

**Plunder of South Africa . . . . by Robert Stone**

**The New**  
**INTERNATIONAL**

**AUGUST • 1947**

**BY ALBERT GATES:**

**THE TAFT-HARTLEY BILL  
AND LABOR POLITICS**

**STALIN'S AGENTS IN BOLIVIA**

*By Luis Velasco*

**SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC "INNOCENT" ABROAD**

*By A. Rudzienski*

**THE CLASS NATURE OF THE POLISH STATE—II**

*By Ernest Erber*

**SWP UNITY LINE CHANGES AGAIN**

*By Albert Goldman*

**TWO SPEECHES ON UNITY**

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# Business Manager's Corner

The coming issue will be featured by a lead article from Ben Hall on "The UAW Before Its Convention." It will contain a thorough analysis of the contending factions, their programs and their leaders, and the significance of the internal struggle in the UAW for the entire labor movement in the United States. This article is must reading for every unionist, every CIO member and every militant in the UAW.

The British Indian plan, resulting in Pakistan and laying the basis for the partition of India in a new "independence" move, will be the subject of Albert Gates' article, "The Partition of India."

Robert Stone's highly interesting study of "The Imperialist Conquest of South Africa," will be completed in the September issue. Also featured are a discussion article on the nature of the Russian state by Albert Goldman, book reviews and special items.

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## Circulation Notes

While THE NEW INTERNATIONAL has been maintaining a steady circulation of 3,000 copies, our sales efforts can be improved by covering labor meetings and getting more subscriptions. Our best circulation gains have been made with increased newsstand sales and foreign orders.

NEW INTERNATIONAL agents should now plan special sales of the September issue to all UAW locals in Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, etc. Special local subscription drives should be planned. Order extra copies now. Let's hear from you.

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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## Leon Trotsky - In Memoriam

In August of 1940, Frank Jacson-Mornard, a selected agent of Stalin's secret police, made his way into Leon Trotsky's study and murdered Lenin's co-worker with an *alpenstock*. The act was a fulfillment of an old plan which was worked out in the Kremlin by the Russian dictator himself. The vengeful Stalin could not be at peace so long as the powerful voice of the October revolution remained alive in the person of Leon Trotsky. Though he had won the victory in the struggle against the Russian Left Opposition, though his blood-stained dictatorship remained all-powerful, Stalin feared his defeated foe.

Stalin had wiped out a whole generation of revolutionaries—the men of October. He had murdered Lenin's companions and co-workers through the infamous frameup trials. Only Trotsky had escaped his macabre net, and he only because Stalin believed that his deportation from Russia would destroy the respect and admiration which tens of thousands of revolutionary workers had for the organizer of the Red army and the president of the first soviet in world history. But the deportation of Trotsky merely tore the veil which hid from the world the turbulent events inside of Russia reflected in the struggle between the new and powerful bureaucracy with Stalin as its leader and the old generation of Bolsheviks. Trotsky made use of his freedom from the GPU to write voluminously of the Stalinist betrayal of the Revolution. In his person, the great theories of Marxism remained alive and by his work a new generation of revolutionary socialists was born to continue the work of an International now dead.

The deportation of Trotsky was an act which Stalin deeply regretted. Not a day passed when he did not seek some way to still the Voice of October. He hounded Trotsky across the continent of Europe. He framed the Bolsheviks in trials which he had hoped would wind their nets around the most intransigent figure of them all. And yet he failed. When Trotsky reached his Mexican haven, the Kremlin dictator moved more swiftly and with greater certainty. All else had been wrong; every plan had gone awry. It was necessary to end the life of the hated Marxist leader—that was the only way out!

### The Event Behind the Murder

The political premise was laid for the act of murder. Stalin had signed his blood-pact with Hitler; Russia became in effect the ally of fascist Germany! The second world imperialist war had begun with the invasion of Poland and its division between Stalin and Hitler. There was no better time than this to settle scores with the lone fighter against the bureaucracy and the hangmen of the revolution.

Trotsky knew what Stalin wanted. He wrote more than once that an attempt would be made on his life. The war,

Trotsky wrote, would make this deed all the more necessary, for Stalin could not rest until Trotsky was silenced.

The first attempt on his life was made in May, 1940. But the plans of the attackers, organized by the GPU in Mexico and led by David Siquieros, a leader of the native Stalinist Party and noted painter, misfired. They did not get Trotsky in their furious machine-gun assault on his room, where he slept with his wife, Natalia Sedov. But they did murder Robert Harte, one of Trotsky's guards. They destroyed the unknown Harte because it was he who admitted the gang into the yard, and this he did only because he recognized a "friend." This "friend" could have been none other than Jacson-Mornard who already had gained access to Trotsky.

The failure had to be made good, demanded Cain Stalin. And the GPU in Mexico responded; it knew the penalty of another failure. But its success marked the deed all the more as the product of the immense power and resources of the GPU. The effort of the Stalinists to describe Jacson-Mornard as a Trotskyist who had a falling out with his leader was so patently absurd that nobody believed it. An incredulous world knew that the real murderer sat in the Kremlin in his military tunic.

### The Murderer in the Kremlin

But if there was any doubt in some minds that Stalin was the real murderer of Trotsky, this doubt is now dispelled by Louis Budenz, ex-editor of the Daily Worker, and re-converted Catholic. In his book, "This Is My Story," he revealed that he was an "innocent" accomplice in the Trotsky murder plot, with which he was fully familiar. It was he who served as the first link which led Jacson-Mornard into Trotsky's Mexican home. He had known for a long time who the murderer was, and although he has not yet told the whole story, the main links in the chain have already been constructed.

In the meantime, the assassin sits in a Mexican jail serving a twenty-year sentence. Writing from Mexico, Victor Serge describes how this GPU triggerman lives an easy and well-provided-for life in prison. He has an inexhaustible supply of funds; his relations with the Mexican Communist Party are extremely close. For while he is in jail, the GPU is taking good care of his welfare.

Stalin may find personal satisfaction in realizing his revenge upon the one Bolshevik leader who defied the brutal, Byzantine régime that the despot constructed with the aid of an equally brutal bureaucracy which has enslaved the Russian masses. But the rush of history will engulf this tyrant in repayment for his crimes against the working class and all humanity. And the victory of world socialism will be justice enough for Leon Trotsky.

# Taft-Hartley and Labor Politics

## *The New Urgency for a Labor Party*

The passage of the Taft-Hartley anti-labor bill presages a new period in class political relations in the United States. More than ten years after the beginning of the New Deal, Congress passed a bill which would:

- (a) weaken or destroy the Wagner Act;
- (b) undermine the right to strike;
- (c) upset established collective bargaining methods;
- (d) create again the possibility of "government by injunction";
- (e) create the basis for the revival of company unions;
- (f) open the door for government intervention in the internal affairs of the unions;
- (g) restrict the operation of welfare funds by taking them out of the hands and supervision of the unions;
- (h) modify and cripple the Norris-LaGuardia Act and the National Labor Relations Act.
- (i) bar unions from effective political action.

By its own lack of clarity, trick language and complexity, coupled with lack of agreement among its sponsors as to its intrinsic meanings, the bill will create, as Senator Morse has said, a veritable lawyer's paradise. We can well imagine from the past experience of the New Deal era how gleeful the legal vultures must be at the prospects for clients offered up by the new legislation.

It would be an error, however, to regard the passage of the bill as an accidental or isolated event. No, this kind of repressive anti-labor legislation was prepared during the war, in the regimented and state-directed economy, which in turn emphasized a new relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. New Dealism, which had ceased to exist in fact during the war, was formally doomed when the Republicans won their sweeping electoral victory in 1946. This did not mean that all the social welfare legislation passed under the successive Roosevelt administrations was to be erased by the legislative acts of the new Republican majority. But it did mean, if the aims of the GOP leadership were carefully studied, that a new relationship to labor was to be established.

It is easy to see in retrospect why New Dealism could not survive the war. Its "philosophy" and practice were the products of economic crisis and incipient disintegration of the social order; it represented bourgeois reformism on an American scale, i.e., economic and social reform measures which, in one form or another, had existed for many years in the older European capitalist nations. Obviously, such a system of state-inspired reformist policies could arise only in a period of economic instability and increasing class conflict, and given the decay of world capitalism, in a comparatively rich country. Such measures would have been entirely superfluous, as indeed they were, in a period of expanding capitalism and economic prosperity such as characterized the United States in the decade following the First World War.

It should have been no surprise to any thinking or conscious person that Roosevelt, the father of the New Deal, began to rid himself of his New Deal colleagues when the war broke out. What good were these reformist experts now? They were no longer really needed. The demands of modern total war changed overnight the economic scene at home. The sick

economy became suddenly a very prosperous and thriving order. To recount the achievements of the war economy now would, for the purposes of this article, be superfluous. It is only necessary to recall that beginning with 1940 a spectacular turn took place in domestic economic activity. With all the efforts of the New Deal, the national economy achieved a record peacetime production with a mass army of between nine and ten million unemployed. But the year 1941 marked a turning point. In that year, the War Deal began in earnest.

### **The Effect of the War Economy**

The entire economy was "organized." In conjunction with the War and Navy Departments, the Administration worked out a master plan for mobilizing all of the economic, political and material resources of the country to fight the greatest war in the history of mankind. The most important link in the vast mobilization for war was the establishment of national class unity. Roosevelt's role in this achievement has not yet been fully explained nor extensively written about. But historians of the future will have to return to this subject in order to explain that the whole success of America's war program depended on the acquiescence of American labor, already allied to the state administration through the New Deal.

The acquiescence of the labor officialdom to the demands of the war administration was accompanied by an abject surrender of some of the most important interests of the working class as a whole. Thus, the labor movement found itself in support of the "Equality of Sacrifice Program" and the "War Economic Stabilization Act" to the detriment of the interests of the people at large. Under these policies initiated by Roosevelt, American finance and industry were able to recoup the losses they took during the long years of crisis by means of enormous profits guaranteed by the government. Labor, on the other hand, accepted a "wage freeze" after agreeing to a "no-strike pledge." The present lamentations of the labor leaders that the Taft-Hartley Bill is repayment in bad coin for the services of labor during the war, is a pathetic reminder that it is precisely the conduct of labor during the war, which makes possible the present political reaction. And if current anti-labor legislation is the product of a reactionary GOP, it is also the result of foolish and criminal policies of an ideologically backward labor leadership.

The labor movement exchanged its hard-won rights and fairly strong class position during the war for a worthless promissory note given by a rapidly disappearing New Deal administration, which was to be honored in the post-war period. For labor's agreement not to strike and not to fight for higher wages, greater consumer goods, indispensable housing and a whole series of social measures, Roosevelt promised that all of these things and more would be "given" to the working class in the post-war period. Labor kept its promises. Indeed, it kept them too well, for during the five years of the war the class peace which it underwrote succeeded in effectively undermining labor's powerful positions while the bourgeoisie gained a new confidence with its increasing economic strength.

The attempt to explain the present position by Roosevelt's death and the arrival of a new administration under the less

capable Truman, is completely superficial. That would assign to the personality a power out of all proportion to reality and grant to an individual an independence of action which does not correspond to life.

One can explain the present situation largely upon the newly found economic strength of the American bourgeoisie and the political factors produced by this rise in the fortunes of the bourgeoisie.

### **The Bourgeoisie Gain Confidence**

The war economy and the military victory which placed the United States at the top of the heap of imperialist powers, provided a new surge of life to the bewildered, unsure ruling class of the 1930s. The war restored its profits, renewed and expanded its industries, brought about total employment and a vast production without risk and without strain, and gave it sufficient resources to carry over into the post-war period when, instead of an immediate economic collapse, the country entered into a boom which has not yet ended.

Toward the end of the war the bourgeoisie as a class, thoroughly awake to the meaning of its new prosperity and the likelihood of a continued high level of economic activity in the post-war period, began to press for a diminution of government intervention in the economy, a repeal of economic and social measures which on a national scale were costly to the bourgeoisie, and a curb on the powerfully organized labor movement which, while still politically backward and in a class sense unconscious, was capable of transforming itself overnight.

The over-all strategy of the bourgeoisie today is to strengthen its own profit positions by reducing through legislative measures the offensive power of the labor movement. The Taft-Hartley Bill apparently was to be the culminating act of a concentrated offensive against labor. To carry out this legislative assault, the ruling class effectively organized its political wing, the Republican Party, together with its reliable reserve, the reactionary bloc of the Democratic Party. First, price control was killed. The capitalist class could thereby pick the population clean of its reserve savings accumulated during the war. Even more important, price increases nullified all wage increases won by labor in its short post-war struggle. The total effect of the continuous rise in prices: reduction of the over-all standard of living of the masses.

The real estate and landlord lobbies got their legislative subordinates to bar a nation-wide housing program which could only have been carried out at the expense of the profits of an antiquated industry. To date, no decent minimum wage law has been passed. Other measures, not directly economic, but promised and unfulfilled by the government, include: legislation on health and insurance, anti-poll tax, anti-lynching and FEPC. All of these were sidetracked for consideration of a tax bill calculated to reduce the income tax payments of the mass of people by a few cents a week and that of the bourgeoisie by millions of dollars. The culminating point in the reactionary legislative drive of big business, the fruit of the GOP electoral victory, was the passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill.

The GOP victory itself was a sign of the times. It coincided with the decomposition of the Democratic bloc. The sweep of the Republican Party gave evidence that the middle class was fed up with its "alliance" with the "liberal" Democratic Party and labor. It held the Democratic Party responsible for the chaos on the price front, the absence of consumer goods and housing, and regarded labor's strike struggles as the im-

pediment toward an improvement of its own middle class position. Ten years of the New Deal and five years of war brought the middle class face to face with an impending disaster. It characteristically sought to blame the Administration and labor for its ills, rather than monopoly capitalism, which won the middle class to support its panacea of "free enterprise," the operation of which could only destroy the highest aspirations of the middle class. One of the reasons for this about-face on the part of the middle class is that it was offered no attractive independent leadership from labor, which continued blindly to follow the Democratic Party.

The Marxist who failed to see the ebb and flow of the political struggle and interpreted the victory of the GOP and the reactionary political turn which followed it as an expression of a militant labor offensive would be a poor Marxist indeed. The victory of the GOP was a defeat for labor—not a defeat on a grand social scale, to be sure, but one of those defeats that occur in every country, in every long-drawn-out and normal class struggle. That is not to say that the American working class has been irretrievably set back. But to say that the GOP election victory reflected the new strength and confidence of the bourgeoisie, and that the ruling class is now on an offensive, is merely to analyze accurately the present situation—which is, of course, transitory.

### **Aim of Taft and Hartley**

The passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill was not the bourgeois answer to a labor movement militantly engaged in a wide struggle. If the labor movement were so engaged we doubt very much that the bourgeoisie would attempt to pass such a measure at this time. The passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill was possible at this juncture of the class struggle because the initiative is in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This is true even though the aims of the bourgeoisie are themselves contradictory and they are unclear as to the bill's total objectives. Does this mean that the labor movement is weak and unmilitant? To raise this question indicates that the answer to it cannot be yes or no. The answer to the question is complex because the weakness or strength of American labor today cannot be measured solely by numbers or militancy but by the economic and political policies and activity of the union movement. In this case, it is necessary to say that the actions of the GOP are as much a product of the ancient and ineffectual methods of struggle of the labor movement as of its own confidence and strength.

The truth is that the labor movement has reached a fork in the road. It cannot meet the problems of the worker in the present period of capitalist development with the economic and political policies of Gompersism or its many variants. The political backwardness of the American labor movement, more than anything else, is responsible for the present situation. So far, if we are to judge by the pronouncements of the labor leaders, the lessons of the immediate past have not yet been understood by them.

What did the bourgeoisie seek by the passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill? Does it want to smash the union movement? Or does it merely want to curb and control labor? As a general proposition, it is correct to say that the bourgeoisie would like to see no labor movement at all. But we are far beyond that early stage of capitalist development. The bourgeoisie has to reckon with an existing mass labor movement. If it tried to smash the union movement now by a frontal assault, it would produce a situation which it is uncertain of winning.

Moreover, the chaos that would result from such a policy would make it impossible for the economy to function, and most important of all, would destroy any possibility of American imperialism carrying out its aim of dominating the world economy. Some sections of the bourgeoisie, more sensitive to the new place of the United States in the world economy, were against the bill. Truman undoubtedly spoke the truth when he said that many leaders of finance and industry called upon him to veto the bill in order to prevent a certain chaos in class relations. The report that Secretary of State Marshall, in cabinet sessions, called upon the President to veto the bill makes sense, considering the task the former Chief of Staff has in furthering America's imperialist interests abroad.

But it is true that the bourgeoisie as a whole welcomed the bill as a measure which would make possible some means of legal control over strike activities and union finances, and to blunt the economic and political weapons of labor. That is what the bill set out to accomplish. Given the complex nature of class relations and intra-class rivalries, it is understandable why the GOP mavericks had such a time of it in trying to get agreement on a bill between the House and the Senate.

How much will the bourgeoisie achieve in practice with this bill? That depends in large measure on the labor movement and its strategy in the coming period. It is true, as David Dubinsky has said, that the bill is "full of double-talk, tricky language and hidden traps." Some of this is calculated; some is the result of the fact that its sponsors were themselves not sure of just exactly what they were doing. They, like so many labor leaders, are waiting to see how the bill works out in practice.

### **Reaction of the Labor Leaders**

The initial response of the labor leaders to the bill was a curious spectacle and illustrates what is wrong in the American labor movement. Naturally, the labor leaders understood the practical significance and consequences of the bill. No one can deny that instinctively, at least, the American labor leader can smell a legislative rat. In that sense he is extremely acute. His long years of experience have not been without their positive sides. But it is in the field of constructive action against bourgeois legislation and bourgeois politics in general that the average American labor leader reveals himself barren of elementary class instincts and class ideology. The labor officialdom as a whole, particularly in the AFL, is capitalist-minded; its class political understanding is at a low level. It is this ideological backwardness, in contrast to the acute consciousness of the bourgeoisie, which sometimes makes a spectacle of labor's "political" struggles.

When the bill was passed Bill Green and Phil Murray both made statements charged with anger and invective. Against whom? The politicians and the impersonal National Association of Manufacturers. At the convention of the International Ladies Garment Workers, Green said:

And are we to be compensated for the great service we rendered during the war (!) by being now subjected, I say, truthfully, to a condition of involuntary servitude in a very large way, and to slavery in a comparative way? Is that our compensation? Are we to be treated in that manner? Well, they may say yes, but we answer with a loud and emphatic NO! And we say this to them. If you will not listen to our voices now, if you ignore our pleas, if our voices fall on deaf ears, let us tell you that you will listen to the election returns when the next election day comes.

What is this? Does Green threaten to do something on election day? No, nothing more follows on this point. Green concluded:

If they attempt force, if they penalize us, if they intend to make slaves of us and rob us of our freedom and our democracy, we will fight to the bitter end because the words "surrender" and "defeat" are not in the vocabulary for the American Federation of Labor.

Strong words! Challenging words! Threatening words! But, on what labor shall do, Green is silent. Let us turn to Phil Murray, head of the CIO. In his statement adopted by the CIO, Murray declared:

The purpose of this bill is to render unions powerless to resist wage cuts, speed-ups and restoration of sweat-shop conditions. It has been made completely unworkable so that workers will be robbed of even the meager protections which survive in the bill.

But, what shall labor do? Murray states:

Our responsibilities require us to work immediately for a repeal of the law and for the defeat of those forces in our political life which have sponsored it and worked for its passage. We shall not shirk those responsibilities. . . .

From this day forward we dedicate ourselves to the mission of obtaining a repudiation of this infamous legislation and of the reactionary program of which it is a part. We will expose to the entire American people the reactionary forces which have produced this legislation. We will bring our message not only to workers but to farmers, small businessmen and other groups whose economic welfare this legislation threatens. . . .

We hereby dedicate our organizations and the entire membership to work unceasingly in the political field in complete unity with all labor organizations, and other progressive groups to insure the political repudiation of those reactionaries who are responsible for the Taft-Hartley Bill and to preserve a free America.

Nothing more from Murray! We now hear from Jack Kroll, director of the CIO Political Action Committee:

This organization of ours is not going to lie down and die just because a Taft or Hartley or a Van Aken says we are going to die. The Taft-Hartley Bill and the Van Aken Bill in Ohio will provide the spark that will set off effective PAC activities for 1948.

