

The

NEW

INTERNATIONAL

**CAN CAPITALISM
END JIM CROW?**

by E. R. McKinney



Spotlight On Czechoslovakia

Articles by

ERNEST ERBER

How the CP Took Power

HAL DRAPER

The Triangle of Forces

ANDRZEJ RUDZIENSKI

The Capitulations of Mr. Benes

THE EDITORS

The Czech Coup as Test of Theory



APRIL 1948

YEAR ONE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

II—The Counter-Revolutionary Socialists

by Victor Serge

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In accordance with the *NI's* post-office registration (ten issues a year) we skip the May and June numbers, and the next issue you will see will be dated July. . . . As a matter of fact, however, that issue will appear only the usual month after the present one, since we are now quite a bit behind our publishing schedule. . . .By getting the July issue out at the beginning of June, we will catch up. . . .

Our aim, of course, is to continue publishing each issue during the month *before* the date line—a consummation devoutly to be wished. . . . The lateness of the *NI's* appearance up to now has undoubtedly hindered its newsstand sales especially, and we intend to leave no stone unturned in order to get over this obstacle to the expansion of the magazine's circulation. . . .

One of the above-mentioned stones will be turned beginning with the next issue. . . . The magazine will be run off on a newspaper press in a revised technical setup. . . . In fact, it's the kind of stone that kills two birds, lowering costs substantially as well as making for prompter publication. . . . The size of the page will come out a wee bit smaller, but there will be even less difference in the word capacity. . . . And that's enough of these technicalities for this month. . . .

Erber's king-size article on *The Stalinist Road to Power in Czechoslovakia* last month went over big, as we expected. . . . Undoubtedly the most illuminating account this side of the ocean, everybody agrees. . . . He follows through in this issue by bringing the story up to the coup d'état itself. . . . And basing ourselves on the importance of the Czech events for Marxists, we also present a concentration of discussion articles viewing the question from several angles. . . . McKinney's views on the civil-rights program (*Can Capitalism End Jim Crow?* in this issue) is also calculated to raise some discussion, we think. . . . What do you think? . . .

We'd like to call our readers' attention to the excellent quarterly published at the University of Chicago by the Politics Club there. . . . Called the *Student Partisan*. . . . It's fifteen cents a copy, and we're sure many of our own readers will want to get it. . . . Write to Politics Club, University of Chicago 37, Ill. . . .

Comrade Arthur Stein of New York has been regularly covering forums, adult evening schools and colleges. . . . Sold forty copies of the *NI* in December, thirty-two in January, sixty-one of the February issue. . . . The New York local of the Workers Party sold fifty-one copies at Arthur Koestler's lecture at Carnegie Hall. . . . They would have sold more if they had taken more copies with them. . . . Comrade Ted Enright, of El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciuncula (usually called L.A. for short), has also been doing a swell job of selling. . . . We don't want to belabor the point but—what conclusions do you draw? . . .

Next issue will carry an important article by our contributor Andrzej Rudzienski on the Ukraine—the resistance movement there and its historical background. . . . Other articles in preparation include discussions of Russian economy, the Marshall Plan, and Professor Charles Beard's recent book on how Roosevelt took us into the war. . . . The next chapter from Victor Serge's opus deals with the civil war in 1918 and the Bolshevik policy with regard to the Constituent Assembly. . . .

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VOL. XIV

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Czech Coup as Test of Theory

The *coup d'état* which the Stalinists carried out in Czechoslovakia in February will probably grow in significance as the passage of time permits an evaluation with greater historical retrospect.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL has presented an extensive treatment of the events themselves and their background. This presentation of factual data is a necessary preliminary to the discussion of the events for which these pages are now open. While this discussion will contribute answers to the more far-reaching implications of the Czech events, we need not await its verdict before analyzing the broad outline of the social and political events of which they were the culmination. Attempts at such analysis have been the occasion of a display of ignorance in the bourgeois press (not to speak of conscious attempts at perverting historical facts) and of endless confusion in the socialist press. Our analysis of Stalinism in general and its role in the satellite countries specifically (above all, our discussions of the Polish question) found us prepared to understand the main outline of what was happening in Czechoslovakia.

The key to an understanding of the Czech events, as is true of all other situations in which the Stalinists operate, is an understanding of the nature of the Russian state and its Communist Parties abroad. The prevalent concept in bourgeois circles, including those of bourgeois liberalism, is to see in Russia a continuation of the Soviet Republic of Lenin and in the Stalinist parties a continuation of the revolutionary mission of the Communist International. Insofar as radicals have not accepted this version or a variant of it, they have (as in the case of the self-styled orthodox Trotskyists) seen Stalinist Russia as a state on the verge of restoring capitalism internally and the Stalinist parties as reformist parties adapting themselves to the bourgeoisie. Viewed from either of these points of view, the Czech events present an impenetrable enigma.

The bourgeois press was anxious to portray the Czech events as a repetition of the Russian October. They made detailed analogies between the "Action Committees," the workers' militia, the mass demonstrations, etc., and comparable institutions and techniques in the Russian Revolution. Yet it never occurred to them to ask what state power was overthrown by this "revolution" in Czechoslovakia.

The head of the government was the faithful Stalinist servant, Klement Gottwald. The heads of the army, police and information departments were Gottwald's party comrades. This "revolution" was proclaimed on the government-owned radio network and carried out with the assistance of the police. A fine comparison with the October Revolution! The latter began at a time when Lenin was in hiding from the police

and official government information was denouncing the Bolsheviks as "agents of the Kaiser." The October insurrection arrested Kerensky's ministers, while Kerensky himself fled the country. The revolution proceeded to completely smash the old state apparatus in order to make way for the new institutions of the soviets and the people's commissariats. If the term "revolution" has any commonly accepted meaning, it means the overthrow of the old state power. Nothing of the sort took place in Czechoslovakia.

If an historical analogy can be made to the Czech events, it is with the *coup d'état* of the Nazis in March 1933. Hitler was called upon by Hindenburg, president of the republic, to become head of a coalition government of Nazis and conservative nationalists. His acceptance of power had the support of the Reichswehr generals. His appointment was the signal for huge demonstrations by the Nazi cohorts, and attacks upon the headquarters of the trade unions and all opposition parties by well-organized "action committees" of stormtroopers. Goering became the head of the Prussian police and immediately legalized the stormtroop detachments by adding them to his force as auxiliaries. Similarly, the Stalinist coup in Czechoslovakia began with the decisive levers of state power firmly in their hands.

However, the similarity between the Czech events and the Nazi coup does not go beyond establishing that they were both *coups d'état* in that the prevailing state power was not overthrown but *utilized* to destroy all political opposition, in the classic tradition of the *coup d'état* of Louis Bonaparte. The Stalinist coup in Czechoslovakia was distinctly different from the Nazi coup in its *social content*.

The Nazi victory was made possible by the support of the German banks and trusts. The latter saw in the Nazi regime an instrument that would crush the labor movement and preserve private property. The mass basis of the Stalinists was among the workers and peasants, with the might of the Russian armed forces towering in the background. Unlike the Nazis, the Stalinists did not merely wipe out bourgeois democracy; they expropriated the remnants of the bourgeoisie itself. The latter was achieved through a renewed campaign of nationalization of the economy and through further agrarian reform. In short, the Nazis took total power in order to save private property, while the Stalinists took total power in order to end private property.

A **social revolution**—that is, the transfer of state power from one class to another—did take place in Czechoslovakia. However, it did not take place in February 1948 but in May 1945, when the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the puppet government of Tiso in Slovakia were over-

thrown by the invading Russian army, assisted by the Stalinist-led resistance movement.

The provisional government which took power at that time was essentially a Stalinist government, for which Benes and Masaryk, in one role, and the Social-Democrat Fierlinger, in another role, served as façade. After Benes had made his famous trip to Moscow to conclude the pact with Stalin which provided for a Russian orientation in post-war Czechoslovakian affairs, an English friend warned Benes that the road he had chosen would lead to a Stalinist-dominated government in Prague. Benes, confident of his ability to outsmart both Moscow and Washington-London, just smiled and said, "Wait until the government is formed and see who has the Ministry of Interior." The government was formed and the Ministry of Interior—i.e., the police power—was given to the Stalinists. In addition, the post of premier was occupied by Fierlinger, a firm ally of the Stalinists from the Social-Democratic camp, while the army was in the hands of General Svoboda, whose close ties to the Russian general staff were known to all.

The program of the government called for nationalization of the bulk of the economy, the division of landed estates and a "purge of public life," to be conducted, of course, by the Stalinist-led police. From then on it was merely a matter of a step-by-step "coordination" of the country by the Stalinists to achieve their total power, the last step being taken in February of this year.

But if a social revolution took place that deprived the bourgeoisie of state power and, through the process of nationalization, of economic power, which class wielded this power?

It is at this point that endless confusion has reigned among political analysts in this country, both bourgeois and socialist. For the bourgeois press, which saw the Czech events in terms of the Russian October, it was a working-class revolution. The general strike called by the trade unions, the armed demonstration of the factory militia, the Prague conference of the factory-committee delegates, all seemed to bespeak the power of the workers. Yet the real power was in the hands of the Communist Party, an organization that is totalitarian, both in its political philosophy and in its internal life. Its membership of over a million, which embraces a substantial part of the industrial workers, has as much power in determining its policies as the millions of members of the Nazi party had in determining Nazi policies. Even the seemingly all-powerful heads of the Communist Party do not determine its basic policy but follow the line laid down from Moscow. The mass of the members know next to nothing about politics and absolutely nothing about the history of the Marxist movement. They are taught only one thing well: that is discipline, which is interpreted as unquestioning acceptance of orders from above. This type of party has controlled the trade unions and Works Councils for the last three years.

Through the control of these instruments, combined with its posts in the government, the party has controlled the nationalized economy. Through the vast number of bureaucratic jobs at its disposal, the party has created a solid layer of supporters among what has been called "the new bureaucratic aristocracy" in Czechoslovakia, i.e., administrators, managers, engineers, specialists, professionals, etc. The real political and economic power is, therefore, in the hands of the hardened Stalinist core of the Communist Party. But what kind of social grouping is this? This is the new bureaucratic-collectivist class in its embryonic form, the Czech counterpart of the class which rules in Russia.

The key to understanding what kind of social transformation has taken place in Czechoslovakia lies in understanding the nature of the Stalinist parties. The key to understanding the latter lies in understanding the kind of social system which has emerged in Russia. Russia is neither a workers' state nor a bourgeois state. It is a bureaucratic-collectivist state, a new social formation produced by the degeneration of capitalism and the failure of the proletariat to replace it with socialism. The Stalinist parties are the agencies of a totalitarian state based on a social system which is anti-capitalist and anti-socialist. The Stalinist parties will, therefore, overthrow the bourgeoisie where they find it possible to do so, but only under circumstances that preclude their losing control of the masses to a revolutionary socialist party aiming at a genuine socialist reorganization of society. It is this understanding of the nature of the Russian social system and its Stalinist parties abroad that makes it possible to comprehend the events in Czechoslovakia and to destroy the bourgeois analysis which speaks of a Czech "October" revolution.

This same theoretical understanding of the Russian state and the Stalinist parties also serves to refute the views of the official Fourth Internationalists. These views, indeed, have become so absurd as to fly in the face of common sense. The *Militant*, organ of Cannon's Socialist Workers Party, greeted the Czech events with a denunciation of the Stalinists for having made another compromise with the bourgeoisie! The steps which the Gottwald regime did take to extend nationalization and to outlaw the bourgeois parties were described as being taken reluctantly by the Stalinists under the revolutionary pressure of the masses. But the Stalinists did not go far enough! The workers wanted more severe measures taken against the bourgeoisie. The Stalinists betrayed the struggle and protected the bourgeoisie, etc., etc.

The line of these people has become so ridiculous that one hesitates to polemicize against it for fear of giving it an undeserved dignity. Instead, let us ask how it is possible for people inhabiting a part of this globe to accept such conclusions. The answer is that they too realize that the key to understanding Stalinism is the nature of the Russian social order. But since they insist that Russia remains a workers' state, no matter how degenerated, this "key" opens only doors to endless labyrinths of confusion.

Russia is still a workers' state because the industry is state-owned, they contend. However, the state bureaucracy is anxiously seeking ways and means of restoring capitalism in Russia. It is therefore only natural that this bureaucracy, yearning for capitalism at home, will not seek to destroy capitalism abroad. The Stalinist parties abroad, therefore, play the well-known role of the reformist workers' movement as props for capitalism. Yet, since they are workers' parties according to this view, they are constantly subject to the revolutionary pressure of the workers. Therefore the post-war political drama of Europe is seen in terms of the masses rushing into the Stalinist movement in order to overthrow capitalism, constantly pressing forward toward their objective, but constantly being foiled by the Stalinist leadership which acts to preserve capitalism.

In the world-wide choice being made by all disoriented elements between Washington and Moscow, the Cannonites have chosen to line up as "left-wing" and "critical" supporters of Stalinism. We have no more in common with this view than with that of the social-democrats who have become the "left-wing" and "critical" supporters of American imperialism's drive to subordinate the world.

Can Capitalism End Jim Crow?

The Civil-Rights Report and Program

The report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights is a document of the highest political and sociological significance.

