent rôle* in our epoch, the epoch of imperialism. Not only did he say this, but Wright knows he said it! And Wright not only knows it, but he actually quotes Lenin to this effect! On the very same page from which we took the just-quoted paragraph, in the very next column to it, is to be found the appropriate quotation from Lenin:

The dialectic of history is such that small nations which are impotent as an *independent* factor in the struggle against imperialism play the rôle as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, aiding the arrival on the scene of the *real* force against imperialism, namely, the socialist proletariat. (*Works*, vol. XIX, Russ. ed., p. 270; Eng. ed., p. 303.)

Now if the "independent rôle" played by a small country in the struggle against an imperialist oppressor "decides" the support of the proletariat (and the proletarian party)—as Wright says—and if these small countries are powerless "as an *independent* factor in the struggle against imperialism"—as Lenin says with Wright's evident approval—we are left at a total loss to understand why the devil the question of supporting the national wars of small countries was ever raised at all, either by Lenin or by Wright.

Fundamentals of Lenin on the National Question

Fortunately, while Wright obviously does not have the slightest understanding of what he is quoting from Lenin, Lenin's own position communicates itself without any difficulty to the normal reader:

In general, Lenin favored the struggle for national independence of any country oppressed by another on the grounds of what he rightly called *consistent democracy*. If, as any genuine democrat would have to grant, the right of any people to self-determination constitutes one of the elementary democratic rights, then socialists who aim at the most complete realization of democracy must necessarily support any people, any national minority, any small country which seeks to exercise this right, and support it even to the point of secession from the ruling (and oppressing) "motherland." Nobody who is opposed to the forcible annexation of one people (or country) by another, can possibly fail to support the annexed people in a struggle for national independence (self-rule), even if this struggle is led by the bourgeoisie, and even if this struggle is initiated militarily by the oppressed people. The Finns have the right to rule themselves as they see fit, and not be ruled by the Great Russians; similarly with the Poles; similarly with the Mongolians. The Irish have the right to rule themselves, and not be ruled by the British. And so on.

In general, furthermore, Lenin favored such national struggles not because of any "independent rôle" they might play, but because they would "sharpen the revolutionary crisis. That is, being directed in each case at weakening the rule of an imperialist power (the Poles against Russian imperialism; the Irish against British imperialism, etc.), they would tend to speed "the arrival on the scene of the *real* force against imperialism, namely, the socialist proletariat."

In particular, however, Lenin opposed giving support to

such a struggle, no matter how just it was to begin with, *if* it was transformed into or subordinated to an inter-imperialist war. For example: *If*, in 1914, the struggle between Serbia and Austro-Hungary had remained *isolated*, had remained what Lenin called a "duel" between the powerful imperialism and the small country, it would have been correct for socialists to support Serbia in the war despite the rule of the bourgeoisie and even though she were backed by the Russian Czar. But that war proved to be only the very briefest overture to the war between the two great imperialist coalitions, in which the national struggle of Serbia formed only a minor, a subordinate, a non-determining part.

In particular, further, Lenin opposed giving support to the national struggle of a small nation, no matter how just "in itself," *if* such support meant aiding one imperialist power at war with another. For example: Lenin, like Marx and Engels, was a life-long supporter of the Polish struggle for national independence. He wrote I don't know how many polemics against those who challenged the socialist validity of this position. Yet, when the World War broke out, he was even opposed to putting forward the slogan of independence for Poland! Josef Pilsudski, Ignace Daszynski and other leaders of the right-wing, nationalistic Polish Socialist Party (PPS) had organized an armed Polish Legion to fight for the liberation of Poland from Russian imperial rule. But the Legion fought as part of the armed forces of the Central Powers, particularly of Austria-Hungary. The "struggle for Polish freedom" became an integral, subordinated part of the struggle of one of the imperialist camps against the other. Without abandoning his basic position in favor of the right of self-determination, for the Poles specifically, Lenin nevertheless wrote:

The Polish social democrats [he referred to the SDPL, the party of Rosa Luxemburg] cannot, at present, advance the slogan of Polish independence, because, as proletarian internationalists, the Poles can do *nothing* to achieve it without, like the "Fraki," sinking into mean servility to one of the imperialist monarchies. (*Works*, vol. XIX, p. 297.)

In other words, revolutionary socialists cannot support even the just struggle for independence of a people or nation where it means, practically, supporting one imperialist camp in its war with another. We have here again an example of the emphasis laid by Lenin on the *isolated* (not at all on the allegedly "independent") character of the national struggle as a condition for proletarian support.

In particular, still further, Lenin opposed giving support to the national struggle of a small nation, *if* such support of a democratic right conflicted with socialist, and therefore superior, rights. In one sense, the preceding example of Poland in the last war illustrates this point. In a much more striking and literal sense, however, it is illustrated by Lenin's position with regard to the intervention of the Red Army on the soil of "democratic" Menshevik Georgia in 1920. The democratic national sovereignty of Georgia—at any rate, as much sovereignty as "protective" British imperialism then allowed it—was undoubtedly ignored by Lenin. But the march on Georgia which resulted in the federated incorporation of that country into a revolutionary workers' state was in the superior interests of the socialist proletariat and the socialist revolution.

In particular, finally, Lenin opposed giving support to a national struggle when it was merely a front for reactionary (example: feudal or feudal-ecclesiastical) elements exploiting

a just demand for people for freedom from imperialism. We need not dwell on this, as it does not enter significantly into our present discussion. It will suffice to point out, as one example, the "national struggle"—i.e., the pogroms—of the Palestine Mufti against the Jews in 1929.

As simply and briefly as possible, that is Lenin's position on the national question. It is not the *whole* of Lenin's position because the question of the relations between the socialist proletariat and the nationalist bourgeoisie, between the democratic and the socialist revolutions—problems that arose so acutely in the years of the struggle against Stalinism—has been deliberately omitted here. But it is enough of Lenin's position to satisfy, for the moment, the needs of the present discussion.

Now it is entirely possible that Wright might express himself as more or less in agreement with our formulation of Lenin's views; that he might retreat from his utterly invalid criterion of "independence" with the complaint that he was misunderstood or even misrepresented. This is possible, but not very likely, because of the arguments he proceeds to unfold. For his main point is: While all that has been said may or does hold true with regard to Lenin's position on countries of the "second type," fundamental modifications are required with regard to countries of the "third type" (China, India, Persia, Morocco, etc.). It must be remembered that Wright is out to show that what Lenin refused to do with Serbia in the war of 1914, namely, support it, the followers of Lenin must do with China in the war of 1942. And here—on guard! For Wright is about to take us for a real whirl.