### **The Important Political Lesson**

And thus we have finished with three spokesmen for the labor movement. From each we have been given a fair share of rhetoric, but from none of them a single, important, practical, new proposal that can lead to a progressive solution of the problem that faces labor. That problem is how to defeat monopoly capitalism on the political, as well as the economic front. Labor's reaction to the Taft-Hartley Bill is vigorous enough. It will undoubtedly carry on an effective legal struggle against it as well as against the numerous state bills that were enacted as safety measures just in case Congress failed big business. Unions have announced that they will not make their customary rush to the NLRB since under the new law it will be a body stacked against labor. We can understand that and agree with it. We have no doubt either that the labor movement will find ways in which to carry out effective economic action even under the bill, either by evading, or to use a Holmesian phrase, avoiding, the strictures of the bill, or else by fighting it head-on in a testing challenge of its legality. Murray and Green are both preparing now to test the political restrictions of the bill.

But beyond that the labor officialdom gives not the slightest indication that it has learned the most obvious political lessons of the struggle around the Taft-Hartley Bill: that the government is a capitalist government, that Congress is composed of two capitalist political parties and that at all decisive moments the government and Congress act openly in the name and interests of capitalism. If labor continues to compete with big business in its own arena of the Republican and Democratic parties it will do so to its own detriment. Any victory labor might gain in that arena can only be, as it has been in the past, of the most tenuous kind in which organized labor and the whole working class will be the final loser.

The fusion of economics and politics in present-day capitalist society makes it evident that labor cannot fight a merely economic battle, defensive or offensive, for its rights. The increasing intervention of the capitalist state in the economic life of the country has revealed how archaic is a purely "bread and butter" struggle, since the economic gains of a generation of workers can be wiped out overnight by a single legislative act. For example, the wage increases won by labor in the post-war period were wiped out in reality by the absence of price control. That is why the action of the UAW in the General Motors strike which sought to link its wage demand with price control was of such tremendous significance. The UAW demand, "Open the Books" was likewise, on an American scale, a revolutionary demand, for it challenged in effect the property rights of the bourgeoisie and introduced, in its elementary form, the idea of workers' control. Whether wholly conscious or not, the action of the UAW in the General Motor's strike was a recognition of the fact that in present-day American society, "bread and butter" struggles are insufficient; they have to be linked with broader social and political concepts.

The path that labor should follow was clearly indicated when Congress outlawed portal-to-portal pay. In this case, labor won an economic demand by struggle and legal action. Overnight, this gain was lost by a political act of Congress.

How then is labor to avoid a political defeat of its economic victories? The very simplicity of the idea advanced in this question is obscured by the action of the labor leaders who continue to think politically in the terms of "reward your friends and punish your enemies," even in its most refined variations to suit present times.

Labor needs to declare its political independence. It needs to organize a party of its own and to break, once and for all, with capitalist politics. If it is to assume the leadership of the nation, if it is to win the support of the middle class, the poor farmers, the disillusioned white collar workers, and such social categories, it will have to strike out on its own to challenge the economic and political power of monopoly capitalism and to provide the nation with an economic, political and social program which truly represents the interests of the people against the bourgeoisie.

But it can only do this by the organization of an independent labor party. Lacking this kind of perspective, the labor

officialdom can only talk in bold and empty words. They can shout from now until doomsday about "we'll meet you on election day," and "we will never surrender." So long as this means, as apparently the labor leaders mean it, to support one or another of the so-called liberal or progressive candidates of the Republican or Democratic parties, it will ever mean that the "liberal" and "progressive" candidate of today will be the "reactionary" who betrayed labor on the morrow. Just think, William Green endorsed Mr. Hartley as a candidate for Representative from New Jersey! In this act alone, he epitomized what is wrong with labor politics today! And now Green, and Murray, again threaten to take "political action" against the enemies of labor, but it is political action limited by a bourgeois horizon.

The labor movement engages in class politics, but it is the class politics of the bourgeoisie, not independent labor politics. It is merely "independent" labor politics in behalf of one or the other of the capitalist parties.

Before any lasting progress of the American working class can be made, it must break decisively and conclusively with the bourgeoisie on the political field, as it has done on the economic. Without that step, the labor movement will suffer economic and political defeats which will begin to undermine its very powerful foundations. We believe the present situation has created enormous possibilities for a labor party. The disillusionment of the masses will increase as it passes out of its present state of bewilderment. The only thing that holds them back now is the labor leadership which has learned only to threaten and to howl, but not to take effective action. But that too will come, and soon, we believe. If the labor officialdom will not arrive at the understanding for the necessity for this indispensable next step for labor, it may well be driven into it by an emboldened bourgeoisie which may overestimate its present political victories over labor and an enraged rank and file. When labor takes that necessary political step, a new period in class relations will have arrived in the United States. The class-conscious development of the American working class will then begin. The national and world implications of such a development cannot be overestimated. That can well be the reason why the Taft-Hartley Bill will become an important chapter in American labor history.

ALBERT GATES.

# The Plunder of South Africa - I

## *A First-Hand Study of British Imperialism*

**(We are certain that all our readers will find the following study of South Africa to be informative and of immense interest. The importance of this vast country in the scheme of British imperialism has only just been highlighted by the "courtesy" visit of the British king and his family. But the friendly gesture of His Majesty can in no way cover up the picture of the reactionary, barbarous role of imperialism, as is so graphically portrayed by Comrade Stone's first-hand report—Editor)**

South Africa was discovered in the ferocious drive of the rising European capitalist class to eat up the world. But its dark interior was at first passed by with disinterest by a bourgeoisie freshly born into historic activity, whose role in the next decades and centuries was a triumphant sweeping away of the stagnation and parochialism of

feudalism, who broke ancient barriers, who vitalized new productive forces. They thrust broader layers of their own peoples into political activity, caused vast disturbances and disruptions in the ancient and passive East. The blood and filth which, as Marx said, capitalism oozed from every one of its pores when it came into the world arena, was, at least in the period of its rise, the means whereby it opened up the world, threw backward peoples into the world market which it created, and initiated them into the path of feverish and intense development.

But when capitalism did turn its rapacious eyes on South Africa for extensive penetration, its progressive onrush was spent. It had reached its last cycle of development, that of finance monopoly capitalism, which, in its brutal and reactionary guise of imperialism grasped South Africa in its strangle-

hold, historically unable to fulfill its former role as a liberating, barrier-breaking force, and able instead only to repress, retard and throw an iron blanket over the development of the country. The non-European peoples of South Africa are on one of the lowest rungs of the ladder of world backwardness and repression.

The Cape was discovered en route to the richer treasures of India, and capitalism had no use for it except as a sea-inn and port of call, until the unknown interior unsheathed its own treasures of diamonds and gold and plentiful and cheap black labor.

In a series of some ten "Kaffir wars," stretching over the nineteenth century, British capitalism conquered and subjugated the independent African people.

As a result of these wars the Bantu tribes were systematically herded together into smaller and smaller areas and robbed of their lands. The history of this period, which can be termed the period of the complete conquest of the African people by white capitalism, is written in blood and iron. Bantu resistance, fierce and desperate, was unable to halt the onslaught of the superior military might of the nineteenth century capitalist power. But the military conquest was only the precursor of the total economic and political enslavement of the whole African people.

To conclusively establish their untrammelled domination and to validate their sole rule over the golden treasure chest of the Rand, the British imperialists, through treachery, trickery and finally a three-year devastating "Boer War," established themselves over the independent Boer Republics.

The Dominion status granted to South Africa's white population by British imperialism in the Act of Union in 1910 has been cited as the finest example of British liberation and British magnanimity toward its defeated foes. But this magnanimity was so framed as to secure for her absentee imperialist owners of South Africa's mineral resources, local agents and managers. Every government since 1910, Unionist, SAP, Nationalist, United Party, Pact or coalition, have all acted as Britain's business managers. But the burden of this constitution and the economic arrangements were thrown on the backs of the non-European majority.

"... The South African possessions of Great Britain form a dominion only from the point of view of the white minority. From the point of view of the black majority, South Africa is a slave colony." (Trotsky: "Letter on South Africa.") A "benevolent" imperialism granted its vanquished opponents freedom and democratic rights and even junior partnership in the British Commonwealth, but this "benevolence" rests on the perpetuation of the most vile and savage forms of racial arrogance and unfathomable slavery and oppression for the non-European people and the continued economic and political strangulation and domination of South Africa by British imperialism.

### **The Imperialist Stake in South Africa**

The modern economic and political history of South Africa begins with the discovery of diamonds and gold. From merely a strategic port, South Africa became an important pivot for swiftly developing imperialism. The grappling-iron of world economy clawed South Africa into its net. The discovery provided the perfect stimulus for opening up the country. Railways, always an important indicator of imperialist penetration, were built from all important mines to the ports. When diamonds were discovered, for example, there were only some 65 miles of railway in the whole of South Africa.

But between 1874 and 1886 1,730 miles of railway were constructed. Mushroom towns sprang up and subsidiary industries began to be developed.

*But it was the discovery of gold which was responsible for the transformation of South Africa from a mere outpost of imperialism to an important area for capital investment and for quick profits. The discovery of gold in 1886 definitely entrenched imperialist domination, created the industrialized Rand, ushered in the complete dissolution of African independence and built up the whole complex structure of reserves, cheap migratory, super-exploited black labor, and legally enforced segregation in every sphere of life, leveling out the Bantu tribes into an oppressed, disfranchised and police regimented African nation of toilers.*

The exploitation of the mineral resources in South Africa has literally been the geese that laid golden eggs worth billions for their imperialist masters of the land. Up to the end of 1944, the Union has produced gold value at 2,331,627,089 pounds sterling, which is 80.4 per cent of all minerals produced; diamonds valued at 341,302,941 pounds (11.3 per cent),\* coal valued at 153,194,446 pounds (5.3 per cent), copper valued at 35,425,093 pounds (1.2 per cent) and other minerals constituting 1.4 per cent. South Africa contributes some 45 per cent of the world's production of gold. In the period 1868-1932, 241,000,000 pounds were invested in the gold mining industry. Of this sum, 148,000,000 pounds were invested from abroad, the overwhelming bulk from Britain. Up to the end of 1944, 440,886,703 pounds were paid out in dividends. From 75 per cent to 50 per cent in 1944 poured back into the coffers of the London mining houses. British absentee capital dominates and controls the primary mining industry—gold—and also the production of diamonds, coal and copper. South Africa is tied to British imperialism by chains of gold.

The nature of the total British capital investment is shown in the following estimates: For the whole period 1870-1936, Professor Frankel, leading Chamber of Mines economist, estimated the amount of listed capital invested in the Union from abroad at 475,470,000 pounds. Of this sum, less than half, viz., 224,000,000 pounds, was public listed capital, i.e., capital borrowed by the government and municipalities, of which a large part was used for railway and harbor development. Roughly, two-thirds of the 251,000,000 pounds private listed capital went into mining, while two-fifths of the balance was invested in commerce, agriculture and industry and the remaining three-fifths in land-owning, finance (including banking and insurance and investment companies).

Out of the national income in 1937, of about 360,000,000 pounds at least 30,000,000 pounds was earned by absent British shareholders. British finance further controls South Africa through its gold-buying monopoly. During the war years, the South African Reserve Bank entered into an agreement with the Bank of England under which the former sold all its gold exclusively to the latter. Two imperial banks (Barclay's and Standard) control the whole commercial banking system.

These huge sums explain the magnetic hold of imperialism and its local agents on South Africa. In fact, the whole British Empire has an enormous stake in South African gold. Rand bullion is a major factor in the economy of the entire sterling area. It is a great flywheel of empire, and consequently a very important factor in maintaining the flickering life of the British Empire.

\*We are not certain whether the author is using figures when these equalled \$5.00 U. S. A., or whether it is related to the present devaluated pound sterling.—Editor.



## Gold Mines—Nerve Center of South Africa

The above figures of imperialist investment and profits can only emphasize the important role that gold plays in the economic, social and political setup of South Africa. The production and exploitation of the gold mines is the primary motive determining the policies and the whole government structure of South Africa. The conquest and subjection of the African people in the pre-gold era only prepared the ground for their callous and planned regimentation to slave-labor in the gold mines.

The gold mining industry is the biggest single employer of African urban labor and its methods of labor control and treatment determine the pattern of conditions for the whole African laboring force of the whole country. The gold mining industry expresses its dominance in the state by contributing about 50 per cent of state revenues. In 1942 it paid over 27,700,000 pounds to the government.

*Gold is the principal and primary export article, comprising over 75 per cent of all the Union's exports. About half of the Union's population obtain their livelihood directly or indirectly from the gold mining industry. Without gold the whole of the Union's economy would crumble to the ground. The gold mining industry is the most powerful single economic force in the whole country. The industry has formed itself into a huge monopolistic octopus whose tentacles have in their grasp the whole state and economic structure. The industry is controlled by seven financial houses or groups. To show the extent of their operations, the most powerful of these groups, the Anglo-American Corporation ("American" in name only)—capital divided equally between England and South Africa—controls besides gold, 95 per cent of the world's production of diamonds, plus extensive coal, copper, chemical, steel works (in co-operation with the government), real estate, railways, zinc interests, etc.*

The majority of these groups have their head offices in London and serve merely as caretakers for the British owners. The seven giant monopolies co-operate through the Chamber of Mines and represent a solid and combined front controlling the whole government press, the government United Party, the internal and external politics of the Union and the character of economic development. (Although controlled overwhelmingly by British capital, American investments cover an extensive field. The introduction of American capital on a considerable scale into the South African mining and industrial field was heralded by the formation of an American Anglo-Transvaal Corporation with an authorized capital of 5,000,000 pounds in 1946. Among the big American corporations already carrying on production are Goodyear Rubber, General Motors, Firestone, Ford and Studebaker.)

## South Africa—Britain's Defense Line

The development of gold mining and the opening up of industrial development has also opened new channels for profit-making for imperialism. The Union is one of the most important and principal markets for British industry and Britain is the best customer for South African products.

For the four years 1935-38, the average annual imports of the Union were valued at 96,000,000 pounds. Of this total Britain supplied South Africa with 45 per cent. "For the four year period for which imports have just been shown, the Union was the best customer in the world for United Kingdom goods, actually taking just under one-twelfth by value of all exports from the United Kingdom." (Review of Com-

mercial Conditions in South Africa: H. M. Trade Commissioner, p. 14.) Clearly, Britain has the lion's share of the Union's market.

Today, when British imperialism is desperately fighting for its very existence, when pressed against the wall by its American imperialist "ally" and chief competitor in South Africa as elsewhere, South Africa still offers a ready, profitable and preferential field for British exports.

The immediate and loyal response and participation of the South African Chamber of Mines ruling class in support of the two imperialist world wars waged by imperial Britain is a steadfast indication of their subservience and dependence on the British ruling class and the indissoluble knot that binds South Africa to the British imperialist chain.

South Africa has been from its first days of conquest by British imperialism, and increasingly so in the shrinking world of the present, an important strategic point in guarding the key possession of Britain, India and, linked with the other dark cesspools of colonialism in the interior of Africa (especially Kenya, etc.), South Africa is today becoming the last and vital outpost of imperial defense.

Especially in the face of Britain's strategic retreat before the threatening and storming Egyptian masses, and her harassed position in face of terroristic explosions and Arab hatred in Palestine, British imperialist strategists are reorienting imperial defense lines to their as yet unstormed colony of Kenya, and this maneuvering is increasing the strategic importance of South Africa in imperial defense. As a Reuter's correspondent reported from London: "It is believed that Kenya has already been decided on as British military headquarters for the Middle East." (*Star*, October, 1946.)

Simonstown, near Cape Town, is a British naval base. By the Smuts-Churchill agreement of 1922, the imperial government gave the Union government the title to their property in Simonstown, but reserved the task of staffing the base to itself.

Not only the need for more cheap black labor for the gold mines is behind the drive for the openly imperialist annexation of Southwest Africa. The continued war preparations of the British labor imperialist government for World War III and the safeguarding of her interests in the Middle East and India, and her reliance on her South African dependents to aid her defense is behind General Smuts' need for Southwest Africa.

*General Smuts had made this naked imperialist policy open to the whole world when he declared, in New York, in answer to his critics of the UN on Southwest Africa, that: "The immense development of the air arm would in future render the Mediterranean-Suez Canal route between the East and West more liable to attack and probably close it altogether. The obvious consequences would be to increase the importance in war of the Cape-Indian route which was thousands of miles further away from a possible air attack. This and also other considerations of a political nature must in future increase the already great strategic importance of South Africa." (Reuters: November 15, 1946.)*

The strategic importance is only in the interests of serving the British Empire; for Smuts merely emphasized what Air Marshal Charles Medhurst, Middle East Air Commander in Chief, and other imperialist officers have said: ". . . If it happened that Britain had to get out of the Mediterranean the Union would be the mainstay of empire air defense." (*Rand Daily Mail*, Sept. 21, 1946.) The South African ruling class

has pledged South Africa, its resources and its super-exploited, super-oppressed non-European peoples to the defense of the imperialist war machine, slaughter offerings to all the criminal war preparations of British imperialism rocking in its death agony.

South Africa and the British colonies of the African interior are the last safe footholds of imperial defense. It rests only with the non-European masses, by their independent national and class action, to convert this foothold of safety into a quicksand of destruction in their struggle for freedom from imperialism.

### The Anatomy of Segregation

Equal in importance for imperialism to the rich mineral resources of South Africa are the eight million non-European toilers, forced by imperialist conquest into the permanent shackles of cheap unskilled labor.

Rhodes, imperialist pioneer, laid down the irrevocable conditions of existence for the non-European people under imperialism. He said: "...It must be brought home to them that in the future nine-tenths of them would have to spend their lives in manual labor." That was a statement of policy which is the only condition for imperialist existence in South Africa and is the constant criterion for all imperialist policies toward the non-European people; it is the axis around which the holy ideal of Trusteeship revolves.

The crystalized policy of imperialism in its rule in South Africa is the segregation of the non-European toilers on the land, in industry and in employment in town and country, politically and socially. This is the means whereby they carry out their policy of cheap black labor.

*In so doing the whole ruling class have deprived the non-European people of even the crumbs of bread-line existence. The tremendous and striking contrast to the power and wealth of the ruling class is the immense death-gripping poverty and degradation and enslavement of the non-European masses. The mine-laborers, the farm-laborers, the industrial laborers, the teachers, the reserve semi-peasants, the houseboy, the clerk, from one end of the sprawling country to the other are all levelled out in one mass of brutalized, agonized and unremitting toil. All are chained, both as workers and as men of color, in a rigid segregation system which daily subordinates and humiliates them as slave laborers for white imperialist masters. Imperialism has decreed their fate to be one shackled and riddled with poverty and the whole complex of repressions and restrictions as the only safeguard for white supremacy. The completely reactionary and predatory character of imperialist rule in South Africa will be irrefutably demonstrated by the following analysis of conditions, as they exist in all the brutalized centres of life for the non-European masses. The structural limbs which form the anatomy of segregation are made up of the following elements:*

### The Land Problem

Like every other problem facing the non-European people, the land problem was created by imperialism. Imperialist conquest of South Africa would have been meaningless if it had not succeeded in creating conditions which assured imperialism of a permanent supply of abundant and readily available cheap black labor. This fundamental aim of imperialism was and still is, the mainspring of their land policy.

The land problem is the conscious and deliberate creation of the imperialist state. The agrarian struggle is directly a struggle against the imperialist state. This analysis is directly

verified in an elaboration of the conditions prepared by imperialism and its local capitalist agents which systematically has expropriated the African masses of their land, and herded them into tiny reserves, rich labor reservoirs of wretched and starving humanity.

Reserves are the boundaries within which imperialism breeds poverty, famine and the preparation of every form of barbarism, i.e., tribalism and, in increasing the tortured numbers, hundreds of thousands of uprooted, disinherited, landless and vulnerable men whose only hope of life is to be sucked into the jaws of the mines, farms and industries for super-exploitation.

The land policy of an imperialism whose main need is for cheap black labor was initiated by Rhodes in his Glen Grey Act of 1894. Under this Act, lands in reserved areas were divided into allotments of about five morgen\* on the basis of one man one lot. In addition to this deliberate curtailment of any progressive, paying, or even merely subsistence agriculture, Rhodes introduced a labor tax payable in cash, which was to serve as a "gentle stimulant to go forth and find out something of the dignity of labor." No gentle stimulant, these laws, but in reality the violent whips that lashed the African people into the centres of industry and agriculture.

Pressed by further labor needs, the Land Act of 1913 and its subsequent amendments finally determined the segregated areas put aside for African occupation in the then already overcrowded reserves. Only here could Africans buy land. They were henceforth expressly forbidden from "squatting or renting land on European farms." At one blow, this created the "stimulus" for tens of thousands of additional families to leave their lands and be driven to slave-labor.