The document is not only of importance for what it says, including its recommendations, but also because the conclusions and recommendations of the Report find their way into the Truman message to Congress on civil rights. In the message, the Report takes on very real political bone and sinew. This may not have any great significance in and for the North but such things are very clearly understood in the South. Aside from the political and sociological significance of the Report, the document raises certain theoretical questions in connection with the possibilities of bourgeois democracy in the United States and the resolving of what Myrdal has called "An American Dilemma." Each of these questions will be treated in the course of this article.

The pertinence of the Report does not arise from any novelty in the publication of hitherto unknown facts about the failure of the democratic process in the United States. All of the findings of the Report, every one without exception, have been known for decades and have been written down before. One can find every "discovery" made by the committee in the files of the Negro press, the archives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, in a host of books, pamphlets and other writings. What is of the greatest import at the present time is that Jim Crow and discriminatory practices have been uncovered, revealed, exposed and condemned by a committee with the composition of the President's Committee.

What is new is not that the committee has discovered the existence of Jim Crow with all its heinousness. What is new is the fact that a committee whose chairman is the head of the world's most powerful electrical manufacturing corporation has openly and definitively admitted that fact of Jim Crow, has said that discrimination must be eliminated, that it should be eliminated now, and that all minorities in the country, including Negroes, should be accorded and guaranteed full democratic rights.

Furthermore these democratic rights are not to be accorded and guaranteed in a purely hortatory manner as in the past; they are to be actual and real. They are to be established as a consequence of the letter and spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The laws are recommended and new government bodies are envisaged which will supplement present laws and commissions wherever and whenever they are needed to make the committee's recommendations effective. In brief, what the Report proposes is the wiping out of every legal disability which the Negro suffers.

Against Jim Crow Myths

The committee's Report sets forth what these disabilities are in the longest section of the Report, "The Record: Short of the Goal." The committee finds that all basic democratic rights have been and are being violated, particularly in the case of the Negro. The committee expresses these basic rights as: "The Right to Safety and Security of the Person," "The Right to Citizenship and its Privileges," "The Right to Free-

dom of Conscience and Expression," "The Right to Equality of Opportunity."

In plain language the Report affirms and substantiates contentions which have been made by the NAACP, for example, about lynching, police brutality, discrimination by the courts, peonage, restrictive covenants, disfranchisement, discrimination in the armed services, job discrimination, educational restrictions and refusals of accommodations by public carriers and places of public accommodation. Under the heading of "Segregation Reconsidered," the Report has this to say about the "separate but equal" philosophy: "In the committee's opinion this is one of the outstanding myths of American history for it is almost always true that, while indeed separate, these facilities are far from equal."

The committee takes hold of another matter which also can be placed among the myths: the point of view, held mainly in the South, that the federal government should keep hands off and leave matters of civil rights to the states and to educational processes at work in the localities where civil rights are being violated. The Report, however, takes the position that "The national government of the United States must take the lead in safeguarding the civil rights of all Americans."

The committee gives several reasons for this demand: many of the offenses are committed by private persons or by local public officers. The American civil liberties record has international implications. There is a growing tendency for the people to look to the federal government for the protection of their democratic rights. Lastly, the federal government is the largest single employer of labor in the nation. It is incumbent on the government to set its own house in order and to set a correct example for the whole country.

In insisting on the necessity for the intervention of the federal government the committee "rejects the argument that governmental controls are themselves necessarily threats to liberty. This statement overlooks the fact that freedom in a civilized society is always founded on law enforcement by government."

Program for Federal Action

After analysis of the situation and presentation of its arguments the committee sets forth its recommendations. The recommendations important for our purpose now include:

Increase in the size and authority of the Civil Rights section of the Justice Department.

The establishment of a permanent commission on civil rights by the federal and state governments.

Strengthening of the United States Code by amendment and by new statutes to give additional protection for civil rights and to make possible stiffer penalties for civil rights violations, particularly "police brutality and related crimes."

The enactment by Congress of an anti-lynching act, a new statute on involuntary servitude, anti-poll tax legislation, federal legislation protecting the right to participate in federal and state elections, and legislation by Congress "to end immediately all discrimination and segregation based on race, color, creed, or national origin in the organization and activities of all branches of the Armed Services."

The committee did not confine its position on how to secure civil liberties to educational and legislative procedures. It proposes the use of "sanctions" in the administrative and law enforcement fields. These would include: fines and imprisonment for civil rights violators; injunctions and suits for damages; administrative cease-and-desist orders, as in the case of the Food and Drugs Administration; refusal of federal financial aid to private agencies and institutions that practice discrimination; exposure of persons and institutions that practice discrimination.

"The committee . . . believes," says the Report, "that the national government has at its command varied powers and administrative machinery which are capable of being used with great profit in safeguarding civil rights. . . . The nation's program for the protection of civil rights . . . should move forward on three fronts, legislative, executive and judicial. Anything short of this full cooperative effort will jeopardize the success of the entire program."

How does the committee motivate and justify such radical proposals? It must be borne in mind that this committee contains not one "radical," not one individual who is anti-capitalist, not one individual who wants to effect any basic transformation in present bourgeois-democratic society. Every member of the committee is a defender of capitalism and of capitalist society as the correct and proper "American way of life." It is to this kind of committee that the question at the head of this paragraph is put, and the committee answers in the Report itself.

Can Capitalism Afford Jim Crow?

(1) What the committee calls "The Moral Reason":

The pervasive gap between our aims and what we actually do is creating a kind of moral dry rot which eats away at the emotional and rational bases of democratic beliefs. There are times when the difference between what we preach about civil rights and what we practice is shockingly illustrated by individual outrages.

For example:

Wartime segregation in the armed forces is another instance of how a social pattern may wreak moral havoc. Practically all white officers and enlisted men in all branches of service saw Negro military personnel performing only the most menial functions. . . . As a result men who might have otherwise maintained the equalitarian morality of their forbears were given reason to look down on their fellow citizens. . . . The United States can no longer countenance these burdens on its common conscience, these inroads on its moral fiber.

(2) "The Economic Reason": The big economic problem before the United States and the rest of the world is to achieve

maximum production and continued prosperity. The loss of a huge potential market for goods is a direct result of the economic discrimination which is practiced against many of our minority groups. . . . Discrimination depresses the wages and income of minority groups. As a result, their purchasing power is curtailed and markets are reduced. Reduced markets result in reduced production. This cuts down employment, which of course means lower wages and still fewer job opportunities. . . . The United States can no longer afford this heavy drain upon its human wealth, its national competence.

(3) "The International Reason": The Report quotes from a letter of Dean Acheson to the Fair Employment Practices Committee. "I think it is quite obvious," said Mr. Acheson, "that the existence of discriminations against minority groups in the United States is a handicap in our relations with other countries. The Department of State, therefore, has good reason to hope for the continued and increased effectiveness of

public and private efforts to do away with these discriminations." The Report then goes on to say:

We cannot escape the fact that our civil rights record has been an issue in world politics. . . . Our achievements in building and maintaining a state dedicated to the fundamentals of freedom have already served as a guide for those seeking the best road from chaos to liberty and prosperity. But it is not indelibly written that democracy will encompass the world. *The United States is not so strong, the final triumph of the democratic ideal is not so inevitable that we can ignore what the world thinks of us or our record.* [Emphasis in original.]

These are the three main reasons for the position taken in the Report and for the rather strong recommendations of the committee. It is clear that the committee was concerned with two main considerations in the world situation: the existence of Russia and its aggressive imperialism, as well as the potential or real ability of Russia to use the terrible violations of democratic rights in the United States as a means toward world prestige. This would be possible especially in those countries inhabited by colored populations as well as among the peoples of the smaller European countries which have always suffered under the domination of imperialism. It is true also that it will be very difficult for the United States to secure the good will or the allegiance of the peoples of Europe, Asia and Africa, even in the absence of Russian propaganda, if these peoples look upon Americans in their midst not only as representatives of the financial colossus of the West but also as oppressors of minority peoples.

This is not all the committee is concerned with, as is clear from the Report. The committee still feels the impact of Hitler fascism and is alert to the threat of Russian totalitarianism: "the final triumph of the democratic ideal" has not been achieved. The whole Report is concerned with the question of how minority groups and populations can be made to believe that democracy is to be their lot now that German and Italian fascism have been defeated. The committee was perturbed, and correctly so of course, as to how this consummation could be brought to pass by this country with its black record of civil rights violations and the denial of democratic rights to a substantial portion of American citizens.

It is necessary now to approach this Report from another direction. We have set forth the analyses of the committee, its recommendations, and its arguments in defense of those recommendations. We have emphasized that the committee recommends legislative, judicial and executive acts, procedures and directives which, if adopted in their entirety, would remove every legal, economic and civil disability encountered and suffered by minority populations in the United States. There are important and far-reaching assumptions involved in the position taken by the committee. It is these assumptions and implications which must now be examined, specifically and concretely as they relate to the Negro in the United States because it is the Negro group which is the worst victimized.

Can Capitalism End Jim Crow?

First of all, the committee assumes that the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and "The American Heritage: the Promise of Freedom and Equality" all do apply or should apply to the Negro the same as to the white citizen. Next, and of greater significance, is the underlying assumption that full democratic rights, in a practical way, can be accorded Negroes in the present social order and within the framework of that social order. By this is meant, of course, that full democratic

rights can be accorded the Negro in the United States within the bounds of capitalism and bourgeois democracy.

Naturally, the committee's Report does not approach the question of civil rights for Negroes from this direction. It proceeds always from the assumption that there is no incompatibility between full democratic rights for Negroes and the existence of and the continuation of capitalism and capitalist society. The question which arises, therefore, is not whether it can be done "now" as the committee demands but rather: can it be done at all inside capitalist society in the United States?

There are those who say that the answer to this question is "No." Numbered among those who deny the possibility of achieving such equality are some Marxists, the American Socialist Party and some independent radicals. I am not concerned here with the attitude of the Socialist Party on the question; it is prompted largely by the disinclination of this organization to carry on a militant struggle for Negro rights here and now. They prefer to maintain a pacifist attitude and to substitute the theory that the Negro will get his rights only when all workers have been freed from capitalist exploitation. I am concerned with the question as posed by Marxian revolutionists, because I do not believe that there is any sound theoretical argument in support of the position that full civil rights cannot be achieved by the Negro in the United States in capitalist society.

We have to be clear what it is we are talking about when we speak of democratic rights and of civil rights. We also have to be clear what we are talking about when we say that the bourgeoisie profits from the exclusion of Negroes from equality and from the intra-class division which results from teaching white superiority and Negro inferiority.

Psychological Barriers Secondary

We have to remember that there was a time when the commercial bourgeoisie profited from the slave trade and the industrial bourgeoisie from the labor of ten-year-old children. It did not follow, however, that the slave trade and child labor would always be retained and defended by capitalists. It cannot be denied that for decades after the Civil War it was the position of capitalism that the Negro should be held as a special reserve to do the heavy, dirty and dangerous labor. To make such a scheme successful it was necessary to cultivate race inferiority and superiority myths, or to exploit such beliefs wherever they existed.

It was financially profitable for capitalism in the United States to have a period in which there was enmity and hatred in the ranks of the working class. The Northern bourgeoisie used this situation just as it had used the pronouncements of various clergymen and pseudo-ethnologists, before 1860, to the effect that slavery was not a violation of the teachings of the Bible and that Negroes and white people did not have a common ancestor. The bourgeoisie used both of these attitudes as a means of exploiting the Negro, making a profit and enhancing capitalist accumulation. Capitalism today, however, is not in the period of the early and middle nineteenth century. There have been development, expansion and many structural changes. Furthermore, it may be the case today that leading capitalists have come to the conclusion that not only does "free enterprise" in the United States need to cleanse itself of Jim Crow but also that it will be beneficial and possible of accomplishment.

To demand democratic rights or civil rights for Negroes and other "minorities" means to demand that Negroes and

others be fitted into and accepted into the general economic, political and cultural fabric of the country without discrimination, segregation or disfranchisement. It means to lift every public disability from Negroes to which white people are not subjected. This is to apply to the whole United States. This is to say that the Negro shall have the same legal rights and the same protection of his citizenship rights as are accorded a white man in every section of the nation: the right to vote and run for office, get a job, travel, attend school, and go into all public places on terms of equality with white people.

The establishment and formal protection of this right have nothing to do, objectively, with any individual's personal thinking and attitude on the question, or the attitude and thinking of any group of the population. Students at the University of Mississippi may be against admitting Negroes and may remain opposed even after the legislature has voted to abolish Jim Crow schools. It will be many decades before all the white citizens of South Carolina agree to Negro suffrage or the natives of Monroe County, Georgia, agree that Negroes have the right to be free from and protected from mob violence. Many decades will pass before the white people of Arkansas adopt the practice of sitting beside a Negro in the train after the elimination of Jim Crow cars. But it must be emphasized that, to one degree or other, everything that is said here about Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina and Arkansas is true of New York, Michigan, Massachusetts or California. It was only a few years back that the white people of Ohio voted by referendum to retain a clause in the state constitution which confined the right of suffrage to white people. This in spite of the fact that the right of the Negro to vote is protected in practice in Ohio.