How Wright Distinguishes the 'Second' and 'Third'

Unlike Serbia, China must be supported in the war because she is a country of the "third type." And how does this type differ from the "second," according to the way Wright interprets Lenin? This way:

Today, as in 1914-18, the task of the European workers, no matter what their country, is the accomplishment of the socialist revolution, i.e., resuming the road pioneered by the Bolsheviks in the czarist empire of 1917. The national element—for all its importance—can play in Europe only the same subordinate rôle that it did in 1914 in the case of Serbia. But the workers in colonial and semi-colonial countries in Asia have before them, first of all, the *objective tasks of the democratic revolution*. For them the national question is the most burning and immediate. Whoever seeks to divert them from the solution of this task cannot speak in Lenin's name.

And further, after two entirely irrelevant quotations from Lenin which are calculated to impress the glass-eyed reader:

The difference between Serbia and China remains no less profound today. It is impermissible even to talk about the theory of the permanent revolution unless one first understands that the position of the colonial and semi-colonial countries in relation to the imperialists is different not only in degree but in kind from that of the small European countries. The colonial and semi-colonial peoples can play and are playing an *independent* rôle not only in isolated struggles, but also in the very midst of an imperialist war.

With the quoting of these two paragraphs, we have kept our promise that Wright would provide us with bigger and better muddles as he went along. But as we read his lines over and over, it is plain that not even we dreamed that muddle-headedness could be reduced to such a refined, triple-distilled essence. Let us examine them closer, and bear in mind that they were not written by a Stalinist, but by a self-avowed, self-patented and self-copyrighted Trotskyist.

As in 1914, the task of the workers in all European coun-

tries without exception is the accomplishment of the socialist revolution by taking the road pioneered by the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917; in the colonies and semi-colonies of Asia, on the other hand, the workers face first of all the "objective tasks of the democratic revolution." Thus Wright. And God help those who, like Shachtman, "seek to divert them from the solution of this task," for Wright positively will not allow them to speak in Lenin's name. Our terror at this threat is relieved by the recollection of some cogent facts:

1. In 1914, Lenin did *not* contend (neither did Trotsky) that the accomplishment of the socialist revolution was the proletarian task in all the European countries, at least not in the sense Wright means it—as the "most burning and immediate." On the contrary. To the working class of the biggest European country, Russia—yes, czarist Russia!—Lenin assigned the mission of carrying through the *bourgeois-democratic* and not the socialist revolution. For, according to Lenin, the "objective tasks of the democratic revolution," which Wright says are primarily before the Asiatic colonial workers today in contrast to Europe 25 years ago, were precisely the tasks primarily before the workers of Russia! When Wright, invoking Lenin, declares that the workers of *all* European countries today must follow the road of the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917, he is either saying that all the European countries still have their bourgeois-democratic revolution to carry through, or else he is saying nothing. Our muddler, in his effort to "distinguish" oppressed China from oppressed Serbia, has succeeded only in identifying oppressed China with oppressive czarist Russia!

2. He may reply: But in imperialist Russia, the "objective tasks of the democratic revolution" could not be and were not

solved in an *independent stage*. They were solved under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and under its class rule the revolution proceeded "permanently" from its democratic to its socialist tasks. In other words, in Russia the "objective tasks of the democratic revolution" were solved under the socialist dictatorship. And that is what is meant when we say that the task of the workers of all the European countries "is the accomplishment of the socialist revolution."

Such a reply would be entirely proper and correct. *Only*, it is not one whit less valid if applied to "the workers in colonial and semi-colonial countries in Asia"! Even a half-baked Trotskyist should know this; even a translator of Trotsky should know this. Even he should know that "it is impermissible even to talk about the theory of the permanent revolution" unless one understands that a country like China, for example, can attain genuine national independence, or solve any other of the fundamental democratic tasks facing it, *only* by "the accomplishment of the socialist revolution," that is, by establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this respect, China and India today differ in no way from Serbia of 1914. The reader who is interested in Trotsky's view on the question, and not merely in the view of the self-avowed, self-patented and self-copyrighted Trotskyist, may study the former's brochure, *The Permanent Revolution*.

3. "The colonial and semi-colonial peoples can play and are playing an *independent* rôle not only in isolated struggles, but also in the very midst of an imperialist war," says Wright. The *people* (i.e., the masses of workers and peasants) *can* play an independent rôle not only in colonial and semi-colonial countries but in arch-imperialist countries like Japan, Germany or the United States. But in the one type or the other, they can play an *independent* rôle on one condition and one only: if they (specifically, the workers) are organized as a *class* by the vanguard forces and (the peasants supporting the workers) direct their struggle against the bourgeoisie. Under any other conditions, the people, be they in the colonies or in the metropolises, are the dupes, the tools, the voting herds or the cannon fodder of the ruling class, and any talk of their "independence" is nonsense, where it isn't positively pernicious. One would think that in the year 1942, a *Marxist* would understand this elementary fact of the class struggle.

4. Perhaps we are quibbling. Perhaps Wright did not

really mean colonial peoples but colonial and semi-colonial countries. Well, if that's what he meant, his case only grows worse. What is a "country"—even a colonial country? It is primarily an arena of the struggle between classes. In the colonial country as in the imperialist motherland, one class rules, the bourgeoisie. In China, the bourgeoisie is different in many important ways from the bourgeoisie in Japan, as is commonly known; but in both countries it is the ruling class and it represents an historically reactionary obstacle to progress. To speak of semi-colonial China, or colonial India, as "countries" that can play an "independent rôle" at the present time, that is, in the era of decadent imperialism, is to say that the colonial bourgeoisie can play an independent rôle. "Country"—that is no abstraction. It is concretized in its ruling class—precisely in its ruling class!—and in the social relations they represent and dominate. "Colonial countries" are no exception whatsoever in this respect. For if they are, then the whole bottom falls out of the struggle carried on against Stalinism by the Left Opposition (Trotskyists) on the national and colonial questions. If they are, the *Fourth International* must stop saying what it has always said, namely, that *precisely in the colonial and semi-colonial countries* national independence can be obtained *only* under the leadership of the proletariat and that in principle there is no difference between Chiang Kai-shek and the class he represents, and Alexander Kerensky and the class he represented, so far as their respective attitude toward imperialism is concerned.

5. According to Wright, there is a fundamental, or principled, difference between the countries of Europe and those of Asia, between the "small nations" and the "colonies," between the "second type" and the "third." He writes literally that "the position of the colonial and semi-colonial countries in relation to the imperialists is different *not only in degree but in kind* from that of the small European countries." You rub your eyes and read again, just to make sure you saw what you saw. Then you turn to the first page of the magazine in which it appears and, yes, to be sure! it is the *Fourth International*. How did that get by the editor? you ask. The answer is a saddening one: The editor doesn't know any better, either; and besides, he is too busy with other things to notice that Wright has catapulted himself right down to the theoretical level of Stalinism.