The acuteness of the land problem created by imperialism is shown by the distribution of the land which deliberately created the abysmal land hunger of the African masses. This land hunger, on paper solved by the Native Bills of 1936, still remains in all its grim potency. The position is, briefly as follows (outlined by "Suiderstem," a government paper):

*The surface area of South Africa is 141,000,000 morgen. Of that the African reserve dwellers will have only 16,800,000 morgen when all the Africans have been segregated and occupy all the areas which have been demarcated, by the Native Bills of 1936; i.e., they will then have one-eighth or twelve per cent of the total land area of the Union, which will leave 124,200,000 over for the Europeans. As against that, the European rural population of the Union is about 700,000, while the African population, when segregation is complete, will be 6,500,000, i.e., the European rural population is approximately one-tenth of the Union's population and the Africans nine-tenths. The position thus obtains that at the conclusion of segregation, ten per cent of the rural population, which is European, will inhabit eighty-eight per cent of the surface area, while ninety per cent will inhabit only one-eighth of the area. While, therefore, there will be 177 morgen for every European person, man, woman or child, there will be approximately two and one-half Morgen per African.*

But this is not yet the position. Seven and one-quarter million morgen of the 16,730,000 morgen promised the African people is yet to be bought under the Hertzog Bills of 1936. This promise has been cynically forgotten by the ruling class, so that the true position is that the African people are cramped into even less land than outlined above.

\*A measure formerly used in Dutch colonies and South Africa. It represents a value slightly more than two acres.—Editor.

The land hunger of the African people is cavernous in its needs. In seven surveyed districts of the Transkei, for example, "... one-third of the families domiciled therein are landless. In the case of the Ciskei, I have heard a chief native commissioner of the area speaking in the Native Representative Council, estimate landlessness at sixty per cent of the population. This rural proletariat simply possess huts and small gardens where the heads of families leave their dependents while employed in the European areas. ..." (B. Molteno, M. P. "Freedom," March, 1944.)

But the predatory imperialist vultures are not satisfied with merely redistributing the land in the princely favor of the white land companies and parasitic landowners and farmers, they have to fully enclose the African tribalist in an unbreakable crust of poverty, to ensure his complete bondage to imperialist needs. A picture of life in the reserves is a sombre picture of deprivation and immense hopelessness. Taking as an example the largest reserve area in the country, the Transkei, it has been estimated that the Transkeian territories needed as a bare minimum 3,575,000 bags of maize every year to feed itself. In 1943 the yield was only 1,750,000 bags. As against the 2.75 bags per head per annum needed for a bare minimum mealie-line existence, only 1.6 bags per head per annum was produced. The reserves as a whole suffer from a shortage of 8,000,000 bags of maize per annum.

### The Fruits of Exploitation

A modern balanced farming is impossible because of the primitive ploughing methods. The tiny, poor and congested allotments, the lack of fertilizers, the unraked garbage of primitive beliefs, the continued use of the same strip of land, are leading to soil erosion, the depletion and wearing away of the soil and the return to desert conditions of all reserve lands. Experts give only a few more years to the life of the soil of the reserve areas, before the land returns to irrecoverable desert.

Not only is the land inadequate, but the labor force to work the land is made up of the old men, the women and the children. Over sixty per cent of the men are away at a time on labor-duty in the gold mines and on the European farms. The rural communities of South Africa are bled white of their man power.

A recent article in the *South African Medical Journal* describing the Glen Grey District, sums up the position all over South Africa. "... It is erroneous to regard a Native reserve as an agricultural area. It would be more accurate to speak of it as a well-spread residential area where the average family unit makes no more out of his land than the average city dweller pattering in his backyard garden. As an agricultural venture this native reserve must be regarded as a total failure. Not only are the production figures negligible, but the methods employed by the residents in their efforts to squeeze a livelihood off the land are destructive. ..."

This state of affairs perfectly suits the imperialists and the European farmer. For the rooting of a peasantry in the reserves would throw out of gear the whole mechanism of migrant and cheap black labor and would lose them their beasts of burden. As the minister of Native Affairs, Van der Byl said outright in Parliament: "... We would not buy the land for the natives to settle down and become peasants. ..." This would be intolerable for imperialism. The land is not meant for use by the African people, but the reserves are merely labor depots for the white masters' convenience.

As though the terrible landlessness and poverty of the African people were not enough to lash them to labor for the

mines, farms and industries, the ruling class cuts off all remnants of security with a special hut tax of 10/\* and a poll tax of one pound per male head, payable in cash, which acts as the final incentive for the creation of the indispensable labor force for imperialist industry.

These are the conditions that imperialism has created for the 2,962,297 Africans who, according to the 1936 census returns, were living in the reserved areas, and it is these conditions which throw up the backward millions to oil the wheels of imperialist industry, to dig for gold, to be cart-oxen for European farmers, and whole cheap slave labor forms the foundation of the South African economic and political structure.

### The African Farm Laborer

The plight of the 2¾ million non-Europeans on European farms, of whose number 2¼ million are Africans is a further example of the permanent degradation of the non-European people. Debarred from owning land elsewhere, uprooted from the reserves, they constitute a permanent agricultural laboring class in the merciless hands of the white landowners.

Regarded by European landowners as a sub-human beast of burden the African laborer and his family are bound by innumerable chains in a semi-feudal relationship to their masters. Over seventy-five per cent of the Africans on European farms are bound hand and foot in this semi-feudal serfdom as labor tenants. The main feature of the labor tenant system is a total dependence of the laborer, and his family on payment in kind. The European farmer on whose farm he slaves allows him a tiny and inadequate plot for his own cultivation and grazing, the right to use the mud and thatch on the farm to build a hut for his family. In return for these meager rights the labor-tenant and his whole family owe the farmer from 90 to 180 days of hard labor from "sunrise to sunset." In the Cape and O. F. S. he usually receives a negligible cash wage varying from 5/- to 2 0/- per month. In the Transvaal and Natal he receives no cash wage at all.

In addition, married men receive rations of one-half bag of mealie-meal per month to feed themselves and their families when at work.

But the lot of the casual laborer is even worse. He receives two meals a day consisting of mealie-meal and separated milk. (The milk now-a-days goes to the pigs, for pigs are more important than African laborers on European farms.) He may not even build himself a hut but must make shift to share with the permanent laborers or else sleep in the open.

His wage varies from 10/- to 30/- per month, depending on the proximity of the rural area to the town.

Added to the burden of crushing poverty and starvation, are the burdens of pass-laws, Masters and Servants laws and the Native Service Contract Act. Under the latter Act the head of the kraal legally binds himself and all his children under the age of eighteen years without their consent to the European farmer who employs him. The young man who deserts the farm for the town commits a crime punishable by whipping.

Pass laws permit the European farmer to restrict the movement of farm laborers and grips them by the throat with debts which are written on the passes, crippling his freedom and opportunities for other employment. In addition, educational facilities for the children are completely lacking.

Like the Chamber of Mines, the European farmers recruit

\*This is approximately \$2.00, measured by 20 shillings to the South African Pound, which is now quoted at about \$4.03.

their laborers. According to the Native Farm Labor Committee 1937-39 there were twelve firms or Combines recognized as farm labor organizations in 1937. In that year they supplied 12,304 laborers to farmers. To further augment their labor supply, African convict labor is hired out to them by the government.

European farmers make excellent warders for the convict labor which is hired out to them. Even Mr. J. D. Scholtz, the superintendent of the Cinderella Prison, who gave evidence before the Commission of Inquiry into Penal Reform, submitted the following graphic description of farmers' treatment of this convict labor. "... The farmers are getting cheap labor

but nine times out of ten they abuse that labor. . . . One gang hired out recently to a farmer refused to work. A prison officer was sent out and the prisoners told him that they were given no water when they were out working and that a native employed by the farmer beat them with a sjambok." The narrow-minded, thick-skulled callousness of the Afrikaner landowner defies description. These Herren-brutes have their heels firmly planted on the inert and crushed shoulders of the helpless African laborers.

ROBERT STONE.

(Part II will appear next month)

# Stalin's Agents in Bolivia

## The Nature of the Bolivian Revolution

The war-cry of Stalinism is the realization of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in South America. In order to realize this supposedly great and noble aim, Stalin's lackeys do not shrink from any infamy. In Brazil, they form an alliance with Vargas, the defeated totalitarian dictator; in Argentina they gratuitously offer their services to Peron; in Chile, they work with the "progressive" bourgeoisie, participating in the cabinet of Gonzalez Videla, even if only for a short time.

There is no country where conditions are more favorable for realizing the bourgeois-democratic revolution, Moscow's current slogan, than Bolivia, a backward country where the majority of the population is indigenous, with no other industry than the exploitation of the mines, with an agriculture that is completely feudal, and with an economic structure that is semi-colonial. In Bolivia, only the city possesses a bourgeois economy based on the activity of commercial capital, while in the countryside, the colonial, feudal régime left by the Spaniards dominates, accompanied by the remains of Inca institutions, such as the Indian "community," where the land is owned and worked in common. For all these reasons, Bolivia should be a paradise for the theoreticians of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Historical experience should serve as a guide not only for practical workers policy, but for Marxist theory as well. Let us see, then, how the Stalinists "realize" the bourgeois-democratic revolution in practice on the Andean plateau.

When the people rose up in arms and overthrew Bolivian Nazism, hanging President-Dictator Villaroel from a lamp post in front of the government building, the Stalinists created a tripartite committee of teachers, workers and students, for the purpose of assuming power. But within a few hours this committee handed over the power to the Supreme Court, well known for its conservatism. Controlled by the Stalinists, this tripartite committee vegetated until it was able to surrender the power to the institutions of capitalist legality. Alcoba, the Stalinist Minister of Labor, proposed the slogan of "national conciliation" with the Liberal Party which represents the big capitalist interests, in first place standing the international company of Patino, tin-king of Bolivia.

### The Bourgeois-democratic Revolution in Bolivia

When the working-class parties and trade unions, led by the miners, opposed the slogan of "national conciliation" with

their slogan of a "Proletarian United Front" and demanded an end to the bourgeois-Stalinist front in the mining districts, the Pirista (Stalinist) political and police authorities of Potosi, famous for its mines, answered with a bloody massacre of the workers, the number of dead rising well over 700. No one can fix the exact figure, because the Stalinist police buried the bodies secretly. *The massacre of the workers in order to install a Bolivian thermidor, this was the first stage of the "bourgeois-democratic revolution."* But the mining and factory proletariat of Bolivia gave a crushing reply to the Stalinist assassins, defeating them in the parliamentary elections, and voting for the Trotskyist deputies or the Anti-Stalinist Independents. The Miner's Parliamentary Bloc today has nine deputies and senators, among whom are *the first Trotskyist deputies in the world.* The Stalinist candidate for the presidency, Guachalla, was also defeated, leaving Dr. Hertzog, candidate of the Republican Union (a moderate right-wing group representing the middle bourgeoisie, the landowners, and a part of the middle class) with a small majority. *The Potosi massacre rendered impossible a Stalinist victory in Bolivia, and prevented a Thermidorian dictatorship in the heart of Latin-America.*

The elections divided parliament into two almost equal fractions, the Republican Union and the Stalinist-Liberals. To cope with the danger of a proletariat still rebellious in part, Hertzog was compelled to form, after a while, a cabinet of "national conciliation," with the participation of Guachalla representing the Piristas (Stalinists) and the Liberals. The lackeys of Stalin received the ministries of labor and public works, their liberal colleagues the ministries of war and agriculture. Guachalla received the ministry of foreign affairs.

The cabinet of bourgeois-Stalinist concentration was greeted by the proletariat *with a strike in the very important mines of Catavi*, a place made famous by the miners massacres which resulted in the fall of the Penaranda cabinet in 1943. The Ministers of Labor (Stalinist) and of the Interior (Republican-Union) journeyed to Catavi, supported by troops, to punish the workers. But they found the workers armed not only with rifles but with machine-guns as well. A new attempt at massacre threatened to bring on the outbreak of civil war in the mining centers. Faced with the demand of the Miners Parliamentary Bloc, the government had to withdraw the army from the mining districts. The workers formed union militias to preserve order and defend their interests. The man-

agement of the Patino Mines tried to sabotage the workers' activities, but was brought to a halt by the militia. After a few days, the miners' union ended the strike and ordered a return to work. The Patino Company answered with an attempt at a lockout by closing the mines. The management of the Patino Mines gave as a reason for its action "*the lack of guarantees*" for its personnel, demanding "armed protection" for the mines. The government could not agree to this provocation, confronted as it was by the organized and armed strength of the workers.

The Stalinist Minister of Labor, together with his Labor Inspectors tried, first of all, to destroy the miners' federation, attacking its leadership and parliamentary representatives. However, since the revenues of the Bolivian treasury depend in large measure on mining production, the government ordered the company to reopen the mines. The management of the mines tried to sabotage this order, but finally yielded, once again demanding "guarantees" for its personnel against the "terror" of the union. The government officials proceeded to re-open the mines despite the fact that the technical personnel, North American in its majority, did not appear to direct the work. The company protested this "invasion of private property" but agreed finally to resume operations. At the present time the government is preparing a decree arbitrating the workers' demand for a wage increase of 40-60 per cent.

The Stalinist Party (PIR) is now carrying on intensive propaganda among the workers calling the re-opening of the mines a "proletarian victory" and a revolutionary imposition upon capital. At the same time, the Stalinist Minister of Labor emphatically states that the government will respect private property. The PIR (Stalinist) emphasizes that in this respect it is conforming to the "bourgeois-democratic" phase of the revolution. Some layers of backward workers accept the Stalinist affirmations in all seriousness, considering the re-opening of the mines by government order a victory for the working class.

However, such is not the case. The government proceeded to withdraw its armed forces from the mining districts and to re-open the mines not only because of pressure from the working class, *but also to safeguard its financial interests and the interests of the bourgeoisie.* The national economy of Bolivia depends on the production of tin. Since at the present time the production of this mineral is under contract to the United States, Great Britain and Argentina, *the big mining bourgeoisie are doing excellent business and it is not in their interests to have the mines closed. The lockout attempt was a maneuver used to force the workers to modify their general aims and scale down their demands for a 40-60 per cent increase in wages.* Furthermore, the workers themselves broke off the strike when confronted by the offensive of the bourgeoisie and the government. The government ministers did not at all impose upon the bourgeoisie, but more accurately speaking, collaborated with them to force the miners to return to work without winning the wage increases asked. In addition, the antagonisms between the capitalists and the workers compelled the government to exercise its power, *thereby increasing its authority and asserting its bonapartist role.* To speak in this instance of a realization of the democratic revolution is a typical Stalinist fable *behind which is hidden the march of the counter-revolution and a native bonapartism painted red.*

### Counter-Revolutionary Stalinism

The liquidation of the miners strike was accompanied by wholesale repressions of the rebellious peasant movement,

whose organization, the agrarian federation, is now the object of a furious police onslaught. The Stalinist hangmen do not protest against this repression because the peasant movement is led by the local federation which is anti-Stalinist and anarchist in character. There is no more striking proof of the reactionary role played by the Stalinists than the persecution of the native peasant movement by a cabinet in which the Stalinist ministers sit. The first and principal task of the democratic revolution should be an agrarian reform; complete cancellation of feudalism, liberation of the Indians, and the division of the large haciendas. The Bolivian Indian works three or four days out of the week without pay for the landowner, besides engaging in other unpaid services, typically feudal, such as the transportation of products to the city, domestic service in the house of the landlord for an entire week at a time, tending the cattle, caring for the garden, etc.

The Stalinists have a grand field here in which to realize the democratic revolution, instead they are massacring the Indians as they massacred the workers of Potosi. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," said Frederick Engels. Bolivia constitutes the best terrain on which to realize the democratic revolution, as the Stalinists understand it, that is, as an historic stage isolated from the Socialist Revolution and realizable in this solitary country lost in the Andean mountains. But instead of proceeding along this road, they slaughter the miners of Potosi, impose the arbitration of the bourgeois government, foment Bonapartism, and massacre the Indian peasants who demand nothing more than "land and freedom," typical democratic slogans. If in Bolivia, under a coalition bourgeois-Stalinist government the democratic revolution cannot be realized (which ought to begin by liberating the Indian and destroying feudalism), so much the less can this program be realized in other and more advanced countries of South America under existing conditions, that is, under imperialist domination.

The Bolivian feudo-bourgeoisie is reactionary and it is weak. The big mining bourgeoisie is tied to imperialism, and is not interested in the advance of progressive capitalism in Bolivia. The Patino interests exploit Malayan, as well as Bolivian, tin; they own smelting plants in England and participate in many foreign mining companies. Hochschild is linked to North American capital and cares not one bit about the industrial progress of Bolivia. What does matter to him is the exploitation of Bolivia's mineral resources at the lowest possible cost. The middle, commercial bourgeoisie lives on imports and has an interest in the industrial backwardness of the country. To the large landholders all that matters is the unpaid labor of the Indian, and the conservation of their feudal privileges. Who then is capable of realizing the bourgeois revolution against the bourgeoisie itself, if there does not exist a "progressive" sector of the bourgeoisie, dreamt of by the Stalinists?

The Bolivian middle-class with its reactionary artisan, its public employee, and its miserable shopkeeper does not constitute an economic or social force of any importance. It plays the role of a poor Sancho Panza to the feudo-bourgeoisie, ready for any adventure. Cowardly and corrupted, it is the ideal rabble for all reactionary caudillos, all the pocket size native Bonapartists. This social stratum, today disillusioned with Nazism, provides the shocktroops, is the "base" for Bolivian Stalinism. Does this heterogeneous mass yearn for a democratic revolution? It wants public posts, the penetration of the administrative machine; the ideal paradise for the ruined artisan,

the unemployed "intellectual," and the unfortunate white-collar workers. This class is incapable of raising up the Indian because it lives by his exploitation, and vegetates like a parasite in the pores of the organism of feudal society.

### **A Utopian and Revolutionary Policy**

The example of Bolivia demonstrates that the program of the democratic revolution, as the Stalinists understand it, is *completely utopian and reactionary*. Moscow uses this slogan to hurl its fifth columns toward the conquest of the administrative apparatus, to dominate the ministries of Labor and Police, with the aim of putting pressure on American imperialism on the one side, and on the other, of assuming the role of executioner of the revolutionary Latin-American proletariat. Latin-America has a relatively strong Trotskyist movement which is directing resolute blows at Stalinism. Latin-America also has left-wing sectors of Social-Democracy in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, political Centrists who are also in opposition to the Stalinists.

Where they control the police, the Stalinists imitate the European experiences of their masters, and *proceed to the destruction of the independent workers cadres*, in order afterwards to offer their services to imperialism in exchange for the required concessions. As in Europe, the Stalinists wish to play

the role of the hangmen of the revolution behind the "smoke-screen" of the "democratic revolution" a la Stalin. As in Europe they wish to auction off the corpse of the workers movement in their quest for concessions from American imperialism. However, they will not realize such successes as they have won in Europe. American imperialism is sweeping them away with an iron broom everywhere. Not only in Brazil or Paraguay, but in Chile as well, where they have been expelled from the cabinet of their own presidential candidate, Gonzalez Videla. The same pattern will prevail in Bolivia as well. After all, why keep a lackey who has no further usefulness?

No, it is not the democratic revolution which the Stalinists wish to realize but the counter-revolution on behalf of Russian imperialism. They wish to exploit the legitimate aspirations of the Latin-American peoples toward social and economic emancipation on behalf of Stalinist reaction.

*The Latin-American revolution must be all-enforcing, international, according to the Peruvian Marxist theoretician, Mariategui.* It must be Socialist. Only the Socialist revolution, only the proletariat can sweep away feudalism and imperialism, finishing with the left-over democratic tasks on the road to the socialist goal.

Luis VELASCO.

May 28, 1947

## **A Social Democratic "Innocent" Abroad**

### **Liston Oak's Observations on Poland**

The impressions of Liston Oak, editor of the New York *New Leader*, on the situation in Poland completely confirm our information and analysis published in *Labor Action* and the *New Internationalist*. They bring many details and political declarations which make clear to the American and international public the problems of Poland and of the Russian zone in general. In spite of his reserve and criticisms of the Stalinist system, the author, however, makes some fundamental errors in his appreciation of the nature of the régime and the perspectives of political development in Stalinist Poland.

If we speak on this subject, it is not from any mean desire of finding holes in the author's exposition, but in order to clear up problems of general international interest for the workers' movement and Marxist doctrine. "The sentiments of the nation, the political and economic currents, the behavior of the bureaucracy, the declarations and program, all this recalls Moscow in the early days of the Revolution, between 1917 and 1925." The analogy is not however complete, in view of the existing differences between Leninism and Stalinism. Russia, in the Leninist period, was a country of hope, something which is totally lacking in Stalin's Russia or in Poland under Stalin's control.