The same observations can be made in connection with the attitude of groups of white people on the question of restrictive covenants and the right of Negroes to live in "white neighborhoods," to sit beside white people in theatres, to be treated in the same wards in hospitals and accommodated in restaurants and hotels. Even after Jim Crow is outlawed there will be persons who will not agree to Negro equality. There will be Negroes who will go on just about as they do now: sitting beside Negroes exclusively, eating only in Negro restaurants and frowning on social intercourse with white people. All of these are psychological and sociological factors in the situation which have no necessary or theoretical connection today with any basic requirement of capitalist and bourgeois welfare.

Capitalist society today can get along as well or as poorly without Jim Crow. Neither capitalist profit nor the rate of profit will be lessened by the complete equality of black and white people in the United States. On the contrary, it seems clear that some parts at least of the bourgeoisie are moving to the position that the rate of profit and the mass of profit might be enhanced by the establishment of civil rights for the whole population.

Temporary Way Out

It may be argued that for the bourgeoisie to demand and carry through equal civil rights for Negroes would mean to dig its own grave, because such action would cause the working class to close ranks eventually and establish the reign of intra-class peace. While this is correct it must be added that capitalism has been digging its own grave for many, many decades but still refuses to descend into that grave. Right now it seems that the bourgeoisie is looking around for a way out to escape the grave for a few more decades.

It must be said also that the bourgeoisie has faced many dilemmas before. I mention only two: free public education and collective bargaining. The ruling class after a while came to the conclusion not only that free public education was necessary in the interest of capitalist development but that it could be so controlled as to become a buttress for bourgeois society. Also one would have to look far and wide for an employer who today would openly demand the abolition of collective bargaining. Capitalism has not fared badly with these two "revolutionary" innovations. Charles Luckman, member of the committee and president of Lever Brothers, soap manufacturers, has written an article for *Colliers* entitled "Civil Rights Is Good for Business." Charles Wilson, chairman of the committee and of General Electric, is clearly of one mind with Luckman on this matter.

The bourgeoisie has had experience enough to know that, while proletarian solidarity is a high explosive, it does not necessarily follow that there will be an explosion. Also there can be various types and degrees of working class solidarity. Advocacy of civil rights for Negroes may not produce such solidarity at once but rather the contrary. The bourgeoisie might at a certain time adopt such a course as a new and subtle means of keeping Negroes and white workers apart; that is, for the bourgeoisie to become the champions of Negro rights would seem to validate what some Negroes have always contended, namely, that the white upper class is the best friend of the Negro.

But even if the result should be intra-class peace this does not mean the end of capitalism, as is occasionally proclaimed in agitational utterances. Only devotees of the romantic movement in politics entertain such notions. Class solidarity is necessary for the elimination of capitalism but not sufficient. Something is needed in order to set off an explosive. The bourgeoisie has always believed, often mistakenly, that it can at least retard the development of anti-capitalist action by the proletariat. For instance, it is well known that the capitalist ruling class has been fairly successful up to now in thwarting the development of independent political action by the proletariat. Therefore, from its side, there is no reason to believe that the bourgeoisie is gripped with the fear that civil rights for Negroes and the demise of capitalism are synonymous.

Open Door to New Market

The "Solid South" is the chief barricade against civil rights for Negroes. But the South is a huge potential market for the manufacturers of consumer goods. It is eighty-three years since the close of the Civil War and the victory of Northern industrial capitalism, and yet the South remains only a *potential* market for consumer goods.

Here are millions of American citizens who would buy the products of industry if they had the money or a cultural level which prompted the desire for an ever-increasing standard of living. This is a primary concern not only of Northern bourgeois but also of the new Southern industrial bourgeoisie.

There is reason to believe that the Northern bourgeoisie is ready to enforce an "Open Door" policy on the South. This means to force the South to consent to the raising of the living standards of the Southern masses, black and white. To raise the living standards means to raise wages, to build homes, schools, hospitals, roads, transport. This cannot be done effectively with the dominance of Jim Crow, the poll tax, lynching and the hegemony of the backwoods. It cannot be done by support of the present forces which represent the South politically. It cannot be done in conjunction with the extreme-

ly reactionary attitudes of Northern heavy industry, power companies, banks and insurance companies which function in the South like colonial administrators.

Southern congressmen and governors are raising a great furor today over the president's civil rights message. Who are these people? They are native Southerners. Some of them are men of modest ability. Some of them are ignorant, ill-informed, lacking in culture, and altogether bombastic, demagogic, venal and corrupt. They are a part of that general phenomenon known as "the South": general backwardness, a vast Tobacco Road stretching from the Carolinas to Arkansas and the far reaches of Texas. A section represented in Congress by Lester Jeeters in custom-made suits. A section which glories in sending its clowns, its mountebanks and its "one gallus" men to the state capital to be the chief executive of the commonwealth.

These men have had an interesting, stormy, but uncertain career. Most of them are not descendants of the old plantation aristocracy but of the poverty-stricken poor whites who were held in subjection by the slavocracy. Historically they are part of the line of poor-white political leaders which came to power in the South after the overthrow of slavery and particularly after the overthrow of Reconstruction.

Poll-Tax Politicos Hinder Expansion

This is the group which carried through the disfranchisement of the Negro, which wrote the segregation laws of the South, which reorganized the Ku Klux Klan, which fomented the lynchings and led the mobs. This is the group which perpetuates and lives by all the discarded ethnological mumbo-jumbo of a half century ago. These are the protagonists of "white supremacy," "pure white womanhood," and no "mongrelization." When they speak of white supremacy they mean supremacy of the Southern white. According to Eastland of Mississippi, "Southern white boys out in the Pacific" were "fighting for white supremacy." Furthermore, white supremacy does not mean to them some distinction the Southern white has achieved in competition, intellectual, artistic, physical or scientific, but rather a state of affairs which the white Southerner has achieved by brute force and which he proposes to hold on to by brute force if necessary.

These present-day Southern politicians—the Rankins, Eastlands, Overtons, Ellenders, Dorns, Gossetts, Johnsons in Congress and the state government politicians—are the beneficiaries of all that is vicious, reactionary and culturally backward in the United States. They know this. As it was put by the elder Talmadge: "I can win in any county where there are no streetcars." Also it can be said that these men can win as long as there is ignorance: so long as there are white men and women in the South who believe that Negroes kill their fathers and then eat the head, who believe that the superiority of the white race arose in the Garden of Eden, who don't know that there is a better life than that which they now live. These demagogues can continue in their places in the capitol at Washington and in the various states only so long as there is a poll tax; so long as Southern poor whites believe that God has limited the supply of food for mortals and that he must therefore starve the Negro in order to keep from starving himself.

The Southern politicians know all this and very cunningly play on this ignorance and degradation. They are against civil rights because civil rights would be a blow to their rule. Democratic rights would recognize and emphasize the rights of all human beings and not as now the rights of the mob.

Civil rights would place the masses in a position to elevate themselves, to acquire higher wages, education, health, and a change in their political representatives.

This Southern rabble in Congress are men of the greatest brazenness. They own nothing substantial and have no controlling say in the industrial and political life of the country. And yet they demand that the owners of railroads continue the unprofitable practice of maintaining dual accommodations for two groups of people. They demand that states and individuals keep giving money to support two schools where one would suffice. They demand that the bourgeois who gives donations to hospitals should give enough for two hospitals if the bourgeois giver insists that hospital care be provided for Negroes. The Eastland-Rankin demagogues are very free with other people's money.

Jim Crow and Imperialist War

There is reason to believe that at least a section of the North which foots the bill is growing weary of paying for the maintenance of the "purity of white womanhood" in the South. If the Report means anything it means that some bourgeois are more frightened at the prospect of not getting at the twenty-one million potential customers in the South than they are at the prospect of "mongrelization" in that section.

Finally, there is something more involved in these gestures toward the enforcement of civil rights. The United States and Russia are facing each other today in the peace and formality of the United Nations, while back home each nation prepares its war regalia to be donned at a moment's notice. Further-

more, there is a contest going on between the United States and Russia for the support of the peoples and nations of Europe, Asia and Africa.

This country may face some difficulty in explaining to the Chinese why American Jim Crow is superior to Russian "aggression." It will not be easy for the State Department to make an Indian understand that segregation is far more moral than the Russian practice of denuding a country of its machinery. European small nations may not be able to distinguish between being stumbled over by big Russia and being milked and regimented "gently" by big America. American Negroes might conceivably decide to remain neutral in a war between this country and Russia. They may find some difficulty in differentiating between a totalitarianism which they have only heard about, and a vicious totalitarian-like Jim Crow which they have lived under for over three hundred years.

The bourgeoisie and the government are concerned about these things. They know that they cannot go into a war with Russia and have this discrimination-segregation burden to carry and explain. To prosecute the next imperialist war will require greater solidification of the people, all of the people, colored and white, citizen and non-citizen, the mainland and the colonies. I believe that the bourgeoisie and the government have this prime necessity in mind. In addition to all the other reasons for the proposals at this time, there is this other: the civil rights program is a plan for achieving national unity in the coming imperialist struggle against Russia.

ERNEST RICE MCKINNEY

How the Czech CP Took Power

Concluding "The Stalinist Road to Power in Czechoslovakia"

The February coup of the Czech Stalinists was the result of a combination of national and international political factors. Of these, the international factors were the determining force.

In one sense it can be said that the events which culminated in February had their roots in the big-power relations produced by the war and were in the making ever since Russia was accorded the hegemony of Eastern Europe. In a narrower sense, however, the crisis that came to a head in February had its origin in the summer of 1947, beginning with the gyrations of Czech policy on the Marshall Plan.

Ever since the Stalinists assumed the dominant role in the provisional government, the Czech bourgeoisie¹ placed its strongest hopes for salvation on international economic developments rather than on internal political developments. Czechoslovakia had always been an integral part of the European economy, with strong financial ties to Berlin, Paris and London. The giant Skoda plant, for instance, was a classic

example of industrial control by international finance capitalism. Representatives of the banking interests of all the big capitalist powers sat on its board of directors. The bulk of its production was destined for the world market.

The Czech bourgeoisie, therefore, counted heavily upon the weight of economic factors pulling Czechoslovakia back to its pre-war orbit, despite the advanced stage of nationalization. That section of the Czech bourgeoisie which still possessed its productive property saw in the reintegration of Czechoslovakia in world economy the means by which the trends set in motion by nationalization could be brought to a halt; and the ever-hopeful big bourgeoisie, though expropriated, saw in it the means by which nationalization could be undone and private capitalism restored, even if, for a period, in close partnership with the state.

As a consequence of this perspective, the Czech bourgeoisie took a keen interest in Secretary of State Marshall's announcement that the United States was prepared to underwrite a large-scale, unified plan for the economic rehabilitation of Europe. It would have an immeasurable effect upon the re-binding of Czechoslovakia's broken ties with the West. However, Moscow took just as keen an interest in Marshall's announcement and was just as quick to realize the effects of his plan. Yet Moscow sought first to probe the possibility of utilizing the offer of American aid for its own economic needs by forcing the United States to refrain from any interference

1. "Bourgeoisie" is used here in a very inclusive sense. It is used to embrace both those bourgeois still in possession of their properties and those whose properties had been nationalized, as well as all pro-bourgeois elements like landowners, the Catholic hierarchy, a large section of the Protestant clergy, and those politicians, technicians, professionals, journalists, army officers, etc., who found their conditions better before the war and yearned for a return to their former status. It must be remembered in any discussion of the Czech events that a bourgeoisie in the traditional sense no longer existed after the nationalization of 65 per cent of the economy, including all the major units.

in the administration of the funds in Europe. The Czech bourgeois parties utilized this period of maneuver on the part of Russia to press hard for a commitment by the Czechoslovakian government to participate in the Marshall Plan conference called for July in Paris.

On June 8, a Czechoslovakian government delegation, including Gottwald and Masaryk, departed for Moscow to discuss Russia's policy on the Marshall Plan. During the Moscow talks, the Czech press was full of inferences that Czechoslovakia's participation in the Paris conference was being decided in the Kremlin. When the delegation returned, Gottwald lashed out at those who suggested Russian domination of Czech affairs, saying: "The USSR in no way interferes in Czechoslovakia's domestic affairs. She is conducting her own affairs in a way which suits Czechoslovakian conditions." Gullible people were prepared to believe every word of Gottwald's statement when, on July 7, the Czechoslovakian government announced that it had accepted the invitation of the British government to participate in the Paris conference and designated as its representative the Czech ambassador to France.

What brought about this decision to participate is not known at present. Whether it was the result of a misunderstanding with Moscow or in agreement with Moscow is not clear. Within three days of the announcement to participate, the Czech government made a complete about-face. On July 10, the Prague Radio announced the following:

The government held an extraordinary meeting today at which Czechoslovakian participation in the Paris conference was again discussed. It was ascertained that a number of countries, especially all Slav states and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, had not accepted the invitation to this conference. . . . Under these circumstances Czechoslovakian participation would be interpreted as an act directed against our friendship with the Soviet Union and our other allies. For this reason the government decided unanimously not to take part in this conference.

In a space of three days the soaring hopes of the Czech bourgeoisie were dashed to the ground. Stalin had decided that the efforts to render the Marshall Plan harmless through maneuver were hopeless and that the die was cast. The fateful division of Europe, implicit since Potsdam, was now to be made explicit. The day so dreaded by the Masaryk school of Czech politicians, who talked of Czechoslovakia being a bridge between the East and the West, had come.