Lenin and Trotsky on the 'Second' and 'Third' Types

On this point we have ample—indeed, overwhelming—evidence from the writings of Lenin and Trotsky. Let us hear first from the latter. (Interestingly enough, despite the rich, up-to-date contribution made by Trotsky to the colonial question in the course of fifteen years of struggle against Stalinist perversion, Wright does not so much as quote one single word from Trotsky's writings on the subject!) Trotsky is speaking of the Stalinist-Bukharinist attempt to draw a distinction *in principle* ("in degree and in kind," as Wright would say) between the bourgeois-democratic struggles in the West and the colonial struggles in the East, and he says:

For a communist, a war of a colonial nation against an imperialist nation is a bourgeois revolutionary war. Lenin thus *raised* the national liberation movements, the colonial insurrections, and wars of the oppressed nations, to the level of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions, in particular, to that of the Russian revolution of 1905. But Lenin did not at all place the wars for national liberation *above* bourgeois-democratic revolutions as is now done by Bukharin, after his 180 degree turn [and by Wright, please note—M.S.]. Lenin insisted on a distinction between an

oppressed bourgeois nation and a bourgeois oppressor nation. But Lenin nowhere raised and never could raise the question as if the bourgeoisie of a colonial or a semi-colonial country in an epoch of struggle for national liberation must be more progressive and more revolutionary than the bourgeoisie of a non-colonial country in the epoch of the democratic revolution. This does not flow from anything in theory; there is no confirmation of it in history. (*The Third International After Lenin*, p. 171.)

Correct: Wright's distinction does not exist in Marxian theory: it cannot be found in history; it is a product of a *haluk*.

But perhaps Trotsky exaggerated. Perhaps he was carried away by his polemic against the Stalinists. No, there is no such possibility. If anything, Lenin was even more categorical and explicit on this point. He did indeed divide the colonies from Europe as two different types. But essentially, only because the struggles of the former were still ahead, while those of the latter were already going on. As for a fundamental difference, "not only in degree but in kind," Wright does

not even merit recognition as an innovator. Lenin specifically rejected the same point of view time and time again.

Here is what he wrote in his wartime polemic against Kievsky (G. L. Pyatakov) in connection with the demand for "freedom of secession for all oppressed nations":

And in this respect the *only* difference we see between the Mongolian and Egyptian peasants and workers and the Polish and Finnish peasants and workers is that the latter are highly developed, politically more experienced and economically better equipped than the Great Russians, etc., and therefore they probably will *very soon* convince their people, who now justly hate the Great Russians for the executioner's rôle they are playing, that it is not wise to extend this hatred to the *socialist* workers and to a socialist Russia. . . . (*Works*, vol. XIX, p. 254.)

In the very next breath, Lenin continued (bear in mind that by "Poles" are to be understood a country of the "second type" and by "Mongolians" a country of the "third type"):

There is *no* other difference between our attitude toward the Poles and that toward Mongolians, nor can there be any other. (*Ibid.*, p. 255.)

On the very same page, even more explicitly, if that were possible:

But what about Russia? The peculiar feature of Russia is that the difference between "our" colonies and "our" oppressed nations is not clear, not concrete and not vital. . . .

While it may be excusable for a Marxist, writing, say, in Germany, to forget *this* peculiar feature of Russia, it is not excusable for P. Kievsky. A Russian socialist who does not merely *repeat* what others say, but who *thinks* for himself, must realize that as far as Russia is concerned, it is particularly absurd to attempt to draw a serious distinction between oppressed nations and colonies.

If Lenin had read Wright's central argument, the above quotations could not have been written as a more direct and annihilating rebuff to the "continuator of Leninism" who issues bulls on who can and who "cannot speak in Lenin's name." But still there may be a reader who imagines that Lenin refused to "draw a serious distinction between oppressed nations and colonies" only so far as Russia was concerned. No, his position was more thorough-going than that. Here is what he wrote in 1916, in summarizing the whole discussion of this question with his principal theoretical adversaries, the followers of Luxemburg:

Two Criteria for Judging Colonial Wars

Wright explained to his readers that the criterion for supporting or not supporting a country of the "second type" in a war was whether or not it "plays an independent rôle." Lenin *never* put that forward as his criterion, but let it go for the moment. What interests us now is what criterion should be employed by the proletariat with regard to wars conducted by countries of the "third type." Wright went through elaborate convulsions to explain the fundamental difference between the one and the other, to show that the latter differed from the former "not only in degree but in kind" and must therefore be approached differently. What then is his criterion in the case of the colonies? The answer is truly seductive in its overwhelming simplicity: the criterion for the "third type" of country is . . . exactly the same as the criterion for the "second type" of country! Yes, sir, after all the wind and fury have died down, and the fundamental differences between the two have been emphasized and belabored, we learn that a war conducted by either one of them must, after all, be judged in exactly the same way. Unbelievable, but there it is, black on white:

The Polish comrades . . . tried to draw a distinction between "Europe" and the colonies. Only in regard to Europe are they inconsistent annexationists and object to the annulment of annexations once they have been effected. For the colonies, however, they put forward the categorical demand: "Get out of the colonies!" (*Works*, vol. XIX, p. 283.)

Again, a few pages later:

By singling out the colonies and contrasting them with Europe, the Polish comrades become involved in contradictions, which immediately shatter the whole of their mistaken line of argument. (*Ibid.*, p. 286.)

As the reader knows, our muddler insists that Lenin attached a higher significance *in principle* to the colonies than to the small European nations. The fact is, as Lenin emphasized in his polemics during the war (1916), he looked for the national struggles in Europe to be even more valuable to the world revolution than the struggles of the colonies.

The fact is that revolutionary movements of *all kinds*—including national movements—are, under the conditions prevailing in Europe, more likely, more possible, more stubborn, more conscious and more difficult to subdue than in the colonies. (*Works*, vol. XIX, p. 285.)

And in continuing his polemic against the attempt by the Poles to contrast "Europe" to "Asia," he expressed himself with the greatest unequivocalness:

Social democracy, we read in the Polish theses (1, 4), "must utilize the struggle of the young colonial bourgeoisie against European imperialism *in order to sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe.*" (Author's italics.)

Is it not clear that it is least of all permissible to contrast Europe with the colonies in *this* respect? The struggle of the oppressed nations *in Europe*, a struggle capable of going to the lengths of insurrection and street fighting, of breaking down the iron discipline in the army and martial law, will "sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe" infinitely more than a much more developed rebellion in a remote colony. A blow delivered against the English imperialist bourgeoisie by a rebellion in Ireland is a hundred times more significant politically than a blow of equal weight delivered in Asia or in Africa. (*Ibid.*, pp. 302f.)

