

The New _____ **INTERNATIONAL**

SEPTEMBER • 1945

Balance Sheet of the War

An Editorial Statement

The British Vote for Socialism

By J. R. Johnson

Atomic Energy and Socialism

By Willem De Voorter

The Question of Unity

Documents of the SWP and the WP

For a New Trade Union Program

By David Coolidge

Agrarian Struggles in the United States

By Willie Gorman

SINGLE COPY 20c

ONE YEAR \$1.50

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Vol. XI

No. 6, Whole No. 99

Published monthly, except June and July, by the New International Publishing Co., 114 West 14th Street, New York 11, N. Y. Telephone: CHelsea 2-9681. Subscription rates: \$1.50 per year; bundles, 14c for five copies and up. Canada and foreign: \$1.75 per year; bundles, 16c for five and up. Re-entered as second class matter August 25, 1945, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Editor: MAX SHACHTMAN

Managing Editor: ERNEST ERBER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Notes of the Month:

BALANCE SHEET OF THE WAR 163

Articles:

THE BRITISH VOTE FOR SOCIALISM

By J. R. Johnson 170

ATOMIC ENERGY AND SOCIALISM

By Willem De Voorter 175

FOR A NEW TRADE UNION PROGRAM

By David Coolidge 181

THE QUESTION OF UNITY

Documents of the SWP and the WP 184

AGRARIAN STRUGGLES IN THE U. S.

By Willie Gorman 187

PLENTY FOR ALL

The Meaning of Socialism

By ERNEST LUND

A Popular Presentation of the Socialist Viewpoint

Why There Is an Age of Plenty

Why There Is Poverty in This Age of Plenty

Who Controls the Wealth Labor Produces

Why There Are Rich and Poor

What an Equitable Society Is

How It Can Be Achieved

Socialism as the Hope of Humanity

Ernest Lund has provided, in this pamphlet, an indispensable instrument for revolutionary socialist agitation. Avoiding the use of technical terminology, and confining himself to a simple and forceful exposition of the basic ideas of Marxism, he has written a pamphlet that any worker can read and understand.

Sixty Pages

10 Cents per Copy

Seven Cents per Copy in Bundles of Five or More

(Revised Edition Available Soon)

Published by the

WORKERS PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

114 West 14th Street

New York 11, N. Y.

I enclose _____ for _____ copies of PLENTY FOR ALL.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

VOLUME XI

SEPTEMBER, 1945

NUMBER 6

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Balance Sheet of the War

The war has come to an end on the same note on which it began—sudden, terroristic mass destruction. Hitler's blitzkrieg in Poland and later in the Low Countries and France stupefied and horrified the world. The ruins of Warsaw, Rotterdam, Stalingrad and Coventry became the symbols of fascism's New Order. A few years later, the Allies (imperialist democracy plus imperialist democracy plus totalitarian despotism) showed their vast technical and moral superiority over Hitlerism: they began with the repeated holocausts in Hamburg, which made the bombing of Rotterdam look like a Sunday duck-hunt, and ended with the extermination of a whole city by means of a single atomic bomb. Neither German fascism nor Japanese militarism could withstand these subtle proddings by Democratic Humanism. They succumbed, and victory fell to the Peace-Loving Nations and Prostituted Science.

The war, if we date its beginning with the attack on Poland, lasted six years. It was fought—both sides gave the solemn assurance—to make humanity a head taller. On the one side, there was the promise of the New Order. On the other, the promise to regain, preserve and extend democracy and freedom. The New Order was a reactionary imposture and is now a shambles—one head dangling at the other end of its heels, the other lost in oblivion, the third blithering for mercy. What has been gained by the victory of the Allies?

Item: Millions of dead, maimed, wounded, millions driven mad or half-mad, millions making up the most important productive force in society; millions—if a "sentimental" note may be introduced into a cool business calculation—of human beings. But do not sacrifices have to be made in the interests of progress? Very well, a few millions sacrificed to progress.

Item: Millions of fertile acres destroyed for years during the war and for years to follow, by the torch in Russia, by frenzied abuse in Germany, by brine in Holland, by bomb and flame-thrower in a dozen countries. Let that be written off in the name of progress and in consideration of the fact that anyway there are fewer mouths to feed—the dead feel no hunger.

Item: Tens of billions of dollars' worth of machinery, buildings, raw materials, plus military and naval products of all kinds destroyed on a global, scientific, systematic, planned, organized scale, exceeding in dimensions and social significance the destruction of all the previous wars of mankind put together.

Item: Tens of billions of dollars in war debts saddled upon the peoples all over the world for generations to come, at least until they rise to throw off the saddle and the rider.

Item: The fall of the fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany and the liberation of all the countries they dominated. But liberation only from *their* rule. Every one of these countries is poorer now than it was before the war; many of them poorer than they were during the war. Every one of these countries is less free and more enslaved than it was before the war; many of them not more free than they were under Mussolini or Hitler; some of them are even less free today than they were under the Axis.

Item: For every person liberated from Axis rule by the Allies, the Allies have enslaved not less than two or three persons. What has changed are the names and addresses of the slaves, but not the slavery.

Item: The old pre-war colonies are no nearer freedom and independence today, with the victory of democracy, than they were on the eve of the war which brought the temporary victory of the Axis. The former Italian colonies now have the right to speak English to their overseer instead of Italian. The former Japanese colonies now have the right to eschew Japanese and to speak instead in such democratic tongues as American, Dutch, English and—language forgotten by them since the last day of the Czars—Russian. The Indians still have the right to bow to the white sahibs from London and Glasgow until they are replaced by the white sahibs from Washington.

Item: The threat of world rule of the German-Japanese duumvirate, with Italy assisting, has been dispelled. The world is now ruled by the American-Russian duumvirate, with England assisting.

Item: In general, all over the world, the people are less free, have fewer rights, more restrictions on these fewer rights, than before the war; the people are poorer, hungrier, sicker, more exhausted than before the war.

Item: Our greatest progress—the atomic bomb! At one time even the artillery of capitalism opened the road to human progress by shattering the walls of feudal reaction. Now its weapons, from trench dagger and pistol to .88's and .90's and atomic bombs merely destroy human life and social wealth. The atomic bomb is said to contain only about one pound of the deadly disintegrator in its war-head. There is no ground for disappointment in this. Capitalism is still capable of grandiose exploits. It started in this war with aerial bombs weighing only a few hundred pounds. After only a few years it had ten and twelve-ton blockbusters, breath-taking, life-taking, property-taking rockets with bigger ones already on the drawing-boards, suicide planes and other testimonials to progress. At the war's end, the atomic bomb had the destructive power of a couple of thousand block-busters. That was the *first* atomic bomb, and it could only destroy one city at a time. The Third World War, which *everybody* expects, will surely be ushered in by a far more highly developed, refined, cultured, civilized and democratic atomic bomb. On that score, capitalism has the greatest conceivable confidence.

There is the balance-sheet of only the more outstanding items of the war and the victory.

Why Hitler Lost the War

The war lasted six years, the war in Europe something less than that. Almost from the beginning we said that this would be a long war, that it *could* last ten or even twice ten years, that it could end not with a military victory but with a revolution. So far as the toll of destruction in life and wealth is concerned, the war was long enough, by any standard. However, the actual course and outcome of the war require a corrective that it is instructive to introduce even at the present time.

It can be said that in making an approximate judgment of the duration of the war, insufficient weight was attached to the strength of Russia under Stalinism, a strength which all underestimated—we less than others—and to the profligacy with which the bureaucracy poured its most abundant commodity, human life, into the tireless maw of the battlefield. More important even than this factor was the insufficient weight attached to the stunning economic potential of the United States which, productive enough to be the envy of the world in peaceful and “normal” times, proved to be even more productive, vastly more productive, in the preparation of modern engines of destruction and their dispatch to every war front of the world.

Yet even these correctives do not, in our view, make the picture or the prediction much more accurate. They do not even account decisively for the comparatively speedy defeat of the apparently impregnable Axis in Europe. Not even the atomic bomb would necessarily have accounted for it. In the frenetic race for superior means of destruction, the United States came in first, for a change, with the atomic bomb. But how far behind in the race was Germany? We do not know, and those who are in a position to have the facts are not divulging them. In any case, speculation on this point cannot very well replace a judgment of the events that occurred, that are known, that can be weighed.

Hitler broke his neck primarily on the basis of the failure of the fascist “New Order” in conquered Europe. *If* German imperialism had really been able to establish *order* in Europe; *if* it had really been able to *unite* Europe into a more or less harmonious and smoothly-functioning whole; *if* it had really been able freely to coordinate and utilize the massive resources, natural and human, economic and cultural, of the old continent; *if* it had really been able to subordinate Europe to a single, freely-united will—there is little doubt that it could have survived the joint efforts of the Allies. To put it more simply: it could have done this *if it had not been imperialist Germany*. The impregnability of a freely-united Europe, having at its command all the resources of the continent, the ability of such a Europe not only to resist the assault of any enemy but more than that, to revolutionize the rest of the world, is precisely what gives such power to the fundamental idea of a Socialist United States of Europe.

Fascism attempted to do what the proletariat (more accurately, the proletarian leadership) failed to do: unite Europe. But because it was fascism that made the attempt, it was doomed in advance to failure. Hitlerism could unite the continent only by converting it into a prison of the peoples and nations—rebelling peoples and nations. The rebellion, which continued to grow in scope and intensity, prevented the Hitlerite “unification” of Europe and, accordingly, prevented that thorough utilization of the continent’s resources by which alone Germany could hope to win the war.

Almost from the beginning—that is, as soon as the con-

quered peoples began to stir again from the stupor into which their sudden defeat had hurled them—Hitler was compelled to carry on a war on two fronts, war in the literal sense. The two-front war that ruined Hitler was not the war with Russia and the Western Allies, but the war against the rival imperialisms, on the one side, and the war against the revolutionary peoples of the occupied countries, on the other. In paying tribute to the latter in his Paris speech, General Eisenhower may have conceived his words as a graceful diplomatic gesture and nothing more. But that fact is that in stating that Germany could not have been defeated without these warring peoples, Eisenhower was making a political declaration of first-rate political importance.

Our Workers Party was among the first to analyze and establish the political significance of the national revolutionary underground movements in occupied Europe, and to do this with increasing clarity in a series of documents culminating in our resolution on the national question in Europe published in these pages a few years ago. The course of events has not required us to introduce a single serious amendment in our analysis or position. It may be admitted here, however, that the far-reaching effects of these national revolutionary movements upon the duration of the war were not given the consideration they deserved and needed. It was these movements that proved to be the force that made the decisive contribution to the ending of the war. We originally allotted this rôle, in a general way, to the “proletarian revolution” which we had forecast long before the war began but which did not come to pass. As may be seen, even in the case of Marxists, the adoption of a new analysis and a new prognosis does not always or immediately signify that the old analysis, valid on the basis of conditions that once obtained but are now outlived, is abandoned as thoroughly as the conditions demand. Objectivity further required adding in our own behalf that we were far from the last to understand this. As for the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, it simply does not understand that there is anything that requires understanding.

Because of its importance for today and especially for tomorrow, it is worth while repeating: Hitlerism broke its neck on the “national question.”

Once the war in Europe was won by the Allies, the war in Asia and the Pacific could not be in doubt for a minute. In Europe, the war donned the tattered garments of a crusade for democracy and freedom; millions of the people looked to the Allies as liberators if they were already conquered or as protected from hated fascism if they were threatened by it, as in England. But the war in Asia was as nakedly imperialistic and chauvinistic—racially chauvinistic in the authentic Nazi style—as any in history. There it was openly a question of holding tightly to the colonies-in-possession and of regaining those taken by the Japanese rival. “I am not the First King’s Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire,” said Churchill, with approving nods from colleagues Sinclair, Attlee and Bevin. India and Ceylon—remain British. Burma—back to Britain. Singapore—back to Britain. The East Indies—back to Holland-cum-America. Hong Kong—back to Britain (with the consent of the Peerless Leader in the struggle for China’s national freedom, Generalissimo—he is also a Generalissimo! — Chiang). Indo-China — back to France-cum-England-cum-America (and in reverse order of real power). The islands of the Pacific—to the United States, which, as the entire world knows, does not lust for an inch of foreign soil. Manchuria, its natural resources and its railroads—out of the hands of the base oppressor, Japan, and into the hands of the

noble liberator, Russia. Dairen and Port Arthur—out of the hands of the foreign ruler, Japan, and into the hands not of Czar Nicholas this time but of Czar Joseph. Korea—part for Russia, part for the United States, with the Koreans themselves allowed to publish a modest bulletin in Washington. The Philippines—independence postponed indefinitely, inasmuch as they are to be fortified and super-fortified as a military and naval base (i.e., a vassal) of the United States (against whom? Utterly prostrated and completely controlled Japan? Or perhaps against so notorious an aggressor nation as Costa Rica? There is a mystery worthy of the era of guaranteed peace inaugurated at the San Francisco Conference!).

The Far East is the scene of an orgy of the imperialist swine. For this, Japanese peasant boys and American farm and factory lads fevered and hungered and died in jungles, on beaches and on mountain ledges from Port Moresby to Okinawa, from Myitkyina to Midway.

The Two War Victors

There were seven more or less “big powers” when the war began—with countries like Poland and Yugoslavia counting as “medium powers.” The war has ended with only two decisive big powers, only two victors, the United States and Russia. Of the rest of what is jokingly referred to as the “Big Five,” England limps piteously behind the Big Two; France is a wreck which the others simply forget, half the time, to inform of their conferences; and China is simply told to lie still while it is dismembered and consumed. The smaller members of the “United Nations” are here, in the words of Jan Masaryk at the San Francisco Conference, “to be seen and not heard.” Other members, like Poland, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Greece, Yugoslavia and Albania, to say nothing of former enemies like Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria, can neither be heard *nor* seen. Italy, Germany and Japan are simply in prison.

The war therefore only accelerated the fundamental tendency of modern imperialist society. On a national scale it manifests itself in the growth of large-scale industry at the expense of small-scale industry, or monopoly at the expense of competition, of the big bourgeoisie at the expense of the middle classes; in the concentration of wealth at one pole and of poverty, misery and degradation at the other; in the reduction of the size of the ruling class combined with an enormous increase in the economic and political power of the monopolistic few—and in the increase in the numbers of the ruled and ruined classes. On an international scale, it manifests itself in the growth of world-monopolistic control by fewer and fewer great powers, on the one side, and the growth of the number of nations that have lost (or have been prevented from acquiring) economic and political power, that are subordinated to the diminishing number of increasingly powerful nations, that lose their national independence to one degree or another, that are maintained as or converted into spheres of influence, protectorates, vassals, semi-colonies or outright colonies of the great powers that subjugate, oppress, disfranchise and exploit them.

At the end of six years of the war for the Atlantic Charter, national sovereignty and independence—only two powers have emerged that enjoy full independence and are able to play a decisively independent rôle in world politics. *All* the other nations of the earth are dependent upon one or the other of them, to one degree or another. If England appears to be an exception, it is more a case of appearance than of reality. The

former workshop and banker of the world can no longer play an independent rôle. Throughout the war it depended on the United States for its defense—without the transatlantic cousin it would have perished. One flip of the pen in Washington—the cutting off of lend-lease—and all England is plunged into a panic amid heartrending wailings and lamentations by Mr. Attlee and the late Mr. Churchill. Once it was England that moved pawns about on the European chessboard. Now it is the colossus across the sea that is determined to reduce and is reducing England to the rôle of its pawn on the European continent. Irony of ironies: England as the European *agent* (not equal, but agent) of the power that grew out of its old thirteen colonies! England standing hat in hand before the new banker of the world! England standing on the American breadline, its back bowed to the ground under the heaviest financial burden in its history! The spectacle, one would think, is enough to warm the heart of the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*.

There is no room in this picture for indignation or commiseration. It is not “cruelty” that drives America, but necessity. Twenty years ago, Leon Trotsky started fashioning the key to an understanding of this irresistible development and of the problems it creates, in his brilliant and prophetic analysis of *Europe and America*. The United States, this continent-land, this land of vast resources and wealth and ingenuity, this land bursting with economic miracles, has become the first power in the world. But too late! It appears on the scene in an epoch of international capitalist decay. Nowhere is there durable peace in the world; poverty lasts longer than prosperity; the world market does not expand, it contracts. To maintain itself, the United States, like any other capitalist power, must expand. To expand, it must cut down the share of the world market of one country after another. In Trotsky's winged phrase, the United States seeks to put declining Europe on rations, diminishing rations, in order that its own share, its own “ration,” may more closely correspond to its productive capacity and appetite. The greater the share of the United States, the smaller the share of all the others. The smaller their share, the more dependent they become upon the American titan. What is economic dependence upon another country? The forerunner of political dependence. What is political dependence? The surest guarantee of economic dependence. What is imperialist war? The endeavor to determine by armed force the question of who will be dependent upon whom.

America has come too late, however. The great empires of modern capitalism were established and consolidated in another epoch, the epoch of the organic ascension of capitalism itself. The very rise of American imperialism, its very power, generates the most violent disturbances and convulsions throughout the world. Putting Europe on rations did not result in converting the Old World into a docile milch-cow of Wall Street. It only plunged the continent into an agonizing crisis, with Germany suffering most acutely. Germany—all Europe—had to break the tightening grip of American domination or be reduced to paralysis. It failed to find a way out of the crisis along the road of the socialist revolution. Such a revolution would not only have restored the economic health of Germany on an unprecedented scale, but would have ended with the unification of the continent on a socialist foundation with more than enough economic and political power to smash any further encroachments upon its life and liberty by American imperialism. Failing in one way, it found

another: Hitlerism, which deserves to bear the trade-mark "Made in America" as much as "Made in Germany." Totalitarianized Germany thereupon proceeded to its own variety of unification of Europe, mobilizing as best it could the economic resources of the continent so that it could, eventually (that is, after the "coördination" subordination of England and, of course, the conquest of at least European Russia), come to direct grips with the super-rival, America. How and why this attempt failed has already been dealt with.

The victory of the United States in the war does not mean an end to the social convulsions which its very power generated in Europe (and not only Europe) before the war. On the contrary. After an interval, the United States, precisely because of its now greater power, will produce even more violent upheavals of all kinds in Europe, at least that part of Europe (the West) which is its particular field of dominion. Whether it does it directly, or indirectly through its European "agent" or the country it must convert more and more into its agent, England, is of secondary importance. (Its very power will stimulate and accelerate upheavals in England, too, for that matter. The first one, for which the power of American imperialism is far from the last cause, is the rise of the Labor Government.) One way or another, Europe will resist the pressure exerted by hypertrophied American imperialism, because resistance is the condition for life. And the ensuing upheavals, convulsions, collisions and social disturbances of all kinds will inevitably have their repercussions in the United States in the form of tremors and then earthquakes shaking its own social structure and shaping its own political future. To quote Trotsky again, the further American imperialism extends its power in the world, the more this power rests on powder-kegs. American imperialism has not learned the big lesson of our time: This, the epoch in which the old empires are crumbling, is not the epoch in which new ones can be created and consolidated. It has learned *nothing* from the disaster of Hitlerite imperialism. How could it? Imperialism is not something that "learns," it is something that must be extirpated.

The Great Conqueror of the war — the Greatest Conqueror — is headed for what has so aptly been called the "gloom of victory."

Russia Over Europe (Or the Death of a Theory)

With the necessary changes, the same prospect lies ahead for Stalinist Russia. The bureaucracy seems to have attained a power which nobody ever expected, not even the bureaucracy itself. It dominates an empire which only the more delirious of the old Czars ever dreamed of: in the West, along a line from Northern Finland south past the Baltic lands, through Stettin, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Ljubljana, probably including Albania, with everything eastward—Northern Iran included, British Asia and China excluded — all the way through Manchuria, at least part of Korea, the southern half of Sakhalin and a few of the Kuriles. As with capitalist imperialism so with Stalinist imperialism — some of these lands are "spheres of influence," others "protectorates," still others vassals and puppets, and the rest colonies and semi-colonies.