After the July 10 announcement, it was impossible for Czech politicians even to pretend that their country was facing both ways. For the Czech bourgeoisie as a whole, it was now crystal-clear that the perspective of eventual reintegration in the economy of Western Europe was ended. The internal political struggle was now the only possible escape from complete destruction at the hands of the Stalinists. The stage was cleared for the series of events that led up to February 20, 1948.²

The Crisis Over the Capital Levy

The withdrawal of Czechoslovakia from the Marshall Plan conference was followed by a Stalinist propaganda campaign to sell the people the idea that Czechoslovakia would secure greater economic benefits as a source of industrial products for the Russian sphere of Eastern Europe than it could expect

2. The effect of Czechoslovakia's withdrawal from the Marshall Plan upon its internal affairs can be seen from the wild rumors of an impending CP coup which circulated in the country during July. The press of all the parties united in calming the public with reassurances, and even the most conservative papers referred to the rumors as being "fantastically untrue."

from the Marshall Plan. This was backed by the conclusion of a Five Year Trade Agreement between Russia and Czechoslovakia, announced to coincide with the opening of the Marshall Plan talks in Paris. Those who knew the facts about Russia's economic relations with its satellites were less inclined to take the trade agreement at its face value than were readers of the Stalinist press who eagerly sought for reassurance that Czech withdrawal from the Marshall Plan would not have an adverse effect upon economic life.

The uneasy summer had hardly drawn to a close before the first big political explosion in the showdown struggle between the bourgeois parties and the Stalinists took place. It resulted from a discussion in the cabinet on September 2 on ways and means to finance a plan to compensate the farmers for losses due to severe drought.

Gottwald proposed that six and a half billion Kcs. allotted to this purpose be raised through a capital levy on some 35,000 persons whose property exceeded one million Kcs. (roughly \$20,000 at its legal rate). The other parties opposed the proposal and offered as a substitute a tax on incomes, saying that Gottwald's scheme "will not touch the protégés of the Communists, who hold important administrative positions, draw high salaries and live in great luxury." Since the CP ministers formed a minority of the cabinet, the Stalinist demand for a capital levy was defeated.

On the day that the discussions were taking place, Slansky, the general secretary of the CP and Stalinist hatchet man, already warned that trouble would ensue if the National-Socialist³ and Slovak Democratic Parties joined with the right-wing (Catholic) People's Party in an anti-CP bloc. The real storm, however, broke on the following morning when *Rude Pravo*, the central organ of the CP, appeared with an account of the discussions in the cabinet and the names of the ministers who had voted against the capital levy in large block letters on the first page. Duris, the Stalinist Minister of Agriculture, took to the air over the government radio station in an appeal to the drought-ridden farmers, attacking the non-Stalinist ministers in the most offensive terms. The speech opened a full-scale agitational campaign by the Stalinists throughout the country, especially in rural areas. On September 5 teams of CP agitators left Prague for all parts of the country.

The Social-Democratic press reported a wave of agitation, accompanied by terror against dissidents, in the factories. The secretariat of the SDP issued a statement denouncing the CP for abusing the confidential discussions within the cabinet for purposes of propaganda and "electoral demagoguery." The statement ordered members of the SDP to refuse to sign CP petitions and resolutions being gathered in the factories in support of the Gottwald proposals and in condemnation of the ministers who had defeated it. The National-Socialist Party daily *Svobodne Slovo* reported a meeting of the party presidium

3. The National-Socialist Party was not strictly a bourgeois party in the formal sense of the term. It traditionally considered itself a socialist party, though it rejected Marxism and based itself upon the anti-Marxist revisionist theories represented by Sombart, Böhm-Bawerk, Struve and, in Czechoslovakia, the elder Masaryk. Though it espoused "Czech socialism" and called for measures of economic socialization in its program, it never did anything serious toward achieving them. The National-Socialists had a considerable stratum of well-paid workers among their supporters and several trade unions were organized under their inspiration. It is therefore not quite accurate to compare their party to one like the Radical Socialists in France or the New Deal in the U. S. Its closest counterpart in European politics, perhaps, would be the Polish "Fraki," Pilsudski's right-wing splittoff from the Polish Socialist Party in the period before its complete degeneration. Like the Czech National-Socialists, the "Fraki" believed in a "national socialism" which was, more accurately, a "socialistic nationalism."

on the crisis and stated that it was "impossible to tolerate publication of cabinet discussions in the press and, worse still, on posters."⁴ The Social-Democratic Minister of Industry, Lausman, threatened to resign in protest against the unrest and strikes which the CP agitation had called forth in the nationalized industries.

On September 11, the Social-Democratic Party called a mass meeting in Prague to rally its followers in the face of the crisis. Majer, right-wing leader and Minister of Food, said: "Those guilty of intellectual terrorism and of spreading disunity are the best friends of the reactionaries. Their actions have violated the laws of the republic, and smack of brutal, inhuman Gestapoism. We Social-Democrats shall never consent to such methods. We know that further propaganda campaigns are being prepared . . . We are always ready to cooperate, but we refuse to submit to any dictates." Lausman said at the same meeting: "Keep calm, for the time being we do not know which way the wind is blowing. Since May 1945 we have not been through such critical times."

Tug of War Around the Social-Democrats

On the following day, the governmental impasse was ended as a result of an unexpected action on the part of the Social-Democrats. They signed an agreement with the Stalinists to form a socialist bloc within the National Front. Its main provision was for discussions between the two parties to achieve joint action on all important questions in the future. The Social-Democratic daily, *Pravo Lidu*, sought to explain the sudden change of party line by saying, "As a result of the general inability to achieve agreement . . . the Social-Democratic Party decided to solve the crisis by starting negotiations with various other parties one by one. The approach of the Communist Party proved that its leaders were most understanding." It hastened to add that the agreement was not directed against the other parties. In another explanation a few days later, *Pravo Lidu* added that "The agreement with the Communists did not mean the setting up of joint organizations, the holding of joint mass meetings, or the issuing of joint proclamations."

This latter assurance seems to have been designed to calm the party's right wing, one of whose leaders, Majer, resigned his government post in protest against the agreement. However, the agreement gave Gottwald a theoretical 51 per cent majority in the Assembly and caused the bourgeois parties to take a conciliatory course to end the crisis. (Simultaneous with the end of the crisis, the Security Police announced the arrest of eighty more "conspirators," alleged to be in contact with the underground "Hlinka Guardists," in Slovakia.) After a short breathing spell, vicious attacks on the bourgeois parties were resumed in the Stalinist press, Slansky saying on October 13 that "If the National-Socialist Party wants to remain a government party, its leaders must abandon their present subversive anti-state policy and expel from their ranks people of the type of Fierabend."

4. This statement went on to discuss the proposal for a capital levy and stated that it was wrong from a socialist point of view. It would strengthen the position of the new privileged classes, "living in the style of millionaires, who enjoy every comfort and luxury, thanks to the villas and limousines which they have been allocated by the authorities and to their high incomes. Their luxury standards would remain unaffected if the Communist proposals were accepted, for the tax returns of these people showed them to be property-less—in form only. . . . The Communist press campaign gives the impression that we are witnessing something more than a mere pre-election maneuver. Perhaps reactionary elements have wormed their way into the Communist Party with a view to achieving the collapse of the peoples' government and of the National Front."

The struggle between the bourgeois parties and the Stalinists now centered upon the growing factional situation in the Social-Democratic Party. As has been the case in all European countries where Stalinism became the main anti-capitalist force, the Social-Democracy, in the absence of a clear perspective of its own, began to be torn into two wings, each gravitating toward one of the two main centers of power.

The 13 per cent of the Assembly seats held by the Social-Democracy became the immediate focal point of the struggle. Gottwald needed the solid support of the Social-Democratic deputies in order to preserve a parliamentary majority. The bourgeois parties needed a split in the Social-Democracy to form an anti-Stalinist majority. The Stalinists sought a Social-Democracy led by a Czech Nenni, while the bourgeois politicians sought a split in the Social-Democracy led by a Czech Saragat. Each side found its man. The Stalinist hopes were placed on Fierlinger, vice-premier and the party's president. The bourgeois hopes were placed on Majer, leader of the intransigent right wing. Both wings of the party rallied their supporters for the coming congress of the SDP at Brno on November 14.

The line of the SDP since the liberation had been one of veering and tacking between the two big power concentrations. In questions of foreign policy, the SDP had followed a firm pro-Russian course, not unlike that of Benes-Masaryk. In economic questions, the SDP had been firmly, even aggressively, for the nationalization program.⁵ It had taken the difficult Ministry of Industry and made one of its ablest men, Lausman, available for the post.

If foreign policy and nationalization brought the SDP into line with the CP, questions of political democracy and individual liberty brought the SDP into continual clashes with the Stalinists. The SDP opposed the Stalinist's line on police powers, censorship, academic freedom, etc. The sharpest friction between the two parties, however, arose from the tactics employed by the Stalinists in the labor movement. The main pre-war base of the Social-Democracy had been its control of the trade-union movement. The new, unified trade-union movement came quickly under complete Stalinist domination, in large measure due to the pro-Stalinist role of leading Social-Democratic trade-unionists like Evzen Erban. The Social-Democratic press repeatedly protested against the atmosphere of terror which the Stalinists introduced into the unions and factories against those Social-Democrats who bucked the CP line. Aside from its traditional attachment to bourgeois democracy as an arena for parliamentary activity and the basis for a free labor movement, the Social-Democrats feared further CP inroads upon its already greatly shrunken mass base.

The Social-Democrats' Dilemma

But as much as it feared the growing power of the Stalinists, the Social-Democracy also feared an anti-CP bloc of the bourgeois parties. It saw in the latter not only an anti-Stalinist force, but also a possible anti-labor and anti-socialist force. The victory of such an anti-CP bloc could denote a long swing to the right. Even more depressing was the fear that such a bourgeois anti-Stalinist bloc might lead to civil war, in the course of which the Social-Democracy would be torn to pieces regardless of who emerged victorious.

5. It has been reported that the SDP initiated the proposal for the immediate nationalization of all enterprises employing over 200 workers at the time the Kosice program of the National Front was being formulated. The Stalinists hesitated on it, perhaps in order to check with Moscow first. Once they made up their minds, they took the play away from the SDP on this issue.

These fears in the ranks of the Social-Democracy found their expression in the alignment of forces at the Brno Congress. Neither Fierlinger nor Majer had a majority. A large bloc of delegates were afraid of both extremes. However, the increasingly open Stalinist course pursued by Fierlinger caused many loyal Social-Democrats to heed the charges of the right wing that the party president was steering a course toward organic fusion with the CP.

As a result, an anti-Fierlinger majority emerged behind Lausman, who did not have the vehement anti-Stalinist record of Majer. Lausman defeated Fierlinger for the party presidency by a vote of 283 to 182. The 40 per cent of the vote received by the pro-Stalinist wing represented a solid base of support for the CP, which in a time of crisis would prove itself more potent than the variegated majority led by Lausman.

The defeat of Fierlinger, however, was a clear danger signal for the Stalinists. The Social-Democracy would now prove an unreliable ally, especially since the outcome of the Brno Congress was considered an implied rejection of the CP-SDP agreement for a socialist bloc. The Stalinist press launched an attack upon the SDP majority and called the election of Lausman "a victory of the right wing." Lausman sought to mollify them with a pledge of allegiance to Russia, saying: "The efforts of true socialists throughout the world must rally around the Soviet Union, although their practical policy and tactics must take into account the particular conditions prevailing in their country."

However, the Stalinist campaign was not abated. Hardly a day went by without heated and lively exchanges between *Rude Pravo* and *Pravo Lidu*, the central organs of the CP and SDP respectively.⁶

With the beginning of December, the government undertook a wide publicity campaign in connection with the arrival of the first shipments of "Soviet" grain to supplement the drought-depleted granaries of Czechoslovakia. The bourgeois press was soon printing notices that the grain was so inferior that it had created technical difficulties for the millers. The bulk of the grain was reported to have come from Rumania, Lithuania and East Prussia, rather than from the Ukraine. The freight cars that delivered the grain were sent back with sugar for Russia. The Stalinists utilized the grain shipments for a wide campaign of telegrams of thanks to Stalin *personally*, from trade unions, local government bodies, etc.

The Stalinists did not limit themselves to a propaganda campaign against the Lausman Social-Democrats nor to whooping it up for Soviet grain. They had read the danger signals of the Brno Congress correctly. If they had been uncertain, the more aggressive tone assumed by the bourgeois parties after Fierlinger's defeat convinced them of the drift of events. The Stalinists everywhere stepped up the pace of preparations for the final showdown.

Remembering some of the Marxist teachings, especially the knowledge that the essence of state power is its armed force, the Stalinists began to push through a reorganization of the Security Police to place reliable "party men" in all key posts. The bourgeois parties responded with an open attack, both in the Assembly and the press, upon the manipulations within the police force.

6. The internal differences between the two parties were exacerbated by the establishment of the Cominform and the renewal of links between the Social-Democrats and the labor movement of the West, especially the British Labor Party. According to some sources, the fraternal delegates of the British Labor Party at the Brno Congress played an important behind-the-scenes role in the defeat of Fierlinger and the election of Lausman.