Is anything more required for the reader to see what Lenin's position on this point actually was? And is anything more required to understand that our self-styled "continuator of Leninism" has not merely diverged from Lenin's standpoint, but has entered right into head-on conflict with it?

What is the criterion whereby Marxists determine whether a colonial or semi-colonial country is conducting a progressive struggle? We determine our position, first of all, on the basis of *fact*. Does this struggle play an *independent rôle*? If it does, we support it. (Wright's emphasis.)

But that's exactly what Wright wrote one page earlier about the wars of countries of the "second type"! Toward what end was so much good and patient paper smeared up in between these two conclusions? The most merciful answer that can be given is that in Wright's construction, the difference boils down to the rather dogmatic assertion that the struggles of small European countries "can be progressive only in *isolated* instances" (does Wright mean "only in rare cases"? It is not clear from his text), whereas the struggles of Asiatic colonies can be progressive in a greater number of cases because, allegedly, they can play "an independent rôle" even "in the very midst of an imperialist war."

Before we go over to the very important question of "fact" in judging our attitude toward China's war with Japan in the midst of the Second World War, let us dwell for some informative moments on the guiding lines suggested by Lenin in

this question. He was acquainted with the problem of a just war of a colony against an imperialist power and the relations between such a war and an imperialist war, or between such a war and aid given to a colony by one imperialist power against another.

In his wartime polemic against "Junius" (Rosa Luxemburg), Lenin gave examples to support his thesis that just wars of national liberation "may lead to an imperialist war," in which case they could not be supported, "or they may not; that depends on many circumstances." To illustrate, he cited the war of the thirteen American colonies for independence from England.

Out of enmity toward England, i.e., in conformity with their own imperialist interests, France and Spain, which still held parts of what are now the United States, concluded friendly treaties with the states that had risen against England. The French forces together with the American defeated the English. Here we have a war for national liberation in which imperialist rivalry is a contributory element of no great importance (*Works*, vol. XIX, p. 204.)

Now, in the same issue of the *Fourth International* containing Wright's article, there is a criticism of the Stalinist war position by the editor, Morrow. In it Morrow quotes the above passage from Lenin's criticism of Junius as it appeared for the first time in English in the British *Labour Monthly* of January, 1935. The quotation deserves some comment:

1. The *Labour Monthly* translation is no good. Morrow unwittingly accepts the bad translation because it seems to support the SWP position on China against ours! Here is how the last sentence of the Lenin quotation above appears in the *Fourth International*:

We thus see a national liberation war, in which the imperialist co-operation [with the colony—F.M.] appears merely as a secondary element without serious significance. . . .

Whereupon Morrow triumphantly comments: "Lenin was considering the great colonial and semi-colonial countries like India, China and Persia, fighting their main imperialist oppressors where it was possible for the imperialist coöperation with the colonial country to be 'merely a secondary element.'"

What Lenin actually wrote was not that "imperialist co-operation" with the colony (as Morrow interpolates) was the secondary element, but that a just national war for independence was possible in which "imperialist rivalry" would be "a contributory element of no great importance." The difference between the two words (coöperation or rivalry) is of key importance. Lenin considered the American war for independence a just war, not in spite of French imperialist "coöperation" with the thirteen colonies, but in spite of the "rivalry" between French and English imperialism. Why? Because, to repeat his words, this rivalry was only "a contributory element of no great importance." Every student of the American Revolution knows this. The revolution was not a *product* of the rivalry between France or Spain and England; the revolution was at no time an integral part of a war between France and England (indeed, there was no war between the two countries at the time of the American Revolution; there was only the continued "rivalry" which had taken the form of war a few years before the revolution and in the Napoleonic wars after the revolution); the revolution was at no time subordinated to the struggle between France and England; the revolution was at no time directed or controlled by French or Spanish imperialism; at no time did the American bourgeoisie

come under the financial, political or military domination of French or Spanish imperialism, even though French *coöperation* with Washington at one time became so important (Rochambeau's expedition) as to be virtually decisive.

It is from the point of view of these *facts*, known to most schoolboys, that Lenin was able to say that Anglo-French rivalry was only a "contributory element of no great importance." We shall see presently if the same can be said about the present situation of China.

2. Morrow, who had to rely on a poor translation of Lenin, may be excused for the moment. But Wright knows better. He is acquainted with the important passage from Lenin "in the original Russian." Does he quote it? No; he paraphrases it in his own words but at even greater length than the original. We get the same stupid analogy between China's war today and the war of 1776. He even improves on Morrow, and adds another "historical instance." Marx supported the North in the American Civil War. Yet,

Russian warships under the command of Grand Duke Alexis appeared in San Francisco harbor at one of the critical junctures in the relations between Washington and France and Great Britain. Thus, in order to defend its national existence and independence, the most progressive government in the world at that time, the United States, was obliged to ally itself with the most reactionary régime in the world—czarist Russia.

This "historical instance" is supposed to justify support of China in the Second World War! Unbelievable again, but we are ready to take our oath that it is to be found, black on white, in the April, 1942, issue of the *Fourth International*, for all English-reading people to look at with wonderment for generations to come.

What good Alexis' warships were supposed to do Lincoln in San Francisco harbor, we don't exactly know; perhaps they were maneuvering to get the firing range of Richmond or Vicksburg. But Wright misses a real bull's eye when he fails to mention that Alexander II really sent *two* Russian fleets, and one of them dropped anchor in New York harbor. And that the Czar gave his admirals sealed orders to place themselves at Lincoln's disposal if France or England intervened militarily on the side of the South. And that this "hint" was enough to cool the ardor of Napoleon III, who was playing with the idea of a coalition to support the South.

But, pray, what has all this interesting and erudite detail to do with China in the war today? Was there, perhaps, in the early 1860's, a big, all-dominating war going on between Russia and France, with Lincoln (the North) allying himself with Russia to help Alexander win his war over the Little Napoleon? Was there even one shell fired from the famous Russian warships, except perhaps in salute? Did the Grand Duke Alexis perhaps replace McClellan or Grant—or Lincoln—as commander of the Union armies? Was the conduct of the Civil War by the North in any way at all (except for the obscure incident mentioned by Wright) dependent upon the Grand Duke, or the Czar, or the Czarina, or the Czarevitch, or the whole Russian Imperial Court?