"In Warsaw, as in Moscow in 1946, a growing abyss can be seen between the masses and the bureaucracy. The workers are told that the factories belong to them, but the worker has no conviction of this, since neither he nor the old leaders have much to say. The new masters are the political commissars. . . . One of the differences between the Russian and Polish revolutions is the destruction of the whole bourgeois state apparatus in Russia, while in Poland the power is in the hands of the Communist-Socialist coalition. The workers' councils in the

factories in Poland have no real power, in relation to the soviets of revolutionary Russia. *The present government of Poland recalls Kerensky's government between February and October, 1917.* It is not very probable that Poland will experience anything like the October Revolution. It is to be supposed that the Communists will gradually take over all the power." (Liston Oak in the PAT agency version, Polish Tel., London. My emphasis—A. R.)

In this quotation, which seems to me to be the author's most fundamental political conclusion, the grain of sand of truth is lost in the desert of false political doctrine. To prove our affirmation, we have to submit Liston Oak's most fundamental affirmation about the Kerenskyist character of the present Stalinist régime in Poland to a real historical analysis. But the good and ingenuous Liston Oak allowed this thesis to be suggested to him by the Stalinists, who must be very pleased at having made use of such an excellent propagandist and one, besides, so removed from Stalinism in putting forward its program. The thesis of present Kerenskyism in Warsaw is nothing but the Stalinist concept of the "democratic-bourgeois" revolution in Poland.

### **When Was the "Democratic Revolution"?**

In our article, "The Problems of the Polish Revolution" (*NEW INTERNATIONALIST*, August-September, 1946), we submitted this muddled theory to severe criticism, laying it bare before Polish reality. We will recall the matter again. The democratic revolution in Poland was exhausted in national risings against the Czar and was not able to carry out its program of creating the national independent state of Poland as a base for the development of Polish capitalism. After the defeat of the last national revolution in 1863-64, capitalism rose in Po-

land inside the feudal Czarist structure. The 1905 and 1917 revolutions put an end to Czarism, burying it in the swirl of the democratic revolution, which in Russia became transformed into a socialist revolution. Poland shared with Russia the democratic revolution of 1905.

*In 1917, nearly the whole of Poland was occupied by the Austro-Germans and isolated from the Russian Revolution. Nevertheless, on October 7, 1918, the democratic, independent Republic of Poland was proclaimed in Lublin, headed by the government of the PPS and the Populists, by the Social-Democrat Daszynski and the Populist Witos.*

This government carried out: (a) National independence as a fundamental postulate of the democratic revolution. (b) Set up a parliamentary-democratic régime of the "popular" republic as an adequate base for the development of capitalism in Poland. (c) Proclaimed the eight-hour day, the right of the workers to form trade unions, and all the modern conquests and social rights of the proletariat. (d) Posed the immediate need for radical agricultural reform, without indemnities. These fundamental points exhaust the program of the democratic revolution in Poland, parallel to that of February, 1917, in Russia.

The democratic revolution in Poland did not pass on to the socialist stage. The Polish bourgeoisie buried its revolutionary axe in 1864, after the national defeat, and passed on to the stage of "organized work" and later to direct collaboration with the Czarist autocracy, which was evidenced in anti-worker actions and anti-Semitic pogroms.

*The bourgeoisie boycotted the democratic petty bourgeois government of Lublin and under this pressure the Social Democrats and Populists handed over the government to its "confidence man," to Pilsudski, who formed a government of national concentration with the right.*

Thus ended Polish "Kerenskyism" and the Polish Kerensky was none other than Pilsudski himself, the ex-Socialist and "confidence man of the Polish left," later dictator and marshal of Poland, leader of the Polish counter-revolution.

### **Preparing Stalin's Dictatorship**

Bourgeois democracy wore itself out in 1926 and it was the Polish Kerensky, Pilsudski, who installed a Bonapartist dictatorship on the corpse of democracy. From 1930 onward the Bonapartist régime acquired eminently totalitarian features, under Stalinist and Nazi pressure, and that of the Polish bourgeoisie itself. In 1939, the year of Poland's national defeat by German imperialism, Polish reaction was replaced by much deeper and more consistent Stalinist and Nazi reactions. The national resistance, and especially the illegal struggle of workers and peasants, constituted the germ of social revolution in Poland. The revolution in Warsaw was the most finished expression of this movement of social and national liberation.

*When Stalin stopped the Russian offensive at the gates of Warsaw, to give the Nazis time to crush the Polish rising, this was a new Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, supported by the "democracies" and directed against the embryonic social revolution in Poland. The Russian armies which invaded Poland over the dead body of the Warsaw insurrection and the illegal struggle, brought with their bayonets, not liberation and "democratic revolution," but a Stalinist counter-revolution, national oppression and Russian imperialism.*

The last stage of the democratic revolution in Poland was carried out from 1918 to 1926. Later came the counter-revolution in its various stages until the Nazi occupation. The only

revolution which would have been able to defeat reaction was the international socialist revolution, whose seed was destroyed in Warsaw in 1944. What is taking place in Poland now is neither "Kerenskyism" nor another "democratic revolution," but a Stalinist counter-revolution acting under the mask of "popular democracy," "nationalization of industries," "democratic agricultural reform," etc.

The nationalization of industries is an instrument in the hands of Stalinist imperialism for exploiting and sacking the Polish people, and has nothing in common with socialist nationalization. The agricultural reform is lacking in any economic importance, since central and western Poland had a typically capitalist agricultural structure, even more capitalist than Eastern Germany. The policy of state capitalism, officially proclaimed, serves to cement the Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship brought in with the Russian bayonets. "The agricultural reform" is an instrument of this bureaucracy for despoiling the peasant masses of the produce of their work and reducing them to the condition of the bureaucracy's slaves. "Popular democracy" is merely a cynical mask for the Russian GPU dictatorship. To speak of a "socialist-communist bloc," as Liston Oak docs, is to make a bloody mockery of the Polish proletariat.

### **The Way of Bourgeois Criticism**

The Stalinist party has nothing in common with the old party of Rosa Luxemburg and her disciples; it is a police fabrication of the GPU. The permitted PPS (Socialist Party) has nothing in common with pre-war social democracy, nor with the illegal and heroic PPS of the underground and the Warsaw insurrection. Cyrankiewicz and Osybka are a couple of poor devils, absolutely unknown before, who are puppets of the GPU. There is no political democracy in Poland, not only in a "Kerenskyist" sense, but not even in the sense of the most moderate bourgeois democracy. Therefore, to speak about "Kerenskyism" in Poland is to make good propaganda for Stalinism.

If the Warsaw insurrection contained the seed of socialist revolution, the Stalinist régime represents the march of counter-revolution, the setting up of a Stalinist Thermidor in Poland. Liston Oak, in spite of his liberal and bourgeois repudiation of Stalinism, thinks in a nineteenth century fashion and cannot understand new phenomena, such as Stalinism, which he identifies with the socialist revolution. From this comes the rather grotesque consequence that an old anti-Stalinist liberal is doing good propaganda for Stalinism. The Moscow bureaucrats and their Warsaw puppets must be having a good laugh about it.

*It is true, and in this Liston Oak is right, that there is little probability of the socialist revolution developing in Poland. The Stalinist régime closes the way to this revolution, opening instead the road toward the complete incorporation of Poland into the Stalinist empire, that is to say, to a complete Stalinist counter-revolution, or toward a capitalist restoration, in case of the defeat of Russia in Europe and the incorporation of Poland in the Anglo-American orbit.*

Both forms of reaction, capitalist and Stalinist, may be overcome and vanquished only through the European and world socialist revolution. The workers' socialist opposition, the illegal struggle of petty bourgeois and peasants in certain sectors, represent the seeds of this revolution, the only one possible, not merely in Poland but in the whole of Europe.

A. RUDZIENSKI.

# The Class Nature of the Polish State - II

## A Reply to Ernest Germain

This installment completes Comrade Erber's reply to Ernest Germain's criticism of the position of the Workers Party and the New International on Poland. The first part of this article appeared in the July issue.

The political crisis which has gripped the Fourth International since the outbreak of World War II is rooted in its false position on the nature of the Russian state. However, as has been demonstrated so many times in the history of political movements, a false position on a key question disorients the entire program of a movement and renders it incapable of answering other questions, even those that appear to be unrelated to the key question. It was, therefore, not long after the split in the movement over Russia's role in the war that the Fourth International committed its error on the national question, the consequences of which all but equal those of the Russian question.

The disastrous policy advocated by the Fourth International for Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe under Russian rule is the bitter fruit of *both* of these major errors, because the political situation of these countries is dominated by national oppression imposed by Russia. The result is that the political line of the Fourth International, which *tends* everywhere to subvert the revolutionary movement into a left opposition to Stalinism, emerges in these Russian-occupied countries, as a result of the direct effect of both major errors, in the role of *open* defenders of the Stalinist police regime and of national oppression against the popular democratic movement of national liberation.

The connection between the Russian question and the national question is far more intimate than appears from superficial examination. The link between these two questions is formed by the fact that both are integrally related to an evaluation of the nature of the epoch, one as a determinant of it and the other as an extraction from it. Whether or not one recognizes that the national question has reappeared in Europe as one of the main political questions depends upon one's analysis of the main trends of development during the last twenty-five years of European history. Without making the latter analysis the framework for one's investigation of the national question, it is impossible to establish the relationship of national liberation struggles to the socialist revolution. However, a historical analysis of this period of history that proceeds, as must that of the Fourth International, from the view that the Russian Revolution still lives and that Stalinism, no matter how degenerate, represents its continuity, cannot possibly come to the same conclusions about the nature of the epoch as a historical analysis which proceeds, as ours does, from the view that the Russian Revolution is dead and that Stalinism represents one of the beginnings of barbarism.

Proceeding from the perspective that the social, economic and political conditions of Europe, including the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat, had undergone no basic change since the period of the early Comintern and that the prospects for the end of World War II were for a repetition of the post-war revolutionary waves of 1917-19, one could not possibly conclude that the national question had returned

after seven decades to dominate European politics. The *strategy* of the proletarian revolution, as formulated by the early Comintern and defended by the Left Opposition, would then continue as the central political axis with the struggle for proletarian state power as the main *political* slogan. The occupation of the continent by Germany would, in this event, be but a passing phase of the war which would be resolved by the rising tide of proletarian revolution as was the less extensive German occupation during the First World War. Under these conditions, the emergence of national resistance movements with influence among the masses would be correctly viewed as solely of *tactical* importance for the revolutionary movement.

The Fourth International, of course, proceeded from the above analysis. Its theoreticians could not understand that the events of the last quarter century required that the *strategy* of world revolution be altered *precisely* in order to achieve the aim of world revolution. Being epigones, these theoreticians had learned the strategy by rote and had come to assume that any changes in "*the*" strategy must mean changes in the revolutionary goal. A strategy of world revolution that took into account the events of history and sought to find new points of support for the proletarian revolution in the mass national and democratic movements appeared to them as an attempt, not to make necessary revisions in strategy, but to substitute some other kind of "revolution" for the proletarian revolution.

### Taking Note of Some Changes

Our struggle against this sterility based itself, in large measure, upon an analysis in which our views on the nature of the Russian state and on Stalinism played a major role. This analysis was composed of the following decisive factors that had shaped world history since the early 1920s:

- (a) The first workers' state had been destroyed and replaced by a totalitarian rule that based itself upon the state-owned economy;
- (b) The organized mass revolutionary movement, product of decades of struggle that crystallized in the Comintern, had been destroyed and replaced by a ruthless and efficient agency of counter-revolution in the form of Stalinism;
- (c) The working class, deprived of a revolutionary leadership, had fallen victim to fascism in Central Europe;
- (d) The combined effects of reformism, Stalinism and fascism had hurled back the proletariat in terms of political consciousness and revolutionary organization;
- (e) The continued decline of capitalist economy was bringing about a decay and disintegration in social institutions and in culture that marked the undoing of several centuries of civilized progress;
- (f) The emergence of the outlines of organized barbarism (Germany, Russia) as the alternative to a socialist reorganization of society;
- (g) The outbreak of a Second World War with its threat to complete the destruction begun by fascism.

The correct reading of these changes revealed that Europe, in the absence of the proletarian revolution, was rapidly slipping backward and that long outlived political problems were



once more reappearing on its agenda. This is the essence of what we have referred to as "retrogression," a concept which has been so badly misunderstood or misrepresented by our opponents. One of the products of this retrogression is the undoing of a great part of the progress achieved in an entire historical period (the bourgeois revolution) in the solution of the national problem. State frontiers, having outlived their usefulness, had become fetters on the economic and political progress of Europe by the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Europe could not progress without the abolition of state frontiers through the unification of European economy as a whole. But this unification would mark progress *only* if it were brought about by the democratic process of the socialist revolution. The unification of Europe through imperialist conquest and oppression could mark, not a step forward, but only a step backward. Leaving aside the fact that the imperialist unification would not necessarily raise the level of production, it would constitute a retrograde process because its political effect would not be, as some falsely believe, the transfer of the proletarian struggle for power from a national to a continental basis, but, rather, the transfer of the struggle in the oppressed nations from *directly* proletarian socialist goals to national liberation.

All modern history teaches us that national oppression has the general effect of blurring class consciousness and heightening national consciousness. The proletariat of the oppressed nation quickly discovers that every struggle which it wages in behalf of its class interests finds its *first* and *most formidable* obstacle in the troops and police of the state power, i.e., the foreign oppressor. The proletariat's struggle for national liberation is, therefore, not the result of some vague feeling without material basis, born of bourgeois patriotic propaganda, as some sectarians believe. It arises from the logic of the class struggle itself. The course pursued by the proletariat in the struggle for national liberation—whether it submerges its class interests in the struggle of the nation for liberation or whether it wages its class struggle as a struggle on behalf of the nation as a whole through *leading* the struggle for national liberation—depends entirely upon the correct strategic orientation of the proletariat, that is to say, of its organized, political vanguard. The struggle for national liberation, therefore, can become the lever by which the proletariat achieves the leadership of its nation and by which the successful liberation of the nation becomes merged with the socialist revolution as a consequence of the proletariat taking state power in the process of liberation. It is this aspect of the problem that gives the national question its crucial importance wherever the national question emerges as the dominant political problem. It is because of this that a movement which is incapable of understanding the national question is totally impotent as a revolutionary leadership wherever the national question predominates. That is why the bankruptcy of the Fourth International on the national question during the occupation of Europe by the Nazis meant its bankruptcy as a revolutionary leadership, no matter how loudly it called for "soviets" and the Socialist United States of Europe. Or rather, one can say, the louder they called for these as *substitutes* for the struggle of national liberation, upon which they had turned their backs, the more bankrupt they declared themselves in the real struggle for the proletarian revolution.

No graver error, nor a more revealing one, can be made than to assume that the national question was a problem limited to wartime Europe. Those who hold this view cannot pos-

sibly understand the Marxist-Leninist concept of the national question, in general, nor the essence of the national question in its reappearance under new world conditions in particular. Every wartime military occupation of foreign soil does not give rise to a national question, even if it does give rise to *movements* of national resistance. Such movements in the course of the First World War were correctly denounced by the revolutionary Marxists as social patriotic movements that could only *divert* the proletariat from its revolutionary goals. It is, as we have said previously, a problem of the epoch.

The liberation of the continent from the Nazis did not do away with the national question. It merely shifted national oppression from Western Europe to Germany, leaving Eastern Europe unchanged in this respect except for a change from German to Russian oppression. The national question has reappeared in Europe to remain until the socialist revolution. This assertion is true because the solution of the national question on the plane of 1871-1939 would require a degree of progress under capitalism which it is utterly incapable of achieving, above all, when the real prospect for Europe under capitalism is for *no progress whatsoever*.

### **The National Question Remains**

The unification of Europe through imperialist conquest, which we referred to previously, was not a necessity that was peculiar to German capitalism alone. It is part of the whole drive of modern imperialism which has resulted on a world scale in the trend toward fewer and ever greater powers just as within each capitalist nation the trend is toward fewer and greater units of monopoly capital. The division of the world into a Russian and an American sphere has not yet exhausted this process. The two giants stand poised to grapple for final world supremacy.

The corollary of this process is the reduction of the rest of the nations of the world to one of varying degrees of subserviency to the two great powers. This does not mean that every nation has a national question as a result of domination by Russia or the United States. The great economic power of the latter permits it to dominate other nations through a variety of forms that enable it to enable it to reach its ends without direct military occupation. Russia likewise dominates some countries (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia) without direct occupation, through the agency of the native Stalinist apparatus. Wherever the foreign domination is exercised without a direct use of military power by the oppressing nation, the national question tends to recede in importance because the direct state power is exercised by the native ruling class, however subservient it may be to the foreign power. As a result, the national question remains as the dominant political question in those nations of Central Europe (Germany, Austria) and of Eastern Europe directly occupied by the forces of Anglo-American or Russian imperialism.

We see, therefore, that the national question is not a matter of wartime military occupation. It is, as would have also been the case in the event of a German victory, a matter of national oppression for an indefinite period. This means that we face a period in which the revolutionary strategy of large sections of the European proletariat will revolve around the national question. By the same token, we face a period in which a revolutionary movement that persists in misreading history and misunderstanding the national question can have no prospect of success.

The ability of the Fourth International to free itself from

the sectarian impasse in which it has landed on the national question is severely restricted by the role of its Russian position as an obstacle to a clear comprehension of the extent to which Europe has been "hurled back." How can one comprehend the reality of retrogression if one believes that half of Europe is dominated by the armies of a workers' state, which introduce "reforms" which "facilitate the realization of the socialist revolution"? No matter how much such a position laments the fact that the socialist revolution is brought closer through the agency of the Russian bureaucracy itself instead of by the proletariat itself, such a position must still contend that socialism is being brought closer. This latter process does not constitute retrogression. It constitutes progress. If Russia, vis-a-vis capitalism, represents progress and Russian might, assisted by the Stalinist mass movements, has grown, all talk of retrogression and the reappearance of the national question becomes objectively counter-revolutionary. That is why two basic currents that struggle for supremacy in the international movement divide on *both* questions, the Russian question *and* the national question.

An attempt to establish a position which believes that Russia remains a workers' state but that retrogression has carried Europe to the point where the national question dominates the politics of half the continent is an attempt to make an illogical, internally-contradictory construction.<sup>1</sup> It would fall apart immediately if tested in a real political situation, such as Poland represents today. Likewise, an attempt to establish a position that holds that Russia has retrogressed to capitalism (which means fascism), but that Europe as a whole has not retrogressed to the point where the national question reappears on its agenda, is to make an eclectic construction which is absurd on the face of it.<sup>2</sup> The absurdity of this latter theoretical construction is that it recognizes the complete retrogression of the Russian Revolution into its extreme opposite, fascist barbarism, but fails to understand the simple fact

<sup>1</sup> Trotsky's views on the eve of the war were of this general character. Trotsky not only recognized the retrogressive process and the key role of Stalinism within it, but made this recognition an important consideration in his calculations. As a result, he was acutely aware of the growing contradiction between his views on the working class nature of the Russian state and the implications of his analysis of retrogression. He resolved this dilemma by postponing any further theoretical conclusions until the second world war would be concluded and its political repercussions were known. His brilliant article, "U. S. S. R. and the War," written a few weeks after the war began, was his final rounded presentation on the subject of retrogression and the nature of the Russian state. In this article he poses the entire question from the point of view that either the war will conclude with a revolution, in which case both the problem of the class character of the Stalinist state and the problem of retrogression will be automatically resolved, or the proletariat will fail to take power and require a complete re-analysis of Marxist fundamentals, including the possibility of a world of bureaucratic slave states. The actual results of World War II are somewhere between the two alternatives which Trotsky posed. The failure of the proletariat to make a revolution in post-war Europe does not demonstrate its historic incapacity to play the role which Marx assigned to it. Yet the continued and accelerated retrogressive process places a question mark over the ability of the proletariat to reassemble a revolutionary leadership and take power before it is overtaken and destroyed by the disintegrative tendency of capitalist civilization, of which the threatening atomic war is the most potent force.