The Peoples' Party deputy Bunza said that senior officers of the Security Corps "made no secret of the fact that Communist Party members were given priority in appointments and promotion . . . The most oppressive feeling which takes away the people's joy of life and enthusiasm for work is fear of the ruling power, which knows neither moral nor political responsibility, and does not respect the freedom of the citizen." The Stalinists answered with an announcement of the Security Corps head in Slovakia, General Ferjencik, that another "anti-state plot" had been uncovered and 207 persons arrested, most of them having alleged ties with the People's Party or the Slovak Democratic Party.

The Terror Grows Bolder

The entire struggle now began to center on the Stalinists' manipulation of the Security Police. An article by the National-Socialist deputy Hora on December 23 in the daily paper of his party, *Svobodne Slovo*, described Czechoslovakia as a "police state." "Anyone who raises his voice in defense of the rights and liberties of man and protests against the heritage of the Protectorate and the Nazis, is immediately attacked as a protector and collaborator of traitors." The Special Secret Department of the State Security authorities, according to Hora, was "screening civil servants before their promotion." He demanded that the police cease acting as the agency of "a single party."

The National-Socialist deputies submitted a memorandum to the Ministers of Social Welfare and of Industry drawing attention to the reign of terror in the factories. Complaints came in from Slovakia charging that the police were beating and tormenting arrested "plotters" to secure confessions. The chairman of the Slovak National Council was indicted in Prague for having "criticized" (!) the Stalinist editor of *Prace*, the central organ of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement. The council refused to permit his extradition.

The year 1947 drew to a close amid alarms and growing tensions and the year 1948 opened with ominous forebodings of worse to come. The correspondent for Reuters closed out his year's work with the prediction that January would see a revolution in Czechoslovakia which would prove "the chief conflict for the future of Europe." The trade-union daily, *Prace*, replied that "This will be assiduously spread by those who have been prognosticating and *provoking* a Communist revolution in Czechoslovakia." (Italics not in original).

On January 8, a Communist Party conference of some 1300 agit-prop directors opened in Prague. The main themes were "The New Czechoslovakian Patriotism" and "The Ideology of the New Czechoslovakia." The eager Stalinist agitators did not let the grass grow under their feet in demonstrating the "new ideology."⁷ Already on the following day, *Pravo Lidu*, the Social-Democratic daily, announced that a new wave of terror against dissidents had begun in the factories.

The fanatics are smashing up the unity of the trade unions. . . . Reports on the elections to the factory trade-union groups show that the propaganda machine of the political parties [a discreet circumlocution for the CP—E. E.] has again been in full use. . . .

7. While the CP was mobilizing its forces and making dire threats, the Czech press carried the speech of Premier Dimitrov (the Gottwald of Bulgaria) in which he warned the socialist opposition in the Parliament as follows: "I have many times warned the members of Nikola Petkov's group, but they did not listen. They lost their heads and their leader now lies buried. Reflect on your own actions lest you suffer the same fate. . . . If you have not learned and do not try to learn your lesson, you will get a lesson you will remember forever. . . . At a moment when the budget is being submitted to the National Assembly, miserable chatterers, who talk like foreign gramophone records, stand up here to create a disturbance. . . . This will lead to no good for you. . . . If you will not vote for the budget, you will not fulfill your duty as people's representatives. Such as you have no place in the Grand National Assembly."

All improper practices are being employed to force people to vote in a certain way, instead of voting freely. Open threats against those who swim against the current are professed, including threats that they may lose their jobs. . . . Political terror in the factories is again on the agenda. . . . Even in factories with an uncontested Communist majority, the employees are fed up with these methods.⁸

On January 17, the Social-Democratic press published an important article exposing the Stalinist strategy for taking over all power. It stated that the Stalinists were grooming certain key people in all the other parties with the intention of splitting these parties at the decisive moment into "left" and "right" wings and reorganizing the National Committees on the basis of the "left" wings only.

The National-Socialist Party press announced that the days of great trial had arrived for the people of Czechoslovakia and called upon the people not to crack under CP pressure but to hold out for the elections. The latter had been expected in May, when the two-year term of the National Constituent Assembly would end. The National-Socialists now gave evidence that they did not think the anti-Stalinist forces could remain intact that long. The consolidation of police power by the Stalinists, the new arrests, the elimination of the remaining anti-Stalinist Social-Democrats from the trade-union apparatus, all indicated to them that the elections in May would find the Stalinists holding everyone by the throat, with an absolute CP majority a foregone conclusion.

The National-Socialist Strategy

Out of these considerations was born the new strategy of the bourgeois parties. This consisted of an intransigent stand against the Stalinist domination of the police and a resignation from the government if the Stalinists refused to submit to a majority vote. The outcome of this tactic, they naively thought, would be immediate elections, with the return of an anti-CP majority.

The National-Socialists, in agreement with the People's Party and the Slovak Democrats, began to unfold their strategy on February 5. They moved a proposal in the cabinet that a special committee of cabinet members be formed to investigate the Security Police. The proposal received seconds from all parties except the CP. The National-Socialists announced that they would present their proposal in resolution form for adoption at the next meeting. If the CP voted against, as it was obvious it would, the coalition would be broken up and the Assembly would have to constitute a new government on the police issue. The National-Socialists then proceeded to charge the Stalinists with obstructionist tactics in reference to the adoption of a constitution, and stated that if agreement could not be reached in ten days the Assembly should be dissolved and new elections held.

This demand convinced the Stalinists as to the strategy of the bourgeois parties and they began to make preparations to meet it. On February 8, a secret session of the central committee of the CP took place, according to National-Socialist sources. The preparations allegedly made at this session were such as would prepare the CP forces for either an immediate election or extra-legal mass action. Whether the preparations were made in this general form because the Czech Stalinist leadership, regarded as "weak sisters" in the Comintern from its earliest days, began to falter or whether it was necessary

8. On the same day the Stalinist press carried two significant items. One was a demand by Slansky, the CP boss, that there be a purge of the army, especially of those who "slander . . . our Slav allies." The other was that Gottwald had received a letter from Stalin himself, promising that a "great delegation of Soviet gymnasts" would soon arrive to partake in the coming Sokol conference.

to wait for instructions from Moscow cannot, of course, be known now.

Events now began to move with great rapidity. On February 12, the National-Socialist deputies in the Assembly's Security Committee, led by their party's general secretary, Vladimir Krajina, secured the adoption of a motion ordering Minister of Interior Nosek to appear before the committee for questioning and meanwhile to end all transfers in the Security Police. On February 13, the non-Stalinist majority in the cabinet adopted an order instructing the Minister of Interior to cancel a regulation of the Security Police chief for Bohemia providing for the replacement of regional police heads by CP appointees.

The next cabinet session was scheduled for February 17. When the ministers assembled, the Stalinists stalled for time by stating that Nosek could not be present on account of illness. The matter was placed on the agenda for February 20. On the evening of the 17th, the CP issued a special appeal to the people, asking that they be on the alert for a reactionary coup against the Gottwald government.

On February 20, the National-Socialist ministers did not attend the cabinet meeting but asked Gottwald in writing whether the cabinet decision on the Security Police adopted on the 13th had been carried out. Gottwald replied that the Minister of Interior would report in person at the cabinet meeting, along with information of the discovery of a new "anti-state plot." The National-Socialist ministers found the reply unacceptable and resigned their posts. The ministers belonging to the Slovak Democratic and People's Parties did likewise. The Social-Democrats stated their agreement with the bourgeois ministers on the police issue but refused to resign.

The Stalinists denounced the ministers who resigned as traitors and reactionary enemies of the republic and announced that they would under no circumstances reconstitute a government with them. They called for a reorganization of the National Front in the form of a "People's National Front."

To back up their demands, they called the masses out into the streets for monster demonstrations, utilizing the trade-union apparatus for this purpose and calling them in the name of the trade unions. The high point of the demonstrations was a one-hour protest strike. The bourgeois parties, in turn, called upon the people to be calm and assured them that the crisis would be solved in a constitutional manner.

What Were the Action Committees?

Benes, meanwhile, procrastinated in accepting the resignations. He evidently feared that acceptance would result in the formation of a CP-SP government, having full claims to legal existence on the basis of a slight parliamentary majority. Procrastination might lead to a new compromise. At this point, the Stalinists took steps to break through the impasse and went over from mass demonstrations to a call issued by Gottwald, on the evening of the 22nd, for the formation of the now well-known "Action Committees."

The Action Committees were extra-legal bodies, formed on a united-front basis with representatives of trade unions, farmers' associations, youth organizations, cultural groups, Partisans' organizations, writers' leagues, and pro-Stalinist dissidents from the other parties, most prominent among the latter being, of course, the Fierlinger Social-Democrats. The formal organization of the Action Committees differed from place to place and in each different sphere of action. However, the nucleus was everywhere provided by the CP.

A mass rally of representatives of the organizations enun-

crated above met on the evening of the 23rd and elected a Preparatory Central Action Committee to negotiate a new government. Action Committees were rapidly formed throughout the country on a local scale. Action Committees were also formed within the various mass organizations that were not yet under Stalinist control, like the Sokol movement. These Action Committees simply seized the headquarters of the various organizations, declared a reorganization of the leadership in such a manner as would place the neo-Stalinist types in control. In the localities, the Action Committees took over the functions of the National Committees by purging the latter of anti-Stalinists and reorganizing them with "reliable" people.

On February 24 the Fierlinger Social-Democrats seized control of the party headquarters and the party press and demanded that the party leadership support the Action Committees and the new government proposed by Gottwald. The Social-Democratic leaders capitulated, including Lausman, but excluding Majer and the intransigent right wing. Fierlinger was restored to the chairmanship of the party.

Meanwhile the Security Police announced the discovery of a plot on the part of the National-Socialist Party aimed at taking over the government by armed force. The Security Police raided the party headquarters and shut down its press. The headquarters of the Slovak Democratic and the People's Parties were taken over by pro-Stalinist elements within those movements. On February 25 Benes accepted the resignations of the bourgeois ministers and prepared to accept the new slate of ministers which Gottwald submitted.

The struggle was over.

What the naive National-Socialists began as a clever strategy within parliamentary channels, the Stalinists ended with lightning moves that combined legal with extra-legal measures and police terror with mass action. The resignations, undertaken not in dismay but with stern purpose, unloosed a situation which the bourgeois parties had not calculated upon and which they could not hope to master.

Once the Stalinists began mobilizing their forces, the parliamentary constructions of 51-49 ratios and 38-62 ratios became mere paper work. What Trotsky said to the German workers in 1932 about the specific weight of the party that bases itself mainly on the industrial proletariat as compared to the party that draws its support from the general population remains true even when the proletariat serves as the mass base for Stalinism.⁹

The New Government

The Stalinist victory was not without its drawbacks, however. The initiative undertaken by the National-Socialists had prematurely forced the Stalinists' hand in Czechoslovakia and upset their international timetable. The result was that the Czech coup had the effect of hastening American action on the Marshall Plan and rearmament and (it appears at the time of this writing) has had a detrimental effect upon the Stalinist chances in the Italian elections.

9. "... in the social struggle, votes are not decisive. The main army of fascism still consists of the petty bourgeoisie and new middle class; the small artisans and shopkeepers of the cities, the petty officials, the employees, the technical personnel, the intelligentsia, the impoverished peasantry. On the scale of election statistics, one thousand fascist votes weigh as much as a thousand Communist votes. But on the scales of the revolutionary struggle, a thousand workers in one big factory represent a force a hundred times greater than a thousand petty officials, clerks, their wives and their mothers-in-law. . . . The Social-Revolutionists were the party of the greatest numbers in the Russian Revolution. . . . They turned out to be a great national zero." Leon Trotsky, *Germany—The Key to the International Situation*, p. 21.

The new Gottwald cabinet reflected the composition of the Action Committees. Of the twenty-four members (including the unfortunate Masaryk), twelve were avowed members of the CP, although some represent non-party organizations, like the old veteran of the Czech Communist movement, Antonin Zapotocky, who became a vice-premier as a representative of the trade-union movement. The Minister of National Defense, Ludvik Svoboda, a holdover from the previous cabinet, is officially listed as a non-party man but is unofficially regarded by nearly everyone as a representative of the Russian general staff.

The Social-Democrats were given five posts, including one for the former "anti-Stalinist" party chairman, Lausman. The latter, however, was not returned to his former important post at the head of the nationalized industry. This job now went to the more reliable Fierlinger. The National-Socialist, Slovak Democrat and People's Parties were each given two posts.

It is not quite accurate, however, to say that these *parties* were given the posts. What really happened is that neo-Stalinist types from the ranks of these parties were given posts. These men are not responsible to their parties but are entirely creatures of the Stalinists. The National-Socialists in the cabinet are virtual unknowns. The People's Party ministers are men who were on the verge of being expelled from their party before the coup. One of them, the Minister of Transportation, Alois Petr, is one of the few prominent trade-union leaders from the ranks of the bourgeois parties. His elevation to the cabinet was, no doubt, motivated by a desire to enhance support from among the Catholic workers of Slovakia. The appearance of Zapotocky, president of the trade-union movement, of Erban, the secretary-general, and of Petr indicates a conscious effort to weight the cabinet with known leaders of the workers' economic struggles.