And while we're at it, let us also ask why Wright inflates the whole trivial business of Russia in the American Civil War to the imposing proportions of an "alliance"? Is it in order to gloss over the treacherous capitulatory and reactionary alliance the Chinese national bourgeoisie has made with "democratic" imperialism by suggesting that, after all, Lincoln "also" made an alliance with a reactionary power which was "approved" by Marx? We will return to this question later.

Lenin and Zinoviev on Colonial Liberation

But back to Wright's paraphrasing of the quotation from Lenin's criticism of Junius. Why didn't he quote Lenin? And why did Morrow stop so short with that part of the quotation which he reproduced? It is the part that follows that is right to the point! For in it Lenin discusses precisely the question now at issue. Here is what he says:

A war for national liberation waged, for example, by an alliance of Persia, India and China against certain imperialist powers is quite possible and probable, for it follows logically from the national liberation movements now going on in those countries. Whether such a war will be transformed into an imperialist war among the present imperialist powers will depend on a great many concrete circumstances, and it would be ridiculous to guarantee that these circumstances will arise. (*Works*, vol. XIX, p. 205.)

Is it any wonder Morrow lost the balance of his quotation? Or that Wright suddenly found it expedient to paraphrase Lenin instead of quoting from him? Lenin does not speak of a war of China against an imperialist power or powers, but a war against them of China, plus India, plus Persia (now Iran). Such a war Lenin would support (just as we supported the "isolated" war of China against Japan up to the time this war was decisively incorporated into the general imperialist World War). But suppose a general war among the imperialist big powers broke out and "swallowed up" the war of the colonial alliance against the imperialist oppressor? Lenin replies, in effect: That *might* happen, in which case it would be impermissible to continue giving support, but "it would be ridiculous to guarantee" that it *will* happen. That is why he wrote in his polemic against Kievsky:

In short, a war between imperialist great powers (i.e., powers which oppress a number of foreign nations, entangling them in the web of dependence on finance capital, etc.) or war in *alliance* with them, is an imperialist war. Such is the war of 1914-16; the plea of "defense of the fatherland" in *this* war is deception, it is used to justify the war. (*Works*, vol. XIX, p. 220. Lenin's emphasis.)

Even more specific on this score was Zinoviev, who during

the war was closest to Lenin and his thoughts. In writing of a colonial war against an imperialist government as a just war, Zinoviev remarked in a footnote that this thesis "perhaps requires a certain limitation." To illustrate, he gave the example of Persia (a country of the "third type"!) during the First World War. In September-October, 1915, the Persian government, as a liberal Russian paper put it, "evidently seriously studied the question of liberating itself from Russo-English influence [!] by means of an alliance with Germany and Turkey." The Shah was preparing the first rebellious steps, but "the appearance of a Russian detachment before the walls of Teheran—succeeded in putting an end to the Shah's vacillations." A real uprising then broke out in the country; revolutionary committees were formed in the center and in the South; but in the winter and spring of 1916 the uprising was crushed by Russian troops.

"What attitude," asked Zinoviev, "should be taken toward such a state of things in Persia?" And here is the interesting reply from Lenin's then closest collaborator:

It is obvious that the socialists sympathize with all their heart with the revolutionary movement in Persia which is directed at Russo-English imperialists. *But in case Persia had participated in the war of 1914-16 and placed itself on the side of the German coalition, the Persian war would only have been an unimportant episode in the imperialist robber war.* Objectively, the rôle of Persia would have been very little distinguished from the rôle of Turkey in the war years of 1914-16. (Lenin-Zinoviev, *Gegen den Strom*, "The Second International and the War Problem," by G. Zinoviev, pp. 499f. My emphasis—M. S.)

The hopeless confusion into which Wright got himself in trying to make a distinction between the Leninist position on Serbia in the First World War and China in the Second World War, we have already seen. What remains to be seen, in the light of what is so clearly and explicitly written by Zinoviev, is how Wright will distinguish between the rôle of Persia in the First World War and the rôle of China today. For those who can witness gyrations without yawning, the spectacle is worth looking forward to.

What Are the Real Facts of the War?

There is left, finally, in determining our attitude toward China in the war, the question of "fact" mentioned by Wright with such unexpected suddenness and in such violent discordance with everything that went before. Most important question, indeed! The question of "fact" to establish is simply this: Has the war of China against Japan become an integral and subordinate part of the general inter-imperialist World War, or has it not? Or, to use Lenin's formula: in judging the Sino-Japanese war, is the inter-imperialist rivalry or conflict "a contributory element of no great importance" or is the national struggle of China "of no great importance compared with the all-determining imperialist rivalry"? A third position, sharply distinguished from either of these two, is out of the question.

Now, judged by the fairly precise yardstick of Lenin, there would seem to be no possibility of two answers to the question of China in the war today. That is, provided one based himself on the facts, the realities, which are universally acknowledged. More accurately, all but universally acknowledged," for Wright and his political colleagues have an almost unique

and mystical conception of what is happening in the world at war today.

To all ordinary people, and especially to those for whom the word "dialectics" is not a license for uttering the most demonstrable nonsense, the Second World War is a *total war*. It is not necessary to lay claim to, or possess, special military-strategical ability to understand that in this war, far more than even the First World War, all the present fronts are inseparably linked and mutually interdependent. The character of the war, the conduct of the war and (for the present) the outcome of the war, are determined by the two couples of imperialist titans which dominate each camp respectively, the United States and Great Britain, and Germany and Japan. (Within each of the two, in turn, there is a senior and a junior partner!) *All* the other countries in the two great coalitions are reduced to vassalage to the giants which differs in each case only in degree. This vassalage is determined by the economic (industrial-technical), and therefore the financial, and therefore the political, and therefore the military domination of the war by the two great "power-couples." Italy is less de-

pendent upon the masters of its coalition than Hungary, and Hungary less than Slovakia. But these facts do not alter the state of their vassalage—they only determine its degree. Stalinist Russia is less dependent upon the masters of its coalition than China (it would lead us too far afield to show in what sense, however, it is even more dependent upon U.S.-England than China), and China less than the Philippines. But again, these facts only determine the degree of their vassalage. Except, therefore, for inconsequential cranks and special pleaders in the bourgeois world, everyone in it understands the total nature of the war as a whole; the total nature of each coalition; the relative position and weight of each sector of the coalition; the mutual interdependence of all fronts.

None of this exists in the dream-world of Wright and his friends. To them, there are at least two and perhaps three distinct and separate wars going on at the same time, but, in essence, parallel to each other. There is the imperialist war between U.S.-England and the Axis (we are compelled to assume that the SWP considers this an imperialist war since it has not found it necessary to give its opinion on the subject). Then there is another war—between Germany and the Soviet Union. A third war—at least one phase of the second war—is that between Japan and China, and in it the SWP supports China.