<sup>2</sup> This absurd position is actually held by the tendency led by J. R. Johnson. In the course of the debates on the national question, he added a further absurdity to it. This consisted of denying the retrograde development of Europe but of "recognizing" the reappearance of the national question! According to Johnson Europe did not retrogress but moved forward—from the proletarian revolutions of 1917-23 to the national liberation movements of 1941-45! That is to say, from millions rallying to the banner of Lenin to millions rallying to the banner of de Gaulle! This utterly contradictory position could be encompassed by the same mind only because it was devoid of any understanding of what the national question means in the Marxist-Leninist concept. For Johnson, the beginning and end of the problem was to advise the French proletariat that in process of making the proletarian revolution they should also "throw out" the Germans, except, as Johnson carefully added, those German soldiers who wanted to marry French women and settle down to live in a Socialist France!

that the retrogression of the Russian Revolution, both in Russia and as a world movement, is the starting point from which all other aspects of retrogression get their impetus. This position also would find its total débâcle in Poland. To make the call for "soviets" and the "Socialist United States of Europe" the central political slogans in Poland today would expose this position as totally sterile and without the possibility of finding a point of political contact with either camp—the Warsaw Quisling régime or the national liberation movement. A position that denies retrogression and preaches the imminent proletarian revolution but finds itself reduced to neutrality between two mass forces that periodically threaten to erupt into civil war becomes a laughable incongruity.

### Germain Does Violence to Facts

In our previous article on Poland, dealing with the nature of state power in that country, we pointed out how the false position on the Russian question held by the Fourth International forces it to maintain that Russia is interested in saving capitalism in Poland and that it erects a police dictatorship for that purpose, but concludes that the Polish workers must defend this régime against the bourgeois democratic opposition. This unfortunate position leads its unhappy exponent, Ernest Germain,\* to do further violence to fact and reason whenever he touches upon the national question in Poland. The result is a repetition of all the traditional errors on the national question which have been the stock-in-trade of every sectarian opponent of Leninism on this question, plus a few new ones tailored to fit the exceptional situation in which the official policy of the Fourth finds itself in Poland.

We say "touch upon" advisedly, because Germain is careful to skirt around the national question in Poland in order to avoid the necessity of making an analysis of Russia's role in Poland. Germain's article abounds with indications of what he believes Russia's role *not* to be. From our foregoing analysis of the relationship between the Russian question and the national question, it is easy to see why Germain should be so discreet.

Germain, for instance, finds it necessary to place quotation marks around the words "exploit" and "oppress" when referring to our view of Russia's role in Poland. The purpose of these quotation marks is to make sure that the reader understands that these characterizations of Russia's role are those of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL and not of Germain. A few lines later, Germain makes reference to the views of our collaborator, A. Rudzienski, on the nature of the revolution which Poland faces and, in quoting, finds it necessary to include in his quotation a sentence which expresses Rudzienski's view that Russia subjects Poland to colonial exploitation. Lest someone be given the impression that Germain accepts this part of the quotation, he hastens to introduce his comments by saying, "Let us disregard the question of whether or not Poland is at present subject to 'colonial exploitation.'"

In the absence of a forthright statement on the question, we are entitled to assume, at least, that Germain is not prepared to commit himself as to whether Poland is oppressed and exploited by Russia, either in a colonial or any other manner. The *facts* of Russia's role in Poland are not in dispute. Almost everyone, with the exception of the Stalinists and their apologists among the liberals, accepts the view that Russia subjects Poland to political dependence and forces upon her such trade relations as are to the advantage of

\* Ernest Germain: "The Conflict in Poland," **Fourth International**, February 1947.

Russia. This has been amply demonstrated in the studies of Russia's role in Poland by Kudzienski, which have appeared in these pages and in *Labor Action*. We very much doubt that Germain will rest his argument on a refutation of our factual material. To do this, he would have to paint the Kremlin in such altruistic colors that they would be unacceptable to anyone in the Fourth International.

If Germain agrees with us that the Polish régime is politically subservient to the will of Moscow and that the latter seeks to use Polish economy and resources for purposes of rebuilding Russian economy, why should he refuse to term this relationship as oppression and exploitation? The answer rests on the fact that what is at stake is an *interpretation* of more or less commonly accepted facts about Russia's role. Germain admits the facts of Russian political and economic policy in Poland but is forced to support Russia against the bourgeois democratic movement of national liberation on the basis of his view that Russia is a workers' state and Poland a bourgeois state. One may condemn and criticize the *methods* by which the Kremlin carries out its policy in Poland (which Germain does) and keep within the Russian position of the Fourth, but how can one denounce the role of a workers' state, no matter how degenerate, and support its bourgeois democratic, peasant opponents or its reformist (really, Menshevik) proletarian opponents? If one proceeds from the view that Russia and Poland rest upon antagonistic class foundations, the former working class and the latter bourgeois, then support to a national liberation movement in Poland would constitute aid to the bourgeoisie against the workers' state, i.e., aid to the counter-revolution.

The only political conclusion possible in Poland on the basis of Germain's reasoning is the conclusion he arrives at—support the imperialist oppressor and denounce his victims. This is the sum and substance of Germain's political line in the context of the actual political relations in Poland today.

"Not true!" say the partisans of the official policy. "We call for an independent Soviet Poland!" Yes, we are aware of this slogan. More than that, we note that Germain labels this the *central* slogan in Poland today. But this knowledge does not affect by a hair's breadth our characterization of Germain's line as being support to the Quislings and opposition to the fighters for liberation.

### Poland Is Not China, You Say

What does it mean to say that one is for an independent Soviet Poland? Are we not also for an independent Soviet India? Or an independent Soviet Indo-China? Or an independent Soviet Indonesia? The aim of our struggle in these latter countries is certainly not the replacement of British, French or Dutch imperialism by native exploiters. Yet we never lose sight of who the *main enemy* is in these oppressed nations. *Today* the main enemy is foreign imperialism. Our central slogan is, therefore, "Drive out the imperialist oppressor." Our struggle against the bourgeois nationalists in the nationally oppressed countries remains on the level of political criticism, denunciation, clarification, etc., in an effort to wrest the national liberation movement from their domination. But if we permitted our struggle against the bourgeois wing of the national liberation movement to become our *main* struggle *before* the imperialist enemy has been driven out, we would be guilty of playing a counter-revolutionary role. Trotsky's criticism of the Comintern line in the Chinese Revolution was not that it failed to make the Kuomintang the main enemy in

the period *before* the fall of Shanghai. Trotsky's criticism was directed at the policy of political and military subordination of the Communists to the bourgeois nationalist leaders and the failure to organize the masses independently of the Kuomintang movement.

"But Poland is not China," our opponents will protest. "Poland is a European nation that has gone through many national liberation struggles in its history and cannot succeed any more today than in the past in achieving its independence short of a socialist revolution."

That Poland is not China, we are willing to grant. Yet the two nations, today, have more in common than the fact that they both excel in the quality of their pork products. One such common feature is that neither enjoys national independence, *Poland less than China*. A second common feature is that the main tasks of the revolutionary party are the same in both countries. These tasks can be described in the following manner:

The task of the revolutionary party is . . . to formulate its program and its slogans in such a way as to rally *around itself* all the exploited masses in the struggle against all their exploiters. It bases itself on the dynamics of the class struggle and not upon the depth of chauvinist feelings, because it knows that in the last analysis the struggle of the masses for their national democratic aspirations can be victorious only by colliding with bourgeois nationalism, can be victorious only through the realization of the socialist revolution, which will require the expulsion of the "occupier" as well as the destruction of the "native" reactionary classes.

This description of the tasks of a revolutionary party which I hold, apply in *both* Poland and China is a quotation from the article by Germain. No Marxist who stands upon the theory of the permanent revolution could reject its formulation without becoming a petty bourgeois nationalist. Germain, who wrote these words, is under the impression, however, that they constitute a refutation of the possibility of supporting the national liberation struggle in Poland! If he believes that adhering to the above tasks means that the Marxists cannot support the national liberation struggle, he must believe that in those countries where Marxists *do* support the national liberation struggle there is no need to adhere to these tasks! Here we see revealed the fact that Germain knows nothing of the Marxist concept of the national question and the Marxist strategy in the struggle for national liberation. What he clearly implies is that in a country like China the task of the revolutionary party is something other than he describes above. What other policy does he have in mind? Namely, one in which the revolutionary party does not carry on the struggle for national liberation on the basis of its *own* slogans, its *own* class organizations, etc., but *subordinates* itself to the bourgeois nationalist movement. This does not follow? This is an unfounded accusation and, therefore, a slander? We shall demonstrate otherwise.

The "liberty" which Shachtman demands for "Poland" has a very different meaning for the different social classes. The "free Poland" of General Anders and Cardinal Hlond, that is the Poland where the gentry and colonels are free to exploit the peasants, assassinate strikers, and organize pogroms. The "freedom" which the workers and landless peasants require, is the freedom to drive out the land-owning clergy, the capitalists, and the "managers" forced on them by the State; it is the freedom to manage industry and the land themselves. Petty-bourgeois politicians think that they can for the moment disregard this difference in content, remaining satisfied with the similarity in formulation of the slogan. But to drag the bourgeoisie and the proletarians, landless peasants and exploiting peasants behind one and the same banner, means, in the Twentieth Century, to fill an empty form with *bourgeois* content!

The above sentences of Germain precede immediately the previous quotation on the tasks of the revolutionary party. These latter tasks we have described as being an adequate description of the role of the revolutionary party in the national liberation struggle. But to Germain these tasks are *counterposed* to support for the liberation struggle. But what role would the revolutionary party play if it *did* support the national liberation movement according to Germain? The role of joining with General Anders and Cardinal Hlond and dragging all the conflicting classes behind the same banner, a bourgeois banner, and of refraining from fighting for the kind of "freedom" (i.e., freedom from exploitation) which the worker and peasant masses desire.

### What Is a Bolshevik Policy?

We ask, is this the role of the Fourth International in those countries, like India, where it supports the national liberation struggle? Was this the role of the Fourth International when it supported China in the war against Japan, even after China became openly a tool of American imperialism after Pearl Harbor? According to Germain, supporting the national liberation struggle in India and China requires the revolutionary party to drag the masses along behind Chiang Kai-shek and Gandhi and to deny the right of the masses to struggle for their own class interests.

If Germain still wishes to contend that this policy is falsely imputed to him, let him describe the tasks of the revolutionary party in India and China and show wherein they differ from the tasks which he outlines for Poland as being the alternative to supporting the liberation struggle. But let him not say that *he* implies no support to the Chinese and Indian General Anders and Cardinal Hlonds, but that in Poland "Shachtman" (i.e., the Workers Party) does imply such support. For this requires citing chapter and verse from our voluminous writings on the Polish question. He will not succeed, either in reading such support *out* of our writings or *into* them.

It is not enough, therefore, to say that one is opposed to Russian domination of Poland by virtue of raising the slogan of an "independent Soviet Poland." This slogan states our final aim in *every* country. The problem of Marxist *politics* is not to state the final aim (this is already stated by our program, if not by the entire content of revolutionary Marxism), but to state at every period what stage the struggle is in and *what to do next*. The Mensheviks and Bolsheviks had complete agreement on the final aim of the Russian Revolution. They adopted a common program in 1903, largely written by Plekhanov. This sufficed for both factions until 1918, a year after the revolution! But each separate stage of the revolutionary process found Mensheviks and Bolsheviks giving different and opposing political answers to the problems of the day. We can readily accept the slogan of an "independent Soviet Poland"\* put forward by Germain. Yet we would find ourselves looking across barricades at Germain in Poland today were the national liberation movement to erupt into civil war against the Russian oppressor and its Warsaw Quisling régime. To call for an "independent Soviet Poland" as the final goal and then to proclaim the need to support the Russian puppet régime today, reveals that this *central* slogan, whatever its propaganda value may be, gives no automatic political line in the actual struggle of contending forces today.

\* The use of the word "Soviet" in a popular description of a workers' state is the height of folly in this period when the word is everywhere related to Russian and Stalinist rule. This is above all true in Poland.

The political line of Germain is adduced from other considerations.

Germain, who, presumably, unlike us, prefers an "independent Soviet Poland" to one ruled by Gen. Anders and Cardinal Hlond, cannot resist falling into the same sectarian channel which has been worn deep but never wide, by successive generations of anti-Leninists on the national question. Says Germain, in the section we have quoted, "... in the last analysis the struggle of the masses for their national democratic aspirations can be victorious only through the realization of the socialist revolution." This gem of a thought has been the "crushing" argument of every sectarian on the national question since Rosa Luxemburg\* first formulated it. Why should a mind allegedly sharpened with a study of the Marxist method find it so difficult to distinguish between the struggle for national liberation and the solution of the national question? Why should it seem a contradiction to people like Germain to declare the national liberation struggle progressive and simultaneously state that the national problem cannot be resolved under capitalism?

Lenin's polemics on the national question has already filled a heavy volume. But were one to subtract his expositions on the compatibility of the national struggle with the struggle for the socialist solution of all social problems, the heavy volume would be a mighty thin brochure indeed. For the concept of the relationship between these two struggles composes practically the whole of Lenin on the national question. Yet here we hear, in the middle of the twentieth century and from the theoretical representative of the Fourth International, the old bromide about the fallacy of the national liberation struggle because socialism is the only solution. The source of the errors of Luxemburg, Gorter, Bukharin, Ryatokov, etc., on the national question in the period before the Russian Revolution can be readily understood. They could at least argue (1) that the proletarian revolution was an imminent probability and with it the solution of the national questions and (2) that the national liberation movements in countries like Poland succeeded in achieving mass support only through advanced programs of economic and social radicalism, like that of the Polish Socialist Society. Germain, however, is forced to admit that the two main camps in Poland represent the régime of oppression and the movement for national liberation respectively, neither of them on the verge of erupting as proletarian revolutionary movements. As a consequence, Germain is reduced to resting his case solely upon the well-worn misconception that since socialism is the only solution to the national question today, all struggles for solutions under capitalism are utopian and reactionary.

### The "Independent Soviet Poland"

"But Germain does more than call for an independent Soviet Poland," his partisans will protest, "Germain also demands the immediate departure of the Soviet occupation troops." Good! We heartily approve of this demand. Even more important, the vast majority of the Polish people approve of this demand. But what if the Russian troops refuse to heed our demand? If the Fourth International intends that its demand for the "departure" (what a delicate and considerate term!) be more than platonic advice, it must implement

\* The great Rosa has had the singular misfortune of having more exponents of her theoretical errors than of her genuine contributions. No mistaken view of hers has proven more popular with mechanical students of Marxism than that on the national question. The adherents of the latter even out-number the latter day disciples of "self-mobilization" and the mass strike.

it with a program of *action*. The following is suggested by Germain. He states that the Fourth International will link the slogan for "departure" with that of "fraternization between the Polish workers and the Russian soldiers." Again we say, good! Again, we heartily endorse it. But we endorse it because we comprehend the full revolutionary significance of fraternization and do not accept it as a substitute for revolutionary struggle against the imperialist oppressor. Fraternization is a weapon of the revolution with which to disorganize and disrupt the organization and discipline of the armed forces of the class enemy, with which to weaken him militarily in preparation for the final struggle. Fraternization was encouraged by the Bolsheviks on the fronts of the First World War as a means of breaking up the imperialist armies. The tactic of a national liberation movement in Western Europe during the Nazi occupation would have been that of fraternization with the German troops if the movement would have had a proletarian revolutionary approach to the struggle. The fraternization with the German troops would have had as its purpose the disruption of the German army as a means of facilitating the process of *driving out* the German occupant, not the hope of fraternally convincing them to depart. If, however, Germain sees the tactic of fraternization with the Russian troops in Poland in this light, much else that he sets forth must go by the board.

If Germain agrees that the Polish masses are to mobilize around the slogan of "drive out the Russian oppressors," he must proceed from the view that the Russians constitute *the main enemy*. In this case, however, he will be in essential agreement with us on the national question and the nature of the national liberation struggle. For the slogan of "drive out the Russians" is not merely a proletarian revolutionary slogan. It will set in motion wide masses of people from various classes on a national basis. But it is precisely because Germain understands the consequences of the slogan of "drive out the Russians" that he balks at its acceptance and takes refuge in the weasel-worded formula of calling for the "departure" of the Russians and seeks to give to fraternization a non-revolutionary, a "friendly" content. The call for the "departure" of the Russian troops within the context of the position of the Fourth is a cowardly concession to the overwhelming national sentiment in Poland. It is a crumb thrown in the direction of reality, a crumb that will be immediately taken back by the Fourth International if the Polish masses undertake any measures to hasten the "departure" of the Russian troops.

Germain seeks to give the demand for the departure of the Russian troops a reason other than the national sentiments of the Poles. He states:

It [the Fourth International] demands the departure of the occupation troops *precisely because* their presence is a brake upon the struggle for the realization of the socialist revolution in Poland, is even a brake upon the struggle for the defense of the nationalizations.

How explain the fact that the presence of the Russian troops is a brake upon the realization of the socialist revolution? Is it not precisely because the Polish masses are taken up with a national problem as the number one political problem? Is not this fact which Germain adduces only further verification of the validity of our position on the national question?

The reference of Germain to the Russian troops constituting a brake "upon the struggle for the defense of the nationalizations" just makes no sense at all. If the aim of the Rus-

sians is toward the "structural absorption" of Poland, why should the presence of the Russian troops undermine the defense of the nationalized economy which they seek to absorb into Russian economy? It may make sense if Germain were willing to explain this statement in terms of the increasing hatred of the Polish masses for the Russians being also directed against the nationalized economy and the consequent increase of the possibility that an overturn of the Russian power would see the anti-Russian feelings vented against the nationalizations introduced by the Russians. We are quite sure that Germain does not have this possibility in mind.

What Germain really does is to (1) call the Warsaw régime a bourgeois state, (2) call Russia a workers' state and (3) call upon the workers' army to liberate the soil of the bourgeois state. This is some going for a man who insists that the class criterion is basic.

### What Is the Social Character?

Germain asks us, with his usual sneer, what our attitude was toward the resistance movements in Europe during the German occupation. He writes:

Shachtman obstinately refused to answer the question: "What is the social character of the various organizations toward which it is necessary to take a position? Is it necessary, on the basis of a distinction between mass organizations led by petty-bourgeois leaders and bourgeois organizations directed by White Guards, to have a different tactic toward these different organizations?" He waxed indignant, however, when he was shown that under these conditions his slogan of "Unconditional support of the resistance movement" (in general? of all organizations?) implied by its lack of precision, a support of *bourgeois* organizations.

The impertinence which Germain displays here is matched only by his polemical dishonesty. (We will retract the characterization of Germain as being dishonest in polemic, only if Germain insists that he never read our resolution on the national resistance movements which appeared in these columns in the issues of January and February of 1943. In this case, however, Germain would be guilty of wanton irresponsibility for engaging in a polemic based on hearsay evidence of his opponent's views.)

The confines of this article do not permit us to quote our resolution of 1943 on the national question and the resistance movements. But to date no opponent who has read our material has made the accusation which Germain does. They have not made it because the resolution deals at length with the heterogeneous character of the resistance movements and the necessity to separate out the proletarian elements and organize them in their own class organizations. In the actual military operations against the Germans, there is no alternative but to shoot in the same direction as do reactionary bourgeois nationalists, while subordinating all other struggles to the main struggle against the Nazis as a step toward dominating the resistance movement and imbuing it with a revolutionary proletarian perspective.

To recognize that the national question has reappeared in Europe today does not mean that Europe is literally back in the period of 1793-1870. Only especially ignorant or especially malicious people could read this out of or into our writings. The national question reappears in an entirely different world situation and must be dealt with along entirely different strategical lines. We can illustrate this with the example of the views of Lenin and the Mensheviks on the character of the Russian Revolution. Both proceeded from the view that the Russian Revolution was a bourgeois revolution. For the Mensheviks this meant that Russia would literally live through

another 1793. The roles of classes and parties were to be assigned accordingly. Since the bourgeoisie led the 1793 revolution in France, it would have to be the same in Russia. History, according to the Mensheviks, demanded that Milyukov play the role of Robespierre. Lenin, on the contrary, saw the bourgeois revolution against the background of his time and the actual character of the Russian bourgeoisie. He sought that strategical orientation that realistically took into account the character of the revolution but just as realistically proceeded from the conditions that prevailed in the world of the twentieth century and their effect upon Russia.

Likewise, to recognize realistically the dominant position which the national question has again assumed in much of Europe does not mean to apply the strategy that was valid in Italy and Germany in the period of 1848-71 when Marx and Engels wrote about it. Why do opponents of the type of Germain then find it necessary to attribute to us the view that recognition of the national question and support to national liberation movements means a search for a Garibaldi among the Polish colonels? We proceed from the view that (1) socialism is on the order of the day, not a nascent bourgeois democ-

racy, (2) only the proletariat can lead progressive struggles to their final goal and (3) a proletariat at the head of the national liberation movement means a proletariat in power if the liberation is achieved, i.e., the solution of the national question merges with the socialist solution of the social, political and economic problem as a whole.