In the Western European countries which Russia does not rule, it nevertheless possesses utterly subservient police agencies, the so-called Communist parties — but police agencies with a tremendous political and physical power among the masses and in affairs of state. It is in this respect — it is extremely important to note and consider — that Stalinist im-

perialism has an instrument at its disposal which no other imperialist power has or ever had, not even the Nazis with their international network of Nazi groups and grouplets.

Therewith, Russia has become the dominant power on the European continent. Mr. Bevin and, now that he has acquired the courage that comes with loss of office, Mr. Churchill, have allowed themselves to bleat and whimper, in a most deferential and anonymous reference to Russia, about the substitution in Eastern Europe of one totalitarianism for another. Once the really big concessions, the big spoils, have fallen into Stalin's hands, he is ready to make concessions *pro forma* to his "Allies" — but only tiny ones and not too many of them. Thus, after protest from Washington about the Bulgarian (not the Brazilian) elections, and another protest from London about the Bulgarian (but not the Greek) elections, in the best Stalino-Hitlerite manner, the Kremlin Khan has agreed, through his Sofia puppets, to postpone the vote. What will be changed? Nothing, except to give the G.P.U. more time in which to kill off all remnants of real and potential opposition to its rule in Bulgaria. Why should Stalin take seriously the protestations of British imperialism? What can it *do* to him? Refuse him loans and credits? It has none to refuse. Call him ugly names? Stalin's retort would be "crushing." Put him in a British prison? Ghandi, yes; Stalin, no. Send an expeditionary force against him? Against unarmed Indians, yes; against Stalin, no. The United States is in a far better position, of course, to exert pressure upon Stalin. But not as much as it would like to exert, not as much as it needs to exert to bring its now principal rival to his knees — far, far from it! Besides, Stalin is not without his own means of exerting pressure in the opposite direction, as he has amply demonstrated to all skeptics. He must pay respectful attention to the wishes of the United States; a timid, cowering attitude, necessary for France and even for England, is not necessary for Russia.

But the enslavement of Europe, even of Eastern Europe, does not mean the consolidation of the new Russian empire, the definitive triumph of Stalinist totalitarianism. The war is at an end, the masses are tired, exhausted, disoriented. As happened immediately after the spectacular victories of German imperialism, so now the masses are stunned by the Russian triumphs. But what Stalin looks upon as a garland of oak-leaves around his Caesarian brow will prove to be a noose around his criminal's throat. The incapacity of the reactionaries to learn anything fundamental from the disasters of their predecessors and compeers, is positively astonishing — and encouraging. As with Hitler so with Stalin: the noose will come alive in time and strangle him and his régime as surely as it did the Nazis.

How long will the masses of the conquered, occupied, humiliated and traduced countries suffer the heel of Stalinist imperialism? How long will they remain silent in the face of the spoliation and plunder of their lands and industries? How long will they endure the monstrous police-dictatorship with which the G.P.U. replaces the Gestapo? Just how long, is hard to say. That they *will* rebel against it in much the same way they rebelled against Hitlerism, may be foretold with absolute confidence. If not tomorrow, then the next day, Stalin, his G.P.U., his "Communist" and "Workers'" parties and his Quislings will have to confront what Hitler, Himmler, Quisling and Pétain confronted, and with the same outcome.

There is another aspect of the Stalinist triumph that has been referred to in these pages before. The net result of the

"unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" is so dismal, not to say disastrous, that nobody in the Fourth International is very anxious today to press the matter, at least not with the vigor of 1939! This is highly understandable and, up to a certain point, gratifying. The question is nevertheless not eliminated. Above all there remains the question of the class character of the Soviet Union.

Officially, the Fourth International still stands on the theory that Russia is a "degenerated workers' state" by virtue of the existence of nationalized property. For our part, we have dumped that monstrosity down the drain of history where it belongs. What has the rest of the International to say now? Is it content to repeat the old formulæ as if nothing of importance has happened in the past six years to test this theory, or to require a reconsideration of it? It is encouraging to note, here too, that there have been no efforts made recently to defend the theory with the old intransigence, pugnacity and confidence. That is encouraging, but far from satisfactory for a Marxian movement which takes its theories seriously.

What we are witnessing, in the International, is the *death of a theory*. It is clear that *nobody* now defends the "workers' state" theory, certainly not in the old way and with the old arguments; nobody *can* defend it. The theory is dying of lack of nourishment, dying in the vacuum which events have created around it and which prevents it from breathing, dying of lack of visible means of support. Mercy would dictate that it be allowed to die in this quiet, obscure, inartistic way. But theoretical clarity demands that it be deliberately *killed* and properly interred — *en connaissance de cause*, as the French say—with a knowledge as to the reason why—and that it be replaced with a carefully-thoughtout alternative theory in consonance with the realities of the living process and the principles of Marxian science.

The basic analysis of the Fourth International, which means in this case of its leader, Trotsky, has proved to be false and untenable in the matter of the class nature of Russia. The predictions based on this analysis have been proved false and untenable. Whoever fails to take this as his point of departure in the now mandatory reëxamination lacks either theoretical understanding or theoretical honesty—less than that even politeness prevents us from saying. Whoever fails to adopt the *political* conclusions that follow logically from such a reëxamination for a Marxist, is certainly lost.

The war is over. The proletarian revolution did not come and did not triumph in Europe—an unhappy statement, but one that must be made. Imperialism continues to dominate the world. Stalinist Russia remains in existence—certainly not weaker in world politics than before the war! No fundamental or even serious *social* change has occurred there, no change in the economic foundations or social structure—at least none that anyone has yet been able to point to and name and weigh. Property remains nationalized; the monopoly of foreign trade is more or less intact. In addition, in conquered Poland the means of production have been nationalized, including even medium-sized enterprises. The same process was completed years ago in the Baltic states. A similar process is now going on in Yugoslavia (in the form of bureaucratic police measures, it is true, but going on nonetheless). If capitalist private property has been or is being restored by the bureaucracy, it is not visible to the naked eye or under any kind of microscope. *Nobody*, we repeat, has been able to adduce concrete data to indicate even a trend in this direction.

Trotsky predicted, nine years ago (he stated it before then and repeated it afterward), that Stalinist Russia would not survive the coming war. He predicted, just as emphatically, that an imperialist outcome of the war—that is, an end of the war without a successful proletarian revolution—would see the end of the "workers' state" in any form, "degenerated" or otherwise, and this *regardless of a military defeat or a military victory by Russia*. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) this is repeated over and again:

If the war should remain only a war, the defeat of the Soviet Union would be inevitable... If it [imperialism] is not paralyzed by revolution in the West, imperialism will sweep away the régime which issued from the October Revolution. (P. 227.)

Has this been confirmed?

... imperialist antagonisms will always find a compromise in order to block the military victory of the Soviet Union. (P. 228.)

Has this been confirmed?

Without the interference of revolution, the social bases of the Soviet Union must be crushed, not only in the case of defeat, but also in the case of victory. (P. 229. "Social bases" equal nationalized property.)

Has this been confirmed?

In other words, in the case of a long war, if the world proletariat is passive, the inner social contradictions of the Soviet Union not only might, but must, lead to a bourgeois Bonapartist counter-revolution. (P. 229. Trotsky is here quoting approvingly from one of his own works of two years before, i.e., 1934.)

Has this been confirmed?

... no military victory can save the inheritance of the October Revolution, if imperialism holds out in the rest of the world. (P. 232. By the "inheritance" Trotsky of course meant primarily the nationalized property.)

Has this been confirmed? It has been flatly refuted by events. Refuted also, in our opinion, is the entire theory on which it was based. But even if this "extreme" opinion is not shared as yet by the International, what serious and responsible militant can deny that the events *demand* not less than a *reconsideration* of the theory that Russia is a workers' state? To be sure, it can be denied by those who need consolation in difficult times, who feel that by calling Russia a "workers' state" we still "have" a "revolution" to "cling to," who feel that Marxism is a rosary of dogma-beads which must be told devoutly four times a day to guarantee against visa troubles at the Heavenly Gate. Such people are inoculated against Marxian science; they've got religion; and religion is the opium of the revolutionary movement, too.

Our Perspective in Europe and America

The question of our perspectives cannot be dealt with here, or on this occasion, with the detail they deserve. That must be left for another, but very early date. Here, they need only be summarily sketched.

The United States, following the "reconversion" agony, will, it appears, be moving toward a pseudo-prosperity, with the inevitably ensuing crisis. A long-term upswing, to say nothing of an international upswing, is, from our standpoint, out of the question. On the contrary, the further decay of dying *world* capitalism cannot but have the most upsetting reactive influence on the United States, aggravating its own internal contradictions. But even the temporary upswing of American economy will not reach the heights attained during the period of war production. There will be millions of unemployed even in the coming prosperity. The millions at work will enjoy not a higher living standard than during the war but a lower one. The question of *security* which already con-

cerns the minds of all will dominate them increasingly, almost like a social obsession. Security is precisely what capitalism, nowhere and at no time, and certainly not in our time, cannot provide.

The coming political shifts in the United States, the changes in the thinking of the masses, the inevitable social conflicts between labor and capital, will undoubtedly revolve around the question of security. That is the meaning of the growing movement for the guarantee of a year-around job and a minimum annual wage. The bourgeois economists and statesmen can talk themselves blue in the face, but they cannot explain away why it was possible for everyone to have a job in wartime, why every ounce of economic strength and every economic unit and every government institution could be mobilized and "organized" and centrally directed for the purpose of waging destruction throughout the world—but it is impossible, in peacetime, to assure everyone a job by the full, organized, centralized, planned utilization of the magnificent economic resources and machinery of the country. That is, they cannot explain it without ceasing to be apologists for the capitalist social order.

Accordingly, the fighting program of the revolutionary movement must also revolve around the demand for jobs and a guaranteed, decent living for all. To make this the fighting program of the organized labor movement, of the working class as a whole; to imbue it with an understanding of how to realize this urgently needed goal; to break it away from bourgeois ideological and political domination, and launch it on the path of class-conscious, independent political action; to set it in motion against capitalism and its beneficiaries with the aim of establishing a workers' government—these are the immediate tasks of the revolutionary party in this country.

A growing response from the working class is absolutely guaranteed! However hesitantly and confusedly at first, the American proletariat must and will strike out on the path of independent political action. What the war period showed, the post-war period will show even more clearly: "pure and simple" trade union activities and efforts are not only inadequate, but grow less and less effectual. Monopoly capital, interwoven at every seam with the government power, cannot be dealt with by mere "collective bargaining," even by mere "economic strikes." *Everything* depends on *who* has the state power, for that also decides the question of who owns and controls and organizes and does what with the monopolies.

A fight for security, for jobs and a decent living for all, which is not carried on inseparably with the propaganda, agitation and practical work of forming an independent Labor Party and a workers' government—is no fight at all. Rather, it is a fight doomed to defeat from the very outset. First, last and always, this thought must be made the most important part of the growing consciousness of the American working class. If the revolutionary Marxists do not succeed in this, they are lost and so are the workers as a whole.

The political education of the American working class also requires their being made aware of their internationalist obligations to their brothers all over the world and to themselves. Here we are back to the ineluctable "national question." The American workers are not part of an oppressed nation, but of an oppressor nation. American exploitation and oppression of millions throughout the world is a weight on our shoulders, too, in the form of standing armies that must be maintained, of a rising national debt, of wars which must be fought and died in, tomorrow or the next day, to maintain this oppres-

sion. The American workers have the elementary obligation to help every people, every nation, which is oppressed by their imperialism to wrench itself free of such oppression. A great principle not only of socialism but of democracy declares that resistance to tyranny by any and all means is a sacred right and duty of any oppressed people. Active solidarity with such resistance is an equally sacred obligation. The rise of American imperialism makes such solidarity a task of the hour for the working class of this country.

Europe, now that Hitler has been crushed, finds itself compelled... to resume the struggle for democracy which it launched against Nazi rule! Half of Europe has been deprived of national independence and all other democratic rights by the new conquerors. Germany, economically despoiled, physically dismembered, politically disfranchised, cannot attain real freedom and prosperity without a struggle against the foreign imperialist powers who occupy, rule and strangle it, which means a struggle for national reunification and national independence on the basis of which the people can freely decide their social régime. The same holds true for every country east of Germany which is now under the bloody heel of the Russian neo-Czars.

Almost every other country of Europe faces the urgent question of the fight for democratic rights and institutions. In Greece, Italy, Belgium and Holland the fight for the democratic republic, against the monarchy and the capitalist reaction and foreign imperialism which are linked to it, is an immediate and revolutionary task. France is a battleground of the fight for a democratic, representative, sovereign National Assembly.

These are signs of the time. They must be clearly understood in all their political and social consequences. Modern imperialism has become more reactionary, not more progressive; more authoritarian and totalitarian, not more democratic. It has assembled around itself all that is historically outlived, outworn, reactionary, up to and including the residues of that feudal order which capitalism once crushed. Capitalism no longer establishes or sets free the modern national states; it wipes out more and more of them, reducing them to vassals or outright colonies—reduces to this status even those countries that were once independent and sovereign, even those countries that were once themselves imperialist oppressors of other countries! The existence of imperialism becomes increasingly incompatible with the maintenance of those institutions and rights that were characteristic of bourgeois democracy.

What holds for capitalism and the bourgeoisie is true only in lesser degree and in a different form of the social-democracy, anachronistic parasite on the working class movement. It has proved to be so thoroughly wedded to decaying bourgeois society that it is not only incapable of fighting for socialism but even of fighting consistently for democracy!

As for Stalinism, it is in *no* sense a democratic movement, but a movement of totalitarian police-rule.

The masses of Europe want democracy, democratic rights, democratic institutions. Life and freedom require them! They fight for democracy with a falsified consciousness, without the necessary clarity and consistency, and under a perfidious leadership. They do not associate the struggle for democracy with the struggle for the socialist revolution. The task of the revolutionary Marxists is precisely this: to participate more actively than all others in this fight; to become the most outspoken and aggressive champions of the fight for democratic

demands and democracy; to provide the consciousness that is missing, the clarity and consistency that are missing; to teach the masses—not from books alone and not from books primarily (above all, not by sermons!) but in the course of the fight itself, on the basis of concrete experiences—that democracy can be realized most fully and protected most surely only in the form of a workers' democracy, that the democratic republic which is a million times more real than the best bourgeois republic, that really represents the interests and the future of the people, that really assures smooth progress toward the utmost social freedom and peace, is the democratic workers' republic.

If this task is performed militantly, consciously and consistently, the revolutionary Marxists have their only real opportunity to become a significant, and eventually, decisive political force in Europe. If not, they are lost, the people of Europe are lost and so is Europe itself. This may be difficult for those people to understand who are under the absurd impression that the struggle for socialism consists in repeating every day, "On to socialism! On to the dictatorship of the proletariat!" It may be difficult for those people to understand who are of the truly lamentable opinion (three generations of Marxist teaching have been in vain—for them) that when revolutionary socialists carry on the fight for democracy, on the basis of their own socialist principles, with their own socialist objective, in their own internationalist manner, they are, somehow or other, fighting to "establish" the power of the bourgeoisie. Such people are more to be pitied than censured. Radically-inverted democrats themselves—that's what they are—they seem to think that the bourgeoisie (the modern imperialist bourgeoisie at that!) is congenitally democratic, is inseparably associated with democracy, the preservation of democratic rights and institutions. Such flattery of the bourgeoisie and of bourgeois society will get these "radicals" nowhere!

The clarification of these questions, the clarification of the question of our perspectives, these are tasks of the Fourth International which cannot long be postponed.

The Task Before the Fourth International

During the war, the Fourth International simply ceased to exist as any kind of real movement. It is amazing, but a fact, that for five or six years the International had nothing to say (or was prevented from saying anything) on a dozen of the most important problems of world politics. There was no international leadership; and that which arrogated this rôle to itself was far worse than bad: it was arrogantly bureaucratic, theoretically sterile or psittacotic, politically a thousand times wrong or impotent. In a word: the International failed completely during the war, failed in every respect, failed inexcusably. If we do not start by establishing this fact, we will not make the progress that *must* be made.

Now that the war is over and international connections are more easily established and maintained, there is a much brighter prospect of restoring our shattered internationalism and of doing it on the soundest and healthiest foundation. It is possible, we think, to overcome the terrible theoretical confusion and political disorientation of the various sections, provided the problem is tackled correctly.

In England, France, Holland, Belgium, Italy and Greece, the Trotskyist movement has survived, and that in itself is a great achievement. In these countries, it is a growing movement, and what is more, it is beginning to find what we con-

sider the right road. In Italy, our section has adopted a good fighting program of democratic demands suitable, despite important shortcomings, to the Italian situation. In Belgium, in connection with the monarchical crisis, our section, it is good to report, has issued and popularized the slogan: "*Abdication? Non! La République!*" The English section, despite a truly dreadful confusion on the question of the European revolution and of Russia, is vigorous and thriving. In France, there is a beginning of the indispensable reorientation.

But each section is isolated, theoretically, politically, organizationally. *An international congress is absolutely essential.* It is necessary to review the six years of the war, the six years of theoretical and political problems, the six years of our political practice. It is necessary to deal with the greatest freedom and objectivity with such questions as these:

Why did the International die during the war, and who and what are responsible for this tragedy?

How has the International's official theory about Russia withstood the test of reëxamination and of events?

What is the attitude of the International toward Stalinism, toward what we ourselves regard as the absolutely pernicious slogan of "The Communist Party to Power!" (in whatever form)?

Was the French section (and the Belgian?) correct in refusing to participate in the national revolutionary underground movement? (We ourselves believe it was disastrously wrong in its position.)

Was the predominant standpoint on the "national question" correct?

What is the position of the International today (and yesterday!) on the struggle for democracy and democratic demands?

These are some of the questions that must be dealt with and resolved internationally—the most important questions. Only an international congress can do this. But an international congress bureaucratically prepared and conducted would be the worst thing imaginable: it would give the International a death-blow. The congress *must* be preceded by a well prepared, honestly prepared, democratically arranged, thoroughgoing international discussion in every section.

No such discussion is possible if the sections and the congress have before them *only* the "official" views or views that are mere nuances of the "official" ones. To put it plainly, only such a congress will have value which is preceded by a discussion in which the German section, for its part, and the Workers Party, for its part, have ample opportunity to present and defend their views on a whole series of disputed questions. These groups have *distinctive*, elaborated views that differ from the "official" views and therefore merit and demand discussion on an equal plane with all others. The Workers Party insists upon an honest and objective discussion (no matter how vigorous) of the theoretical position put forward by the German section in its "Three Theses" and "Capitalist Barbarism or Socialism" in spite of the fact that our party has not endorsed the German thesis on capitalist retrogression (we have, as is known, a common standpoint with our German comrades on the "national question" and the main political tasks in Europe). Our party must insist no less emphatically on the presentation and discussion of its theory of Russia as a bureaucratic-collectivist state, on its position on the "national question" in Europe and Asia as embodied in its resolution and corollary documents, on its position toward the Stalinist

movement, on its conception of the character and régime of a democratically-centralized Bolshevik Party and International. It would insist on the same rights being accorded—and ungrudgingly!—to the views of any other comrades or groups in the International.

That the international Trotskyist movement must be re-

stored and consolidated, we take for granted. That the precondition for this advance is a properly-organized and properly-conducted discussion, leading up to a world congress which would reorient and rearm the movement, must be understood in short order by all the comrades. Now, in any case, there is no longer a reason or an excuse for delay.