Are these two wars (or three wars) taking place independently of each other? Whatever our theories may have been yesterday, or are today, all the facts speak against such an assertion.

Anglo-American and Japanese imperialism have been fighting a most desperate war since December 7, 1941, for the domination of the Pacific and of the Asiatic continent. In the course of a few months, territories of hundreds of thousands of square miles, inhabited by tens of millions of people, have changed hands, so to speak. Does Wright expect any Marxist, any person with a little political experience, or, in general, any moderately informed and moderately sane person to believe that this war between the two big imperialisms

is only “a contributory element of no great importance” in relation to the war of China against Japan? Is this the kind of “fact” on which Wright bases himself in order to determine his position? Who is expected to take seriously a comparison between Czar Alexander II’s intrigues against Napoleon III and their relation to the American Civil War, on the one side, and the world-shaking, all-determining war for the domination of the Orient between the U.S. and Japan and its relations to China’s war, on the other?

In the environs of the radical movement, somewhere in New York, there is a man named Marlen, whose sufferings indicate the *monotypic* described in the studies of Wechniakoff and Letourneau. The mania which preoccupies his life is the insistent, year-in-year-out declaration that the only war going on in the world since 1939 has been the all-imperialist struggle to crush Russia, cunningly concealed behind a phoney war which the democratic and fascist imperialisms have pretended to carry on against each other. The invasions of Poland, Norway, the Balkans, Holland and Belgium and France, of Iceland and Greenland and Libya, the air raids on England and Germany—all these are just cleverly contrived frauds, jokingly arranged among England, Germany, Italy and the United States to create the impression that they have a war on among themselves, whereas in reality the only war being fought is the one all of them are fighting against Russia.

Wright puts forward a variant—a much milder variant, to be sure, but a variant nevertheless—of our monotypic’s ultra-mundane animadversions. Russia’s war with Germany is independent of the war with Germany of U.S.-Britain, with which Russia is allied. China’s war with Japan is independent of the war with Japan of U.S.-Britain, with which China is allied. In both cases, presumably, the inter-imperialist war is merely a second-rate, contributory element of no great importance in the “just wars” of Russia and China, or as Trotsky would have put it, it’s like “a war on the face”—not pleasant, “reactionary,” but in any case not decisive in judging the main qualities of the face itself.

The Historical References Re-examined

If we go back to Wright’s fabulous historical instances, the answer to our present problem becomes still simpler. The Russo-French rivalry did not *dominate* the American Civil War; the Anglo-American war with Japan *does* dominate the war in the East, and only a purblind dogmatist or a man in a *haluk* can regard it as a sort of minor side-show in China’s war with Japan.

Baron von Steuben was a great drill-master of the American colonial army and Rochambeau and his French monarchist forces were a most valuable aid to the American colonial bourgeoisie; but the latter was at all times the real master of its political and military position. On the other hand, the American General Stillwell, as head of the Chinese general staff, symbolizes the decisive subordination of China’s struggle to the interests and exigencies of the imperialist war between Washington and Tokyo (the American press speaks uniformly and with full justification of “Stillwell’s Chinese troops”). Washington gladly accepted the aid of Rochambeau’s troops, it is true; but the American colonial army did not have to fight to preserve the rule of French monarchist imperialism over the Louisiana Territory! The Chinese colonial army, however, now that it has been incorporated into the general World War, has already fought under its new com-

mander, General Stillwell (presumably he represents the “independent rôle” China is now playing!), for the preservation of the rule of British imperialism in Burma, while the “generalissimo,” Chiang, is sent on a mission to India as recruiting sergeant for Anglo-American imperialism.

Finally, the victory of Rochambeau’s French monarchist troops over Cornwallis helped the colonies win their freedom and independence from England, without *in the slightest degree* bringing them under the domination of French imperialism. Again, that is why Lenin could speak of Anglo-French rivalry during the American Revolution as a “contributory element of no great importance.” Now, once more, we ask: Can that situation legitimately be compared by any rational person with the subordinating alliance the Chinese bourgeoisie has made with Anglo-American imperialism? *Will the latter’s victory over Japan help China win its freedom and independence?* If Wright’s fantastic comparison has any meaning accessible to the mind of an earthly being, his answer to this question must be in the affirmative. But the resolution of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International spoke its prophetic word on this question several years ago: “The imperialists of the West will intervene against Japan only to preserve their own robber interests in the Far East. If Japanese

imperialism should be defeated in China by its imperialist rivals, and not by the revolutionary masses, this would signify the enslavement of China by Anglo-American capital." (*Resolutions*, etc., p. 85.)

Not a word about this from Wright, however. He is too busy amusing himself with his ludicrous denunciations of Shachtman as a criminal and a traitor and a two-time deserter. Pathetic hack! He is so busy, indeed, that he does not find time or space for a single word of criticism—much less denunciation—of Chiang Kai-shek, as representative of the national bourgeoisie, not for accepting material aid from one imperialist group or another (which is perfectly permissible in itself, and to which nobody could object), but for his complete capitulation to Anglo-American imperialism. It is startling, when one stops to think of it, but it is true. Instead, Wright actually glosses over, embellishes, defends this imperialist alliance! Startling; unbelievable; but it is true.

He teaches us that Chiang under Anglo-American imperialism is not quite the same as Wang Chin-Wei under Japanese imperialism. Isn't the flavor of this argument reminiscent of the good old days of the dispute in the Russian Communist Party in 1927?

He writes: "Shachtman declares that the Chinese troops in Burma are fighting on behalf of Anglo-American imperialism. Is this so? Yes and no. More no than yes." But it is not Shachtman he needs to convince of this puerile dream-theory; it is Anglo-American imperialism; it is Japanese imperialism; and not least of all, it is the bulk of the people of Burma. An unenviable job!

He writes: "China is freer today to play an independent rôle *vis-à-vis* Anglo-American imperialism than at any other time since 1937." How can he possibly write this, you may ask, in face of the increasingly patent subjection of China (military-strategical, political, economic) to Anglo-American imperialism? The only scientific answer to this legitimate question is: Wright is in a *haluk*.

We denounce Chiang and the class he represents for hav-

ing subordinated China's just war for independence to the needs and interests of one imperialist camp. We summon the Chinese masses, particularly the proletariat, to break the reactionary alliance with imperialism, as did the Russian masses in 1917, and resume the struggle for independence on a higher level, the only level on which it can now be conducted. Wright says: "We, on the contrary, say to the Chinese workers: The Japanese invader is the main enemy. Fire at Japan first—and *shoot with anybody who shoots in the same direction*." (My emphasis—M.S.) Could there be a more craven or deceptive way of selling the Chinese masses the reactionary alliance with imperialism? We warn against the "good friends" who, you see, are "shooting in the same direction"; Wright says: It's all right; nothing much to worry about; Lenin approved of the same kind of alliance as far back as 1776 and 1861.