We repeat. Germain can only accuse us of fighting to restore the Poland of 1939 because for him national liberation consists of placing the native bourgeoisie in power. Because he does not see a need for the latter in Poland today (confining it—wrongly—to “backward” countries like India), he opposes the struggle for national liberation. Is it for this that Trotsky labored to clarify his concept of the permanent revolution against Stalinist misrepresentation? One can truly state that we, the open opponents of Trotsky on the Russian question, remain the only people who can consistently defend his great revolutionary contributions and preserve them for the new generation of revolutionists. Our defense of his views must be directed in the first place against those who so zealously yearn for his mantle.

ERNEST ERBER.

## DISCUSSION ARTICLES

# SWP Unity Line Changes Again

## A Reply to M. Stein and J. P. Cannon

Our readers are acquainted with the negotiations for the unification of the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party in accordance with our policy of publishing important party material of interest to the radical labor and political movement. From the very beginning we have informed our readers and sympathizers of the general progress of unity, and from time to time reported on its development. In a recent issue of the NEW INTERNATIONAL we published an article by Albert Goldman dealing with some fundamental aspects of unity and the perspectives of the Workers Party. This article was severely criticized by the SWP on two grounds: first, that it was published in the magazine, and secondly, because it expressed the opinion of the Workers Party that it hoped to win the unified party to its theoretical, political and organizational views. The Goldman article is being used in the SWP as an additional reason for them to reconsider the whole question of unity “politically.” That is what they are now discussing.

We are therefore reprinting two speeches by M. Stein and J. P. Cannon made at an SWP membership meeting in New York, and published in one of their internal bulletins (reprinted in a bulletin of the WP), dealing with the question of unity and another article by Albert Goldman in reply to them. This will, we believe, bring information on the state of the unity negotiations up to date.—Editor.

“On unity, our line has changed again.” So sang Cannon and Stein at a recent meeting of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. (See Bulletin of the Workers Party, Vol. II, No. 4, May 27, 1947. The bulletins of the SWP are “secret.”)

What is the present position of the leadership of the SWP on the question of unity? Cannon states in his speech that “in a political sense we are right back where we were at the convention. We have not changed our position.” That should mean that he is against unity because the convention resolution solemnly affirmed that the “SWP rejects the so-called

unity proposal of the Shachtmanites and closes all discussion of this question in the party.”

On the other hand Cannon says that “we don’t need to withdraw our unity proposal” made at the recent Plenum of the SWP and Stein chimes in with the statement that “we do not in the least retract from” the Plenum resolution in favor of unity. So we are confronted by this very clear position of clear thinkers: they hold to the Convention position which is against unity and “which we have not changed,” if we believe Cannon; they are still for the Plenum position which came out in favor of unity.

Is there, can there be a better example of double talk? And Cannon has the temerity to accuse me of being guilty of “double talk” in my recent article on unity published in the NEW INTERNATIONAL of April, 1947. Naturally he does not point to any specific example of “double talk” to prove his statement. To Cannon every straight-forward proposition must necessarily be double talk.

### The Alleged Mistake

If we believe Cannon and Stein, the change of line in favor of unity was due to a sad mistake, “a chain of comical errors,” in the words of Cannon. Now that they have discovered their mistake they must go back to their Convention position which is against unity (without giving up their Plenum position which is for unity). Their mistake, they lament, was due to their naiveté and their excessive faith in the “Shachtmanites.”

Far be it from me to deny that Cannon and Stein can make mistakes. In this particular case, however, I rise to their defense and contend that they did not make the mistake they claim to have made. Their mistake was an altogether different

one. Only those who do not know Cannon and Stein could possibly accept the idea which they now wish to put across, that their naïveté and their excessive faith in the "Shachtmanites" led them to come out for unity.

What, according to Cannon and Stein, was their mistake? They thought, so they tell us, that the leaders of the Workers Party actually "changed their attitude toward the Movement." They claim they thought we "capitulated." They assure us they meant nothing bad by the word "capitulation," but that is immaterial.

Now Cannon and Stein are people of some shrewdness and experience. Their tactics, right or wrong, are based on some facts. What, in our documents, in our conversations with them, or in our attitude could possibly lead them to conclude that we capitulated? What conditions did any one present to us which we accepted as an indication of surrender?

To give some semblance to the charge of capitulation, Cannon utilizes the fact that we finally agreed to accept whatever decisions the Extraordinary Party Conference may adopt. At first we rejected the proposition that we accept such decisions before we know what they are. In reality Cannon tries to create the impression that we "capitulated" not only on the question of accepting the decisions of the EPC but also on all political and organizational questions. It is not necessary to discuss any "capitulation" on political or organizational questions. Not even Cannon or Stein dares to say that openly. I shall confine myself to discussing the question of capitulation in so far as it has reference to the fact that we agreed to accept the decisions of the Conference in order to attend its sessions.

Here I for one must admit that I misunderstood a phrase used by the comrades in charge of convoking the Conference. In their resolution they stated that an organization must agree to be bound by the decisions of the Conference in order to have a "deliberative voice." I took that to mean what we usually mean by the phrase "a voice but no vote." These comrades, however, use the word "deliberative" to mean a voice *and* vote. Had I understood that I would not have objected so strenuously, although I still think that limiting an organization to voice only is wrong under the present circumstances when such great and important problems face the revolutionary movement and when the Conference has obviously very little authority in the working-class movement.

But the question of the meaning of "deliberative voice" was pushed completely aside very early in our discussion with Comrade Smith, the representative of the Conference Committee. We made it plain to him that we would agree to accept the decisions of the Conference only on condition that unity would result from or precede the efforts of the Conference. Not to have unity and still agree to abide by the decisions of the Conference would be an absurdity.

Smith, who is very close to Cannon, accepted; and I remember distinctly that in our first conversation with Cannon and Stein this understanding was mentioned and it was taken for granted by everybody that unity was an essential condition to our agreement to abide by the decisions of the Conference.

Do Cannon and Stein deny that there was such an understanding? Let them read the joint statement which they certainly read and re-read before signing and they will see that it is expressly stated that our obligation to accept the decisions of the Conference was undertaken with the understanding "that fusion of the two organizations into a united party was achieved."

The failure of the SWP leaders to explain this to their ranks is part of the deception, the purpose of which is to con-

vince their members that the WP "capitulated." In his speech before the Political Committee Cannon said, "In his circular letter to the WP membership he [Shachtman] refers to their disciplinary pledge to the EPC as a 'formality' and said that unless 'unity is achieved' they would regard their commitment as a 'mere scrap of paper.'" Cannon does not say so explicitly but he wants his followers to understand that our commitment to abide by the decisions of the Conference has no string attached to it whatsoever. Cannon knows better, but if by chance he really believes that he should read the joint statement.

It should be obvious that while our undertaking to abide by the decisions of the Conference depends upon the achievement of unity, unity is not at all assured by the fact that we undertake to abide by the decisions of the Conference. Unity cannot be ordered by a resolution of a higher body. It must result from the desire of both parties to unite. There is clearly no desire on the part of the SWP to achieve a good unity.

Many times have we explained that in a united party we were willing to abide by the decisions of the majority. Hence we yielded nothing when we undertook to abide by the decisions of the Conference, provided there was unity. And unity depends upon the attitude of the SWP leaders.

If there is nothing in the written documents to support the thesis that we "capitulated" to the SWP or to the "Movement," the same is true of the conversations that went on during the negotiations. The fact that the SWP leaders never cited a single statement allegedly made by any of our negotiators is proof positive that no such statement was made. Of my own knowledge I can testify to the first conversation we had with Cannon and Stein. The emphasis was laid on the probability of our being able to work together in the united party without friction. We all agreed that the last thing any one wanted was a factional fight after unity. While on our part we stressed the necessity of complete freedom of discussion as the best means to avoid a factional fight, Cannon argued that the best means of achieving freedom of discussion was to avoid factions. We agreed and we further agreed that we would refrain from discussing any political question a decision upon which was arrived at by the EPC.

#### **Cannon Discovers His Mistake**

Four incidents are supposed to have opened the eyes of Cannon and Stein and to have made them realize how mistaken they were in believing that we "capitulated." They are: (1) the introduction to the joint statement on unity, both published in *Labor Action* of March 24; (2) the answer of Max Shachtman to Martin's claim of capitulation; (3) the publication in *Labor Action* of the letters of Jack Weber and Ruth Fischer, dealing with the attack on the latter that was published in the *Militant*; (4) my article on unity published in the *NEW INTERNATIONAL* of April, 1947.

The introduction to the joint statement is a factual account of what had previously occurred on the unity question. What is wrong with that? How does a scrupulously correct statement of facts violate the spirit of the joint statement on unity? The leaders of the SWP could have pointed out any error of fact and we would have been glad to make a correction. It seems that they are somewhat sensitive about their past position on unity.

We could not possibly ignore Martin's letter to the SWP membership in which he claimed that we capitulated due to the "pressure" of the representatives of the EPC and of the Johnson minority in our party. By failing to state specifically the points upon which we allegedly capitulated the Martin

letter tries to create the impression that we capitulated on all of the political and organizational questions upon which we have our own position. To permit such an impression to go unchallenged would be criminal. Not only because we are vitally interested in the principle that leaders of a revolutionary party should under no circumstances deceive the membership of the party but also in order to avoid serious misunderstandings and conflict in the future. We want the members of the SWP to know our position on all questions and that we do not give up a position except openly and on the basis of argument. A good unity can be achieved only on the basis of an honest interpretation of the ideas of the opponent.

To the Cannonites it was not the Martin letter with its misrepresentations and distortions that raised an obstacle to unity but the Shachtman reply which corrected the misrepresentations and distortions.

An editorial in the *Militant* criticized Ruth Fischer for testifying against Eisler, the GPU agent. The editorial called Fischer an "informer" because she revealed what she knew about one of the murderers in the pay of the GPU. Both Jack Weber and Ruth Fischer wrote letters criticizing the *Militant* editorial. We published the letters because they dealt with such an important subject. One or two expressions in the Weber letter might have given offense to the Cannonites, from the point of view of "tone." We asked Comrade Weber to eliminate them; when he refused we published the letter as is. This is our method and we want the world to know it.

And what was there in my article which aroused the rage of Cannon to the point where he called it "greasy hypocrisy," without of course indicating exactly what points in it are hypocritical? In general it can be said that any honest presentation of a problem would almost necessarily appear hypocritical to Cannon. In my article there is, however, a subject about which he is very sensitive—the leader-cult in the SWP. All who know the members of the upper ranks in the SWP know that it is a calculated policy for some of them to "build up" the leaders, especially *the* leader. That of course implies that there is a necessity for building them up. Cannon is exceedingly sensitive about this subject and my mentioning it undoubtedly explains his foaming at my article which I claim is a very restrained statement of the differences between us and the Cannonites. I shall plead guilty to the charge of hypocrisy only if restraint constitutes hypocrisy.

The whole theory upon which the Cannonites rely in their criticism of our course subsequent to their turn in favor of unity is that the expectation of unity should mean a cessation of mutual criticism. We reject that concept; we are not in favor of creating a bureaucratic unity on top by agreeing to refrain from criticizing each other. We are perfectly willing to see criticism of our ideas and policies in the press of the SWP and we are prepared to answer.

The Cannonites are fond of repeating that we are sensitive and jittery to criticism and this "proves" that we are "petty-bourgeois." It would be hard to find a group of people more sensitive to criticism than the SWP leaders.

That Cannon and his lieutenants made a mistake in their maneuverings is clear. But it is not the mistake they are now so anxious to admit. It was in thinking that they could get away with a crude deception to the effect that it was the "capitulation" of the WP that brought about a change in their line on unity.

Less than three months before they came out in favor of unity, Cannon presented a resolution to the convention of the SWP, which rejected unity and forbade further discussion of

the subject. The resolution was based on a "political" analysis which proved to their satisfaction that we are everything that is bad from the point of view of revolutionary Marxism. In addition, our unity proposal was a fake. The addition was a mere afterthought. The stress was laid on our "petty-bourgeois revisionism."

Of a sudden there is a complete shift in favor of unity. My theory is that the shift was caused largely by the fact that leading comrades in other countries must have been repelled by the method used by the SWP leaders to reject unity. They had promised to conduct a "thorough discussion" of the differences but unity was rejected without any discussion unless the document wherein they decided that we are "petty-bourgeois revisionists" can be called a discussion. Some leading comrades in other parties really wanted unity and others accepted the Cannonite line of opposition but thought Cannon was too crude in his methods.

When confronted with the objections of the leading comrades Cannon acted on a hunch and decided to go all-out in favor of unity. He was of course uncertain as to what would develop but he figured he could take a chance and retreat if he had another hunch. Probably he also figured that he could possibly win over Johnson and some of his followers by his maneuver.

It was necessary to present some explanation to the membership for the sudden change of line. Cannon and his lieutenants cooked up the idea of "capitulation" of the WP. This was their mistake. For it turned out to be impossible to put this idea across. The "capitulators" refused to act the part assigned to them. Even some of Cannon's staunch followers in the ranks declared that they saw no sign of any capitulation on the part of the WP, and continued to oppose unity. Then, when the WP answered and annihilated the claim of capitulation, Cannon had another hunch and decided to go back to the Convention position.

The mistake of the SWP leaders was not that they thought that the WP capitulated but that they thought up the idea of a WP capitulation in order to deceive their members into believing that they did not change their line on unity, but that the WP surrendered.

### Why All the Shifting?

In the two years since the question of unity was raised the SWP leaders have frequently shifted their position. Is it possible to find some general theory to explain these shifts? Let us first enumerate their various positions on unity.

1. "We must deepen the split." This position was held just before the question of unity was raised.
2. Flat opposition to unity on the ground of political differences. This was the first reaction to the proposal for unity.
3. A slight turn in favor of unity leading to negotiations with the WP. This shift coincided with a letter from Natalia Trotsky in favor of unity.
4. A turn away from unity with the statement that they are not for unity nor against unity but must wait and see.
5. The period when the necessity of a "thoroughgoing discussion" of the differences between the parties became the point that was stressed. Needless to say there was no discussion whatever between the parties.
6. The final decision of the convention which passed a resolution rejecting unity and forbidding further discussion of the subject.
7. The sudden and completely unexpected shift to unity



following the intervention of some leading comrades of other countries.

8. The present position which can be characterized as being both *for* and *against* unity *in principle* but working hard to prevent unity in practice.

What a miserable record! And the persons responsible pride themselves on being principled politicians! Such a shifting of positions shows conclusively that the leadership does not act on the basis of some thought-out political principle. The real explanation is not difficult to find if one knows Cannon and his lieutenants. The first "principle" is that they do not want unity because they do not want the opposition of a large group composed of many capable comrades. They have very little composed in their ability to meet an opponent on an ideological plane. The second "principle" is their natural unwillingness to tell the real reason for their refusal to unite. Hence the necessity of maneuvering and shifting in an attempt to deceive their followers and important leading comrades everywhere. If one tactic leads to complications and difficulties they try another one. And one must not forget the element of "hunch politics" which plays a large rôle with Cannon. Faced by some difficulty he is capable of coming out for unity and seeing what develops.

It is perfectly true, as he claims, that he offered us unity immediately after his shift. Since we follow a consistent, thought-out line on the question we rejected such hasty unity. First we wanted a period of collaboration to prepare the ground for unity. And second, we wanted to discuss the problems that will face the Extraordinary Party Conference. Cannon made his offer of immediate unity *subject to the condition that there should be no discussion after unity.*

### **The Present Status of Unity**

On the basis of the change of line in favor of unity made by the SWP leaders at their last Plenum and on the basis of our conversations with them, most of us were convinced that it was highly probable that unity would be achieved. Then came two blows which shook our confidence: the Martin letter with its charge of capitulation and the refusal of the Cannonites to have joint meetings on May Day, on the pretext that the contemplated attack by the American imperialists on Russia made it necessary to emphasize the defense of Stalinist Russia at the meetings. Since we would not go along with the idea, joint meetings could not be held. With all the important issues confronting the American workers, especially with the anti-labor legislation being pushed through Congress, the Cannonites had to emphasize the defense of Stalinist Russia.

Now it is perfectly correct that were we the minority in a united party we could not insist that slogans unacceptable to us should be eliminated from meetings. But the fact remains that we are not yet in the united party and until unity is achieved or until unity is absolutely certain in the immediate future we must play an independent rôle.

Nothing would have done more for unity than successful joint May Day meetings throughout the country. The refusal of the SWP leaders to have such meetings shows how little they are interested in preparing the ground for unity.

And now we have the speeches of Cannon and Stein which in effect cancel our agreement with the SWP as embodied in the joint statement. All this does not mean, I suppose, that unity is absolutely excluded. Our agreement with the EPC stands, that is, we still undertake to abide by the decisions of the EPC if unity is achieved. If the EPC can effect a real change in the line of the SWP leadership then unity can be revived.

But we must understand that unity is not a matter of formal discipline. An unwilling party should not be ordered to unite with another party even if there are enough votes to pass such an order. There must be mutual respect and a desire for unity before it can be achieved and certainly before it can work.

The speeches of Cannon and Stein at the Political Committee meeting show how far we really are from unity. Stein tells the members of the PC that the WP "remains essentially what it had been." As if there could be any question about it! He can eliminate the word "essentially" and speak even greater truth. We did nothing to lead any one to suspect that we changed in any way. Stein seems to be of the opinion that unity is not to be had unless the WP changes. If that is his opinion he should say so and quit maneuvering.

Stein also informs us with an air of profundity that the only firm basis for unity is programmatic agreement; failing that there must be subordination of the minority to the majority. For two years we have been saying that there are serious political disagreements between us but that we think we can live together in one party in spite of them. We recognized that we were in the minority and said that we were willing to submit to the majority in action. All we ask for is an assurance that the majority will grant the minority a minimum of freedom in the party. We have gotten no place with our requests for a discussion on the real questions of unity—the questions of how to assure a fruitful unity, where there is worth-while discussion as well as action and discipline.

There are all kinds of threats in the speeches of Stein and Cannon. They have a right to make them and we have a right to ignore them. When Stein tells us that there will be no collaboration except on their terms, he merely says that there will be no collaboration unless we deem their terms acceptable. We are not afraid of terms nor are we insulted by being presented with them. On our part we too offer terms for collaboration but we do not make ultimatums; we are ready to discuss and be convinced by superior arguments.

Cannon tells us that if, after the Conference, the WP still wants unity, he will see. And he adds that he will formulate the conditions and we are at liberty to take or leave them. We are happy at least that he permits us to take or leave them. That is really a wonderful concession on his part and we shall certainly exercise that right. And we shall also exercise the right to formulate conditions of our own.

The leader of the SWP seems to be of the opinion that unity means an obligation on our part to accept his ideas about politics and his ideas of the party. He seems to be indignant when he says that Goldman thinks "by coming into the SWP they will change the character of the party." I don't think that I used that expression but we certainly hope to be able to change the character of the party and we shall try to do so by winning a majority for our ideas. We want a Bolshevik party and not a Zinovievist or semi-Stalinist party.

If Cannon and Stein want a homogeneous party, as they proudly assert (another name for a monolithic party), they surely cannot have it with us in that party. They must make up their minds exactly as to what they want and stop playing around with hunches.

On our part we have said and still say: we want unity and we want to make a Bolshevik party out of the united party. This is the antithesis of a monolithic party. It is a party where free discussion prevails at all times and where the minority submits to the discipline of the majority in action.

ALBERT GOLDMAN.

## Speech by M. Stein

We must now review the unity proposal as it was presented to the Plenum in the light of what has transpired since that time. This applies especially to the motivation we originally gave for the unity proposal. Our motivation at the Plenum, and prior to the Plenum in the Martin letter, was based on the premise that Shachtman and the WP had changed their attitude toward the Movement.

Once we accepted this premise, we concluded that we must give the Shachtmanites every possible chance to reintegrate themselves in the movement. Even when we spoke of their "capitulation," we interpreted this in the best sense, that is, as a turn toward the Movement from which they split seven years ago. When they decided to accept the terms for participation in the Extraordinary Party Convention we interpreted this as an important step in our direction and were prepared to greet this development and extend to them a helping hand. That was the motivation for the Plenum resolution.

Since then the Shachtmanites have done their best to convince us that we acted on the basis of a misunderstanding. We judged the WP leaders and their attitude toward unity by their signed statement and by impressions gained in conversations or reported conversations. This served to obscure our knowledge of these men and their politics, based on long experience. We then read into their statement of February 10 a change of line, which was not there in reality.

We must now purge ourselves, so to speak, of the illusion we had about the Shachtmanites changing for the better. Such illusions can lead only to bitter disillusionment when the truth becomes known, as it has become known. There is a lot of disillusionment in the party today with the unity proposal, and a strong opposition is rising up against it. There is a realization that the motivation we gave for the unity proposal has not been proved correct. Everything the WP has done since the appearance of the joint public statement has served to sober up the party on this score.