The other People's Party member in the cabinet is the priest, Father Josef Plojhar, serving as Minister of Health. He is typical of the neo-Stalinist type—part careerist, part confused idealist, part faker—so well illustrated in this country by Henry Wallace.

On February 27, Benes, war-time lecturer at the University of Chicago on how to make democracy work and the man who tried to outsmart Stalin, whimpered to the thundering Gottwald, "You speak to me like Hitler"—and humbly affixed his signature to the paper that made the new cabinet official. Czechoslovakia was *ingeschalten*. The new bureaucratic-collectivism was firmly in the saddle and the Minister of Interior, Nosek, spoke the truth when he informed the country in a radio speech that a membership card in the Communist Party is "today the most valuable paper in political life."

ERNEST ERBER

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The Triangle of Forces

Notes on the Czech Coup

The Stalinist coup de force in Czechoslovakia has had a double impact. On the one hand, it has greatly sharpened the tension between Washington and Moscow and raised a new wave of war fears. On the other, it has posed new questions about the nature of Stalinism and its potentialities outside of Russia itself.

It is the second of these that we wish to discuss here. In doing so, we necessarily face the difficulties of analyzing a phenomenon which is still in the process of developing; one thing which is certain is that Stalinism, both inside and outside of Russia, is not a finished social formation. It is not yet ready to sit for a leisurely portrait, as capitalism did for Marx in his time, but must be examined through snapshots taken in motion.

So also the full significance of fascism did not appear on the day after Mussolini's "march on Rome." That event did, however, destroy a great many illusions—as even a snapshot can—and it brought about a fair amount of the unlearning which is a precursor of knowledge.

In this sense, one aspect of the Czech events is perfectly clear. The view hitherto seriously held by some Marxists that the Stalinist parties are merely a variety of working-class social-reformism—parties whose mode of betrayal is capitulation to their own bourgeoisie at critical junctures—this view is given its quietus. It does not matter that the Socialist Workers Party (the official-orthodox-canonical Trotskyists), in its *Militant*, still writes that the Czech CP was "capitulating" to Benes and Masaryk. Such paranoiac politicians can now be left to their own hasheesh pipes without disturbing them with polemics.

Our own analysis of the Stalinist parties as both anti-working-class and anti-capitalist, as political representatives of the new bureaucratic-collectivist exploitive system of Russia, more than ever is confirmed as the starting point. This does not mean that it exhausts the problems raised by Stalinism in the modern world. The advantage of a Marxist analysis is that it is not thrown into a theoretical crisis of confusion by new events but rather given new material for its further development and clarification.

1

The mistake of the bewildered theoreticians of the Fourth International is curiously reflected in the strategy of the Benes-Masaryk *Realpolitiker* who touched off the coup. The National-Socialist and People's Party representatives who precipitated the events by resigning from the government obviously expected that the parliamentary crisis so evoked would naturally be resolved according to the consecrated rules of the parliamentary game. They too (like our unfortunate SWP) thought they were playing with just another gang of bourgeoisified reformist politicians of unconventional origin.

What was revealed, instead, was the pitiful impotence of the bourgeois democracy to stand up against Stalinism's march to full power.

Democratic capitalism is simply not viable in Europe today. Masaryk mirrored its fate: its only elbow room even for a courageous gesture is in choosing the manner of its passing-away. Only armed force remains available for European capi-

talism to stem the advance of Stalinism—armed force organized internally in a militaristic Bonapartism merging into out-right fascism (such as De Gaulle is preparing for France), or the direct employment of armed force such as may unleash the First Atomic War.

A western capitalism, so armed to the teeth and so maintained in artificial existence while Washington pumps Marshall plans through its veins (keeping it alive like the famous Carrel-Lindbergh chicken heart)—such a capitalism can gain even a historical reprieve only if eventually the capitalist colossus of the West defeats the bureaucratic colossus of the East at Armagedon. The legions of the degenerating Roman Empire also regularly defeated the encroaching barbarians, but only because the victorious legions were legions of . . . barbarians.

The theory of the lesser evil itself degenerates with capitalism. Is capitalist democracy Europe's "lesser evil" as against totalitarian Stalinism? For the theory of the lesser evil to make even its usual sense, there must be two *practical* alternatives; for the lesser-evildoers are nothing if not "practical." But capitalist democracy is not now a practical alternative even in the sense in which that notorious phrase is used by shortsighted opportunists.

Capitalism can remain democratic in form only as long as there is *some* remnant of social dynamism left in the old system. In Europe it is spent, and is now overdrawing its account. There is only one social force in old Europe whose *interests* are both anti-capitalist and anti-Stalinist and which therefore has the social power to cut itself loose from the symmetrical totalitarianisms on east and west. That is the working class.

2

Everything hinges on the fighting capacity of the European working class. That is why one examines the Czech events for the play of forces within the working class during the crucial period of Stalinism's reaching-out for power, though we will see why the picture so gained cannot yet be a definitive one.

What is perfectly clear, again, is negative. Those sections of the Trotskyist movement which, in the past couple of years especially, have put forward the slogan "Communist Party to power!" as a correct strategy for Europe; which have maintained that this slogan is not different from nor less correct than the British version "Labor Party to power!"—these face the complete bankruptcy of their politics.

The theory behind this slogan was that it was a mere repetition of Lenin's "Oust the capitalist ministers!" in 1917. The theory was that the Communist Parties of Europe, being basically social-reformist, would certainly "expose themselves" either by refusing to take power (like the Mensheviks and S-Rs of 1917) or, if they were compelled to take power (like the German Social-Democrats of 1918-19), by merely administering the capitalist machinery in a compromise with the bourgeoisie.

The Czech CP took power and "ousted the capitalist ministers." If the SWP therefore deduces that the Stalinists "must be" capitulating to Benes and Masaryk, it is because the events of life cannot contradict deductions from "first principles"—in theology.

What is more important is a second corollary of the "CP to power!" slogan. This was the claim that the taking of power by the CP would produce such a wave of responsive enthusiasm and revolutionary élan (due to the workers' illusions about the Stalinists' revolutionary character) that the resulting mass upsurge from below would build up an insurrectionary wave from the grass roots which would roll over the heads of the Stalinists themselves, which the Stalinists would be powerless to stem. Indeed, for this reason the CP would be unwilling to take power in the first place, for fear of awakening the sleeping giant. So the theory went.

The slogan was wrong and the theory was false: the Stalinists are not simply social-reformists but *anti-capitalist and totalitarian* as well as anti-socialist. The tactics that applied to Kerensky and Ramsay MacDonald could not be mechanically applied to Gottwald and Thorez. The Czech experience now demonstrates in life that the second corollary was false also. There was no such revolutionary wave from below unleashed by the Stalinist coup.

3

But did not the press reports indicate that what took place in Czechoslovakia was indeed a revolutionary rising resembling the great October Revolution in Russia in 1917? So went the intimations of the bourgeois press. Wasn't there a general strike, weren't there "soviets," didn't the working class support the Stalinist coup? In short, wasn't the CP road to power in Czechoslovakia essentially the same as that of Lenin and Trotsky in Russia?

It is easy to see why the bourgeois commentators should be unable to understand, or be uninterested in, the differences between the Czech coup and the proletarian revolution: both are anti-capitalist, and the bourgeoisie is less concerned with the motivation of its despoiler than with the fact of its spoliation, like other victims. But among radicals the question has led to two quite opposite interpretations of the events. These are:

(1) The Czech CP was losing influence among the workers; the masses were turning against Stalinism to such an extent that the coup de force was necessary in order to forestall its ouster from power. (See Rudzienski's article in this issue.)

(2) The overwhelming majority of the working class actively and enthusiastically supported the CP; and this must make us question the role of the working class in the struggle for socialism.¹

The evidence available does not justify either of these views. But whether one surmises that the CP was losing proletarian support or had it tucked away in a vestpocket, it is not this question which leads to the greatest insight into the play of class forces in Czechoslovakia. It is quite probable, to say the least, that the majority of the working class was still

1. The article by Irving Howe in *Labor Action* of March 8, "Observations on the Events in Czechoslovakia," is a crass enough example of this reaction. Howe does not draw any theoretical conclusion about the role of the working class—he substitutes an exhortation to nourish the "flickering but still beautiful socialist dream"—but his view of the relation between the working class and the Stalinist coup is there. It is that "the pattern of recent events makes quite clear that the Stalinists had the active support of the bulk of the workers and unions. OTHERWISE THEY COULD NOT HAVE SEIZED POWER." (My emphasis.) If on the one hand the Stalinists cannot seize power AGAINST the working class, and on the other hand DID seize power with the active support of the workers, what we have here is not a "Stalinist coup" but a proletarian revolution unfortunately led by the CP—to be sure, a proletarian bureaucratic-collectivist revolution. Howe's analysis is false, both factually and politically, in closing the door ("Otherwise they could not have taken power") to that which is precisely the Stalinists' aim: to take power from above. Whether we, in turn, can close the door to the opposite—the possibility of the Stalinists taking power on the swell of a real revolutionary upsurge—will be considered below.

overwhelmingly pro-CP in sentiment, in the sense and for the reasons discussed in the next section. But from the viewpoint of examining the nature of Stalinism, what deserves attention is the fact that *the actual role of the working-class mass in the events was essentially a passive one.*

Was It a Proletarian Revolution?

The Marxist views of proletarian revolution have been so overlaid by Stalinism that this comment requires explanation today.

In the first place, there is no evidence of the entrance en masse of the Czech working class onto the stage of action in the fashion that has characterized every real proletarian revolutionary upsurge—whether one that was more or less spontaneous or one that was organized and planned (like the Russian October). The first two installments of Victor Serge's book, now running in *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*, are enough to show the vital difference.

What has characterized them all is the fact that—all the way down to layers of the working class that may not have previously known even elementary organization, all the way down to raw, backward, even unpoliticalized strata—the working class in its mass became not merely spectators of the doers and movers on top (applauding or disapproving, i.e., "supporting" or "not supporting") but themselves became the doers and actors, the movers and shakers, a *class in motion*. That is the meaning of Trotsky's remark, in his biography of Stalin, that during the October days that shook the world, the Bolshevik Central Committee *lagged behind* the masses' action; that is why Lenin felt it was so desperately urgent that the insurrection not be delayed lest the floodtide of the masses' upsurge be missed. For Lenin it was not *he* who was "setting the date" for the revolution.

The proletarian revolution never has been ridden like a bridled horse but only like a whirlwind. It has unleashed wild energies, which the revolutionists have tried to "lead." It is a bureaucratic view of the relation between proletarian revolution and the revolutionary party which finds it merely in the fact that the masses "support" the latter. Before October the Russian masses supported Kerensky and therefore, insofar as they did, did *not* exercise their class strength from below, did *not* seize arms, did *not* seize the land, did *not* demonstrate. The Bolshevik victory was not sealed merely because the masses switched their "support" but because the masses did throw off these shackles from on top and acted in their own name. When this happened they became Bolsheviks.

In the Czech coup of the Stalinists there was not a whiff of this heart-and-soul of the proletarian socialist revolution, the characteristic moreover which gives the revolution its overwhelmingly *democratic* impulsion.

Gottwald's Action Committees had no more resemblance to soviets than the elections in Stalinist Russia have to soviet democracy. The soviets were revolutionary rank-and-file councils, representative institutions whose function was precisely to involve the broadest strata of the masses in the tide of action. The Czech Action Committees were apparatus shock troops of carefully picked Stalinist supporters, whose function was to seize levers of control behind the backs of the masses; organized without the democratic participation of the masses, and turned on and off like a faucet.

Of this mold are the cadres of a putsch or the stormtroops of a counter-revolution. If the Action Committees had had the slightest resemblance to soviets, they could not have been

packed up the day after the coup like a fire brigade that is no longer needed.

So also with the rest of the CP's "mass action from below"—the union resolutions, delegations and herded demonstrations; and the hourlong general strike (whether it was complete as some reports say, or ragged as do others) after which the workers went back to their benches, to read about the "revolution" in the evening papers.

Business As Usual

The Czech Stalinists did not topple the bourgeois power from below but snatched it at the tops, against the backdrop of staged demonstrations. Indeed, they had had the main levers of power in their hands since the "liberation," though a minority in the cabinet. In this sense it was even less of an overturn than the Nazi seizure of power in Germany; and the CP's methods were fitted to the task.

Side by side with the extra-legal force of the Action Committees and the terrorism of the Security Police went *the maintenance of parliamentary forms*. While a coup de force in actuality, it was carefully and systematically kept by the Stalinists within the forms of a constitutional change of government.

It would be quite wrong to believe that this was done *only* to deceive or placate Czech morons, foreign liberals, Wallaces or Archbishops of Canterbury. The preservation of parliamentary forms, and even of bourgeois captives and turncoats in the cabinet, served the far more important purpose of limiting the elbow room for the initiative of the masses, maintaining the air of "business as usual" rather than of revolution in the handing-over of the state machine to the new caretakers, keeping the masses from taking the center of the stage—avoiding precisely the outburst of that revolutionary élan which neither the new nor the old masters desired.