After the Chinese bourgeoisie has integrated, i.e., sold out, the Chinese national struggle to the struggle of one imperialist camp against the other, Wright still says: "Given the opportunity, Chiang will again betray the Chinese people..." This is like shouting a warning to a woman who has just been ravished: "Keep an eye on that man, he may yet attack you."

Just when the Chinese masses need an alarm signal, Wright sings them a lullaby. Chiang is only a tool, but "a tool is one thing; a finished job is something else again." China isn't Ethiopia; "China's position is not the same as Slovakia's and Norway's but just the opposite" (yes, the very, very opposite!). Do England and the U.S. completely dominate Chiang? "We answer, emphatically no." (Wright's assurances are about the only consolation the poor "generalissimo" has nowadays.) The Chinese aren't really fighting for British imperialism in Burma. China is freer today to play an independent rôle than for five years past. And so on and on and on, interrupted only with reminders that the traitors to watch out for are... Oehler and Shachtman.

Who disseminates this dope to the Chinese people and their friends—yes, this dope, this narcotic, this opiate? The self-styled, self-patented, self-copyrighted "Trotskyist."

John G. Marlborough S'en va-t-en Guerre

Before taking our overdue departure from Wright, there are a few additional comments worth recording.

The main enemy of China today, he says, is Japan; the main enemy of India is Britain. Good, let us accept this for the moment. And who was the main enemy of Burma? Presumably that country stood in the same category as India before the Japanese conquest, and in the same category as China following the Japanese conquest.

Wright adds: "We remain supporters of national struggles whether they are led by Chiang in China, by Nehru or Bose in India. This is what we mean by *unconditional support*." We already know from no less an authority than Wright himself whose tool Chiang is. And the other two whose struggles he supports unconditionally? "If Anglo-American imperialists ever had a tool, they surely possess one in the person of Nehru. Hitler is operating as best he can with Bose." Good, very good.

Now, wars are not fought in people's heads, but on land and sea and in the air, by one body of armed men against another body of armed men. In a war between two camps, it is possible for a third party to oppose both; it is possible to support one against the other; but it is not possible to support

both at the same time. Amendment, please: it is not possible for ordinary, earth-bound people; but for Wright anything is possible.

Wright supports Nehru's "national struggle" which is backed (i.e., dominated) by Anglo-American imperialism, and he supports Bose's "national struggle" which is backed (i.e., dominated) by German-Japanese imperialism. Nehru and Co., despite all their impotent phrasemongering, will fight, at the showdown, at the side of (i.e., under the direction of) the "Anglo-Indian" (i.e., the British imperial) army, on the grounds that Japan is the main immediate enemy. Bose, on the other hand, will fight under the direction of the Japanese imperialist army, on the ground that Britain is the main immediate enemy. Which of these "two national struggles" will Wright "unconditionally support"?

Since in India there are "two tools in two camps," writes the muddler, then, "according to Shachtman's logic, it would therefore follow that India's national struggle is twice-damned and doubly unworthy of his 'critical support.'" His murderous sarcasm included, Wright has accidentally stumbled on a fairly correct thought. But what, under the circumstances, is to be done "according to Wright's logic"? We can only con-

clude that "it would therefore follow" that India's national struggle (excuse, please: struggles) are twice-blessed and doubly worthy of unconditional support—both struggles at the same time and with mutually annihilating vigor!

Furthermore, Wright would surely not be less generous than he is to China or India. If he is prepared to give "unconditional support" to Bose, then surely he would not withhold it from the leaders of the Burmese "national struggle" who also decided to "shoot with anybody who shoots in the same direction"—anybody, in this case, being the Japanese. The fact that he was already committed to "unconditional support" of the Chinese in Burma should not deter him from the same support to the Burmese "national leaders." And in point of fact, Wright declares in his article that at one and the same time he was for support to China in Burma ("Stilwell's Chinese troops") and for support of the "Burmese peasants" (Tojo's Burmese troops!).

A dull-witted person may scratch his head in puzzlement over how it is possible to support *both* armies at the same time when they are fighting each other, and add to that miracle of military science the political miracle of not supporting imperialism. Idiot! Wright will shout, with an accent from the

original Russian edition. Don't "slither all over the landscape, depending upon episodic developments in the field of diplomacy, or moves on military maps." Be like me! I depend upon nothing. I hang freely suspended in mid-air between two entirely unmacerated and undigested quotations from Lenin.

Here we bid farewell to Wright and to all his fumings and cursings and imprecations. Are they really meant for us, or mainly for us? There is reason to believe otherwise. Is it not just barely possible a pseudonymous struggle, that the names "Oehler" or "Shachtman" actually stand for unknown persons who are members of Wright's party with doubts and even outright disagreements over Wright's policy; persons who, Wright believes, can be intimidated out of their views by having them denounced publicly as "desertion," and "petty-bourgeois," and "ultra-leftist," and anything else that paper will allow to be printed on it? For it is hard to believe that even in a party where discussion is so violently frowned upon, there is not more than one thoughtful militant to challenge the utterly indefensible official line. It is even harder to believe that every section of the Fourth International will simply say "Amen" to the line and its apologist. We shall see.

The Future of the Colonial Struggles

Is there then no future for China's struggle against imperialism? Is the struggle for freedom of the colonial countries and peoples in general a hopeless one, at least while the World War is on?

Yes, the struggle of the colonies for freedom is utterly hopeless during the present World War *if they continue the course of serving one imperialist camp against the other*. That is today the course of the bourgeoisie in every colonial and semi-colonial country, and its tragic results multiply every day in Latin America, in Europe, in Africa and above all in Asia. It is not the course toward independence, but rather to deeper, more exhausting, more ignoble dependency upon imperialism, that is, enslavement to it.

To cover up their complete capitulation to imperialism, their betrayal of the genuine struggle for national independence, the Chiangs, and the Wangs, the Nehrus and the Boses, the Sultans of the East Indies and the Lions of Judah, the Quezons and the Sakdalistas say: Allied with our Great and Powerful Friend and Protector, we are continuing the struggle for national freedom. Join and fight with us, workers and peasants!

To cover up their sordid imperialist aims, each of the two big war coalitions, the "power-couples," who hate the very thought of any national freedom except their own freedom to oppress and exploit all the weaker and smaller countries, says to the skeptical masses: In union with our brave allies from the little nations and the colonies who have so long suffered under the yoke of the other coalition, we are fighting for their national emancipation. Come, support us in this noble task!