Had we broached the question of unity with the WP correctly, we would have oriented ourselves upon the following factors: The failure of the WP to emerge as a viable force after seven years of struggle against us as party against party; the isolation of the WP, its stagnation, its lack of perspective, and the internal conflict of irreconcilable tendencies within it. Then we would have posed the question as to whether this situation warranted on our part an offer of unity to the WP.

They tried a unity maneuver against us which lasted for some time but which came to smash against the firmness of our party. They tried this through the disloyal minority inside our own party and the fraudulent "unity" campaign in their public press. Their object was to create either a split in our party or to effect a "unification" which would lead to a bitter factional fight and a bigger split. There was not a trace of good faith in their approach to the question. This is equally true, it is now clear, of their present attitude to the new unity proposal.

Once their original "unity" maneuver was

smashed, the question was posed whether or not it is advantageous for us to accept unity with them, with the object of removing them as a rival party and in this way facilitating the building of the revolutionary party. Had we posed the question in this way, I am not sure what the answer of the Plenum would have been. But I know that I for one would have favored such a move. I would not of course have proposed concentrating the party's activities on such a unity effort. In reality, there would be no need for it, since we can easily take it in our stride.

But it is profitless now to speculate on this aspect of the question. The task now is to reorient ourselves along practical and political lines. We must acknowledge openly before the party that we made a mistake in attributing to the WP a political change in the direction of the Movement which they did not really make. The Shachtmanites remain Shachtmanites. The WP remains essentially what it had been. Shachtman's demagogic agitation about the Martin letter, the hostility with which he met it, only serves to demonstrate this all the clearer. Shachtman is now out to demonstrate that he did not "capitulate," that he remains true to his revisionist program, to his Menshevik concept of an all-inclusive party. If anything, he has revealed himself as in no way different from the right-wing in his party. As far as I am able to judge, he is now heading the right wing.

After we acknowledge our mistaken appraisal, we should orient the party along the lines of a correct approach to the question of unity. What do I mean specifically? Proceeding from the general proposition that we are committed to unity by the Plenum resolution and that we do not in the least retract from it, we proceed to present this problem of unity to the party and the outside world as it really stacks up. We have to purge the whole unity proposition of all false concepts and illusions.

First, we have to go back to the split of 1940. That split revealed a revolt of the petty-bourgeois opposition inside the SWP against our program and against our organization methods. The petty-bourgeois minority could not submit to the discipline of the proletarian majority of the party. That was the meaning of the split. We must recapitulate this once more.

Then followed the seven years war of party against party. During that time the WP tried to demonstrate that, once they had liberated themselves from what they called the "conservative bureaucracy of the Cannon clique in the SWP," they would build a party by their own "dynamic" methods. What have they accomplished? They ended up with a smaller group than they started with. Even though they started out with forces numerically almost equal to ours, they quickly demonstrated that they could not build a party either with their politics or organization methods, or with their "dynamism."

Then they, together with Goldman and Morrow, made a "unity" proposal. This proposal was falsely motivated from the beginning. They said that once we had relegated the defense of the Soviet Union to the background, a unity proposal became realistic. We have never answered this point publicly but we should do it now. This was a

completely false premise from the beginning. The defense of the Soviet Union was placed in the background by objective circumstances and can be placed in the foreground by other objective circumstances. Our alleged change of position on the Russian question is no basis for unification of the two parties. This is a false motivation, and we must say so.

We posed the question correctly two years ago. We said that the only firm basis for unification is political agreement, and failing that, the subordination of the minority to the majority. They have advanced the theory that through collaboration of the two parties in practical day to day work the ability of the members to get along with each other will be tested, and that this will establish a firm basis for lasting unity. This is another false concept we must reject.

The only firm basis for unity is programmatic agreement, and not the personal compatibility or incompatibility of individuals with each other. The Bolshevik party is based on program; agreement on program is the cement that holds it together. Failing that, there must be subordination of the minority to the majority; not formal, hypocritical subordination, but the real thing in the Bolshevik meaning of party discipline. Because of the peculiar nature of this proposed unification, there must be all the more emphasis on this point.

We must open up a clarifying discussion along these lines. We must also discuss their Menshevik concept of the all-inclusive party and counterpose to it our own concept of a party. We are for the homogeneous party, a party based on one—and only one—program. Our unity resolution is not meant as a concession to the concept of the all-inclusive party, as they have mistakenly represented it, but as a party of our irreconcilable struggle against it. Our unity proposal does not signify the slightest conciliation toward Shachtmanism on the question of organization, or on any other question.

Their jitteriness and nervousness; the present campaign they have undertaken to solidify their ranks—that is, to harden them for a faction fight in the event of unification; the polemical articles they write in such hostile tones; the open forums and classes they hold against our views—indicate that they are afraid of the prospect of living in a proletarian party and subordinating themselves to the proletarian majority of the party. We must explain that too.

They are now engaged in an "enlightenment" campaign to poison and prejudice their members against us. While they are speaking of collaboration to wipe out hostility, they are actually creating a wall of hostility between the membership of the WP and ourselves. They are attempting to poison their membership against our political line, our organizational concepts and our leadership.

We must expose the whole fraud that is part and parcel of Shachtman's approach to unity, while we purge ourselves of illusions on this question. What will we accomplish by this? I don't attempt to predict the end result. But the very least we can do is speak the truth, to speak it boldly and pose the question as it really presents itself. We will thus arm our own party, and that is the most important thing. If, after a period of

this kind of clarification, the WP should decide that they still wish to go through with the unification, there will be no illusions or misunderstandings, either on their part or ours, as to the basis on which this unification is taking place.

We will thus be writing down in advance the precise terms of the unification and preparing our party to carry out these terms to the letter. It is possible that the right-wing in the party when confronted with the realization of what unification with us really means, may recoil from it. If they do, that is their business. In any case, if they do so, that will only demonstrate and confirm their fear of living in a proletarian party which imposes a real discipline on its opportunist minority.

On the question of collaboration: We must take just as firm an attitude on this question. We will collaborate, but only on our basis, i.e., wherever they are willing to accept our line. Between now and a possible unification we must have the same kind of approach as if they were already inside the party. The SWP is the party because we have the majority. The WP acknowledges this, and this should be the basis for collaboration.

Our members should not hesitate to discuss this whole question with the WP members, especially their newer people. If these are interested in a genuine unification they must start out by a reexamination of their whole course, the split of 1940 and the seven years since then. The WP leadership is not doing this and we should do it for them. If we do this it will also educate the new members in our own party.

## Speech by J. P. Cannon

I am in agreement with the remarks of Stein and wish only to emphasize a few points. It isn't very pleasant to have to admit a mistake. It is doubly unpleasant to have to admit a mistake that helped to mislead others, especially the Plenum of the National Committee. That, however, is the rather disagreeable position we find ourselves in, myself in particular.

Reviewing the whole fight from the beginning more than seven years ago, I think we were fundamentally correct all the way through, up to and including the last party convention, in our fight against the Shachtmanites, in principle as well as in our strategy and tactics. The line was absolutely right. And none of us had the slightest idea of changing the line that we had carried through, including the line of the convention.

I consider what happened since the convention as a chain of comical errors, which I am sure we can correct without damage to our cause. First came the unexpected decision of the WP to accept the conditions laid down by the Movement for participation in the EPC. We interpreted this action of theirs as a turn in the direction of the Movement, as a capitulation to its terms which they had previously rejected. That is the way we accepted it. That was the basis of our decision at the Plenum. And when in the letter of Martin, which was sent out with the agreement of other comrades, we spoke of their capitulation, we didn't do it

in a derogatory sense, but in an entirely different one.

As we saw it, they had come to the turning point where they would have to go one way or the other, and at the last moment they made a turn to the Movement, accepted its conditions and thereby capitulated to it. And we decided to give them credit for that move, to give them a helping hand. That was the basis of our recommendations to the Plenum, where the unity resolution was adopted.

By that we demonstrated that we are communist politicians and not gang-fighters. In spite of all that had happened, all the personal animosity, all the slander, etc.—at the moment they took a political turn in the direction of the Movement we were prepared to give them a helping hand, to open the door for them to come into the party and to give them liberal terms. The second thing we demonstrated—which I am not so proud of—is that after all our experience with these people, we showed a certain naivete. It is somewhat embarrassing to be obliged to acknowledge that, in this case at least, experience did not bring wisdom; that good nature and good will obscured political judgment. That is a very sticky feeling. I really didn't think that even the Shachtmanites would be stupid enough to think they could play a maneuverist double-game with the EPC.

Everybody at the Plenum had plenty of ground for animosities against these people, whose mistakes have often amounted to crimes against the Movement. But the moment the Plenum members saw—or rather, thought they saw—that the Shachtmanites were turning toward the Movement, they were willing to have them come into the party and give them good terms. Why, we even gave them better terms than those they agreed to in their meetings with Smith. We gave them credit in advance for carrying out their decision in good faith, and offered to expedite the unity even before the EPC, provided the discussion was finished beforehand.

We followed that up with our meetings with them and the Joint Statement on unity, in which we rounded a few corners to make it easier for them, without, however, violating the instructions of the Plenum. We agreed to present their return to the party in public as a merger of the two organizations, for example, accepting their verbal declarations that they know this means their coming into the SWP, etc.

Then things began to happen. First through an inadvertance, when the Martin letter to the NC members came into their hands. Long experience has taught me that inadvertences never change a fundamental course—but they often show its real direction. The Martin letter was utilized by them to reveal what their real purposes are, and this has served a useful purpose for us.

Shachtman has made it perfectly clear, in his letter to the membership of the WP and in subsequent actions, that there was a comical misunderstanding on both sides. As he represents the matter, they understood that we had changed our position; that we had sharply reversed the line of the convention, and under the pressure of the Movement had changed our whole approach to the question and accepted their formula for

the unification. In other words, that it was we who had "capitulated."

Shachtman makes it clear that our interpretation of their action in sending the letter to Smith was a misunderstanding on our part, that they meant no capitulation to the Movement. When they deny heatedly, not to say hysterically, that they have "capitulated"—as though they consider it dishonorable to bow to the rules and discipline of the Movement—they only reveal that they haven't changed a bit, that they stand exactly where they were before.

The series of events which followed are known to you. At the time they were signing the Joint Agreement that they wouldn't take Weber into their party, they had Weber's article against us in their hands and were preparing to publish it in *Labor Action* and solidarize themselves with him—without even notifying us, without mentioning the matter in the Joint Committee. That revealing incident only shows their disposition to abide by the form of an agreement while violating it in spirit and essence. This way of acting is just a little bit too clever to be clever. We will have to bear it in mind and rely more on guarantees than promises in the future.

As you know, we did not publish our Plenum resolution. This was done deliberately, as we explained to them, to give them an opportunity to present the new unity agreement to the public in a Joint Statement with us. We observed the spirit of the agreement by publishing the Joint Statement without comment. They, however, published it with an introduction attempting to justify their "unity" maneuvers in the past. By that they reopened the whole question of the past for discussion. There were two or three other incidents of the same kind. The publication of the Ruth Fischer letter, without notification or consultation, was a crass violation of all normal procedures when two parties are seriously meeting in negotiation for a unification and loyally cooperating to bring it about.

The campaign now raging in the WP against Johnson—who sincerely stands for unity—is conducted in a real Burnhamite spirit. The obvious purpose of their campaign against Johnson is to discredit those who take unity seriously and to solidify and harden their people to come into our party fighting, with the perspective of another split. That is their idea. Outside of the single thing we noted—their acceptance of the conditions of the Movement, which we took too seriously at face value—there is nothing whatever to show any change of attitude on their part, either politically or organizationally. And even that letter has since been repudiated in essence by Shachtman. In his circular letter to the WP membership he refers to their disciplinary pledge to the EPC as a "formality" and said that unless "unity is achieved," they would regard their commitment "as a mere scrap of paper."

So, in a political sense we are right back where we were at the time of the convention. We have not changed our position. They have not changed. Goldman writes an article in the latest issue of their magazine with his usual compound of misrepresentation, greasy hypocrisy and double-talk designed to trick and trap the unwary. As for

"unity" he blandly explains that by coming into the SWP they will change the character of our party. He doesn't know how wrong he is. They continue all the old denunciations of our party in the old tone. Their object, obviously, is to poison and harden their people to formally accept the conditions of discipline until they get set in the SWP. Then would follow the next stage: the fight to break up the party as we have built it, and convert it into a Shachtmanite party, a windbag's paradise, with permanent discussion, driving out the workers and diverting us from our basic task of recruiting new workers and training them for the Bolshevik struggle against capitalism.

Such is the reality from which we must proceed. I agree with Stein that we should begin a political offensive against the Shachtmanites within the formula of the unity proposal. We don't need to withdraw our unity proposal. What we need to do is interpret it and apply it in the light of the new developments. We are still willing for them to come in and accept our line. But we must explain what we mean by that, so that there can be no more misunderstandings on either side. We do not withdraw our unity

resolution, but just simply slow the tempo of its application. We should forget about this good-will offer we made to them of a quick unification to do them a favor. Take our time. The members are discussing it. Let them take their time and discuss it thoroughly. Discuss it in the press.

I, personally, am quite sure now that there can be no unification before the Extraordinary Party Convention. Our Plenum resolution distinctly specified that their disciplinary obligation to the EPC must be "carried out in good faith." Let us wait and see what they do with the "scrap of paper" they signed. After that, if they still want unification—I, personally, am pretty sure they will revolt against the decisions of the Extraordinary Party Convention despite their signed pledge—we should have a special convention to decide the question. No more joint statements; from now on decisions to be made by our conventions and plenums, precisely formulated and closing the door on any double interpretations, and telling them: take it or leave it. That is the form, I think, for the further developments on the unification proposal.

We have the inestimable advantage of a

homogeneous party which has been built and unified in struggle. We have a leadership united in its entirety on the fundamental questions, and in its attitude toward Shachtmanism from a political point of view. So we don't need to have any great fears about big differences of opinion. What differences of opinion we had prior to the Plenum were not fundamental at all. It was the question of how best we were going to serve our program. These differences are not like those we had with Goldman and Morrow. That is why the opposition to the unity in the first place didn't impress us as a hostile opposition. Nothing more was involved than the question of whether our method or theirs was best calculated to serve the program to which we all subscribe. I don't doubt that even these tactical differences will easily be eliminated in the further course of developments—if we avoid any more unnecessary "misunderstandings" and dispense with excessive good nature in scrutinizing any more "scraps of paper" which the Shachtmanites may sign.

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# Psychoanalysis and Literature

## A Discussion of "Writers and Madness"

Of late, the critical trend in literature has taken a turn toward a self-avowed psycho-analytic approach. The results of this trend have usually been long-winded essays on the creative impulse per se. Absent from consideration or merely referred to in broad outline to substantiate an a priori premise has been the product of that creative impulse, the creation.\* Also, implicit in these discussions one may find a disparagement of serious literature as being an offshoot of a basically neurotic and therefore irrational impulse. This in turn has done a great deal to bolster the sterile intellectual's belief that all artistic creation is a form of neurosis, and has helped compensate him for his lack of fertility.

In an article, "Writers and Madness," printed in the *Partisan Review*, Jan.-Feb., 1947, William Barrett speculates on what constitutes the literary creative process. A brief analysis of this article

\*This may suggest to the reader a parallel with the so-called Marxist criticism that ran wild in the '30's and still "functions" today in a lesser degree. Then, the "reviewer," "critic," "commentator" unleashed a barrage of home-made Marxism that did away with everything in reach, including whatever book was in review. Further similarity is evident when one realizes how poorly equipped critically the professed Marxists were and how feeble are the attempts of some at coordinating psycho-analysis and literature today.

would be appropriate for it is one of many representative of this "analytic" tendency. However, it should be noted that the entire tone of what Barrett has to say is one of defensive demurity, echoed in fine phrases that are almost completely empty of clear thinking and sound conclusions. Barrett begins by posing the question: "Is my title ["Writers and Madness"] extreme?" In answering, he states that he is dealing with the same subject that has been discussed under the titles "Art and Neurosis," "Art and Anxiety," but chose the "ancient and more extreme term . . . to maintain continuity with all the older instances." Characterizing the modern writer\*\* as "that estranged neurotic," he finds that "if one characteristic of neurosis is always a displacement somewhere, then perhaps the test of a writer's achievement may be precisely the extent and richness of displacement he is able to effect." (Italics mine.)

As examples, direct or indirect, of the proximity of artistic greatness and "madness," he introduces the names of Swift, Joyce, Kafka and sundry others. After sparring cryptically with Swift's ego and getting exactly nowhere, he waxes meta-

\*\*Barrett draws no distinction between the realist and the experimentalist of the Symbolist and Fanatist schools.

phorical and sings that "the great writer is the victorious suitor who has captured a beautiful bride in an incomparable marriage [!]." Not satisfied with this, he injects, in a long footnote, a statement of his "main point," which is, that the literary process "does, in a certain way [what way?], imitate the neurotic process and does exploit neurotic material." In the same footnote Joyce is explained as one who "moves us . . . by the powerful charge he is able to lay on the most banal episode." (Italics in original.)

At another point, he deems as "un-guarded from an analytic point of view" the notion which implies that the "writer attains [or seeks to attain] through the work, health and wholeness [??] in his life too." (My italics.) To disprove this, he cites a counter-example from the realm of painting. Von Gogh after writing to his brother Theo that the country was "healthful and strengthening" committed suicide. Here we have conclusive proof that "the triumph of the ego . . . is in the work and not life." The only example provided, however, is one of Barrett's own shoddy thinking and irrelevance. Van Gogh also wrote before his death: "I am in a mood of nearly too great calmness. . . . Well, my own work, I am risking my life for it and my reason

has half-foundered."† Further, while painting, as one of the arts, is allied with writing, it is commonplace to point out that it differs widely in its mode of creation. Heedless of this, Barrett crosses frames of reference for the sake of one untenable "counter-example."

### What Freud Wrote

Throughout the article Barrett mentions Freud with whom he says he disagrees on a number of points. This adds to the prestige of the article. It adds little else. The mere mentioning of Freud's name and a distortion of his work contribute nothing to our understanding.

In his autobiography, Freud stated, apropos of psycho-analysis and literature: "The lay man may perhaps expect too much from analysis in this respect, for it must be admitted that it throws no light upon the two problems which probably interest him. It can do nothing towards elucidating the nature of the artistic gift nor can it explain the means by which the artist works. . . . What psycho-analysis was able to do was to take the interrelation between the impression of the artist's life, his chance experience and his works, and from them to construct his constitution and the impulses at work in it—that is to say that part of which he shared with all men."

In *Totem and Taboo* Freud also gave us an insight into the arts which is especially pertinent here. He wrote: "In one way the neuroses show a striking and far-reaching correspondence with the great social productions of art . . . while again they seem like distortions of them. We may say that hysteria is a caricature of an artistic creation, a compulsion neurosis, a caricature of a religion, and a paranoid delusion a caricature of a philosophic system." (My italics.) While Barrett all too readily accepts this correspondence between art and neurosis (and neglects their equivocal relationship), he sees the philosopher as free from a "fatal tendency toward aberration." The philosopher deals with concepts which he may elaborate upon and revise at will like, say, a child playing with blocks. For this reason he accords him a clean bill of mental health. But the writer "must

make such discoveries as to secure the completeness of release necessary to achieve authenticity. If he repeats what is already discovered he has no chance of making it *his*." (Italics in original.) And to find his authenticity, the writer's unconscious that is released "must be at deeper and deeper levels."

It is clear that "authenticity" is used in this sense merely as a shabby substitute for "originality." Originality is that relative something that has obsessed the less intelligent critics of our time and which Barrett implies, more or less, when he speaks smugly of the writer "capable of satisfying our severe demands." As if the writer really cared! All that one can ask of the writer is that he be serious and truthful. For some writers this is a very "severe demand." For some critics it is next to impossible. But no, the writer must be "authentic." By being authentic he must be original and not "imitate" any of his predecessors. If he does, all that he has written has been in vain. For it is not *his*. How can it be *his*? Only if he "imitates" the neurotic process "in a certain way" and somehow salvages the "very world of experience." But this is simpler than it sounds. He can write with the same compulsive stupidity that Barrett displays and solve his problem.

In a lecture on "Psychology and Literature," C. G. Jung (who nevertheless has flagrantly distorted Freud in the name of psychology and Jung) correctly maintained that every great work of art is objective and impersonal. Of the writer he said: "He may go the way of a Philistine, good citizen, a neurotic, a fool or a criminal. His personal career may be inevitable and interesting, but . . .

we can only understand him in his capacity of artist by looking at his creative achievement." A facile evasion of this responsibility is noticeable in Barrett's pronouncement that "Joyce did not write *Finnegans Wake* out of a free decision taken in the void, but because his experience of life and Western culture was what it was, and he had to write that book if he was to write anything." (My italics.)