The British Vote for Socialism

The Rise of British Labor

Few, if any, elections in modern times have had the significance and opened out perspectives on a scale comparable with the recent British election. Its evaluation can proceed along three main lines. The first is the meaning of it in relation to Britain itself. The second is its repercussions in Europe and the world. The third is its influence on the political development of the American working class movement. These three can be separated only for purposes of convenience. If, for example, at the coming French elections in October, it were made clear that the British victory had stimulated the French electorate toward a repudiation of de Gaulle similar to the repudiation of Churchill, then the repercussion back on Britain would be tremendous. For the time being, however, we shall confine ourselves to the first—the significance of the election as a purely British phenomenon.

There is only one fundamental question which has to be decided. Is the election merely an unmistakable sign of a desire for “social progress,” or a desire for social reconstruction of Britain, in a word, for socialism? The American bourgeoisie has been at pains in its press to explain that what the British workers in reality want is higher wages, greater social security, no unemployment, a vast housing program, in general, improvement on the admittedly unsatisfactory conditions which prevailed before the war; be it understood also that the workers expect some reward also for the sacrifices endured during the war. Despite the warning notes uttered by some correspondents from abroad and a few commentators here, the emphasis has been upon the mild program of nationalization put forward by the Labor Party and upon the well known, alas, only too well known, sobriety and conservatism of the British labor leaders. American capitalism also, according to this theory, has played its own progressive part in this education of the British working class. American soldiers held forth to British workers on apartments with central heating and frigidaires and the high standard of living which had been granted to American labor by American capitalism. This stimulated the British working class to demand the same and therefore to vote Labor in overwhelming majority.

All these ideas are just so much whistling in the dark. As far as the great masses of the British people are concerned, their vote is a repudiation of British capitalist society in Britain and a mandate to the British Labor Party to institute socialism. The people who think or would like to think what the American bourgeoisie is teaching in its press are the British labor leaders. But we draw a sharp distinction between the masses of the British people as a whole and the labor and trade union bureaucracy, a distinction as sharp as that which Lenin

in his time and Trotsky from the days of *Whither England?* to his death used to draw. The first purpose of this article is to make this clear, not by speculation into the psychology of the British working class, but by a review of the development of the British Labor Party and its relation to economic and social changes in Britain and in the world at large. It is sufficient to say that our approach is based on that conception of British development expressed consistently by Trotsky and nowhere so sharply as in his *History of the Russian Revolution*. There he writes: “Only a blind man could fail to see that Great Britain is headed for gigantic revolutionary earthquake shocks, in which the last fragments of her conservatism, her world domination, her present state machine, will go down without a trace. Macdonald is preparing these shocks no less successfully than did Nicholas II in his time, and no less blindly. So here, too, as we see, is no poor illustration of the problem of the rôle of the ‘free’ personality in history.”

That was over a dozen years ago. Since then the British people have lived through tumultuous years. They are not blind men. Their vote is a declaration that they are not blind.

British Labor and the World Market

Marx and Engels knew the British working class very well. As far back as the Civil War in the United States, Marx, watching the reaction of the British people as a whole to this world-shaking event, paid a great tribute to what he called the “incontestable excellence” of the British working masses. This, he said, was the greatest strength of Britain. Over the years which followed, he and Engels agreed that, owing to the superior position of Britain on the world market, the English working class had become the most bourgeoisified working class in Europe. And this was likely to continue until Britain had lost its privileged position on the world market. In his preface to the English translation of *Capital*, published in 1886, Engels showed that for him a new stage had arrived in the development of the British proletariat. He said that the number of unemployed kept swelling from year to year and “we can almost calculate the moment when the unemployed, losing patience, will take their fate into their own hands.”

What saved Britain and not only Britain but the advanced countries of Europe, was the development of imperialism. But imperialist super-profits could only keep a small portion of the working class enchained, and toward the end of the century a series of individual movements sprang up in Great Britain which in 1900 culminated in the formation of the British Labor Party. The formation of the British Labor Party coincided with the recognition by a substantial section of the British bourgeoisie that Britain was fast losing its domination of

the world market. The statesman whose name is forever associated with this recognition was Joseph Chamberlain, father of Neville. At one time mayor of Birmingham and one of the most dynamic and far-seeing politicians of his day, Chamberlain claimed that Britain's policy of free trade was leading the country to catastrophe. Reversing the traditional policy of a century, he became a protectionist and when asked by the British Prime Minister what position he wanted in the Cabinet, he chose the theretofore unimportant post of Colonial Secretary. From 1900 to the present day, the history of Britain can be summarized as follows: Consistent decline of the British economy upon the world market, increasing convulsions in Britain, uninterrupted growth of the Labor Party as a socialist party, preaching that the only salvation for Britain's difficulties was the "social ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange." Who does not understand this cannot understand the British election. This is no question of a sudden clutching at a panacea by the British people, or a psychological change in the minds of the electorate or a violent revulsion against the war. As is characteristic of Britain, the idea of socialism is permeated with constitutional illusions. But the vote for socialism is the culmination of a process which can be easily traced.

"To Dish the Socialists"

The first stage is the Liberal-Labor government of Asquith. Between 1906 and 1914, Lloyd George carried out a series of measures aimed at increasing social security in Great Britain. This was done for the specific and avowed purpose of preventing the growth of socialism. The power of the House of Lords was broken by the Asquith-Lloyd George administration in the constitutional crisis of 1911. The attack on the Lords was supported not only by the workers but by petty bourgeois liberal ideologists and sections of the bourgeoisie which saw in the continuance of the House of Lords, with its traditional powers, the surest way to encourage the growth and sharpen the attack of the socialists.

Just as in World War II, the National Government which ran World War I found it necessary to include Labor members in its personnel. In 1918, immediately after the victory, Lloyd George engineered an election in order to capitalize on his personal prestige. The Labor Party polled two million votes, a higher vote than it had ever had before. Lloyd George promised to make Britain "a fit country for heroes to live in." Before long every music hall in the country resounded to the witticism that post-war Britain was a country in which only heroes could live.

In the election of 1923 the British people gave to the Labor Party the greatest number of seats among the three contending parties. The Liberal Party and the Conservatives together held a majority over the Labor Party which, however, formed a government with their consent. This government introduced not one single socialist measure. It had preached socialism for twenty-three years. In the campaign the Tories, then as now, had made it clear to the British people that as far as they, the property owners, were concerned, the Labor Party was a socialist party. Victory for the Labor Party, the Tories explained to the British electors, meant the substitution of a socialist society for a capitalist society in Britain. They called the labor leaders red revolutionaries, which, of course, the labor leaders vigorously denied. Their denial was not without some justification. The British people or the masses who support the Labor Party were and are not Marxists.

But the debate in Britain among the working class and those classes closest to it has for years now not been as to whether socialism is workable or not; the debate has been as to whether it is to be achieved by constitutional or revolutionary means. On that question, the overwhelming majority of British opinion, deeply suffused as it is with democratic tradition and British empiricism, has more or less expressed itself as follows: We shall adopt the parliamentary procedure and if afterward the Tories should attempt to prevent the carrying out of the will of the people, the Labor Government would be in a position to use the machinery of government, the army and the police against the self-exposed enemies of democracy.

The Socialists Dish Themselves

After a few short months of government in 1924 the Labor Government was thrown out of power and was defeated in the election which followed. The reasons for its defeat were twofold: it had shown itself conspicuously unable to make any radical change in the increasing dislocation of the British economy. It had thereby alienated those middle class elements which had come tentatively toward it through disgust with the Tory Party. On the other hand, the Zinoviev letter, skillfully used by the Tories, created a stampede toward the Conservative Party as the bulwark of British stability against red revolution.

The five years which followed were years critical in the history of the development of political crystallization in Britain. Churchill, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, faced with Britain's declining position on the world market, brought Britain back to the gold standard. What Britain needed was a reorganization of its economy. This was beyond the Tory Party and Churchill's step fell heavily on the working class. One of its results was the general strike in 1926 and the growing hostility among the British people to the Tory Government and the perpetual crisis of Britain. That is why, in 1929, after five years of the famous capitalist prosperity, the British people gave to the Labor Party a still greater number of seats than in 1924. The Labor Party had excused itself for its failure in 1923 on the score that it was unable to introduce any socialistic measure because it did not have an absolute majority. Millions tried to give it that majority in 1929.

A few words are here in place as to the stratification of British voting. In 1929, the Labor Government received eight million votes on its program of socialism. Socialism by constitutional means to be sure, but socialism nevertheless. Britain was suffering from unemployment and the Labor program as explained to the masses of the people attributed the unemployment to capitalist society and private ownership. The basis of the vote was the working class. By this time, almost to a man, those millions of the population engaged in direct production and transport were voting the Labor ticket. They would not think of voting anything else but Labor, and it is the foundation of their creed that capitalist society is the root and origin of all their social ills. They do not necessarily take this very seriously at all times. But in Sunday schools, in Labor classes, in Labor rallies, at regular Labor Party meetings, in their trade unions, at election time, the Labor Party has brought them up on the idea that capitalist private property must be superseded by socialist abolition of private property. Britain, however, is almost seventy per cent proletarianized and many millions of this proletariat is in distributive and service trades. In 1921 this number was seven million, as compared to the ten million of the population engaged in direct

productive industry. Many of these consider themselves workers, but of the seven millions, four millions were classified in 1921 under commerce, finance and personal service. Britain is a country with a numerous traditional aristocracy and a strong rentier class. A substantial number of the population lives, directly or indirectly, by attending to the needs of these parasites, thereby becoming themselves parasitic. In 1924, the salaried workers were nearly three million as opposed to fifteen million actual wage earners. This is a very high proportion. These people for years voted liberal or stuck to their patrons, the Conservatives. Since 1918, however, with the increasing strength and confidence of the Labor Party this vote has been shifting towards the Labor Party. The significance of the 1929 vote was that more and more of them were looking towards labor.

The failure of the Labor Party in 1929 was even worse than in 1924. Unemployment went from one million in 1929 to nearly three million in 1931. Those who believe that it is the mildness of the program of the British Labor Party which has attracted the British voter should ponder upon the following statement by the greatest British parliamentarian of the last forty years and one who has repeatedly showed his understanding of the British people and their political situation.

Millions consequently threw in their lot with a new party. To them this party was the party of the last hope. It is now rapidly becoming the party of lost hope. Speakers and agents of all parties returning from the last by-election in a great industrial constituency had the same tale to tell. It was one of the gloom and despair which had fallen on this working class district owing to the failure of the government they had helped at the last general election to put into power to bring any amelioration into their conditions and prospects. If Labor fails this time, confidence in parliamentary institutions will for a period disappear in myriads of loyal British homes and hearts.

The writer is David Lloyd George. This is testimony, if any were needed, of what the British people expected of the British Labor Party in 1929 and their reactions to its failure. As a climax to two years of failure came the disastrous split of 1931.

The Crisis of 1931

The circumstances of that split are not at all personal or accidental. In reality they mark a stage in the development of the bankruptcy of the Labor Party leaders. At the same time, the way in which the masses took the blow and recovered from it, testifies to the "uncontestable excellence" of the British working people.

In 1931, the world economic crisis and Churchill's restoration of Britain to the gold standard in 1924 on the basis of the declining British economy had superimposed a financial crisis upon the prevailing economic depression. It is argued that the crisis was a result of the manipulation of British financial magnates with assistance from Wall Street, a manipulation aimed at discrediting the Labor Government. The mere fact, however, that such a development was possible, shows the critical situation to which the country had been reduced. Maliciously stimulated by the bourgeois press, a feeling of near panic spread over Britain. With their record of failure behind them, facing disaster, and conscious that they had no program to solve capitalist chaos, the Labor leaders sought to save face by a display of their socialistic program. They fell back on the perpetual alibi—only socialism can save the country but we had no absolute majority. Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative Prime Minister, was quite aware of the tem-

per of the country and the miserable record of his own Conservative Party between 1924 and 1929. He, therefore, prevailed upon Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister of the Labor Government and Philip Snowden, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to join with him in a national government. He also invited some of the leaders of the Liberal Party to join this government. The significance of this was not fully appreciated at the time, and in fact could not have been. The astute Englishman, astute in his petty party politics, was one of the first in Europe to recognize that pure and simple conservatism was bankrupt in Europe. He hid monopoly-capitalist politics behind the smoke-screen of national unity, the practice which was carried to its highest pitch by Adolf Hitler afterwards and imitated in varying degrees by every government of Europe.

How would the country react to it? The *Manchester Guardian*, for instance, a great leader of liberal opinion in Britain, hesitated up to the last moment before it finally decided not to support the National Government. The real blow to the Labor Party, however, was given by Philip Snowden, one of its founders, and admittedly its intellectual leader. Snowden went onto the radio a few days before the critical election and let out a blast *against* the very socialist *program* which he more than any other politician in England had helped to create. The country, said Snowden, was in serious crisis. It faced the possibilities of inflation and loss of the savings of the poor. At this time, said Snowden, the Labor Party comes forward with a program of socialization of the means of production, distribution, etc., as a solution to the crisis. This, he declared, was the straight road to catastrophe.

The British people were thunderstruck. The petty bourgeoisie streamed away from the Labor Party. Who, in the name of heaven, could vote for a party whose leaders had asked for power as the party of the last hope, and had now not only abandoned its organization but had repudiated its program. If this was not the time for socialism, when would be the time? But far-seeing conservative observers noted two ominous signs. The "national" election destroyed the Liberal Party as an effective political force. And, more important, the actual working class vote stood steady as a rock. MacDonald and Snowden had demoralized the petty-bourgeoisie. They took with them into the national caucus only leaders. Labor was unshaken and would henceforth be the only alternative to conservatism. The Labor Party returned to Parliament after the election with less than forty seats.

The Historical Dialectic

History moves according to certain laws. These laws are to be elucidated from the living specific concrete development. There the logical movement which they indicate is repeated in a higher spiral, modified or accentuated by the changing historical conditions. This is magnificently demonstrated by British policies between 1901 and 1945. As we look back at Britain between 1900 and 1931, the pattern is startlingly clear. The declining British economy gives rise to the political organization of labor which gradually assumes a commanding position in national politics. But Britain is still wealthy enough to make concessions. The Liberal Party makes them up to 1914 but in no way severely halts the growth of labor's political organization. World War I is a catastrophe for Britain's position on the world market. Between 1918 and 1931, the Liberal Party is gradually extinguished. More and more the Labor Party assumes the position of the alternative party with labor as its basis and attracting to it the restless petty-

bourgeoisie under the whip of bankrupt British capitalism. The masses of the people push political labor towards the power. Socialist in name only, the labor leaders are incapable of solving capitalist crisis by capitalist methods. In 1931 their bankruptcy takes organizational form. The most distinguished of them abandon the party and join the bourgeoisie. The petty-bourgeoisie which has been coming more or less steadily towards labor abandons it in dismay and rallies behind the Conservatives. Labor stood firm because it had to and some of the labor leaders (apart from the trade unionists) remained. But a man like Herbert Morrison, for instance, moved heaven and earth to be included in Baldwin's National Government. Only when the door was slammed in his face did he turn back to labor and "socialism." This was the movement of classes and their political representatives. We shall now see the same essential pattern repeated on a higher plane, but within the changing circumstances of the developing world crisis.

The labor movement recovered from the 1931 crisis with astonishing rapidity. But whereas hitherto the struggle between stonewalling capital and labor had been carried on almost exclusively on the national field, it was now widened to extend to every tentacle of the British Empire, i.e., to the four corners of the earth. Organized labor could not work out a foreign policy of its own and although it made heroic efforts to do so, found that its weakness here continually disrupted its renovated power on the home front. This pattern is repeated to a climax in 1935 and once more again in 1940. The victory over Germany in 1945 releases labor from this dilemma and clears the way for a victory long delayed and for that very reason all the more devastating.

Foreign Policy Intervenes

It used to be a commonplace in Britain that elections are never decided on foreign policy. From 1931, however, the depths of the British crisis was shown precisely by the repeated crisis in foreign policy and the impossibility of separating it from home policy. In 1931 came the crisis over the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. In a League of Nations session that attracted the attention of the whole world, Sir John Simon, then British Foreign Secretary, made a speech giving the British point of view. At its conclusion Matsuoaka, the Japanese delegate stated that Sir John Simon had said in a few words what he had been trying for days to tell the League. A roar of protest arose in Britain. The British Labor Party, meeting in congress at Hastings in 1932, passed an almost unanimous resolution that British labor would never support British imperialism in another imperialist war. On the day after the conference, the British Labor leaders outvied themselves in explaining that the resolution did not mean what it said. Perhaps the resolution and the labor leaders did not. As far as they understood the resolution, the British workers most certainly did as would be abundantly proved before long. Even before the National Government had been formed, the series of Round Table Conferences on India had begun, and in them much of the Indian question was laid bare before the British people to their shame and confusion. Gandhi was warmly welcomed in Lancashire of all places.

The National Government decided on a protectionist policy at last and this was trumpeted forth and sealed at the Ottawa Conference in 1932. It brought no relief and only precipitated a series of colonial revolts, protesting at the rising prices for manufactured goods and the lowered prices for

raw materials which Ottawa imposed on the colonial peoples. The risings received a hitherto unexampled publicity in the British press. In 1933 came another much trumpeted panacea —The World Economic Conference. It collapsed dramatically within a few days of its opening session. Meanwhile, the wrath of the British people at Tory helplessness before the crisis grew. There was a sense of social crisis in the atmosphere. Hitler's accession to power gave Sir Oswald Mosley his chance. Lord Rothermere of the *Daily Mail* placed his paper, with nearly two million circulation, at the disposal of Fascist Mosley, and for months the *Daily Mail* was a Fascist organ. In the middle of 1934, the June purge in Germany broke the alliance between Mosley and the *Daily Mail*. It was this period of disillusionment with British capitalism which preceded a wave of sympathy for Stalinist Russia and the skillfully propagandized "successes" of the Five Year Plan. The British worker remained invincibly opposed to the British Communist Party, but the Stalinist "planned economy," as the antithesis of capitalism with its unemployment and distressed areas, made great headway among British workers. Under cover of Russian popularity and Russian endorsement of the League of Nations, the British Labor leaders, still keeping up a great show of hostility to imperialism, revoked the Hastings position, and adopted the doctrine of collective security. But the miners, 700,000 strong, reaffirmed the original stand. Baldwin took the opportunity to deliver a blast at the whole concept of collective security. The November municipal elections of 1934 showed how far the Labor Party had recovered the confidence of the country. Labor won sweeping victories and as far back as 1934, constituencies which had been Tory for fifty years, went Labor. Everything seemed set for a great victory at the coming parliamentary elections. What smashed Labor's chances was foreign policy—this time the Ethiopian crisis.

As war with Mussolini grew imminent the British workers reacted strongly. Lord Robert Cecil, a League of Nations maniac, instituted a private poll. *It gathered over eleven million votes for collective security and over six million for an armed League of Nations.* Thus the British workers expressed their distrust of British Tory foreign policy. Baldwin was pursuing an anti-League policy. But British indignation ultimately broke Sir Samuel Hoare who had replaced Sir John Simon as Foreign Secretary and nearly broke Anthony Eden who replaced him. The Labor Party leadership found itself in an impossible dilemma. It had, in traditional Second International fashion, opposed all credits for the war budget. Yet in an official resolution it shouted war at Mussolini *even before Baldwin did so.* With remarkable and promptitude, Baldwin went on the radio and endorsed the League of Nations and collective security wholeheartedly. The election was a war election if ever there was one. The Labor Party added well over a hundred seats to its miserable thirty. But the British electorate (with the British and Italian fleets facing each other in the Mediterranean) and listening to two major political parties saying much the same thing, gave Baldwin the support he asked for. People do not choose the eve of a war to start a social experiment. The decisive middle classes hesitated and chose Baldwin. It was openly stated in the Commons that Labor had lost the election by its apparently inept resolution, declaring war on Mussolini. It was not the Labor Party leadership which was inept but the short-sighted commentators. In essence the Labor leadership had done in the international crisis of 1935 precisely what it had done in the national crisis

of 1931. It had betrayed its incapacity to produce a policy of its own and it had gone over to the side of the bourgeoisie.