4

What accounted for this ability of the Stalinists to keep the working masses on the sidelines, to shepherd them to and from demonstrations in the midst of a power struggle, in the first place to gain the pro-CP sympathies of their majority? The reasons are neither new nor obscure.

(1) The starting point is the fact that the Czech workers, like the workers of most of Europe, have had their bellyful of capitalism and in their vast majority look with hope only to socialism. This is the rockbottom basis of the attraction of the working class toward the CP, as the only party of meaningful size which *claims* to be for socialism, as the party which still sports the mantle of the greatest revolution in the history of man. That illusion has not ceased to dazzle.

(2) But still, after all that has happened, cannot the workers see through the CP? Cannot they see the horribly brutal totalitarianism of the Russian slave system and take warning? Can they really have any illusions about the "socialist" character of the earth's most monstrous prison house of the proletariat? Can they be that "stupid"?

It is only liberal snobs who can try to understand the complex situation in terms of the workers' "stupidity." Especially in Eastern Europe, where capitalism is not only bankrupt (it is that in America too in another sense) but visibly in shambles and putrefying at a terrific rate, where it has not only no attractive power but where no half class-conscious worker can dream of anything but burying it, where all this is not merely a matter of theory or opinion but of what is to be done today

and tomorrow morning—what alternative is there for a worker who is attracted by the socialist protestations of Stalinism but repelled by its Russian reality?

Cling to the bourgeois politicians—Benes & Co., forever protesting their love and friendship for the Slav brother in the Kremlin? The whole impetus of the workers' struggles in the past decades had been directed against these bourgeois politicians and against their known and old evils, and not against the new, still mooted, less tried evils of Stalinism. Throw up hands in futility and relapse into a non-political coma? It is easier to do this in America. A real socialist alternative? There can be no doubt of the great numbers who looked for one and the greater numbers who would; but there was no revolutionary socialist party in Czechoslovakia and none in sight before the bend in the road.

In such an impasse arises, if not enthusiastic support for the Stalinists, then at least bewildered toleration of it or the sheer immobilization of uncertainty and confusion. Until a revolutionary socialist party of democratic Bolshevism takes root there is no way of squeezing out of the cul-de-sac.

In the Shadow of the Kremlin

(3) All that is common to much of Europe. In Czechoslovakia the Stalinists' strength rested on more than their appeal to an alternative to capitalism. The country since the end of the war had been fully in the Russian orbit, a dependency of Russia. Every section of Czechoslovakia was aware of that; even the pro-Western bourgeois-democratic politicians gritted their teeth and vowed that "we have to get along with Russia," "we cannot fight Russia," etc. Up to now Russia has kept the country on a long leash; in one way, all that happened now is that the Kremlin has shortened the leash into a noose.

But in Czechoslovakian reality, "we cannot fight Russia" became "we cannot fight the CP." Or rather, that was a task which involved more than merely one's opinion of the CP's "brand of socialism," but also the whole precarious and internationally complicated foundation of the country's very existence.

(4) "We have to get along with the CP—can't we perhaps *use* it?" This question arises quite apart from the opportunism of mere bandwagon jumpers, numerous as such are. If one cannot even try to fight it to a standstill, in a country where Russian power looms over all, then the best thing to do is to attempt to ride it and salvage what one can. In their own way and for bourgeois interests this is what Benes and Masaryk tried to do; this forlorn hope has its impress on working-class attitudes too. Besides—who knows?—maybe the *Russians* are slavedealers and butchers and maybe that is the way communism had to develop in that backward country, but—cannot we hope that *our* Stalinists (who, after all, are Czechs and not Muscovites) may be different and "not so bad"?

(5) There are other ways of rationalizing support of Stalinism in spite of at least a partial appreciation of its nature. Especially where the only alternative seems to be the impossible one of a revived capitalism (and not a democratic one, to boot) the atmosphere is also created for the growth of the vicious concept of the "totalitarian stage of socialism": Stalinism is bad, but maybe it is the necessary road through which we must pass to real socialism, through the progressive democratization of a Stalinist regime no longer threatened by capitalist encirclement. . . .

(6) On the one hand, then, there is the tendency of sections of workers to support the CP because they believe the CP is for some kind of socialism. On the other hand, the so-

cialist ideas held by such workers are themselves insensibly penetrated by the poison of Stalinism itself.

First among these poisonous concepts is the notion that the nationalization of industry is ipso facto socialistic, and that, given this much, complete socialism can follow if the regime is allowed to develop in peace. If the official theoreticians of the Fourth International can put forward their own variant of this syphilitic notion—nationalization equals workers' state—rank-and-file workers may understandably fall victim to its cruder forms.

The other concept of Stalinism which is at hand to overlay the socialist thinking of the masses is the abandonment of the fundamental Marxist principle that socialism can be achieved only through the self-activity of the masses themselves and never handed to them from above by "leaders." The ideology of Stalinism encourages the passivity of the mass in preparation for their coups.

What we have touched upon in these six points are not finished phenomena; the relative weight of each is still indeterminate. They are, however, forces at work in the absence of an organized revolutionary Marxist vanguard which indubitably played a role in a situation, such as that in Czechoslovakia, where the events took place under the shadow of Russian power, whether the Russian army was in the country or not. To generalize the potentialities of Stalinism from this specific situation is quite a leap in the dark, more useful for rationalizing a preconceived conclusion than for scientifically exploring new ones. The Czech coup—to use a military figure—was essentially the straightening out of a salient in the Russian front in Eastern Europe, not a new advance into Europe.

There is no reason for Marxists to follow the panic-stricken impressionists who have just about decided that the working class is doomed to accept the Stalinist counterfeit as the good coin of socialism. We cannot close the door to fresh understanding of the phenomenon of Stalinism as it develops; but it is necessary to understand how workers, aspiring to socialist democracy, fall into bewilderment, uncertainty and uneasy passivity when they see before them no way to turn in order to effectuate their socialist ideals; while meanwhile the Stalinists assail their ears with a barrage of propaganda about their "new democracy." Those who seize the opportunity to reject a working class in such an impasse for its "stupidity" are ten times more bewildered by events than the workers they scorn and a hundred times more impotent.

5

On the basis of such a state of passive acceptance, the Stalinists are in a position to do that in which they are past masters—to *manipulate* the masses. Their success is not due in the first place to mere skill and apparatus-juggling; it works only on the basis of a class which is *not* yet in motion, not in upsurge.

That is why the Stalinists themselves, for all the necessity they are under to gingerly use the club of working-class action against the bourgeoisie, do not themselves *want* to arouse the class in the manner of the Russian October. Like the bourgeoisie itself, they *may* be compelled to call on working-class action to take the stage to a greater or lesser extent, while seeking to keep it within limits. They can usually do so all the more freely in proportion as there is no organized working-class opposition to crystallize the anti-Stalinist democratic revolutionary forces. Insofar as this is true, and in circumstances vital for them, the Stalinists may be readier to take the long chance on being able to control the masses in move-

ment than they showed themselves to be in Czechoslovakia. Where no alternative threatens, even the most reactionary bourgeois will most freely do likewise. The Czech events show that the CP's perspective is to *avoid* unleashing the revolutionary initiative of the masses.

The Lesser Evil for the Bourgeoisie

Rather their aim is to manipulate the workers' movement as a kind of Greek chorus in the wings. Their aim is no clean sweep of the old bourgeois state machine; on the contrary they have a real need to try to integrate into their own regime as many of the old political figures and bureaucrats as possible, to put them into new jobs as bureaucrats of the Stalinist power.

For the old bureaucrats (even for amenable bourgeois who are willing to accept careers as factory managers and technical intelligentsia) there is a *personal* "way out" in the Stalinist revolution which does not exist for the bourgeoisie as such—a personal way out which a proletarian socialist revolution does not offer, in its need to *smash* the old state machine and build a new one on a basis of proletarian democracy.

Thus the Stalinist bureaucracy in the new satellites is recruited from and absorbs the adaptable elements of the old regime. To this limited degree (again, we are speaking of a situation where it is impossible for capitalism to go on in the old way) the Stalinist revolution is the "lesser evil" for the bourgeoisie as compared with the socialist revolution.

The bourgeoisie has little interest in trying to mobilize the masses against the Stalinist usurpers—they still have reason to fear the masses even more. At no time, therefore, during the Czechoslovakian crisis did the "democratic" politicians dream of appealing to the people over the heads of Gottwald and Nosek; at no time did they stop counseling order, quiet, and reliance on the top parliamentary maneuvers.

6

This, to be sure, is exactly what should have been expected from these "defenders of democracy"; but the Czech situation itself raises the question, speculative but not farfetched in given circumstances, of what the working-class problem would be if the bourgeoisie had decided to take a stand.

What if Benes had resisted the Stalinist coup—or if not Benes, then De Gasperi in Italy or Schuman in France, perhaps pressed to resist by American imperialism? What if civil war were to break out—bourgeois democracy formally ranged on the one side, totalitarian Stalinism on the other?

The speculative problem deserves discussion not mainly in order to anticipate the future but for the light it throws on the class relationships engendered by the Stalinist advance. Just as the situation itself obviously recalls the line-up of the Spanish civil war, so also the main lines of the answer are provided by that experience.

In the Spanish civil war, behind each camp—the Loyalist bourgeois democracy (Azana) and totalitarian fascism (Franco)—loomed a rival foreign imperialism in the background. Trotsky and our movement took the stand of material support (not political support) to the Loyalist camp, while recognizing that such a policy could last only as long as the international imperialist rivalry remained a subordinate element and did not actually convert the Spanish war into a world war in which the former would be absorbed (like the case of Serbia in World War I).

But meanwhile, we said, the task of socialists is twofold: to *defend democracy* against fascism, but to seek to defend it by our own (i.e., revolutionary) methods—by building a proletarian power in the democratic camp and fighting behind the banner of that proletarian power, not under the political banner of the bourgeois democrats. The programmatic aim of the revolutionists in Spain was to turn the civil war into a revolutionary war, *through* the defense of democracy against fascism—in order to defend democracy against fascism, since in the last analysis only the proletarian socialist revolution could actually defeat the totalitarian threat. This last point was even truer in Czechoslovakia than in Spain, given the thin hair by which bourgeois democracy was already suspended.

The very comparison with Spain, however, raises the vital *difference*. In the Spanish civil war, the whole of the working class was actively, enthusiastically and consciously on the side of the Loyalist government. On the other side was capitalist reaction in its starkest form—fascism.

Not so in Czechoslovakia. At best the decisive sections of the working class were actively in neither camp, at worst at least passively supporting or tolerating the Stalinist coup—disoriented precisely by that characteristic of totalitarian Stalinism which blinds so many socialists who are far better educated politically than the Czech worker-in-the-street: namely, the fact that Stalinism is not only anti-socialist and anti-working-class but also anti-capitalist.

Not only is this no small difference, it is precisely this difference which makes the present situation in Europe so crucial a test of the necessity for Marxist reorientation, which characterizes the three-cornered social struggle of our day, and which we discuss in the next section.

In Czechoslovakia, the “Spanish policy” would mean a conscious effort to swing at least a vanguard of the proletariat toward an active anti-Stalinist position and into the anti-Stalinist camp, to organize a vanguard in that camp under its own class banner, its own class slogans and aims and methods—to break through working-class passivity not by acting as the “left wing” of Stalinist totalitarianism (the SWP form of suicide) but by organizing the proletarian resistance and taking over the leadership and hegemony of the anti-Stalinist struggle.

7

The CP victory in Czechoslovakia was not completely different from the totality of Russian expansion since the end of the war, but so many of its features and effects show differences in degree that it may (looking back upon it in a future year) stand out as a divide.

For there was a difference worth noting between the rape of Czechoslovakia and the way in which Russia grabbed its other East European satellites, the Baltics, Poland, etc. The latter countries were openly taken at the point of the Russian army's bayonets (or in Yugoslavia, by Tito's Stalinist army) whereas there was no Russian army on Czech soil in February. The Czech CP was not handed the government by a Russian general; it took over complete control under its own steam, so to speak. All the Stalinists needed in Poland et al. was a military conquest, not a state coup. In Czechoslovakia the open Stalinist dictatorship was won from within, not imposed from without.

But isn't this a difference in superficial form only, in view

of the factors already mentioned? The Stalinists had entrenched themselves at the levers of the real state power while the Russian occupation army was still in the country, and the relationship of forces was already fixed when the last **Russian soldier departed**. The rest of the game was the working out of this gambit. And even after the Russians were gone, the shadow of the Kremlin determined the political climate of Prague; we have stressed that even the bourgeois politicians understood that Czechoslovakia was a dependency of Russia. Under these circumstances, does it make much difference whether or not a Russian regiment was around in the life?

The answer is clearly no, from the point of view of the Czech CP's ability to take over once it had decided to (or once the Kremlin had decided). It was no gamble for them. *But was it a dress rehearsal? Was it an experiment, under conditions where fumbling would be inconvenient but not fatal, in the mechanism of the Stalinist coup, from which other Stalinist parties could learn? The field trial of a road to power which would be more necessary, and might be more dangerous, farther to the west?*

The Character of Our Epoch

It is enough to raise the question, since we are not crystal-gazing at the moment. Raising the question, not answering it, means politically that we recognize the emergence of the bureaucratic-collectivist empire as a bidder for the historic role of successor to a doomed capitalism. This much we have said before: if it is worth noting again, it is merely that Czechoslovakia has made the development a bit plainer.