All this has nothing to do with the contents of Joyce's masterpiece. A glance at this work will tell us why, instead of elucidating on the work itself, critics dabble in abstractions concerning free will or the lack of it, neuroses, and ex post facto nonsense. The time has come for critics, if they are serious, to drop their guises and come out to meet art face to face. There have been too many critical abortions perpetrated in the name of science, Freud, Marx and who knows what else. The time has come for critics to cast aside all pompous pretenses. Critical tendencies such as the one set forth in *Partisan Review* and other "modern" periodicals must be foregone. For such tendencies only confuse and divert the young artist from his efforts to "find himself." They have nothing to offer but petty insinuations none of which are borne out by what evidence is presented.

In conclusion, it would be well to remember what Freud wrote in *An Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy*: "For psycho-analysis is not an impartial scientific investigation, but a therapeutic measure. *Its essence is not to prove anything but merely to alter something.*" (My italics.) ARTHUR A. DIENER.

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

# From Two Old Masters

**LITERATURE AND ART. Selections from the Writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. International Publishers. \$2.25. 154 pp.**

This book should be read by three groups of readers: those interested in Marxism; those interested in literature and art; and finally those interested in Marxism and literature and art.

Most of the selections are available elsewhere in English translation, but it is very useful to have this compilation, especially since there is no Stalinist introduction to besmirch it. It contains selected passages from books, unpublished fragments and letters

which reflect the cultural attitudes of Marx and Engels. It is divided into four sections:

*The Origin and Development of Art*, which contains the most familiar material: the famous discussions of the relationship of art to society, the "superstructure" of ideology to the social "base." There are selections from *The German Ideology*, a few fragments and the famous letters of Engels to Schmidt and Starkenberg in which he repudiates mechanistic interpretations of historical materialism.

*Art in Capitalist Society*, which contains selections on the specific effects of capitalist society on the practice of art. There is an

†This was a calmness that usually preceded his epileptic attacks. Dostoevsky was also a victim of epilepsy. He is often brought forward as "proof" of the existence of an abnormal psychology in the great literary artist. (See the introduction to *The Short Stories of Dostoevsky*, Dial Press, New York. This introduction was written by William Phillips, an editor of *Partisan Review*. For a review of this book and a refutation of Mr. Phillips' assertions by James T. Farrell, I refer the reader to *The New York Times Book Review*, December 29, 1946.)

obscure polemical section from Marx's *Theorien Ueber den Mehrwert* and an extraordinarily brilliant fragment by Marx on the dehumanizing effects of money.

*Realism in Art*, mostly drawn from letters by Engels discussing his conceptions of realism in art. To this reviewer, this section is the shakiest in the book; many of Engels' observations are very keen but others show a spirit not too sensitive to the purposes and nature of art (as for instance, his definition of realism as "the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances.")

*Literary History*, which analyzes cultural periods and individual writers, among them Goethe, Heine, Shelley and Byron, Thomas Hood, Carlyle, Chateaubriand and Balzac. This section contains the most material previously unpublished in English and is by far the liveliest and most controversial.

I do not wish in this brief notice to start juggling the old chestnuts about Marxism and art, propaganda and art, etc., which have contributed so much to the dreariness of recent years. I wish only to note a few reactions to the book which will, I hope, stimulate others to read it.

Marx and Engels did not write a comprehensive work of esthetics; they dealt with the subject only in passing. Marx did have in mind a book on Balzac, whom he greatly admired for his depiction of 19th century French social types; but even if that book had been written, it would probably have been an unpretentious study of certain social implications of Balzac's novel, and not a "Marxist analysis" of Balzac as a writer. Marx and Engels developed a method of *historical analysis*, but there is no indication that they considered it also a method of literary criticism or a substitute for literary criticism. They were tempted occasionally to apply their method to literary history, but they nowhere indicate in these writings that they believed literature to be *only* an aspect of history.

These selections from Marx and Engels contain statements which if made by latter-day Marxists would, at least until a few years ago, have been considered downright heretical, as for instance one by Marx: "It is well known that certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and skeleton structure of its organization. Witness the example of the Greeks..."

Now it is true that if anyone so desired he could go through this volume and find some pretty crude statements in which the authors, especially Engels, judge literary works by political standards. But this would be a misleading procedure for at least three reasons:

1) During the early years of Marx's and Engels' intellectual development, their historical method was itself often crude and still fuzzy with Hegelian verbiage; many of the selections are taken from this period and it is only natural that its crudity should overflow into literary judgment.

2) While in their published writings Marx and Engels confine themselves usually to discussions of cultural history and origin, they reserve most of their literary *judgments* for private letters and usually hastily written "off the cuff." Thus there are

some harsh statements by Marx in a letter on Heine; yet it is common knowledge that he considered Heine the greatest German poet of his time. *Marx was able to distinguish between categories of discourse.*

3) Some of the crudities are merely personal lapses of taste, usually those of Engels. By comparison with Marx, Engels' literary writings seem almost pedestrian. (Yet in fairness to Engels it should be noted that he writes that "The writer is not obliged to intrude on the reader the future historical solutions of the social conflicts pictured.") Marx indulges more frequently in strictly literary judgments; he had a much finer esthetic sensibility than Engels and his remarks show a strong interest in and love for literature as sheer literature, that is, what James T. Farrell calls "the refreshment value" of a work of art. (*A Note on Literary Criticism.*)

Yet, though there were lapses, one can only marvel that men who spent their lives in political conflict still had such fine and certain taste. They did not allow their newly developed and explosively powerful method of historical analysis to obliterate their feeling for the cultural tradition of the past. In Aeschylus, Shakespeare and Goethe, his favorite authors, Marx did not seek "solutions"; nor did he analyze them in terms of their "social context." That was left for others.

It is clear from these writings that the Marxist historical method contributes a great deal to an understanding of the origins and development of a cultural tradition or a work of art—the more so, Engels tells us, "the longer the period considered and the wider the field dealt with." That is, it helps in the intellectual placement of literary material antecedent to its literary judgment in somewhat the same way that Freudianism does. But I think all the internal evidence of this book substantiates

Edmund Wilson when he writes in his essay, *Marxism and Literature*, that "Marxism by itself can tell us nothing whatever about the goodness or badness of a work of art... A man may be an excellent Marxist but if he lacks imagination and taste he will be unable to make the choice between a good and an inferior book..."

But to return to the book. There are some things in it that are quite extraordinary. I have mentioned already the selection called by the editor "The All-Revolutionizing Power of Money." Though draped in Hegelian linguistic paradoxes, this fragment, based on selections from Goethe and Shakespeare, is a remarkable *tour de force* on the dehumanizing role of money in modern life.

There are some things with which the modern reader is bound to disagree—as for instance, I think, Marx's judgment that the reason we are attracted to Greek culture is that Greece represents the childhood of humanity and the "Greeks were normal children." That seems to this reviewer a gross over-simplification.

But the essential virtue of Marx's and almost always Engels' writings on literature is that they are aware of the existence of culture as an activity of human beings *which is its own sanction*—and which, though subject to and part of historical development, still possesses value not reducible to that relationship. For though their historical method necessarily involves reduction of complex phenomena of conceptually ordered sequences—as must any historical method—they are equally aware that this very same method may be fatal for an analysis of art. They did not establish an esthetics, they didn't claim to, and they didn't relieve their followers of the obligation of knowledge and taste. They did, however, change man's vision of this world—which was enough.

IRVING HOWE.

## CORRESPONDENCE

# IKD and the Polish Question

*(The following is a letter received from a representative of the IKD, whose views on the Polish question are clearly evident by the position it states. We are publishing this letter not only, or primarily, because we are in agreement with its general point of view, but also because it is our policy to print such discussion material within the limits of our technical resources whether we necessarily agree with the point of view or not. In the present case, we regard the material as a contribution to the world-wide discussion by the revolutionary socialists on the most important questions of the day.—Editors)*

To the New International:

There is no getting away from the fact that the very best revolutionary intentions have never yet prevented the most shameful capitulations to reaction. Politics, like every

other process, has a logic, and the most innocent-looking path can lead inexorably to the lower depths. For this reason it is not the affair of the political analyst to deal with subjective motives—the road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

The foregoing paragraph is a necessary introduction to a frank commentary upon the resolution "The Situation in Poland" adopted by the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, for the position taken in this resolution represents a full-fledged capitulation to Stalinist imperialism.

But capitulatory though it may be, the position of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International is a thoroughly consistent one. Having said A, B and C, this leadership of the Fourth International does not hesitate to recite the rest of the alphabet. Having pronounced

Russia a "workers' state" and therefrom analyzed its role in Eastern Europe as "progressive" and "revolutionary" (all qualifications aside) it now has taken the next inevitable step and declared any anti-Russian opposition in these countries that is not clearly labelled "Trotskyist" as "counter-revolutionary." Without offering one particle of evidence, and without so much as a single qualification, the IEC declares the entire Polish underground movement against Stalinism to be reactionary and undeserving of the slightest revolutionary support. With this declaration it has abandoned all possibility of influencing political developments in Poland and thrown itself into the arms of Stalinism.

The resolution proceeds by *assuming*, not proving, that the underground in its majority (in fact in its entirety) is "in the service of the bourgeoisie and imperialists." Like the Stalinists, it amalgamates the scattered and unimportant fascist formations with the genuine mass underground movement into which all oppositional workers and peasants are driven by the repression. It mentions the NEW INTERNATIONAL editorial giving critical support to the national movement, but it does not refute or even mention the series of articles in *Labor Action* by A. Rudzienski, articles that demonstrated irrefutably that the opposition to the Warsaw regime is for the most part of a progressive proletarian and peasant character. It calls this underground "pogromist" and ignores the mountain of facts that have piled up to prove that responsibility for the wave of anti-Semitism in Poland lies first and foremost with the Stalinists. In other words, it whitewashes the Quisling regime with one hand and tars the opposition with the other.

How do the authors of the resolution differentiate themselves from the Stalinists? By showing that they are "better" and more efficient! A slander? Then listen: "It (the Fourth International) will try (!) to show the proletariat that the autonomous revolutionary struggle of the masses against reaction wins much more decisive successes, and at infinitely less costs than the Stalinist police action against it!" In other words, we recommend ourselves as able to accomplish the revolution more efficiently than the GPU! We do not object, you understand, to the Stalinist "police action" on the grounds that it is reactionary and destroys the masses' liberties—it is just too "costly." The main center of reaction is not in the Warsaw regime itself. Far from it, this regime is credited by the IEC with struggling against reaction! The IEC's main concern is that Stalinism may canalize "to its own profit the anti-fascist feeling of the masses"—this at a time when the only totalitarian fascist-like force oppressing the Polish masses is precisely Stalinism itself.

And so the resolution proceeds, declaring that it is in the *forefront* (the resolution's emphasis) of the struggle against the underground, but nowhere putting itself in the forefront (even without emphasis) of the struggle against the Stalinist government. Thus despite all qualifications and conditions, the IEC appears as defender and apologist of a regime which rivals the most reactionary in Polish history. Instead of rousing the Polish population to rise up in

armed struggle against Russian imperialism and its Warsaw quislings, the IEC directs its principal blows at the revolutionary underground that opposes the government. It has already announced that in a showdown it will be on the "Red army's" side of the barricade!

With this capitulationist line, the IEC's influence in Poland is guaranteed to fluctuate around zero. It is not over-optimism, I

think, that every Polish revolutionist with the most elemental political intelligence will know on which side to place himself. It will not be on the side of the unspeakable Stalinist counter-revolution. It will be alongside and in the forefront of the long-suffering Polish people who are striving to settle accounts with the most vicious police dictatorship in all history.

DAVE JEFFRIES.

## A Reply to a False Charge

Dear Editor:

I am in complete agreement with your correct reply to the criticism, or more accurately speaking, the misunderstanding displayed by Comrade Findley toward my article on anti-Semitism in Poland. Although your reply exhausted the matter, I desire to contribute some points of clarification which can help in the understanding of this thorny and bloody problem. Comrade Findley reproaches me for my "generalizations," "simplifications," and "distortions" of the anti-Semitic problem in Poland. I, as well as your readers, would welcome proof demonstrating the accuracy of his easily made and more than abundant charges.

The strongest accusation made against me by Comrade Findley is that I underestimate the anti-Semitism of the Polish petty-bourgeoisie and even the Polish proletariat. It seems to me that my entire work demonstrated the growth of this anti-Semitism as a historic process among the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie of Poland. The greater part of my work dealt with pre-Stalinist anti-Semitism. Any desire on my part to underestimate, hide or defend anti-Semitism would be a grave disservice to the Socialist cause. My intention was to uncover, analyze and condemn it, but not in the form of a moral, ecclesiastic and idealistic anathema, but in a scientific and materialistic form, laying bare its roots and historic development. Unfortunately, many Marxists are more in love with moral preachments than with the surgical scalpel of historical materialism. This and the accusation of Stalinism as the principal factor in the Kielce pogrom (and not only in Kielce) brought Findley to some conclusions and accusations which seem to me to be hasty and unjust.

Findley puts himself in the easy position of identifying my point of view with that of the PPS and then of putting "us" in the same line with Stalinists under the rubric of the "theory of provocation." In the first place, the Stalinists never propounded such a theory, but accused the Polish people in general of being responsible for the pogroms in almost the same form as Findley. In the second place my point of view differs fundamentally from that of the PPS since the latter really underestimates anti-Semitism as a historic process and reactionary sentiment of the petty-bourgeoisie, reducing it to a question only of Stalinist provocation, while I affirm that in the present phase the principle factor in the pogroms is Stalinist provocation and tolerance without underestimating "spontaneous anti-Semitism."

And Findley himself supports my thesis saying, "For seven hours, this mass, calmly and without haste, in broad daylight and in the center of the city, sadistically tortured to death several dozen Jews who had been disarmed and turned over to the mob by the Stalinist militia without interference or intervention by any police, military or political agency."

### A Government Policy

History shows that there never were and there are not now pogroms without the tolerance and intervention of an anti-Semitic government. The pogroms of Czarist Russia were instruments of struggle against the proletariat. The pogroms in Rumania, Poland and Germany were tolerated and even instigated and prepared by the respective governments in accordance with its degree of fascization. I state that the recent pogroms in Stalinist Poland were carried out with the toleration and preparation of the government and the GPU. The reactionary Stalinist government uses them as a weapon against the spontaneous workers movement which has an anti-Stalinist character. The Stalinist government skilfully took advantage of the organic anti-Semitism of the nationalist bands of the NSZ, giving them free reign and lending them the collaboration of its army and militia. Kielce is the capital of the province with a military garrison and many police. To demand the intervention of the Peasant party in a city, or of the illegal PPS against the Stalinist militia is difficult under a Stalinist régime. The Stalinist party should have intervened but did not. Why? The answer is easy.

However, without the existence of established "spontaneous anti-Semitism" the tragedy of Kielce would not have been possible. But "spontaneous anti-Semitism" is not a monopoly of either Poland or Russia; it exists in England and the United States, in Latin America, in France, etc. If the United States government had a political stake in preparing pogroms in the Jewish sections of New York, it would find the mob ready for this purpose. The agreement between the Stalinists and the important section, almost the main section, of the NSZ confirms my thesis. The top leaders of this organization, few in numbers when compared with the other sectors of the armed underground (3,000 men as against 200,000 of the A. K.—Home Army), Piasecki and Dziarmaga now edit a legal paper which collaborates with the government. It should also be pointed out that the commander of the NSZ collaborated with the GPU and

was a Stalinist tool. In a series of political trials, the "repentant" accused of the NSZ, accused the opposition of contact with the NSZ and of collaborating in the anti-Semitic pogroms directed against the "popular Polish Democracy." Does Findley prefer to put faith in the GPU before accepting the criticism and analysis of a comrade?

#### Biological Anti-Semitism?

Comrade Findley considers it demagoguery to refute the notion of the biological anti-Semitism of a people. And in refutation presents as an argument the lack of documents and acts demonstrating Polish workers' solidarity with the Warsaw ghetto, an argument that indeed falls short of the truth because there is abundant documentation to prove the contrary. The PPS and the underground unions not only solidarized politically with the martyrs of the ghetto, but did everything possible to provide them with arms, ammunition and even military instructors, not to speak of the refuge given en masse to the Jewish victims. Ignorance of these facts is not to be condemned, but Comrade Findley can request the indicated documentation from Felix Gross, Jewish member of the PPS, and author of the "Polish Worker" who resides in New York. Findley is not convinced by the almost complete absence of anti-Semitic pogroms under the German occupation in spite of all the efforts of the Nazis to organize them. Does not Findley know that the guards and militia

in the Ghetto and death camps were, aside from the Jews, the Ukrainians, the Letts and Lithuanians, the German stormtroopers, and not the Poles?

My intention, dear Comrade Findley, was not to underestimate, or worse still, to hide or defend Polish anti-Semitism, but to seek it out and accuse the principal evil-doer, criminal Stalinism. And along this road, I was preceded by no-one less than the "organizer of the proletarian victory," Leon Trotsky, himself of Jewish descent. In order to accuse reactionary and criminal Stalinism, I had no other recourse than to set it on the first plane. It is to be regretted if Findley understood it in any other fashion. I know the anti-Semitism of the provincial Polish bourgeois and petty-bourgeois very well indeed, since I have spent most of my life fighting it, struggling without truce against the bourgeois reaction and now against the Stalinist reaction. The nationalism of the Stalinist press in Poland constantly foments anti-Semitism, and reminds one greatly of the period of the National-Democratic anti-Semitic press. However, they carry it out much more "skilfully" and subtly than did the bourgeois beasts.

I consider Comrade Findley's article hasty and unjustified. I would gladly accept his criticism as a compliment and deepening of my work were it not so poor in ideas and so rich in prejudice.

ANDRZEJ RUDZIENSKI.

long as it is truly literary. It turns his writing into a faded bit of cultural phenomena, which can have only a collector's interest. Farrell has implied that these cultural narcissists are a result, an end-product rather than a new school of writing, and in this he is correct. They are literary paralytics, stymied by their own obsessive lack of feeling with regard to the people whose problems they seek to portray. They are some of the end-products of capitalism's decay.

C. ESSEX.

## On Literary Narcissism

To the Editors:

James T. Farrell's criticism of the recent novel *Passage from Home* by Isaac Rosenfeld involves a stimulating discussion of cultural narcissism. Farrell's discussion of this phenomenon is extremely illuminating.

However, the writers who exhibit this spectator complex are in themselves only a symptom of literary degeneration. In the first place, they are profoundly disgusted with the market-place. The market-place involves concocting material for the pulps, the slicks or the movie-radio set-up. It means conforming to criteria which no one with any individuality wishes to conform to. The victim of cultural narcissism is one who has striven to divorce himself from the meaningless optimism of the professional day dreamer, from the glamorous tripe of the big-time copywriter. And in so doing he has succeeded only in divorcing himself from any emotional involvement with the characters or the problems he seeks to portray.

James, who also was a spectator, nevertheless was concerned with definite problems. They were not the everyday problems of the price of bread and the question of meeting the rent, but they were valid problems of personal endeavor. James had the gift of observing with amazing accuracy, and depicting in astonishing detail the ways in which people react upon each other. Furthermore, James relegated the role of the spectator to that of a secondary position: his spectator watched, the people he watched

were real. Today's cultural narcissist only succeeds in making the spectator larger than life: he looms so large that he obscures the picture he is trying to portray.

The cultural narcissist is not really concerned with problems, as he is not really concerned with ideas. His retreat from the marketplace is, as Farrell stated, a retreat into himself. He has become a reporter with nothing but himself to report.

The cultural narcissist hasn't even the emotional involvement of the spectator of a competitive sport. He tends, rather, to view the world as a gigantic insane asylum, and neglects the fact that he, too, is an inmate. He cannot be one of the psychiatrists, for he exhibits in his writing no desire to change anything. He cannot be a warden or attendant, for that is too active a role. He is enmeshed in a situation which is beyond bearing, so he has retreated into an Olympian detachment which enables him to describe the other inmates without feeling sorrow, to regard the psychiatrists with scorn, and to view the attendants as brutal fools. This view of the society in which he lives relieves him of any personal responsibility for the situation in which he finds himself, and enables him to live fairly comfortable in a situation which he otherwise would find intolerable.

The main difficulty with this Olympianism is that it deadens his writing so that his audience is limited to the "literary" who do not care how dull a piece of writing is so

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