The climax came with the Hoare-Laval pact which followed closely upon the election. It was a typical imperialist instrument for the division of Ethiopia and it was initialed by Anthony Eden. It fell like a skyful of cold water on the deceived and cheated British electorate. It was not for this they had voted. Labor had been impotent to produce an alternative and thus the masses had lost both at home and abroad. From that moment the National Government was distrusted in its foreign policy as much as it was hated for its home policy.

Economic Bankruptcy and the Cliveden Set

The years 1936 to 1940 were the years in which the British petty bourgeoisie came to the conclusions which the war crystallized and concentrated explosively. In that period there was not one single measure taken by the National Government to give anyone the belief that it could solve the economic decline of Britain which was so long patent to the British people. Roosevelt in the United States initiated a New Deal and Blum in France headed the short-lived experiment of the Popular Front. British Toryism did nothing for there was nothing that it could do. In foreign policy, however, it demonstrated to the full its hostility to democracy and its readiness to collaborate with Hitler and Mussolini. The British people knew in their bones that the National Government had pursued its own narrow class interests in Europe, the Mediterranean and the Far East and thus precipitated the war of 1939. This is not wisdom after the event. The Labor leaders for three solid years inside and outside Parliament kept up a ceaseless agitation against Chamberlain on just those grounds. The lesson, easy enough to read in life, was dinned home by these politicians from the safe refuge of opposition. Thus both on home policy and foreign policy the bankruptcy and treachery of the British ruling class was revealed. "The Cliveden Set" was in reality not a set but the capitalist class of Britain, which almost in its entirety supported Chamberlain until the break-down of his policy opened the abyss before their feet. Once more as the election due in 1940 approached the British working class and its allies were baffled and torn by the approach of war. This time no election took place at all. But the internal tension was far greater than in 1935. The British workers and the population as a whole were deeply hostile to the war and far more distrustful of Chamberlain in the crisis of 1939 than they had been of Baldwin in 1935. But the switch from Chamberlain to Churchill and the terror inspired by the early German victories enabled the Labor leaders to repeat their usual performance—join up with the bourgeoisie.

There is no need to recapitulate the social consequences of the war. The fatal error would be to see it as anything else but a continuation and concentration of the tendencies which we have traced since 1918. The war has made final that recognition of Britain's decline which has steadily grown among the British people since 1918. It has made final that recognition of the hopelessness of capitalism which has steadily grown among the British people since 1918. It has made final that recognition of the ineradicable treachery of the British ruling class which has steadily grown among the British people since 1931. Britain can no longer go on in the old way. Capitalism is bankrupt. The Labor Party claims that it is a socialist party, the party of a new society. The petty bourgeoisie and the rural constituencies have made up their minds, or rather have had their minds made up for them. The Labor Party claimed

that it could not act in 1923 because it did not have an absolute majority. Again in 1929 it did not have an absolute majority. In 1934 it was getting ready to do better than in 1929 but the war scare of 1935 frightened these fluctuating classes away. The war in 1940 and the acceptance of the coalition by official Labor robbed them of the opportunity of expressing themselves. Now in the first chance they have got, in their quiet, parliamentary, unspectacular, sober, but infinitely determined British way, they have spoken their verdict. They have voted for a socialist society. In their eyes the essence of the change is the nationalization of the means of production, destruction of the power of the capitalists and the landlords, an economy planned for the use of the people and not taking its anarchic way for the profit of the few.

The Perspectives of the Labor Leadership

It is impossible here even to examine the outlines of the dreadful economic and international political situation in which Britain finds itself today. It was necessary first of all to clear out of the way the motivated illusions which the American bourgeoisie has been trying to instill into the American workers. Some of these scoundrels have even tried to attribute Churchill's defeat to his stupid political campaign. Churchill's campaign was in fact the most striking demonstration of the helplessness of the British bourgeoisie. He had no program because he could have none. It would be interesting to see one written by his critics. Churchill said that socialism was the issue. He knows Britain too well to have thought that after 1924 and 1929 the issue of socialism could be camouflaged. Neither could Churchill attack the idea of a planned economy *per se*. His whole war administration would have been a refutation of the argument that private enterprise was the only feasible method of reconstructing the country. What he did do was strictly in character with our times. He took the position that socialism meant a British Gestapo. In other words, *he could only agitate against Attlee's "socialist" economic proposals by building a bogey of their political consequences. Exactly the same type of argument is being used in Europe and in the United States against socialism.* It is a long, long way from 1918, when the very idea of socialism as a type of economy was denounced by the bourgeoisie as ridiculous and utopian. But it is precisely here also that the fatal weakness of the Labor leaders is already revealed. *Their* campaign was the quintessence of ineptitude. *They* had a program. They could have put it forward like the confident builders of a new society. Instead, every statement, modest as it was, had a qualification. The same petty bourgeoisie whom they were trying not to "alienate," the farmers, reputedly so conservative, were the very ones whom the election shows were only waiting for the chance to give Labor an unmistakable mandate. And what is Attlee's program, as announced in the King's speech? Labor will nationalize the coal industry. This measure, if you please, was recommended by an all-party government commission *over twenty years ago*. They will also nationalize the Bank of England, which already functions as a semi-public body. They will repeal the Trades Disputes Act, i.e., they will repeal what is a stiff version of the American Hatch Act. The election program promised to "nationalize" electric and gas utilities. But now that they are in power they propose only to "co-ordinate" them. They are the same people of 1924 and 1929. In his first speech to the Commons, Attlee told the people: "Before the war there was much that was in our view wrong in the economic and social conditions in this country." So that is it. In

"our view" much "was wrong." Also, "We must set ourselves resolutely to the task of increasing our exports." The reorganization of the economy, as an indispensable instrument—the mobilization of the people who supported him, this cannot even enter the vision of this petty clerk of the bourgeoisie. Today the Labor leaders can do what they want with Britain. If they were to tell the people what is required, call upon them to sacrifice, yes, to sacrifice themselves to build a new Britain as they sacrificed themselves to save the old, the British people would perform prodigies of reconstruction which would put their great war effort to shame. The bourgeoisie is today powerless. The army, a non-professional army, overwhelmingly supported Labor and if, in response to a genuine socialization, any reactionary elements showed opposition, Attlee can be certain of the support of the overwhelming majority of the workers and soldiers. But no! He will "resolutely" increase exports. Circumstances may lead these opportunists to sporadic adventures, but isn't it clear that they are, in essence, as helpless before the creaking structure of British capitalism as the Tory leaders have shown themselves to be during the last quarter of a century? All questions of policy are subordinate to the fact that only a social revolution can save Britain from catastrophe and the Labor leaders are not revolutionary. If in Trotsky's opinion Macdonald prepared the catastrophes which awaited the country, on the high plane to which he had been pushed, Attlee will prepare them still more and still faster. Today history is in no waiting mood.

Is the British working class revolutionary? No serious

Marxist can ask that question. Their historical development has not ceased with the election. The bankrupt British economy, the helplessness of the bourgeoisie have led the workers step by step to a situation where they have won over the middle classes and placed the Labor leaders in a situation where they have no bourgeois political party to run to, where they cannot blame anyone upon the absence of a majority. The election is the climax of one period and *therefore* the beginning of a new. If Attlee and his colleagues meant business the first thing they would do would be to mobilize the creative energies and aspirations of the British people as a bulwark for a revolutionary program. But that they will not do. The revolutionary manifestations of the British workers and their allies will therefore come from some other sources—the whip of the counter-revolution, seeking to gain outside of Parliament the power that it has lost inside. The response of the British people will be tremendous. Let no one have any fear of that. Or disillusionment with the Labor government will open up a new period of clarification and a struggle for new ways and means to achieve the goals they have pursued since 1918. On our British comrades of the Fourth International, who have acquitted themselves so manfully during the war, falls the heavy burden and the proud privilege of being the spearhead of the revolutionary reorientation. To look back and learn the lessons of the past years, which reached their climax in the election, can be the source of an inexhaustible confidence and energy in teaching the British workers and learning from them the revolutionary demands of the new period.

J. R. JOHNSON.

Atomic Energy and Socialism

First Notes on the Discovery

Now if someone could succeed in isolating a few pounds of U-235 and the whole were to be immersed in water, very interesting developments would almost certainly follow. The isolation of uranium isotopes in quantity lots is now being attempted in several places. If the reader wakes up some morning to read in his newspaper that half the United States was blown into the sea overnight, he can rest assured that someone, somewhere, succeeded.

—*Applied Nuclear Physics*, by
Pollard and Davidson.
New York, John Wiley and Sons.

The above quotation was published in 1942.

Someone, somewhere, succeeded; the reader woke up and read in his newspaper that Hiroshima had been "blown into the sea." And a few days later Nagasaki. And some day—which city?

The above quotation was not written by H. G. Wells, in one of his many fantastic novels: it was written as sober fact by two scientists who knew of what they were speaking. Their *Nuclear Physics* is a sober text, for the most part readable even by the layman who is willing to apply himself to grasp new concepts. And if the layman does so apply himself, he is bound to discover the sham of "military secrets." There is no

secret—except one: the secret that capitalism and its cohorts willingly appropriate money for destructive purposes.

Of course, this statement must be qualified: it was not their "private" money that was appropriated. Who would be so foolish if you can take the tax-payers' money and avoid the "risk" of loss of capital? After all, two billion dollars is money. And how do you know what a bunch of scientists, "starry-eyed idealists" and "impractical dreamers," will do when you let them go ahead on a subject so complicated that an honest capitalist would hesitate to give up even half an hour of his precious golfing time to listen to them in normal times.

But now we have the stuff—and they can advertise it at public expense, and tell the public about "their" patriotic services, "their" devotion to the welfare of the nation, "their" unsparing efforts to accomplish the national purpose.

What has been accomplished?

Luckily, we are in a position to give a definite answer to this question: What has been accomplished is simply the following: With the aid of two billion dollars we have done, on a large scale, what had been done in 1938 in a laboratory, on a microscopic scale; what by the middle of 1939 was a certainty in the laboratory of a few scientists, checked and rechecked, photographed and rephotographed, has been done industrially.

We, as Marxists, must understand what went on in laboratories all over the world; we must evaluate what has been

done with the two billion dollars; we must evaluate its military and social consequences; we must convince the nation of the truth inherent in our findings; we must, more than ever, work for the realization of a workers' state and a workers' government, lest disaster overtake not only the worker, but mankind. We must, as a first step on this road, debunk the nonsense being spouted about the celebrated "private initiative," which will increase in intensity as time goes by in order to cover up the steal and before the transfer to private hands of this destructive power can be slipped over without exciting too great public interest.

Our questions start then with the paramount one: What has been accomplished? From the following it will become clear that the answer is the one given above: "We" got hold of unlimited funds of the taxpayers' money, and proceeded to do on a large scale what was fully known as atomic fission in 1939.

Atomic fission brings us at once to the heart of the entire subject: the atom. We will try to give here facts, in an order leading to an understanding or rather grasp of the subject. For precise, detailed information we refer to the volume quoted at the head of this article; another excellent compilation of atomic information is: *The "Particles" in Modern Physics*, by Stranathan, Blakiston.

When dealing with atoms we deal with the ultimate particles into which elements can be divided while remaining as elements. This might be stated as follows: An atom is the smallest possible subdivision of matter as we know it. Matter then is composed of atoms, which may combine with one another to form molecules.

Fifty years ago the atom was a chemical concept: it was, as already stated, the smallest particle of an element. There were known to be about 92 elements, each with definite chemical behavior. Some of the elements have, as yet, not been found. But as the elements apparently fall into quite an orderly array it is possible to predict the existence, and even the chemical behavior, of such unknown elements; even to look for them deliberately, trace them by characteristics they ought to possess.

Into this realm of pure chemistry the physicist was, in a certain sense, catapulted by the logic of events. The results of physical research compelled the investigation of the physical characteristics of elements, and today the chemist of necessity must study atomic physics.

It has been found that gases could be made to conduct electric currents (Crookes) and this phenomenon was investigated by J. J. Thomson of Cambridge, who discovered the electron: apparently a concrete particle with a mass approximately 1800 times smaller than that of a hydrogen atom, up to that time the smallest particle known, and with a "negative" charge of electricity. Thus it dawned on the world of science that the atom could be subdivided. Here might be the clue to such things as X-rays, which had just been discovered by Roentgen.

Meanwhile Becquerel had found that certain uranium ores gave off X-rays: This discovery of the Becquerel Rays was the impetus for the work of Pierre and Marie Curie, who emerged after the most arduous and heartbreaking work with an infinitely small quantity of stuff they called radium, because it was such a potent radiator of energy.

It was soon found that here was the strangest stuff man had ever heard of: It completely upset the placid world of the chemist, because here was stuff that defied all "natural" laws.

Here was, indubitably, an element: No matter by what standard one analyzed its behavior. Yet, this element behaved in a thoroughly undisciplined manner: it radiated heat, X-rays and electricity, which latter was similar in its manifestations to the electrons of Thomson. But another, far more disturbing fact was apparent: it emitted actual particles, of high mass: and these particles in a short time turned into helium. Here then was an element that defied the laws of all elements: it divided itself and became something else. It was soon found that all kinds of other new elements put in an appearance. For instance, a gas called radium emanation (radon). This emanation did the impossible: it behaved as, and was, an element, which also gave birth to radiated particles and X-rays. But, if you kept this new element nicely bottled up—you had to, because it was a gas—it did a disappearing act—and another element took its place. And this element too radiated energy. None of the new elements was like anything ever seen before: elements that destroyed themselves and gave up energy, and became something else, gave up energy, and became something else, and gave birth to new elements.

The Conversion of Mass Into Energy

The hunt was on: Radio activity became the most intensely studied subject in physics. Here was the deepest secret of matter going on before our eyes. Soon the fact became known that other elements behaved in the same irrational manner: Uranium, thorium, actinium. They all sent out particles that later became helium; electric charges, electrons; and X-rays. And they all gave birth, in the long run, to—of all things—prosaic lead.

Thus there was born the science of what went on within the atom: atomic "model" followed atomic model. Always for the purpose of explaining these things, which were against all the accepted laws of nature of but a few years ago. The concept of conservation of mass was gone. Mass was being converted into energy in these irregular elements. And elements changed. Were the old philosophers and alchemists right, after all? Could we really change elements into other ones? Gold-making by 1918 had become an honest profession. By 1919 it became a cinch: Rutherford transmuted nitrogen into oxygen, by irradiating nitrogen with the particles emitted by radium. Soon gold was made from mercury. True, the gold may have come from gold tips of cigarettes, but maybe some gold was made. At enormous expense, it is true; but with improvements in the process maybe unlimited gold could be made. In bankrupt Germany gold-making was heavily financed, by Ludendorff among many others.

Soon it was found that the oxygen produced by transmutation was somehow "different" from the normal, well-known oxygen. It had a different "atomic weight," one of the things that had always been considered by the chemist as one of the unchangeable characteristics of elements. Yet here was oxygen, chemically pure: yet its weight differed from that of the natural stuff. This was a riddle. Aston surmised shrewdly that maybe such oxygen existed, unknown, in nature. He started a line of investigation for elements with atomic weights that differed from the chemically established weights: And the more he looked, the more he found. The concept of isotopes was born: it was found that every element is present in various weights, yet chemically alike. True, the different weights lie very close together for every element, but every element has isotopes, which means, that there exist, of every element, two or more forms, only distinguished from one another by their

atomic weights. At this time hundreds of isotopes have been found, which number no doubt will still increase.

Slowly the understanding of "matter" and its actual constituents became clearer and clearer: the facts related to the radiating elements, and those relating to the new science of the transmutation of elements were analyzed with greater and even greater clarity: the nature of the atom began unfolding itself. The "building stones" of matter were being recognized. The concept of the atomic model, as it stands today, is about as follows:

An atom of any given element consists of a core, called a nucleus, which has a positive charge. This positive electric charge is determined by the number of positive particles in the nucleus. These particles are called protons. Although exceedingly small these protons are of enormous density, so that it would be a tremendous task to lift a cubic inch of closely packed protons. For each proton in the nucleus there is present, in the confines of the atom, an electron, which travels planetwise in a circle or ellipse around the nucleus. The number of protons, respectively of electrons, determines the chemical behavior of the atom; that is, this number determines what element is represented by the atom. Besides the protons the nucleus contains, in all elements except hydrogen, neutral particles, called neutrons. These may be considered as being composed of a proton and an electron closely united, the positive charge of the proton and the negative one of the electron neutralizing one another. The electron is the unit of negative electric charge, and has a mass only 1/840th of that of the proton; the neutral particles, containing a proton and an electron, have approximately the same mass as a proton.

The nuclei of all atoms are built of these three kinds of particles, except the simplest one, the nucleus of a hydrogen atom: this consists only of a proton. However, there are even in this element nuclei which contain, besides a proton, a neutron. The "mass" of such a freak atom is then twice that of the normal hydrogen.

In all elements, while the number of protons and electrons determines the chemical nature of the element, its "atomic number," the "atomic weight" depends on the number of protons plus the number of neutrons in the nucleus. The number of neutrons may therefore vary, and with it the atomic weight, while the element chemically is still the same: the varying number of neutrons is therefore the reason for the existence of the so-called isotopes.

A great many isotopes occur abundantly in nature, but almost as many have been created in the laboratory. Rutherford transmuted nitrogen, and did so with particles naturally and constantly emitted by radium. Later it was found possible to duplicate such particles, when their nature was determined as that of a helium nucleus: two protons in combination with two neutrons. This particle was given the name of alpha particle long before its true nature was known.

One of the most interesting facts about the neutron is that Rutherford had declared that in order to come to an orderly understanding of the nucleus it was necessary to assume its existence. It took fully twelve years to prove its actual existence as a concrete thing. It was finally unearthed. The reason for this delay was the fact that the neutron is electrically neutral, and carries therefore no charge which would make it detectable. Once the methods had been found to create neutrons in abundance, a particle was obtained, which can penetrate into the highly charged nucleus of the atom, and carry the wallop of a proton, due to its mass.

Neutrons are produced in several ways, and occur in abundance when alpha particles from radium or one of its sub-products impinge on lithium or berillium. This discovery had momentous consequences.

Neutrons, when hitting atomic nuclei, are apt to cause changes in such nuclei and almost invariably upset it to such an extent that a new element is created: but also almost invariably this element is a very unhappy one: its internal balance is a precarious one, it tries to gain balance, as do all things in nature. Invariably it does so by emitting particles: either a proton or an electron or a neutron, or even alpha particles. But, when it does so, it does the same thing as the radioactive elements. Thus the unstable isotopes created by bombardment are called radio elements.

Each time a radio element (and now we must think of the natural radium, thorium, uranium and actinium and their decay products as well as of the radio elements created in the laboratory) attempts to achieve a natural balance by getting rid of one particle or another, the emission of the particle is accompanied by a loss in weight of the total final products. This loss in weight is accounted for by the fact that energy is imparted to the particle being thrown off, and furthermore by the emission of a so-called gamma ray, a single vibration of the nature of x-rays. Such a single vibration is called a quantum. Here then was a true verification of one of the consequences of Einstein's theory of relativity, in which matter and energy are interchangeable. Einstein had gone so far as to give a formula for the amount of energy represented by any given mass: the energy equivalent of matter was given as the product of mass and the square of the speed of light per second. The phenomena involved in radio activity completely checked with this formula and constituted one of the most striking proofs of Einstein's theories.