The Second World War, imperialist to the marrow, is total and all-dominating. In its first stage, at least, it was inevitable that it draw into the grip of its iron ring all the small countries, all the would-be neutral countries, all the isolated national wars and struggles for national freedom. That is where these struggles are today—within the iron ring of the imperialist war.

Does this mean that this is where they will remain? Does

this mean that there can be no struggle for national independence by the colonies or by other oppressed countries? Does this mean that revolutionary Marxists can no longer support any national struggle?

Deserter! You have deserted the struggle for national emancipation! screams Wright. Poor chap. He seems to think that an amateur slanderer will succeed with people who were unmoved by practiced Stalinist professionals. Yes, the struggle for national emancipation of the colonies *has* been deserted—by the Chiangs and the Nehrus and the Boses and the Wangs, by the people who led and directed it and then, at the showdown, brought it into the imperialist war camp. The problem is to lead the national movement out of the camp of imperialism and into the field of struggle against imperialism!

In other words, we are not one whit less the partisans of the fight for freedom of small nations and colonies today than we were yesterday. China's struggle for national independence is not one whit less just in our eyes today than it was yesterday; nor is the struggle of India, of Iran, of Ethiopia. What we want is precisely to launch that struggle all over again where it has been strangled or betrayed; to develop it more broadly, more militantly, more consciously wherever it has already started; to help it to victory over our common enemy where it is already engaged in struggle. The precondition for this victory, however, is for the national movements to free themselves from the imperialist bondage into which they have been sold by their false leaders, the bourgeoisie. In other words, the precondition for the victory is to break the iron ring of imperialist domination and exploitation of the national emancipation movements.

The ring is made of iron; it is not easy to break; but it is not unbreakable. Where will it break? As in 1917, at its weakest point, and it is not possible to say right now where that is. When will it break? It is even more difficult to make predictions on dates. Who will break it? To this question we have a categorical and confident answer: the revolutionary proletariat. Be it in the imperialist metropolis or in the backward colony, the working class is the only one capable of leading

the break through the ring. Its leadership, and only its leadership, will assure the *independent rôle* of the struggle for national independence, not "even" in the colonies but precisely in the colonies, because that leadership will at the same time assure the independent class road, the road to socialism, for the colonial countries. No other road is now practically possible.

This should be clear, especially in the case of China. The national bourgeoisie led the fight against Japan largely under the impatient pressure of the masses, whose struggle the bourgeoisie was afraid to "leave leaderless"; and above all in the hope of attaining that great ideal of the colonial bourgeoisie, customs autonomy, which would enable it to grow and fatten without heavy tribute abroad. But talk about "customs autonomy" for China in the present titanic struggle between the two big imperialisms is utterly ridiculous and nobody knows it better than the Chinese bourgeoisie. Above all else in importance, however, is its knowledge that *in the conditions of the imperialist war, a genuine struggle for national independence demands such an arousing and mobilizing of the masses,*

such a revolutionization of their political thinking and acting as would instantly threaten and immediately thereafter destroy the rule of the colonial bourgeoisie itself. There is the thorny point! With the country threatened by both imperialist groups, we repeat, Chiang could carry on a real struggle for national independence only by setting in motion the revolutionary forces that would eliminate him and what he represents. Hence, when the World Imperialist War broke over its head, the bourgeoisie did not waver for a moment. It took out a commission in the camp of imperialism and brought its "national struggle" along with it as useful camouflage. This reduces the national bourgeoisie to pretty small potatoes, to be sure; but the alternative—the continuation and intensification of the struggle for independence—meant reduction to zero. Wright does not of course begin to understand the dynamics of this development; he still asks, challengingly, how the bombing of Pearl Harbor succeeded in "blowing up China's war"? But the colonial bourgeoisie understands to perfection.

For a Marxist Colonial Policy

It is therefore on the basis of objective analysis, and not of rhetoric, that we declare that only the proletariat can break through the ring of the imperialist war, only the leadership of the proletariat can re-launch the just wars of the colonies against imperialism, or the just wars of conquered nations and peoples against their conquerors. Without the support of other social groups, especially the peasantry, the proletariat will not succeed in this struggle, to be sure. But with the leadership of the proletariat, the struggle for national independence, be it in Norway or Slovakia or India or China, cannot now even hope to succeed.

The colonial and semi-colonial countries, especially the more politically advanced, like China and India, have certainly not said their last word. The proletariat of a country like China was brought to its feet in the course of years of national struggle, not merely by the ideal of national independence but also by the ideal of social freedom. The attainment of both was bound up in its mind, as it was in fact, with the struggle against the foreign oppressor. It is likely that it will long endure the siphoning off of its efforts and struggles to the interests of one group of these oppressors as against another? The colonial working class will be least of all inclined to continue long in a war to decide that it should be ruled by a whiskey-besotted British democrat instead of by an equally depraved Japanese martinet, or vice versa. What will this working class do when it realizes the conflict between what its rôle is and what its rôle should be?

Wright terrifies weak-minded children by writing: "Oehler and Shachtman today say in effect: Chiang is the main enemy." The formula is not bad; only, because it is too summary it can lead to misunderstandings; and that alone is why it is not our formula but rather our critic's inadequate paraphrase. The "main enemy" of a colonial country which is oppressed and exploited by an imperialist power—this is the

ABC of Marxism—is imperialism and remains imperialism so long as the country remains in a colonial or semi-colonial state. And imperialism is indeed the "main enemy" I would tell the Chinese worker and peasant to fight against.

But this generally correct formula becomes an abstraction, if not a downright deception, if it is used as a substitute for that truth which is always concrete. In the concrete situation, today as in 1914, the immediate rulers of China, Chiang and his national bourgeoisie, *prevent* the masses from fighting the main enemy, imperialism. Chiang makes the Chinese masses fight one imperialist power in behalf of another imperialist power—which is an altogether different thing from fighting *imperialism*. That is why I say to the Chinese masses, not in Wright's brusque, unilluminating and malicious formula, but at more explicit length:

Now, today, in order to fight your classic foe, imperialism, it is necessary to remove the main obstacle in the road of that fight, Chiang. That means, remove the class he represents, for it now fears you, the masses, more than it envies imperialism and it has therefore put you under the control of one of the imperialist war coalitions. In its place you must put into power the only class whose interests, whose social cohesion and character make its rule the only guarantee today that China can gain its national independence: the working class. The bourgeoisie can desert the struggle for national freedom and has deserted it. The working class will not.

This is the counsel that the Fourth International must give the long-suffering, oft-betrayed peoples of the colonies, and no other. When the hundreds of millions rise to act on this counsel, the whole world will shake. There is no possibility of doubt, once it happens, that it will be the final conflict.

MAX SHACHTMAN.