Atomic energy thus became a reality. If it were only possible to annihilate matter in large amounts (relatively speaking), unheard of amounts of energy would be released, and temperatures beyond the imagination would be reached. No wonder then, that atomic energy attracted the widest attention.

As knowledge advanced in the nuclear field, it slowly became possible to predict reactions. Mankind may congratulate itself that in 1935 and 1936 this exactness of analysis had not been attained, so that Fermi and later Folliot and his wife Curie started off on the wrong track, when Fermi came to the conclusion that in his work he had created new radio active elements with atomic numbers 93, 94, 95, which numbers might still be extended. Had Fermi seen the true facts then, the world, today, would have been considerably more of a shambles than the most ardent applications of TNT have been able to accomplish; all, of course, in the name of a führer, god-emperor and democracy. The authority of Fermi, however, was so great, that most investigators started hotly on the trail of the "transuranic" elements which Fermi thought he had artificially created.

Meanwhile progress was still being made—and there was the eternal urge of the true scientist to know how and why. Predictions of reactions and new combinations which could be made to "go" became more and more accurate. Such predictions were made on paper, and then verified in the laboratory.

A woman mathematician, Lisa Meitner, investigated Fermi's transuranic elements and found them wanting. The existence of various isotopes of uranium had been abundantly verified: one of them was uranium 235, discovered in 1936.

Calculating the probabilities of decay of these rare isotopes she came to the conclusion that, of all the radio elements, this isotope of uranium might be caused to "emit" not only alpha particles when bombarded with neutrons but might decide to decay in a never observed way. It might suddenly fall apart and form two elements somewhere in the middle range of the series of elements. Uranium has atomic number 92. It was conceivable that it could split, say, into two atoms of atomic weight 46, or into one of weight 50 and one 42, or any other combination totalling 92. Careful investigation showed that the greatest probability lay in the formation of barium or krypton.

Being Jewish, she was, of course, unworthy of the blessings conferred by der Führer on Germany. She was kicked out of her job and fled to Denmark. From Copenhagen she communicated with Hahn (almost a suspicious name too—Rankin will have to go into the matter) and told him of her conclusions. Hahn and Strassman verified her calculations in their laboratory: they bombarded U-235 with slow neutrons and barium and krypton became the end products. Hahn and Strassman notified Niels Bohr, then in the U.S.A., who notified the world of science, almost breaking up a meeting of the Philosophical Society in Washington when he did so in 1938.

Fascism Loses the Race

By January, 1939, the results had been duplicated time and again, and it was known that here was a source of energy hitherto confined to such characters as Buck Rogers and such as appear in *Fantastic Stories*. This became even more true, when further investigations and calculations showed that the process was spontaneous, because U-235, when disintegrating, emits neutrons, which will set off adjoining nuclei on the same splitting or fission process: it was proved that here was a true chain reaction.

The munitions fraternity and the military had long been casting loving eyes at radium: they dreamed of a radium bomb. If you could make that, you really would have something worth while to sell to your clients. But radium, and all its relatives, were perfectly useless, except maybe for idiotic things like pure research in biology and medicine. But reputable medical supply houses fought shy of the stuff. Those who had foisted radium products on the public had created too much havoc. The trouble with all these radio materials is that they follow their own sweet course. There is not a thing you could do to make them do their stuff in a hurry. The hope to have something really destructive in their field was too remote for straight-thinking business men to bother about.

But this thing of Hahn and Strassman—that might be something worth looking into. Let's talk it over anyway with those idiots. If they have something we'll put them to work. You can get them for next to nothing and they'll be flattered like hell if we show them we appreciate them. It was talked over, extensively. Lisa Meitner might even have been permitted to return to Germany, maybe even been offered a diploma of honorary Aryanism. It was talked over internationally. And nationally. You think there really is something to it? These fellows seem to be pretty sure of themselves—I had one to lunch yesterday. Of course, I don't know what he was talking about, but he seemed damn sure.

The exigencies of dictatorship drove Hitler into his maniac culmination of the Second World War, before he could add atomic energy to his extensive armamentum. Of course every-

where it was realized that someone, somewhere, would succeed. And so everyone, everywhere, who was supposed to know something about the stuff was pressed and cajoled to defend, and help defend, whatever it was that had to be saved by total annihilation of the other guy, as a true service to mankind. And so the race was on.

How perilously close the race was may never be known. It is already becoming clear that it was full on when France was invaded; the invasion of Norway may have been motivated by the search for atomic power.

The race was truly an adventure story. But fascism was outpaced: her factories could be bombed; those in the U.S.A. were safe, if the Germans did not get to the goal first. The knowledge was everywhere. The means to go into mass production were abundant. No more mass spectrographs on a budget; a million was a bagatelle. You have an idea? Fine, try it out; money no object. And so, out of the hellish cauldron came methods for isotope separation that could be worked industrially. What matter if an installation isolates only a gram a year! Build thousands of them, and you get kilograms a year. Anything to get the precious stuff. Money doesn't mean a thing—the yokels are good for it.

What a dream for scientists—an unlimited budget. You want a new apparatus, a slight improvement? Presto: here are the funds.

Now the dream is over. Gone are those days and nights of feverish work and plans. Will it work, this new and improved super-centrifuge, this new mass spectrograph, this new vaporizer, this new ionizer? It worked: and now we have Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Yes, we never prayed so hard in our lives as when the test, the final test, was made, on July 16, in the desert of New Mexico. We may even surmise that the prayer was for failure; that the thought came up: what have we done to mankind?

Came the explosion: such as never was seen or dreamed of before; a force inconceivable was generated instantaneously: the calculations were all too true, all too accurate. Because what occurred here was truly annihilation of matter.

For the transformation of uranium 235 to barium and krypton is annihilation of matter in the literal sense of the word, and energy formation in the true sense of the Einstein formula given above. This because of the original weight of U-235 fully 13 points must disappear somehow, to form barium and krypton, and be converted into energy: almost 5 per cent of the original mass is so converted. When, therefore, a finite mass of U-235 is available, the figures resulting from Einstein's conversion formula become truly staggering in their magnitude. One disintegrating atom of U-235 generates approximately 162 mega-electron volts, or 162 million electron volts. Therefore the power generated by the disintegration of one pound of atoms staggers the imagination, if one considers that this power is generated and "consumed" in a small fraction of a second. To imagine a sudden release of power as here discussed, one would have to imagine the power used in a whole year in a fair-sized city, say like Albany, generated and used in one-hundred-thousandth part of a second, and in a space smaller than a child's fist.

The temperatures generated in this process cannot even be estimated; the quantity of x-ray quanta sent out in a very small fraction of a second is unbelievable.

Truly, there was reason to pray—for forgiveness, if anything. Ask Einstein.

There we have, in a nutshell, what has been accomplished with our two billion dollars. Now what? What are we going to do with it? Of course, we have the bomb—and it is irresistible. Of course, it is a deep military secret; no one who is blind and cannot read can find out how it is done. That we have won the race is indubitable on the surface. But do we know for sure? Have the Russians got it, or the Swedes?

Your truly logical man says: As long as we have it, and have no reason to believe others have the same thing, let's use it before the other fellow has a chance. The McCormick-Patterson-Hearst press is all for using up all the bombs we have now, quick, preferably on Great Britain and Russia, and so establish "our" brand of "democracy" everywhere. Rankin would like to use it on his friends, but quick. So would Bilbo: it would save letter-writing. And Pegler would love to use a few pounds of it to blast Roosevelt out of his grave for not being of the same brand of reaction Pegler favors. Patterson is a prudent man. He thinks we should build a few more factories so that we will not run out of supplies if, for instance, the Greeks should manage to establish a popular government, or the Spanish or the Italians.

We, however, must seriously ask ourselves: What are we going to do with it? The people, the workers, have one paramount duty today, one that overshadows all others: We, the people, must control this power so that it shall not be turned against us. In the hands of the captains of industry it is bound to be a weapon of suppression: for the time being only one of violence; eventually an economic one.

* * *

All Must Wait on Profits

We have been assured that the millenium is at hand: unlimited power to relieve mankind of its burdens of labor. We can see the Weirs, the Fords, the Mellons, the du Ponts, Bethlehem Steel directors, the South African gold diggers getting together at a thanksgiving party, celebrating the fact that now mankind's burdens are relieved so that the Wops and the Bohunks can now attain the status of members in fashionable golf clubs. We can see the joyful countenances of the Dutch planters, who now can give their coolie labor clean jobs and stimulate their intellects to a true appreciation of the finer things of life. We see the South African gold diggers (black ones, of course) go down in the pits jubilating, and watch the atoms dig gold for the dearly beloved British masters, who allow them to bask in the soft glare of multicolored atomic lights, air-cooled recreation rooms being available if they should get tired of watching the tireless atoms and wish to inhale refinement in the form of atomic music and lectures on archeology and physics.

Of course, a little bit more work has to be done: for a while the hearts of these kind benefactors are bound to go on bleeding when man gets hurt, or is overworked, or is hungry in the midst of plenty, and cold for lack of ordinary fuel. That is, of course, too bad. But business is business: you can't have bread and coal and clothes without paying a profit. Meanwhile, be patient; presently we will have the atomic age. Once that has come, we can truly enter upon the age we all want: the age of Service; the age for which we prepare every Tuesday when we have our Rotary meetings, and call even the gods of finance by their first names. You would realize our vision of brighter days to come, if you heard us thundering: *For He's a Jolly Good Fellow!*

Meanwhile, there is the atomic bomb: the one weapon all lunatics have dreamed of. And the people, the workers, are confronted with that reality.

A few grams in the hands of capitalists, and the need for priorities to make riot clubs is gone. Because a gram of it is as potent a strike weapon as could be desired.

A few pounds of it in the hands of Franco—and be sure someone in the State Department is already figuring out how to slip him some—and Spain is almost certainly saved for fascism. A few pounds in the hands of Stalin—and let the workers march: he will menace them with sudden and swift annihilation.

Those are the things atomic power means now. Already it has been announced that the government (which is, as we well know, the people, all of the people, by right of the ballot) has only a "fiduciary right," whatever that may mean, but the intent to turn atomic power over to a few private concerns for exploitation. One asks: what for, if it is such a great responsibility that even a few capitalists shudder when they think of it? What will the stuff mean when in the hands of the du Ponts, and for sale to all comers with the cash to pay for it?

Because, at this moment, atomic power is but destructive. And is but a weapon against the workers of the world.

The question thus arises: What of the promise of power without limit, once this "atomic" power has been harnessed? We will attempt an answer, both from the economical standpoint and from a purely physical viewpoint.

Of course, we know nothing of the balance sheet of "our" production of U-235—we probably will never get it, if it can be avoided by the powers that be. One thing is known: the methods developed for so-called isotope isolation developed in the laboratories all over the world were such that even the smallest amount was enormously costly. Hahn and Strassman in all probability did not have pure U-235 when they made their famous 1938 experiment verifying Meitner's theory. There is, therefore, a great chance that the production of U-235 is almost as costly as it was then, and could be accomplished on a large scale only because cost was no object in a two billion dollar project, which, incidentally, was not burdened with "overhead" and expensive and useless "executives." For scientists and technicians a \$7,000 a year salary is high. Most of the work was done by common labor—and we know how they enriched themselves by exacting their price during this war—on frozen wages. Because the extraction of uranium as a mixture of isotopes is just hard labor, and well known metallurgical processes are employed.

If the isolation could be accomplished with super-centrifuges, the ultimate cost might not be too prohibitive. If, however, the known methods of isotope separation, and primarily the mass spectrograph, had to be employed, the price should be tremendously high, and might, as a matter of fact, be so high that U-235 is not a competitor of coal and oil. It would be possible only to make a definite statement in this respect if the entire balance sheet were published and the quantity produced were known.

There is, of course, a chance that during the work done since the "Manhattan Project" started a way was found to utilize the rather abundant uranium isotope U-238. There is apparently an abundant supply of uranium, as a mixture of the different isotopes: only .71 per cent of the normal uranium is the desired U-235, while U-238 is the most abundant isotope, more than ninety-nine per cent of the total.

It is, for instance, conceivable a way was found to "transmute" U-238 by means of neutron bombardment, or by means of, for instance, deuterons (a proton and neutron pair) or alpha particles at high speed, into a truly trans-uranic element of unstable character. This might, for instance, be an isotope of element 93, 94 or even 95, which would be necessarily highly unstable. Such a "synthetic" trans-uranic element might decay either naturally, or under a second bombardment, to U-235.

If this was accomplished, the supply of U-235 would be well-nigh unlimited. The fact that uranium exploration has been restricted would lead one almost to suppose that this process or something very nearly like it has been accomplished.

The Possibilities of the Future

We dare say that a good mathematical physicist could work out the necessary steps in the procedure on paper without too much trouble.

It is exactly these facts which form the secret of the project: the balance sheet might prove at once that the promise is but idle talk, to satisfy the yokels who paid the bill and want to see something for their money, if only verbiage; or that U-235 can be produced in unlimited quantities.

Let us assume, however, that U-235 can be made cheaply enough so as to become a serious threat to present power sources. While as yet the stuff cannot have any useful part in our technical processes and is no immediate threat to coal and oil interests, it then might be. Then we would see an immediate change in imperialist policies, directed toward uranium deposits as well as to oil lands. The entire imperialist game will have to be reshuffled and again the people will have to pay for the game with blood and life.

If we assume that U-235 or another new element or isotope is tamed and becomes the power source we are being promised, the consequences will be, as far as the workers are concerned, disastrous under a capitalist system. A single airplane could serve for fuel transportation over the entire world, delivering an ounce here, an ounce there. One has only to visualize the unemployment resulting from its use in power plants. Truly, the burden of labor would be lifted from the shoulders of mankind, to make place for the burden of unemployment and hunger on an ever increasing scale. Technological unemployment would reach staggering figures; and the capitalist would invent the slogan: a fair day's work for a fair day's wage, when dictating conditions to those he will employ. This might be interesting for the membership of the AFL. Capitalism will feel perfectly healthy again: there will be a well supplied pool of unemployed, and a college degree may be necessary to become an atomic spittoon cleaner, as in the good old days such a degree was demanded from gas station attendants.

* * *

We return to the technical aspect again: when, if ever, will atomic power be used for controlled power generation?

In order to give the reader an idea (on a small scale) we will employ a simile which was used some time ago by one of the most popular radio authorities on the air. Atomic power was compared with gunpowder, and it was stated that the first gun was really the first internal combustion engine invented. Refinements gave us the present automotive engine, which works on the same general principles.

Now it so happens that no sane automotive engineer would make such a statement. The internal combustion engine would be a constant danger if run with gunpowder, nitroglycerine or

other similar explosive. It is a safe engine only for the fact that gasoline—or oil—must be supplied with oxygen in order to be able to burn. In the absence of oxygen gasoline is a completely harmless fluid: it cannot burn, much less explode, unless sufficient oxygen is supplied.

If anyone should attempt to run a gasoline engine on gunpowder, or diluted nitroglycerine, for instance, he would face almost certain violent death. Explosives are substances which carry within their molecular structure a supply of oxygen which makes them independent of an air supply. Once the stuff is ignited, it goes off on its own. No air or ignition needs be supplied. One molecule burns and generates the heat necessary to ignite the next one. We have here again a "chain process," a term we met before, when discussing the generation of neutrons by disintegrating U-235 nuclei which set off other nuclei, after the first atom had been started off by an external neutron, introduced for instance by the action of radium bombardment on lithium or beryllium.

If, therefore, in a "gunpowder engine," or "nitroglycerine engine," there were the slightest leak between storage tank and cylinder, there would be a "fuse" between engine and tank; and very soon, as a matter of fact, incredibly soon, the lucky owner would join his ancestors, honorable or otherwise, and the chances are that not even a dissecting room would know what to do with the remains.

At present the promised atomic engine looks very much like the discussed nitroglycerine engine, only a little more so. In all probability the design would consist of a steam engine, the steam being furnished by water heated by atomic disintegration. All one would have to do is to introduce measured, minutes doses of U-235 into the water and set it off—by means of neutron bombardment: the steam will be there.

However, there is a vast difficulty: the disintegrating atoms would emit neutrons in all directions: the chances are some might reach the main U-235 reservoir and set it off on its own hook, and a minor earthquake would be the result, accompanied by local fireworks of a rather violent nature. Now, neutrons are particles which can be stopped. But only, apparently, effectively by compounds such as paraffin and water, which contain large quantities of hydrogen: a neutron generator is only safe when surrounded by approximately six feet of water, for those who work around the apparatus. And U-235 to start on its disintegration course, needs only low-energy neutrons, so that the isolation of the main supply becomes a major problem.

It is no wonder then that warning signs are already being hoisted: do not expect atomic power to wash your dishes, run your car or nurse the baby within the first ten years. Ten years is a long time, and many exalted promises may be forgotten in that period.

Meantime, science will go on forever: men who are born with the virus of curiosity can't help themselves. They will evolve atomic power. Our guess is that it will not be based on the present basis of U-235 but on other radio elements which can be controlled, which, in other words, do not disintegrate in a true chain process, but can be disintegrated by means of an independent, controllable and simple bombardment, without which the nuclei will not be able to disintegrate.

This development may come tomorrow, or in a few years. The Marxist can have but one hope: that when it does come it will come in a society where added power truly would mean added leisure and added comfort, even for the expropriated capitalists.

WILLEM DE VOORTER.

For A New Trade Union Program

White Workers and Negro Workers

(Continued from August issue)

White workers have an abundance of evidence at hand in their past experience with the capitalist employers to teach them that what we say here is true. White workers acquiesced in the barring of Negroes from skilled and semi-skilled occupations for decades. Some of them went so far as to write in their union constitutions that Negroes could not be members. They participated in pogroms against Negro workers. They collaborated with anti-Negro employers and used their closed shop agreements to keep Negroes off the job. They engaged in strikes against the hiring or the upgrading of Negroes. But when the Second Imperialist World War rolled around with unprecedented demand for increased production, the capitalists and their government did not hesitate to raze the job barriers against Negroes and induct hundreds of thousands of them into "white" jobs. The Negro lost his inferiority, at least to a considerable degree. The protestations of white workers availed them nothing. The FEPC appeared. There were presidential decrees against the barring of Negroes. Capitalist employers discovered that Negroes were as good workers as white men. They even expressed disagreement when white women objected to working with Negro women.

The contention that "Negroes are savages" did not seem to be a matter of any importance. The lathes, punch presses and welding apparatus did not seem to be concerned with whether or not the "hands" that operated them were black or white. The owners of the machines also did not bother about the niceties of social theory and practice. For the time being at least these were things for the erudition of a backwoods Bilbo, the gentlemen of the professorial chair, the editorial office and the street corner. When a big war is on, there are capitalist profits to be made and gold is neither black nor white. Fifteen per cent on one's investment or an annual salary of \$100,000 wrung out of the sweat and blood of a black worker will buy just as many mansions, cocktails, and chorus girls as the same amount from the labor of a white worker. Capitalist profit really knows no color line. The African native toiling in the Transvaal gold fields, concentration camps, the Nicaraguan peon writhing under the lash of the slave drivers of the United Fruit Company, the Chinese coolie sweating out profits for the British imperialists, the Indian laborer bowed under the weight of the whole British ruling class, the Negro sharecropper of the South eking out his inhuman existence on sow belly and corn meal, the Mexican peon enriching the Associated "Farmers" of California, stand no lower in the estimation of the capitalist masters than the "aristocracy of labor" in the most highly skilled of the AFL craft unions.

The white worker who does not understand these things is in fact a very naive individual. He believes everything that he is told. He is a glutton for error, myth, ignorance and superstition. He sees the employers and the government crack down on his Negro exclusionist policies during the war and his only reaction is: "Just wait until the war is over and we'll get rid of the niggers." How does he know he will, and what does he mean by "get rid of?" White workers have never under-

stood that the preferment which has been theirs all these decades was neither basically a matter of the capitalist employers being pro-white labor or anti-Negro labor but what best serves the interest of capitalism at a certain time or in a certain locality. The ruling class always seeks to divide and rule. The atomization of the working class has not been promoted by the ruling class in the relations between black and white workers but also between skilled and unskilled, male and female, children and adults, natives and "foreigners," Jew and Gentile, northerner and southerner, urban and rural.

We have said that these phenomena in the ranks of the white workers are the result of the impact of capitalist society on the working class: the penetration of the working class by ideas which should be cast out as alien and inimical to the welfare of the proletariat as a class. A united and class conscious ruling class parades before the working class with slogans and ideas which if accepted by the workers can only lead to strife, disruption and disintegration of the working class front. The fact that the economic problem facing the white worker is the same problem faced by the Negro does not impress itself on the white worker. He has a feeling that because he is white, he is entitled to more and better. The capitalist employers, knowing full well that the root of the problem is capitalism itself and the search for capitalist profits, seek always to keep the white worker disoriented and safe in the tow path of race and race superiority.

The root problem is the job problem. Under capitalism there are not, will not and cannot be enough jobs for all the people. Those who work can never hope to receive adequate wages or a high enough standard of living. Capitalist profits and a high standard of living for the masses are incommensurable. White workers act as though they believed that if there were no Negroes in the U. S., they would have no economic difficulties. If this is true then Bilbo and the Negro chauvinists have the solution white workers are looking for: more jim-crow, complete separation or giving the Negroes a country of their own. It is extremely difficult, however, to grasp how a white worker can accept such nonsense. To believe this is to believe that 12 or so million Negro workers are the main obstacle to the economic welfare of 40 to 50 millions of white workers. And not only this but the 50 millions belong to the superior race and the 12 millions are cursed with the badge of inferiority.

It is a most sorrowful predicament that the white workers have permitted themselves to be pushed into. Fifty millions of them have developed the conception that they can enhance or sustain their present economic, social and political position by keeping Negroes common laborers, by segregating them into Jim Crow departments, by disenfranchisement, by forcing them to live in Negro ghettos, by mob violence, terrorism and lynching. This is the way the white worker attacks the problem of capitalist exploitation, of profit grabbing and imperialist war. If there are no Negroes around the capitalists will agree among themselves not to have any more depressions. If there were no Negroes involved, the capitalists and the government would reconvert to peace-time production at a faster tempo, they would never attack seniority and no white worker would

ever be fired and rehired at a lower rate of pay. Any employer who violated the sacredness of this arrangement would be branded by the National Association of Manufacturers, as a betrayer of the white race. If such events occurred in the South, that would be betrayal of the South and an insult to southern white womanhood.

The Roots of Negro Aggressiveness

And thus the white worker attempts to rise on the backs of the Negro toilers. He attempts to solve the problems of capitalist created scarcity by demanding only a meagre portion for his children and starvation of the child of the black worker. He demands a cheap pair of shoes for his wife and is satisfied if the wife of the Negro worker goes barefoot. He confines his efforts to getting some kind of shelter for himself and drives the black worker into the unspeakable cabins of the cotton fields and the vermin infested hovels of the big cities. This is what the white worker has learned in capitalist society. This is what he has imbibed from the capitalist press, the capitalist school, the capitalist pulpit and the capitalist government. This is the halter which the ruling class has drawn around the neck of the white working class, the blinders which this class has placed over its own eyes.

Quite often white workers resent aggressiveness on the part of Negroes. I have heard them say that Negroes "push too hard" for their rights. Negroes are too "uppity." "They should take things a little easy." Here these white workers are only producing an echo. That is what he reads in the capitalist press. That is what he hears from white "friends of the Negro," and white enemies of the Negro. That is the kind of advice the Negro gets from certain white liberals, especially the southern white "liberals." The white worker should stop and ask himself: what or whom is the Negro pushing against? What are the roots of this aggressiveness? Does the Negro push too much against the employer? If so, this is good. The white workers themselves need a few practical lessons in this type of pushing. If the Negro worker gives them this lesson, we say "well and good." That is a much needed contribution that militant Negro workers can make to the labor movement.

Do the Negro workers push too hard against the officers of a local which collaborates with the employer in discrimination against Negroes? We will support wholeheartedly this type of pushing also and every white worker who is against discrimination should do likewise. And without hesitation or qualification. Do Negroes demand in a most aggressive manner, their democratic rights in all phases of national life? The Workers Party supports this type of pushing also and every white worker should go arm in arm with the Negroes in this demand.

Are Negroes angry in the United States today? Do they at times give vent to their anger in foolish ways? Do they at times react in an incorrect manner toward white workers? To be sure they do, but who are the white workers to rise in such righteous indignation against them? How did the Negroes get into this condition? Is the white working class ready to pretend that it has made no contribution to this situation? It can be only a pretense because the Negro worker has had many sad experiences with the white working class during the past decades since his emancipation. The Negro has been oppressed and exploited by the white ruling class and maltreated and oppressed by the white working class. In his political and social immaturity he has not always understood how to make the proper distinction between the "boss" and

the white worker. The Negro worker and the white worker both have been victims of the same capitalist poison propaganda. White workers should therefore ask themselves whom and what Negroes "push" against. Do they push against the union and when? Do they push against the employer and when?

Here too the white worker is thinking in terms of race and not of class. It is race against race. The militant and aggressive Negro in the factory is not a worker with a grievance against the company or the local, or the international. He becomes a Negro who "wants to be as good as a white man." The white worker develops a grievance against the Negroes and at times expresses this resentment by collaborating with the company.

Do Negro workers who come North for example, try to move into "white neighborhoods" after they have accumulated a few dollars and become accustomed to a higher standard of living? To be sure they do. Is this one other mark of inferiority? Does the white worker expect the Negro to act in any different way from the white worker. The white worker from Mississippi or Arkansas, who has come North to escape the horrors and misery of "Tobacco Road," to escape the low wages and the meagre standard of living of the South, begins to fix himself up as soon as he has made a few days' pay. The Negro who has left the South or the slums of the North, does likewise. He moves into a "white neighborhood." Why? Because he has only one aim in life: to live beside a white man? The white worker who thinks this is really too stupid to be entitled to opinion on any question whatsoever. The Negro goes to the "white neighborhood" because here he finds the most modern houses, the best paved streets, the most up-to-date school buildings, fewer brothels, whiskey shops, factories and dumps.

Instead of the white working class welcoming this move by the Negro, quite often a mob is organized to drive Negroes back to the slums and shanty-towns from which they came. What are the white workers protecting when they act in this manner? Whose property? Their own property? Nonsense; they own no property. Even those white workers, particularly in small communities, who have a little home of their own, discover every so often that they do not own anything; not even the house on which they pay taxes to the capitalist state. The white working class renters who object to Negro neighbors are victims of the propaganda of the big property owners and real estate operators who say that "Negroes depress property values." Why should white workers be interested in maintaining "property values?" It is not their property. They, like other wage-earners, own no property. The property is owned by the banks, landlords, insurance companies: that is, by the capitalist exploiters of all the workers; black and white. If Negroes depress property values, that in itself is a good reason for any white worker to welcome the arrival of Negro

Do Negroes want to eat in "white" restaurants? Of course they do. They want to eat where other people eat and where it is most convenient to eat. Why do white workers object? The proprietor says that if he serves Negroes he will lose his trade. Why will he lose his trade? Because white workers will not eat with Negroes or rent a room in a hotel if the proprietor accommodates Negroes? But we ask any white worker: "What interest can you have in refusing to eat in a restaurant which serves Negroes or live in a hotel which rents a room to a Negro?" Assuming that there is a loss if Negroes are served or accommodated, is it the white worker who suffers the loss?

How many white workers own hotels, restaurants, theatres, railroads or bus lines? In what way do white workers profit by the exclusion of Negroes? Does the hotel keeper reduce their room rent, the cafe owner the prices of the meal, the railroad the cost of the ticket or the landlord the amount of the rent? If none of this, then what? A feeling of racial superiority? This is very poor material to use as a foundation for economic security, for the building of the unions, for the struggle against the employers, or for the organization of working class political action.

The Bogey of Social Equality

The white worker has one stock argument against Negro equality which is likely to be pulled out at the drop of the hat. That is his obsession with what he calls "social equality." "How would you like for your sister to marry a Negro?" It is expected that this question will floor any white worker who has been advocating that Negroes should have the right to a job, to live in a decent house, to eat in a "white" restaurant or ride on a train like other people. "How would you feel if you looked up and saw your girl friend dancing with a Negro?" For fear that the "girl friend" might forget herself and dance with one of the Negro members of the union, such a worker takes the position that Negro members should not be allowed to attend union social affairs.

Years ago I heard a southern congressman say in the House that he went into the Washington Union Station and there was no place "for my wife and daughter to set. Every place they went they would have to set by a dinky." The white union member who talks about "social equality" in the way which is prevalent among these workers is taking the identical attitude as this congressman. If Negroes just must use the trains then let them have a separate waiting room and a separate coach. If Negroes insist on joining "our unions" then let them have their own department, their own washrooms and their own social affairs.

This attitude on the part of white workers is reactionary in more ways than one. It assumes that men should control the lives of women and dictate to their wives, sisters and sweethearts, who their associates should be. This is a medieval conception of the place of women in society. They are given an inferior status and told by the men how they should live their lives. Also such an attitude on the part of white workers assumes that the main determinant in social behavior should be, or is, sex and the relations between the sexes. A white worker who exhibits such beliefs reveals that he accepts all the anti-Negro propaganda that is spread through the country by the purveyors of hate and working class disruption. This "social equality" obsession of the white workers gives the impression that his main concern in life is to keep Negro men away from "our women." All of this orients white labor away from what should be their main concern: the united struggle of the working class black and white, male and female, against the capitalist employers and exploiters. Their attention gets centered on maintaining artificial divisions within the working class, which strips labor of its striking power, makes it the prey of every demagogue and hate-monger.

The most important aspect of this question of "social equality" for the working class, however, is the fact that the white worker thinks that *he* has social equality. He doesn't know that the Negro worker has just as much social equality in the fundamental sense as the white worker. The essence of social equality is not merely nor primarily the right or the

opportunity to mingle socially with those of other racial groups. The white worker does not achieve social equality in capitalist society just because he excludes Negroes from association with him. Social equality is the question of which class one belongs to: ruling class or working class. In a capitalist society if one belongs to the working class, then one does not and cannot have or achieve social equality in that society. Only those can be socially equal who share in the distribution of social power. Social power, therefore, social equality is based on economic power. Economic power means the ownership of the means of producing wealth: the mines, mills, factories and the banks.

The white worker deludes himself even if he believes that he has political equality. Many workers think thus because they have one vote the same as the millionaire. Rockefeller has only one vote the same as the lowliest wage-earner. But political power too, can be under looking at capitalist society or capitalist democracy (the United States) as a society divided by class lines: ruling class on one side and the working class on the other. The ruling class rules politically as a class because this class owns the wealth and the means of producing wealth. It protects its political power, it dominates the government and the country by virtue of the fact that it has social power.

If the white worker, the white trade unionist, would look at this question through his own eyes, that is, through his own experience he would get the point clearly. He wants to bar the Negro worker from his dance but this white worker doesn't think the matter through. This white worker is himself barred from his employer's dance or other social affairs of his employer. He is barred from his employer's club, from his home and from the whole social, economic and political life of his employer. The two belong to two different and antagonistic classes in capitalist society. The employer has social equality. He can go wherever his desires or inclinations lead him. He may marry in his own class or in the working class. He may eat in the most expensive cafe or in the humblest and cheapest. He may join the swankiest club or the cellar hangout of the very dregs of society. For his social life he may stay in his class or leave his class. The white worker cannot do these things. He is forced to remain with his class. He has no economic power, no social power, therefore he cannot have social equality in a capitalist society.

The natural ally therefore for the white worker, socially, politically and industrially is the Negro worker. They are in the same boat together: members of the same class. The working class cannot cross the class line; either in its social life, its economic life or its political life. Both are propertyless wage-earners. There is political, social and economic equality between them. The white worker is socially equal to the Negro worker and vice versa. This is one of the stark and crude facts of capitalist society. No amount of nonsense about superior and inferior races; no catch questions about the marriage of one's sister to a Negro worker can destroy the fact that this Negro worker, as a worker, is socially, politically and economically equal to the white worker; to his sister, his wife or his mother. It is capitalist society with its class lines and its exploitation which makes this so. It is the fact that both are wage-earners which establishes this basic fact.

The new program urgently needed for the labor movement must take this fact into account. The white working class must place in its program and in all workers' organizations: Social, Political and Economic Equality for the Negro.

DAVID COOLIDGE.

The Question of Unity

Documents of the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party

Editor's Note—The first document is a resolution of the minority in the SWP presented to the Political Committee of that party. The second is a statement on the document by the National Committee of the WP.]

1. It is now more than five years since the groups which we designated as the "petty-bourgeois opposition" left the party. Immediately after the split, they organized the Workers Party under the leadership of comrades with many years of experience in the revolutionary movement. After five years, we note that their activities in the labor movement continue unabated. They publish a weekly agitation paper, *Labor Action* and a monthly, *New International*; put up candidates in elections; conduct fraction work in trade unions, etc. They took with them in the split 40 percent of our membership; their present activities indicate that they have retained a substantial portion of this number and recruited new elements.

2. Assuming that the Workers Party is but one-third the size of our party, we cannot ignore the possibility of re-unification of the two forces on the ground of their allegedly sparse numbers. Unification would result in a 25% increase of our forces. More important, unification would return to the party cadre elements who are the product of decades of Marxist training and experience and whom we cannot hope to recruit elsewhere.

3. Our attitude toward re-unification must be based on a *political* estimate of the Workers Party. This means not to repeat what we said about the minority at the time of the split, but to analyze without prejudice the history of the Workers Party and the character of its program and present activities.

4. With the exception of the important questions of the nature and defense of the Soviet Union, the Workers Party remains on the fundamental programmatic basis of the Fourth International. Its propaganda, agitation and activities are based in the main on the program of transitional demands adopted by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.

5. The acid test of a workers' party is its attitude toward imperialist war. Without the slightest hesitation and with no opposition in its ranks, the Workers Party took a Leninist position toward its own imperialist bourgeoisie. It has maintained that position throughout the war. Some comrades deny that this is an acid test of the revolutionary character of the Workers Party; they point to the anti-war position of Martov in World War I and of the Young Peoples Socialist League in this war, as examples of centrists and/or non-revolutionists who oppose imperialist war. The speciousness of this argument is that it ignores the fact that Martov and the Y.P.S.L. remained in parties dominated by social-chauvinists, whereas the Leninist character of the Workers Party's position includes its recognition of the principle that Leninists must have their own party and cannot remain in one party with social-chauvinists.

6. The comrades of the Workers Party have shown that they remain loyal to the proletarian revolution. On the American scene the Workers Party has followed the same general course as our party: against the no-strike pledge and against

class-collaboration through the War Labor Board, for a Labor Party, etc. On questions of the European revolution, it has likewise followed the same course as we, and similarly on tasks of liberation of the colonies, etc. Today the similarity of the two parties' programs and activities has become still closer, with the disappearance into the background of the question of the defense of the Soviet Union, and the appearance in the foreground of the urgent need to defend the European revolutions against Stalin, a question on which the Workers Party is in complete agreement with us. It is inevitable that militant workers will not understand our separation into parties which they deem to be similar in fundamental program and immediate aims. Nor can we justly deny to these militant workers the essentially revolutionary character of the Workers Party.

The Question of Russia

7. The Workers Party position on the Soviet Union is that it is a bureaucratic-collectivist state. However, this does not constitute an insuperable obstacle to unity. Within the Fourth International there have for some years been currents rejecting the concept that the Soviet Union is a degenerated workers' state. Nobody has claimed that the Fourth International must expel comrades who believe that the Soviet Union is a bureaucratic-collectivist state or a state of capitalist restoration.

8. Yet there are comrades of the Political Committee who, while agreeing to the principle that differences on the Soviet Union are no bar to unity within the Fourth International, nevertheless argue that the comrades of the Workers Party do not belong in the Fourth International because they are "revisionists." But revisionists in the classical sense refers to reformists of the type of Bernstein, who distort Marxism for the purpose of giving up the class struggle and the proletarian revolution. The "revisionism" of the Workers Party is obviously not to be confused with Bernsteinian revisionism; the former is a revision of the Marxist theory of the state in the sense that the WP theory of bureaucratic-collectivism is not compatible with the Marxist theory of the state; but we must recognize that the Workers Party agrees with us against Bernsteinian revisionism on the necessity of carrying on the class struggle to proletarian revolution, and denies that it has abandoned the Marxist theory of the state, whereas revisionists make no bones about their abandonment of it. Only those bewitched by words can fail to distinguish between Bernsteinian revisionism which has no place in the Fourth International, and the "revisionism" of those who differ with us on the Soviet Union but who do have a place in the Fourth International and actually have a place in several of the parties of the Fourth International.

9. Another argument against unity is that the "petty-bourgeois" opposition has continued to move further and further away from us since the split. This abstract spatial metaphor is not a valid political proposition. It is true that several political differences have arisen in the past five years between the position of our party and that of the WP, but neither singly nor together are they a bar to unity. There are differences on the question of material aid to China; on some phases of our military policy; on our attitude to the Stalinist parties; differences on the national question in Europe during

the Nazi occupation may also still exist to a certain extent. But differences on all these questions must be expected with comrades in our own or sister parties of the Fourth International. They are not questions upon which difference of opinion can be expected to lead to a split, assuming the disputants to be genuine Bolsheviks and sensible. On some of these questions we had differences in our own ranks and no serious factional struggle resulted. Moreover, many of those in the WP who differ with us on these questions would be influenced by our arguments were they to be in our party; much of these differences can be laid to the existence of two separate parties. Perhaps also many of our comrades would be influenced by the arguments of the Workers Party comrades if they returned, but this is natural and to be expected. He who objects to unity on the ground of these differences and possible future differences will only find satisfaction in a monolithic party, a party without differences, which in reality would not be a party at all.

10. Another argument against unity is that the very fact that the "petty-bourgeois opposition" split from us shows they do not belong in the same party with us. This argument amounts to saying that once we have split there should never be unity again. It is completely alien to the method of Trotsky, who so often attempted to heal splits in the parties of the Fourth International. Following earlier unsuccessful attempts by Trotsky, our French comrades have recently succeeded in healing a nine-year split with the Molinierists. Our Belgian comrades have again offered unity to the Vereecken group, with whom they have more long-standing and far deeper differences than we have with the Workers Party. The fact that the comrades of the WP split from us is irrelevant to the question of unity now.

Factor in the Split

11. The Political Committee insists on continuing to characterize the WP as "petty-bourgeois" and to use that as an argument against unity. "When did they change?" is the argument against those who say that unity is possible now. A date is demanded of us. We cannot give it, but we can indicate precisely in what the change consists.

(a) Our characterization of them as "petty-bourgeois" was based mainly on the fact that we considered they had yielded to bourgeois-democratic pressure in abandoning the defense of the Soviet Union during the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact when bourgeois-democratic public opinion was hostile to the Soviet Union. But had they continued to yield to democratic public opinion, they would not have adopted a Leninist position on the war, a position which indicated that the comrades of the WP were capable of resisting far greater pressure than was exerted during the Stalin-Hitler pact.

(b) In the split Burnham was the ideological leader of the petty-bourgeois opposition. But Burnham left the WP and with him also a small group influenced by his anti-Marxist theories; likewise, Macdonald, an anti-Bolshevik, did not find himself at home in the WP. The departure of these elements was an important factor in permitting the group to remain on the fundamental position of the Fourth International instead of taking the path first indicated by Burnham.

(c) During the war the petty-bourgeois elements in the WP found jobs in industry and many of them had their first experience in fighting in the ranks of organized workers. They undoubtedly made many mistakes because of inexperience, but we cannot deny their seriousness of purpose and their

devotion to the labor movement. We can also expect that the large number of their members drafted into the army have undergone a significant transformation through their experience with masses in the war.

These are the specific changes which answer the formalistic question as to when the WP ceased to be a petty-bourgeois group.

12. Even if it had remained a petty-bourgeois group, that would be no principled obstacle to unity, for even when we characterized them as a petty-bourgeois opposition the party was willing to keep them in its ranks. Although the organizational question was raised in the form of an indictment of the Cannon regime as a bureaucratic-conservative tendency, and although that question played an important role in the struggle culminating in the split, the basis of the struggle was the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. Under the guidance of Trotsky, we took the position that a split on this question was not justified; that it was possible and desirable for the minority to accept discipline in action and to strive further to win the majority of the membership to its point of view. Trotsky proposed that the minority be given guarantees that factions would not be prohibited; that no restrictions would be imposed on factional activity other than those dictated by the necessity for common action; that the minority could choose to have an internal bulletin of its own or a common one with the majority. The minority demanded the right to publish a public newspaper agitating against the party position. This right the majority rejected as irreconcilable with Bolshevik procedure. The split occurred because the minority violated the convention decision denying it permission to publish a public organ.

13. It is clear from the facts that led to the split that either the elimination by history of the question of the defense of the Soviet Union or a willingness on the part of the comrades of the WP to accept the conditions proposed by Trotsky to avoid the split should lead to a serious attempt at re-unification.

14. The question of the defense of the Soviet Union has not been eliminated by history, but it is no longer the burning question that it was in 1940. The burning question today is the defense of the European revolution from Stalin, on which both parties agree. This creates the possibility of working together again in one party. No one can say if and when we are likely to bring to the fore again the slogan of defense of the USSR. The variant of a fairly long term of peace between the imperialists and Stalin is more likely to occur than the variant of war. At any rate, it is necessary to invite the WP comrades to re-enter our ranks, offering them the same conditions that we were willing to offer them in order to avoid the split.

The Issue of Unity

15. How the WP will react to such an invitation is not certain. The important thing is to work out a correct line for our party on this question: to invite the WP to unite with us on the same conditions we offered in 1940. We shall benefit no matter what attitude the WP takes. A refusal on its part can be utilized to tear away some of their supporters within and outside their party. Acceptance means increasing our membership by several hundred among whom are capable comrades with many years of experience in the revolutionary movement. It means eliminating a party whose existence side by side with ours causes much confusion.

16. An attitude which condemns those who split to per-

manent separation from the party regardless of their loyalty to the revolution, is incompatible with the true spirit of Bolshevism. In the course of building a Bolshevik party, sharp differences of opinion, even bitter struggle and splits, are almost unavoidable. Unification after a split, when tempers have cooled, when events have eliminated or pushed to the background the cause of the controversy, is just as obligatory as refraining from splitting. We correctly characterized the split as a criminal blunder against the movement, but that does not justify us in forever barring the door to those who left us.

17. The unwillingness to unite with comrades who have different opinions has nothing in common with Bolshevism. Such unwillingness bases itself on the concept of a monolithic party whose leaders, while granting formal democratic rights of discussion, do not in reality, conceive differences of opinion and discussion of the differences as a method of building a healthy Bolshevik party. They do not have confidence in their ability to convince intelligent revolutionists: they depend upon blind followers. Building the party to them is to create a machine with a membership that is docile and accepts unquestioningly the directives of the leaders. The question of unification with the comrades of the WP is thus of enormous symptomatic importance in determining the kind of party we want to build. The party's decision will be a touchstone indicating the direction in which we shall henceforth move.

—GOLDMAN.
MORROW.
WILLIAMS.

STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE WP

1. The National Committee of the Workers Party takes note of the fact that a minority group of the Socialist Workers Party, led by Comrades Goldman, Morrow and Williams, has presented a resolution to the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in favor of the unification of that party with the Workers Party. The principal ground given in the resolution for unification of the two parties is that the main political question in dispute in 1939-40, which led to the split in the Socialist Workers Party and the formation of the Workers Party, namely, the difference over the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union," is today no longer as acute and topical as it was when the dispute first arose; and that the two parties today have a similar position on the main task in Europe, namely, defense of the European Revolution from the threat of Stalinism and Anglo-American imperialism.

2. The National Committee also takes note of the fact that the Socialist Workers Party itself has officially taken the view that the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" does not, at the present time, occupy the prominent position it was given at the beginning of the war, that it has receded into the background.

3. The Workers Party stands for strengthening the forces of the Fourth International in all countries, the United States included. Therefore, it also stands for the unity of the Fourth Internationalists in this country in a manner and on a basis calculated to give the greatest assurances of healthy progress.

4. We are obliged to record our disagreement with the motivation for the modification of the Socialist Workers Party's position on the defense of Russia in the war. It is also

well known that we still have important differences with the Socialist Workers Party on a number of political and theoretical questions. However, the range of these differences do not go beyond what is permissible within the ranks of a single revolutionary party. Furthermore, our estimate and criticism of the official regime maintained by the representatives of the majority in the Socialist Workers Party has not been changed. The fact that these representatives are now so categorically opposed to unity with the Workers Party, as well as their opposition to any united action with the Workers Party, is confirmation of our estimate. Nevertheless, the interests of uniting the Fourth Internationalists in the United States on a sound foundation are more important than the regime in the Socialist Workers Party.

5. The Workers Party is therefore prepared to discuss the question of unity with the Socialist Workers Party.

6. However, our National Committee proposes that, in order to test the practical possibilities of living and working together harmoniously in one united Party, as well as to promote the common cause in the working class and the labor movement, the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party, through their National Committees, should arrange for joint consultation and cooperation in all fields—trade union, political, defense, etc.—where it is possible, necessary and fruitful.

—National Committee, Workers Party
MAX SHACHTMAN, *Secretary*

THE TRUTH ABOUT INDIA:

'INDIA IN REVOLT'

By HENRY JUDD

Order from the **WORKERS PARTY** **PRICE: 25 CENTS**
114 W. 14th St., N. Y. C. **In Bundles of**
Five or More—20 Cents

INCENTIVE PAY

THE SPEED-UP, NEW STYLE

By ALBERT GATES

Editor, Labor Action

Your boss's new scheme to squeeze more profits and more work out of YOU! What it is, who's behind it, how you can fight it!

Five Cents per Copy **Thirty Pages**
Three Cents in Bundles of Five or More

THE WORKERS PARTY

114 West 14th Street

New York 11, N. Y.

Agrarian Struggles in the U. S.

Populism and Its Lessons for Today

(Continued from August issue)

Southern Populism and the Negro

Intimately connected, if not completely identified with the vicissitudes of Southern Populism, was the Negro question in the South. The period of Reconstruction marked the first time that the masses of Negroes participated in Southern society under formal conditions of equality. But the Negro's social rights and economic opportunities were maintained only by the force of Northern arms, the political power and temporary interest of the Northern bourgeoisie. A new Southern ruling class—agents of Northern capital—arose, to whom power could be entrusted and the Federal troops were withdrawn. The Negroes were pushed out of Southern politics by terrorist and legal methods of the new Bourbons and old planters.

Though some poor whites obtained land during the Reconstruction days, the Negro fell back into agricultural labor or share-cropping. With the crisis in cotton culture, the whites became farm-tenants. Tenancy is a higher economic level than share-cropping or agricultural labor. A tenant owns his farming tools, seed and crop. He is free from supervision. However, the Negro laborers or share-croppers owned nothing and often worked in gangs.

By 1900, 73.6% of the Negro farm population were share-tenants and 25.2% were property owners, as contrasted to the white, of whom 36.1% were tenants and 63% were owners.² It is no wonder that by 1891 the Colored Farmers Alliance had a million and a quarter members. There is a sad dearth of material on Negro populism³ but there is enough to indicate the pivotal role of the Negro agrarian masses.

It is misleading merely to comment that both the Populists and the Bourbon Democrats courted the Negro vote. Though planters and small farmers led Southern Populism, the militancy and forceful politics originated with the direly impoverished tenants and share-croppers. Populism flourished among Southern Negroes as no movement had spread among them before or since. The Negro people, predominantly rural and propertyless, quickly realized that their struggle was identified with their century-long struggle for democratic rights and political equality. To a greater or lesser extent, the poor white farmers recognized that only their class solidarity would gain them any victory at all. In spite of numerous defections, equality for the Negro became almost a principle of Southern Populism. On the opposite side, elimination of the Negro from Southern politics was a firm principle of the Southern Bourbons. They began to search desperately for Negro support only

when Populism became a veritable tidal wave which threatened to engulf them.

In 1892 the Alabama People's Party platform contained the following: "We favor protection of the colored race in their legal rights . . . through the means of kindness, fair treatment and a just reward for them, a better understanding and more satisfactory condition may exist between the races."⁴ In Texas, two Negro leaders were on the People's Party state committee. In Louisiana the Populists issued an appeal that the people "not let the scare-crow of Negro domination longer drive them to the Democratic wigwam."⁵ In South Carolina Ben R. Tillman, an agrarian champion who became anti-Negro and a loyal Democrat, attempted to implement discriminatory legislation. For some time, the Populist state legislature prevented him. In Arkansas the People's Party adopted the resolution: "It is the object of the People's Party to elevate the downtrodden sons and daughters of industry in all matters before the people irrespective of race and color."⁶ To sum it up, "For the first time in his political history, the Negro was not regarded as an incompetent ward of white supremacy, nor as a ward of military intervention, but as an integral part of Southern society, with a place in its economy." "Never before or since have the two races come so close together as they did during the Populist struggles."⁷

The planters and other prosperous farmers were caught between two fires. They were in strong opposition to the oppressive merchants, but they undoubtedly looked with increasing alarm at the rise of political activity among tenants and agricultural laborers, the majority of whom were Negroes. As a result, the rich farmers tended to conciliate their differences with the urban capitalists and lead Populism back into the Democratic Party. They partially succeeded; due to their superior economic and educational position they controlled the agrarian movement; and apparently won victories, taking over important positions in the Democratic Party from the Bourbon business-men. White supremacy and the one-party system, twin phenomena, were thus maintained. But the steady worsening of economic conditions spurred the landless agrarians on. The well-to-do farmers could foresee the consequences of a real agrarian triumph—expropriation of the large land-owners by a land-hungry peasantry. So they deserted Populism. Thus it came about that after 1892, radical Populism (one can almost say Negro Populism) came to the fore and dominated the Southern agrarian movement.

The Negroes were outstanding in their advanced demand for a third party. In 1890, at the convention of the Northern and Southern Alliances, at Ocala, Florida, the Colored Farmers Alliance came with a strong condemnation of the vacillating Jim Crow policy of the Southern white Populists; and in full support of the Force Bill, whereby the Federal Government would enforce Negro suffrage in the South. Boldly striking out for an immediate third party, they were condemned

4. Anna Rochester "History of the Populist Movement in the U. S."
5. Melvin Johnson White in the "Mississippi Valley Historical Review."

6. Helen M. Blackburn "The Populist Party in the South," an unpublished thesis.

7. C. Vann Woodward, "Tom Watson, Agrarian Rebel."

1. This important point is thoroughly discussed in David P. Brooks' "The Agrarian Revolution in Georgia."

2. E. Q. Hawk "The Economic History of the South."

3. Hicks "The Populist Revolt," which is considered a standard text, mentions the Colored Farmers Alliance just three times. Of Arnett (Populist Movement in Georgia) Jamie Reddick writes: "Arnett treats lightly the influence which the Negro exercised in its (Populist) activities." Reddick herself supplies only a mass of unrelated material and ends with a superficially absurd conclusion. Anna Rochester (The Populist Movement in the U. S.) can only comment "... it seems likely that historians have not yet told us the whole story of Populism and the Negroes." It would indeed be unfortunate if our interpretation would be determined by the shortsightedness and limitations of the bourgeoisie historians rather than by fundamental Marxist analysis.

by the white Populists who were busily engaged in maneuvers within the Democratic Party. Powderly, leader of the Knights of Labor and an active Populist, heartily commended the action of the Colored Farmers Alliance.

At the 1891 Cincinnati convention of the Farmers Alliance, the Southern Alliance was scarcely represented. But a good many of their representatives were Negroes who were obviously for a third party. One Negro delegate explained that more Negroes did not attend the convention only for lack of funds. "Much cheering for the Colored Alliance followed."

At the St. Louis convention of 1892 the Southern White Farmers Alliance was again largely unrepresented due to its vacillation on the third party. However, 97 Negro delegates were in attendance. "Humphrey, the white missionary who had helped to organize the Negro Alliance, was bitterly detested by white Georgians, because he had advised the Negro cotton pickers of Texas to strike... and because he was a strong third party man."⁸ Though more historical material has yet to be found, the role of the Negroes in the Populist movement is clearly discernible.

"Goodbye, Old Parties, Goodbye"

Northern Populism received a growing voting support in the state elections of 1890. But the Populist experiences with state politics continued to be disappointing.⁹ Ignatius Donnelly, devoted scholar, historian, orator and stylist of Populism, declared in the Minnesota Alliance Manifesto of 1891: "We are defeated... but not disheartened." Political power like economic power lay elsewhere than in the Western farm states. In 1890 the Supreme Court declared state regulation of railroads to be unconstitutional. Two years later the income tax law was invalidated by the Supreme Court for the same reason.

Preparations for organizing the People's Party began at the Farmers Alliance convention in 1890. The nomination convention in 1892 was put off after the Democratic and Republican nomination convention, so that the actions and programs of the two major parties could be judged beforehand. The Republican convention paid scant attention to the Populist demands. The Democratic Party convention gave weak verbal support to the doctrine of bi-metallism—a doctrine professed by the Populists—but was silent on all other issues of reform. After some ten years of activity within the Republican Party and political action within the Democratic Party by the Southern farmers, the rural masses had failed to seriously affect fundamental national policies.

After due preparations and efforts to involve all middle-class reformers and labor unions, the new party was born in St. Louis in 1892. Out of 698 delegates, 82 represented the Knights of Labor and there were some few delegates from other labor unions. All the long-felt bitterness at the prevailing inequality and injustice was effectively expressed in the preamble to the party platform. "Corruption dominates the ballot box, the legislature, Congress... the newspapers are largely subsidized; public opinion silenced... labor impoverished and the land concentrated in the hands of the capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right of organization, imported pauperized workers beat down their wages... a

8. The actions of the Negro delegates at the Populist conventions are reported in Jamie Reddick's unpublished thesis "The Negro in the Populist Movement in Georgia."

9. "In the states where the more notable Alliance victories had been scored much was expected of the newly elected legislatures but curiously enough very little was done."—John D. Hicks "The Populist Revolt."

hireling standard army is established to shoot them down... The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and possessors of these, in turn, despise the republic and endanger liberty."

The American farmers had at last reached the highest stage of independent class action possible to them. At the Omaha convention applause raged loudest for freeing the land from mortgages, least for the purchase of "free silver." General Weaver, an old Reform Party candidate, was the People's Party choice for President, with a Southern general as vice-presidential candidate. Their program demanded tax reforms, a flexible currency, abolition of the national banks, direct election of senators, and effective control of errant politicians through the recall and referendum. Sympathy with labor's struggle for the eight-hour day and a denunciation of the Pinkerton Spy Agency were also included. While the *nouveaux riches* were extolling the almost miraculous growth of the nation's industry and continental power, thousands of farmers struck up a new theme song with fierce pride—"Goodbye, old parties, goodbye."¹⁰

The political temper of the nation's farmers is evidenced by the whirlwind campaigns conducted by the People's Party. "People commenced to think who had never thought before and people spoke who had seldom spoken. On mild days they gathered on street corners, on cold days they congregated in shops and offices. Everyone was talking and everyone was thinking." Edward Bellamy's vision of a socialist utopia, *Looking Backward*, and the *Autobiography of Terence V. Powderly* were read by hundreds of thousands. Women orators and agitators participated in Populist politics in such numbers and with such fury as was never before seen or heard of and thus, incidentally, pushed forward the cause of woman suffrage. The speech of Mrs. M. E. Leese stirred everyone. "Wall Street owns the country... The great common people are slaves and monopoly is the master... The politicians said we suffer from over-production. Over-production when ten thousand little children starve in the United States and over a hundred thousand shop girls in New York are forced to sell their virtue for the bread their niggardly wages deny them." Marx had correctly explained that in the process of transforming or combatting the social order the active masses themselves would be transformed.

If the election results in 1892 showed no spectacular vote-getting by the Populists, neither were they discouraging to the new party. The People's Party obtained 1,027,329 votes or less than ten per cent of the total national vote. In the industrial states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts the party polled only six-tenths of one per cent of the vote. But even this does not tell the whole story. For in the South many rebellious agrarians had voted for the Republicans and "Independent Democrats." Besides, in Virginia, Georgia and Kansas, the capitalist political machines "won" the elections only by the most flagrant illegality and fraud.

Economic Crisis: 1893-1896

In the years after 1892, the slogan of "free silver" was to captivate the Populist movement and predominate over all

10. When the platform was adopted "cheers and yells... rose like a tornado from four thousand throats and raged without cessation for thirty-four minutes, during which women shrieked and wept, men embraced and kissed their neighbors... in the ecstasy of their delirium." Thus comments an observer at the convention as quoted by Arnett "Populist Movement in Georgia."

other issues. To the farmers, free silver meant a depreciated dollar or currency inflation to compensate for the declining prices and growing indebtedness. Since silver was being produced in ever greater quantities at the very time it was being driven out of the money market, its price was steadily declining. Only by government subsidization—the purchase of silver to be greater than that of gold by the ratio of sixteen to one—could the market price of silver be maintained. The United States adopted the gold standard, among other reasons, because it was adopted by the European countries as a uniform basis for monetary exchange. In order to carry on world trade, this debtor nation had to maintain a large gold reserve. To the agrarian movements, the predominance of gold over silver was only a further capitulation to finance capital and to capitalist powers abroad.

The economic crisis of 1893 struck the country with unprecedented force. Strikes, unemployment and Populist agitation spread like wildfire. The bitter strike battles at Cripple Creek and Homestead; the new sudden drop in agricultural prices; the obvious impotency and helplessness of the capitalist politicians—all these contributed to the mass discontent of 1893 to 1896. The unemployed march on Washington aroused the ire of capitalist representatives and received the active sympathy of the Populists. In turn, the AFL was swept into the free silver agitation and its leadership had to fight a strong minority which was for a complete socialist program on one hand and those who pressed for affiliation with the Populist Party on the other. In Congress the Populists took up the battle for labor's right to strike, while the Populist governor of Colorado, after surveying a strike situation, called out the militia to protect the beleaguered strikers!

In 1893 Donnelly investigated for the Minnesota legislature the price combination and economic frauds in that state. He amassed more than adequate evidence but the court refused to indict the companies involved. Whereupon the Populists of Minnesota called an anti-monopolist convention, which was held in Chicago. Donnelly, fortified by his own experience and swept on by the radical tide, called for government confiscation of monopolies. When voted down, he declared that "the convention was a humbug."

The Democratic President Cleveland obviously believed that the 1893 depression was a monetary crisis, caused by the depletion of our gold reserve. He, therefore, issued government bonds which could be purchased only with gold. The bankers saw in this issuance of gold bonds a heaven-sent opportunity to milk the national treasury. While they turned in gold for these bonds bearing high interest rates, they further depleted the gold reserve by exchanging the paper currency in their possession for gold. Forced to act by the severe depression, yet helplessly entrapped in a bankers' scheme, Cleveland could only press for repeated issuance of the gold bonds. It is impossible to know how many tens of millions were netted by the bankers. But there is no doubt that the gold bonds "stirred millions of Americans to a pitch of acrimonious frenzy, for which there are few parallels in our history."¹¹ Some time later the Democratic governor of Georgia wrote to Cleveland: "The conditions of this state are fearful and threatening." Cleveland, somewhat jarred and uneasy by the turn of events, began his reply: "I hardly know how to reply to your letter of the 15th."

This is the background for the nearly half a million increase in votes that the Populists received in the elections of

1894. The total Populist vote was 1,523,079. In many states a fusion took place with the party out of power; with the Republicans in the South and with the "Silver Democrats" in the West. Four senators represented the People's Party in the upper house of Congress, with six Populists occupying seats in the House of Representatives. In some nineteen states the Populists elected an average of eighteen per cent of the legislators.

In the South, the ruling class gave up all pretensions of legality. The elections took on all the appearances of civil war. Voters were bribed and intimidated, election boxes were stuffed and destroyed. Election campaigns frequently ended as shooting frays. In one case a Negro Populist agitator, threatened with being lynched, came to Tom Watson, a leading Southern Populist, for aid. Couriers were sent out during the night and by morning two thousand white Populists had gathered to guarantee the Negro's safety. But violence against Populists, particularly Negroes, continued unabated. The capitalist class and particularly its Southern section had good cause to be alarmed by the elections of 1894.

Populism and the Labor Movement

At this point it is necessary to review, in summary fashion, the development of the American working class from the Civil War to the rise of the People's Party. The National Labor Union, led by Sylvis, had thrown its support to Lincoln during the Civil War and by 1870 had become more of a political party than a trade union. Controlled by petty bourgeois reformers and political émigrés, the question of strike action split it wide open. But the "politicalization" of the American working class was mainly agrarian in emphasis, as shown by the subordination of labor questions to currency agitation in the Greenback Labor Party. The violent strike actions of the 1870's passed them by completely.

The Knights of Labor, which followed the National Labor Union, was mainly non-industrial in its form of organization and was concentrated in small Western and Southern communities, its membership being agrarian in social origin. The K of L participated actively in the Populist movement as a minority. Though Powderly is quoted as saying "The Knights of Labor and the farmers ask for the same things... only the Knights ask for more, such as the environment of the farmers does not call for," nevertheless Powderly's politics were mildly reformist and there was no *specifically delineated* rôle aggressively pursued by labor within the Populist movement. And though thirteen working class state parties were organized during the 70's and 80's, these were undoubtedly swallowed up by the greater weight of Populism.

When the People's Party was organized, the K of L was already in decline and was being replaced by the American Federation of Labor. This aristocratic stratum of skilled labor had no interest in challenging the political domination of capital. Its class-conscious elements were socialists unwilling to accept the currency panaceas of the Populists.

Not subject to any form of class organization were the millions of new immigrants who formed the great unskilled majority of the American working class. Untouched by elementary class organization and settled in the large cities, they were easily captured by the smoothly run political machines of the two capitalist parties. Also, while the farmers seemed hopelessly doomed to expropriation as free producers, the workers had made definite gains along the lines of class organization, improved working conditions and higher wages. Politically, they were generally inclined to give their support to an ex-

11. Peck "Twenty Years of the Republic," quoted by A. M. Arnett.

panding capitalism, whether the issue was a high tariff or the gold standard. They voted for jobs, particularly those new waves of immigrants happy to escape hunger and disorder abroad. This combination of circumstances led to labor's lack of political consciousness and consequently to its indecisive rôle in the Populist movement.

Election Battles and Defeat

The People's Party seemed destined to challenge seriously the political power of the capitalist class in the presidential elections of 1896. As in 1892, the Populists waited for the Republican and Democratic conventions before holding one of their own.

Large sections of the Democratic Party were resentful and dissatisfied with Cleveland's actions during the years of economic crisis. Labor had been alienated by Cleveland's provocative use of federal troops and the court injunction. The urban middle class and small manufacturers had become declassed and impoverished by every successive capitalist depression.¹² Southern merchants and bankers, desperately on the defensive against the growing agrarian movement, readily adopted the "free silver" slogan as a means of swallowing up Southern Populism. As early as 1891 Western "silver" congressmen had supported the Southern Bourbons to defeat the "Force Bill" (which would have enforced Negro suffrage in the South) in exchange for Southern support for "free silver." Perhaps most important of all, a rebellious section of the capitalist class—the silver mine owners—were attempting to ride into power on the backs of the insurgent agrarian masses. Through their Bi-Metallic League they were avidly shopping for political support and had probably conspired to capture the Democratic Party long in advance.

Cleveland's forces were utterly routed at the Democratic convention. None of the old political hacks were eligible for the presidential nomination. Instead, the convention lost its head over William Jennings Bryan, a thirty-six year old Nebraska senator, whose eloquent oratory could not be denied.¹³ Indicative of the status quo orientation of the Bi-Metallic League manipulators was the convention's choice of Sewall, an Eastern banker, as the Democratic vice-presidential candidate.

The upheaval in the Democratic Party threw the People's Party convention into violent disagreement and dissension. What was the People's Party to do—attempt fusion or follow its own road? Southern Populists and the labor delegates, who had more than "free silver" in mind, wanted the People's Party to stay clear of the two bankrupt capitalist parties. But Northern Populists, more moderately inclined, were swung over to endorsing Bryan.¹⁴ The anti-Bryan forces were swamped by a vote of 1,042 to 321. But the Populists could not adopt Sewall the banker as their champion. Instead, Watson was enthusiastically accepted as the party's vice-presidential candidate. In addition, the endorsement of Bryan for President was made contingent upon Bryan's endorsement of Watson as his running mate. Bryan, who had once commented that he would have nothing to do with "that radical, Watson," now maintained complete silence. He refused to drop Sewall but didn't care to reject the Populist nomination. The People's

12. In 1870 there were 19,349 establishments in eleven leading branches of manufacture, in 1900 only 11,193. (A. M. Simons "Class Struggles in America")

13. Donnelly wrote of Bryan: "We put him to school and he ended up by stealing the schoolbooks."

14. Wheat went up from 64 to 82 cents a bushel in 1896. This might have been a factor contributing to political moderation.

Party entered the 1896 election campaign confused and despairing.

The campaign was as momentous as the election was decisive.¹⁵ Bryan traveled 16,000 miles on speaking tours. McKinley stayed at home, relying on his party lieutenants. Bryan tempered the radicalism of his supporters, but Republicans charged the Democrats with inspiring sedition. The Republicans spent sixteen million dollars, the Democrats only three hundred thousand! Employers of labor intimidated their workers to vote for McKinley or be fired. Unrest, tenseness, excitement and agitation prevailed everywhere. The masses of people revealed an extreme consciousness of the historical moment arrived at in our nation's history and of the class forces arrayed in this election conflict.

The total vote was the largest of any presidential election up to that time. McKinley received approximately eight million votes against seven and a half million for Bryan. Bryan won the West and South and lost the populous Northeastern and Middle Atlantic states to McKinley. Victory for Bryan was dependent on working class support, and the workers voted for jobs, i.e., stable capitalism, i.e., the Republican Party. This is not as incongruous as it may seem in these days. The Democrats had no real program for labor, though its supporters vehemently expressed their sympathy for the exploited. The working class could not be inspired by the slogan of free silver—a hopeless panacea that would only interfere with and disturb the productive economy without advancing it or transforming it. True, the labor supporters of the Democratic Party were wary of the "free silver" cry and attempted to give the Democratic program a strong working class emphasis.¹⁶ Considering the relation of forces within the Democratic camp, their efforts were of little avail. The alliance of petty bourgeois and workers had at this critical point only served to drive the majority of the working class toward the bourgeoisie and social peace. Certainly an independent Populist ticket and campaign in the 1896 elections would have unloosed tremendous class forces and immeasurably speeded up the revolutionary development of the American working class. For the People's Party would have had to stand to the left of the newly renovated Democratic Party and fight the election on clear and sharp class issues. In the fateful year of 1896, the People's Party could have passed into the hands of Southern tenants, Negro agricultural laborers, and class conscious workers. Instead the party was inherited by the silver mine owners, Southern planters and businessmen, the small bourgeoisie and the sagacious Democratic politicians. Due to the fundamental historical limitations of that period, and secondary historical "accidents" the People's Party followed the one course rather than the other.

In the South the development is particularly interesting. The political setting for the 1896 elections was as follows: In North Carolina and Virginia there existed a coalition of Republicans and/or the Negroes making up the greatest majority in the anti-Bourbon movement. In Georgia and Texas, there existed strong Negro-white Populist solidarity. The businessmen and planters were clearly threatened with upheaval. In South Carolina, the Negro was disenfranchised in 1891 by a planter-led Farmers Alliance allied with the new Southern bourgeoisie. By 1896, as we have seen, the Populists lost their programmatic independence and willingly or un-

15. It is written up extremely well in Matthew Josephson's "The Politicos."

16. "The Trade Unions and the Populist Party" in Science and Society, Spring 1944.

willingly went back into a Democratic Party which was passionately espousing "White Supremacy" and planning to eliminate the Negroes from politics. The Negroes, alienated from their Populist allies, streamed once again to the Republicans in their attempt to defend themselves from the strengthened Bourbon Democracy. This explains the high vote obtained by McKinley in many Southern states. The tortuous political road of the Southern Negro during Populism can be broken up into three periods: a) 1886-1892—Negroes are organized and come out for a third party. The class and racial (democratic) demands become clearly identical. b) 1892-1896—A section of the white Populists come out for a third party. With the class unity as base, fundamental political and social changes are imminent in the South. c) 1896 and after—The white agrarians re-unite with the southern ruling class. The Negro re-unites with the northern ruling class. The agrarian class program is split off from and subordinated to the program of democratic equality as promised by the big bourgeoisie.

Having broken the Populist movement, the Southern ruling class perpetrated legislation for the repression of the Negroes in particular and the impoverished masses in general. This was accompanied by physical terror and violent slander against the Negro masses. The Bourbons were so shaken up by the Populist revolt, they searched wildly for any and all means to prevent its recurrence. Many poor whites fought against the disenfranchisement of the Negro but they were too weak and demoralized to halt the feudal-capitalist counter-revolution.

The Aftermath of Populism

The decline of Populism marked the end of one stage of the class struggle and its beginning on a new and higher level. After his experience with Populism, Eugene V. Debs helped found the Socialist Party in 1900. The party paper, "Appeal to Reason," was published and widely read in the mid-west. A Texas Populist editor complained that younger Populists were "sliding into the Socialist Party." Similar reports came from other states in the South and Northwest.¹⁷

At the other pole, former Populists were becoming arrogant, vociferous Southern Bourbons. Tom Watson, a fiery radical Southern Populist, now found his place comfortably among the dominant planters and businessmen. When Socialism made advances on the American scene, this "Jeffersonian Democrat" penned ferocious attacks upon it, commenting that Socialism would "never make a white woman safe from the lusts of a negro." Daniel De Leon excellently characterized Watson as "a feudal Junker," adding "Hit the capitalist and the Junker will shriek—we are seeing this spectacle in Mr. Watson's department."

The explanation for Watson's "conversion" is very simple. As tenantry increased, Watson took the side of the landlord. Previously, the farmers were arrayed against the merchants. Now, the possessing farmers stood opposed to the dispossessed farmers. Agricultural prosperity prevailed in the South—for prosperous farmers, landlords and planters. As a result of the capital accumulation by merchants' usury, the mills were now brought to the cotton. The landless agrarian was a source for cheap mill labor. The urban population doubled and trebled. The capital invested in manufacturing in the South increased by 325.4% between 1880 and 1900. Cotton culture was intensified. In Georgia, 156 lbs. of cotton were produced

per acre, in 1879. By 1909 it was 204 lbs.¹⁸ The gross value of all farm products in:

	1899	1909
Georgia	87 million dollars	151 million dollars
Alabama	91 " "	171 " "
South Carolina	68 " "	156 " "

There was no longer any question of credit for the small landowner who was steadily being dispossessed. For the planters and businessmen, there existed in 1909 7,391 banks in contrast with 1,007 banks in 1881. The ruling Bourbons were saved not only by the political defeat of their enemies but by a decisive economic revival as well.

In the country as a whole, the same phenomenon took place. The value of farm products rose as follows (in millions of dollars):

1880	2,212
1890	2,460
1900	4,717

This was due to the growth of the native and foreign markets, the growth of food processing, the intensification of agriculture by means of machinery and capital investment, co-operative marketing which eliminated middlemen, and new lands opened by irrigation. A special point must be made of the increasing importance of government intervention. The railroads, occupying a smaller place on the scheme of capitalist production as a whole, were regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission. The Federal Reserve Act of 1914 allowed for an elastic and adequate currency and facilitated agricultural credit. Under the AAA program, the Roosevelt administration attempted to abolish speculation in the futures of crops and made efforts to maintain price levels by avoiding crop surpluses. Crop insurance, flood prevention and technical aid to agriculture, all were government sponsored.

In the years since 1900, many Populist grievances have been ameliorated or have disappeared. The hue and cry about the gold shortage in the 1890's faded into the past when gold was discovered in Alaska and quicker means of processing gold were discovered as well. The nominating primary and secret ballot, the recall and referendum are now familiar political institutions. And the farmers are not without representation in the state and national governments. The anti-capitalist agitation was continued mainly by the urban petty-bourgeoisie who felt the oppressive weight of centralized capitalism after 1900 as the agrarians felt it before. Finally the Populist agitation was freely appropriated by the demagogic vote-catchers of both capitalist parties.

Conclusions for Today

The agrarian struggles of 1870 to 1900 are pregnant with lessons for our time. The most general lesson which can escape no one pertains to the social energy of the American people. Living in a period of comparative class peace and social stability, it is possible to appreciate the speedy and spontaneous growth of the Populist movement. The brilliant agitation of Tom Watson, the mellowed wisdom of Ignatius Donnelly, the analytical lucidity of Henry Demarest Lloyd, are all forceful individual representations of a multi-millioned movement which broke all historical precedent with enormous speed. At the high point of a socio-historical development the tradi-

17. "Tom Watson, Agrarian Rebel" by C. Vann Woodward.

18. E. Q. Hawk "Economic History of the South."

tional, legal and ideological boundaries cannot limit the living mass movement. Such was also the case with the Committees of the Correspondence of the Revolutionary War, and the Republican Party before the Civil War. The spirited growth of the Progressive Party in 1912 and 1924; and the almost overnight rise and effectiveness of the CIO and the CIO-PAC, are vital indications of the socio-political nature of the American masses. The intermittent periods of quietitude are only a temporal repository for the accumulation of grievances, conscious social energy.

More specifically, we must view how far the American working class has advanced since its participation in the Populist movement. Because the workers trailed the farmers in consciousness and organization, a successful farmer-labor alliance was not effected. Today the increase in farm tenancy and agricultural labor makes these classes ripe for trade-union organization. The organization of the small farmers—the “National Farmers Union” is politically effective only when it is supported by the powerful CIO.

How vastly different is the position of the working class in American society as a whole. Fifty years ago the agrarians swept over the Democratic Party. Just last year, the Democratic Party stood in fright before the prospect of capitulating to the CIO-PAC. But whereas in 1896 the Southern Bourbons would swallow the insurgent agrarians in a reunited Democratic Party, the same Bourbons today find it increasingly unbearable to be in the same party with representatives of organized labor. The two-party system, which has severely limited labor's own political consciousness is showing all the signs of breaking down. Between 1892 and 1924, there arose three major third parties, because class lines had shifted, and the new class relationships had to be expressed outside of the two-party system. Today the decisive newcomer is CIO-PAC, which in spite of its misleadership and deplorable politics, is developing into the most powerful portent on the political scene. The already existing minority parties are not demanding impossible monetary inflation but labor's share in the government. The lower petty-bourgeoisie, the “liberals,” have no mass political organization of their own. In the last election, they depended on labor's organized strength. Here, as elsewhere, the urban and rural petty-bourgeoisie is descending from the historical stage. The working class is becoming the prime mover and maker of history.

These political phenomena only express the fundamental development of the capitalist economy in the period between 1900 and 1945. In the first twenty years of this century, America engaged in some highly successful and not very costly imperialistic adventures. These were twenty years of almost undisturbed agricultural prosperity. The last large waves of immigration expanded the domestic market. The effects of this economic well-being were felt by the higher-paid and skilled section of the working class.

Since then we have experienced a vital and decisive change in our economic existence. Concentration and centralization of capital, the irrevocable expropriation of the middle classes, the socialization of labor, constant state intervention and growth of statification, America's contention for world domination, the accumulative and almost permanent state of economic crisis—this is the objective framework in which the class forces operate today. The expropriation of a free agriculture in an earlier period was an essential part in the affirmation and triumph of capital. Statification and centralization today are an essential part of its breakdown and its negation.

Populism was a reaction to the closing of our natural frontiers. The labor movement is going forward *because of the expanding technological horizons*. The opposition of the agrarians to an advancing economy ended in confusion and capitulation, and it could not be otherwise. The reaction of the workers in a collapsing economy is greater struggle and greater clarity leading to the appropriation of the economy by the whole class. Here, too, it cannot be otherwise. The agrarians could not achieve state power, and even if achieved before the Civil War, there was very little they could do with it. For the working class, state power is not only a pressing necessity because of oppressive social conditions, but an opportunity created by the existing centralization, socialization and statification inherently contained in modern society. Between 1900 and 1920, the existing prosperity and stability made “mild” solutions possible. Capitalism today bears not the least semblance of stability and well-being. The depth of the crises poses the class issues sharply and fundamentally.

That is why we can look forward to the coming class struggles with the greatest confidence. Given the objective crisis in the 1890's, the farmers of this backward country revealed a class consciousness and capacity for class action which shook up American society. The agitational temper, boldness and combativity of Populism will be inherited by the proletarian mass movement. The Populism of our nation's past only confirms that America's future belongs to its revolutionary working class.²⁰

WILLIE GORMAN.

20. The history of Populism would not be complete without a note about its historians, particularly the Stalinist Anna Rochester. It is no surprise that the bourgeois historians, in the main, treat the subject dryly, academically and empirically. Judging from their interpretation, the Southern historians are simply wallowing in the post-Populist, anti-Negro reaction. But the political conclusions of Anna Rochester are so wretchedly confusing that we can only pity the poor reader. On one hand, she points out that Populism failed because it attacked some of the evils of capitalism, but not capitalism itself. Then we are told that we must support the war to defend the gains made by the Populist movement. This is followed by some peans to the Soviet Union. Finally, the gem of wisdom emerges. The American people are still too deeply under Populist traditions and influences to want socialism. Rochester's devious political mischief is its vicious purpose. The advancing American working class is to be dragged back to the vain Populist efforts of fifty years ago.

More correct is the conclusion reached by A. M. Arnett, that perhaps “reform is racing with catastrophe.” The “catastrophe” is, of course, the social revolution.

A COST-PLUS WAGE

An Answer to the Wage-Freeze

By MAX SHACHTMAN

PRICE: 5 CENTS

IN BUNDLES: 3 CENTS