The end of the Second World war has indeed ushered in a new stage in our epoch of wars and revolutions. In most of the world, and above all in Europe, it is no longer enough for working-class revolutionists to chart the lines of class struggle against capitalism in the assurance that every blow struck against capitalism is a blow for the socialist future. They face two enemies: a capitalism which is anti-Stalinist and a Stalinism which is anti-capitalist.

What has emerged into the light is a three-cornered struggle for power; it was implicit in Czechoslovakia; it is this utterly new constellation of social forces which disorients and confuses the working-class movement.

It is the recognition of this new stage which is the basis of the politics of the third camp. The alternative to it is support of capitalism (*vide* the reformists) or left-handed support of Stalinism (*vide* the Fourth International majority). From that dichotomy there is no escape to freedom.

That is why one of the frontiers of Marxism is today in the analysis of what is happening in Eastern Europe, where the old rulers and the new barbarism stand face to face, while the only force for a regenerated humanity, the working class, pauses in bewilderment.

Without the working-class struggle, no socialism: this is truer than ever before. What is not true is that anti-capitalist struggle automatically equals socialist struggle. The conscious planned intervention and leadership of a revolutionary Marxist party, anti-capitalist and anti-Stalinist, which has not been poisoned at its source by a false conception of the relation between socialism and workers' democracy, is more than ever the key to the possibility of victory.

HAL DRAPER

The Capitulations of Mr. Benes

The Road of Struggle Against Stalinism

In 1938, at the time of the Munich Pact, Czechoslovakia's "allies" capitulated to Hitler's dictate and accepted the dismemberment of this small country. The representatives of the Daladier and Chamberlain governments in Prague awakened President Benes at midnight in the ancient residence of the old kings of Bohemia, *Hrad*, demanding his signature to the imperialist document which dismembered his country. Benes, who for several days had been under the constant pressure of his generous "allies," signed his own capitulation and that of the Czechoslovakian republic. On the following day he called his people to "calm" and "work." The people wept in the streets of *Zlata Praha* (Golden Prague) but obeyed the president. Thus ended Masaryk's republic.

A few days later Benes resigned the presidency and went into exile. Scarcely half a year later, in March 1939, the columns of German steel entered Czechoslovakia, putting an end to the Second Republic of Munich, born with Benes's signature, and proclaiming the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. In September of that same year the Nazis invaded Poland. We recall these facts in order to familiarize our readers with political atmosphere of Czechoslovakia, and in order to indicate the historic importance of the latest events in this country.

This February, a stunned world stared with astonishment at the march of the Stalinist cohorts through Prague. As we know, since the invasion of the Russian troops, this country had been governed by a "popular democracy" of a type standard in Eastern Europe. The governmental coalition consisted of Stalinists, pro-Stalinist Social-Democrats, Catholics, Benes's National-Socialists, and the Slovak Democratic Party. However, the key positions, such as the police and the Ministry of Interior, were in the hands of the Stalinists.

The Social-Democratic Party, was "reformed" in the Stalinist manner, that is to say, a pro-Stalinist leadership was imposed, headed by Zdenek Fierlinger, Benes's former ambassador to Moscow. The old Social-Democratic leaders disappeared from the scene. Benes's party accepted collaboration in view of the Kosice pact, where Benes, unlike the Polish government-in-exile, accepted Stalinist "liberation."

Back to Czarist Pan-Slavism

Czech nationalist sentiment against the Germans and a reactionary Pan-Slavic feeling, along with a nationalist sympathy for Stalin's Russia, served to knit the coalition together. It is strange that in this very small Slav country, which until lately was quite Germanized, reactionary Pan-Slavism has very great strength. The new government nationalized the industries, effected an agrarian reform, introduced a system of state capitalism, and proceeded to the expulsion of all Germans and Hungarians from the national territory. In Czechoslovakia, Stalin's "democratic revolution" took the form of a nationalistic and Pan-Slavic reaction, dreamed of for decades by the reactionary Right under the leadership of Karel Kramar, leader of the National-Democracy, friend of

the czars and enemies of socialism as well as of Masaryk and Benes.

The Sudetenland, annexed in 1938, was completely depopulated. The Sudeten Germans had to abandon their possessions, their homes, and their country, and depart in a few hours for Bavaria. The tragedy struck the old Social-Democratic workers, who with great sacrifice had fought against Heinlein and his Nazi Party of Sudeten Germans and against Hitler. The German Social-Democratic Party of Czechoslovakia ended up in concentration camps for loyally defending Masaryk's republic and combating the German Nazis. Such was the cruel and bloody fate of all German anti-fascists and revolutionary socialists. The nationalist anger reached such a point that all German-speaking Jews were considered Germans and suffered the consequences. University professors were expelled from their posts, doctors and lawyers were prevented from practicing their professions, etc.

It is necessary to explain that before 1914 Czechoslovakia was part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy of the Hapsburgs, in which the German language and German culture dominated. Consequently, the whole bourgeoisie and members of the middle class spoke German, the Czechs as well as the Jews. Now the German-speaking Jews must be purged for the "crime" of having been born in the circle of German culture. This is how Stalin's "democratic revolution" manifested itself in the heart of old cultured Europe.

Old Hands at Capitulation

In contradistinction to Poland, neither the bourgeois nor workers' opposition offered any resistance to the Russian invasion. The Czech bourgeoisie and middle class have a collaborationist and opportunist tradition. In 1938 Benes surrendered the power to the executed President Hacha; Hacha in turn tranquilly handed the Second Republic over to Hitler and Baron Neurath, the Fuehrer's second lieutenant. Only the women of the people wept in the streets when the martial footsteps of the gray legions sounded in Vaclavske Namiesti (the Plaza of Wenceslas).

The Czech bourgeoisie collaborated with the Nazis, saving their fortunes and goods. Even the Social-Democrats submitted to the totalitarian pressure. The Stalinists followed the directives of the Stalin-Nazi Pact, aiding Nazism to carry out the conquest. Soon after the invasion of Russia, "Comrades" Gottwald, Slansky, Zapotocky, et al. discovered the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia and began to organize the resistance.

The Czech bourgeoisie accepted collaboration willingly, because the incorporation of Czechoslovakia into the "Greater Reich" represented enormous markets for Czech industry, while the expense of occupation had to be paid for by the people. Raised in the school of Austrian and German Social-Democracy, the Czech Social-Democracy had no knowledge of revolutionary traditions and bent peacefully before the Nazi barbarism. The Stalinists, true to their master, followed the orders of the Kremlin.

After signing the capitulation, Benes collaborated tranquilly with Roosevelt and Churchill and signed agreements with them accepting the program of Central European federa-

tion with Poland. But when the Russians intimated they were opposed to such a federation, Benes facetiously refrained from this program and accepted Stalinist policy. When the Russian armies occupied Eastern Europe, he hastened to dissociate himself from his allies and protectors in England and America, and signed the pact of Kosice which accepted Russian protection.

Thus the Stalinists had no need to uproot the opposition because there was no dangerous opposition. They entered Prague as triumphant "liberators." The Stalinist government was "democratic" because it had no need for terroristic measures. In reality, from the first moment, this government was far more totalitarian than in Poland, for example, because the nation surrendered and submitted voluntarily, corrupted and demoralized by the capitulations of Benes, Hacha, and the Stalinists.

How, then, are we to explain the latest Stalinist coup and the political crisis in Czechoslovakia? *By the popular disillusionment with the Stalinist regime.*

Two years of Russian government in Czechoslovakia demonstrated to the Czechs the "virtues" and "advantages" of the Stalinist dictatorship. The products of Czech industry had to be delivered to Russia at a low price, thus depriving the people of their principal source of income. Even before the war the Czech worker had been cheaper than the German, without his product being inferior in any way. Now, the level of wages had to be forced even lower, as in all the eastern countries of Europe.

The discontent of the proletariat found its distant expression in the change of Social-Democratic leadership not so long ago, when the more independent elements replaced the pro-Stalinists. The middle class and the peasantry were also discontented and disillusioned with regard to the totalitarian expansion of state capitalism. The popular discontent penetrated the leaderships of the parties collaborating with the Stalinists, the former demanding that the Stalinists give them a greater measure of control.

Drive Behind the Coup

On the other hand, the international tension and the political preparations for the war against capitalism in the Kremlin do not allow the existence of a country in the Soviet zone whose proletariat receives better wages than obtain in Russia, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Poland; it is necessary to lower the living standards of the Czech people and to force developed Czech industry, in the first place the war industries, to work for the Stalinist bureaucracy. The relative equilibrium between the Stalinist party and the other collaborating parties did not permit the realization of this new task. On the other hand, the ties of the bourgeois and Social-Democratic parties with the Anglo-Americans not only weakened the solidity of the Stalinist dictatorship but endangered new plans and even political and military secrets of the "Soviets."

Thus these three factors forced the Stalinists to "consolidate" their dictatorship at any price. The discovery of the arms stored by the Stalinists in Olomue exposed the preparations of the Stalinists for the elimination of their collaborators. The Stalinists responded with complete domination of the police apparatus, from which they excluded all their collaborators. The Stalinist Minister of the Interior, Nosek, prepared to play the part of the "bloodhound," like the notorious Noske of Germany. The night of the long knives approached.

Seeing this situation, the Social-Democratic, National-

Socialist, Catholic and Slovak ministers resigned in order to isolate the Stalinists and force them to retreat, as is the custom in parliamentary democracy. However, there was no parliamentary system in Czechoslovakia, nor had there been one since 1938. The proof of this was given by the actions of Nosek, who, while Benes was rejecting the resignations of the non-Stalinist ministers, arbitrarily raided the local headquarters of the parties of the governmental coalition and arrested the officials and leaders of these parties. Nosek, of course, carried out these actions at the express order of the Kremlin and the GPU.

The police actions were supported by a general strike and the public demonstrations of the Stalinists. The unions, previously under the leadership of the Social-Democrats, had been taken over by a Stalinist leadership after "liberation," beginning with the omnipotent general secretary, Zapotocky. According to the press reports, the strike was of short duration and not very solid. It would seem that the "popular pressure" was in reality more of a bureaucratic device than a spontaneous movement. Nevertheless it fulfilled its function and gained the desired end.

Stalinists Held All Power

All this proves that the coalition regime was neither a parliamentary nor a democratic regime, but that all the power was held by the Stalinists, supported by the Russian Army and the GPU, who followed orders in ceding a part of the power to their collaborators. Now, when the Kremlin deemed it necessary to "consolidate" its dictatorship, the Stalinist puppets proceeded with complete and open brutality to do as they pleased.

When Benes rejected the formation of a purely Stalinist government, the political bureau of the Czech CP clearly gave him to understand that the Stalinists were going to form the government they wanted without his permission and acceptance. In the personal meeting between Gottwald and Benes, the former assumed a dictatorial pose to such a degree that even Benes, accustomed to political humiliations, dramatically exclaimed, "You speak to me just as Hitler did." The "friendly persuasion" of Gottwald was accompanied by Stalinist street demonstrations and demonstrations of the power of the Stalinist Action Committees and police. This was "popular democracy" in Czechoslovakia.

Benes finally yielded to the Stalinist ultimatum, accepting the cabinet they proposed. For Gottwald, Kopecky, Slansky & Co., it was convenient to retain some puppets of other parties in order to keep up the appearance and farce of "parliamentary democracy." The symbol of the arrangement was the return of Zdenek Fierlinger, pro-Stalinist Social-Democrat, to the government. Drtina, secretary to the president, friend of Benes and his party colleague, unaccustomed to the political pirouettes of his chief, tried to commit suicide. Nosek not only seized the secretaries of the collaborating parties but proceeded to arrests en masse.

Protesting the Stalinist coup, Czech students carried out an imposing demonstration. The police dispersed them with drawn arms. Many people went in the streets as in 1938-39. Perhaps Benes too wept in his bedroom. To this we can only say with the mother of the last Moorish king of Granada, who also wept when the Spaniards ended his reign: "You weep like a woman, not being able to defend what is yours like a man."

The theoreticians of the Fourth International applauded Benes and the Czech bourgeoisie as "prudent" because they accepted collaboration with Stalinism. Now, perhaps, they will

say that the "democratic revolution" in Czechoslovakia is being transformed into the "socialist revolution," although "deformed and degenerated." In reality, the democratic revolution was consummated in Czechoslovakia in 1918-21 with national emancipation from the German yoke, personified by the Hapsburg monarchy, and the creation of a democratic republic with the Social-Democrats playing the dominant role. The counter-revolution began with the predominance of the Agrarians, the party of the landlords, who replaced the Social-Democrats in power. The Nazi counter-revolution imposed the dictate of Munich and dismemberment; then, to carry dismemberment still further, the Nazis set up the "Protectorate." The Protectorate was terminated by the war, but only to be replaced by Stalinist occupation; the government of Hacha gave way to the new Stalinist-Benes government.

Undoubtedly the pressure of national resistance in all of Europe compelled the Kremlin bureaucracy to engage in "democratic" maneuvers. But all the economic and social changes did not conform to the program of a socialist revolution, but served the bastard interests of a counter-revolutionary force, the Stalinist bureaucracy and its bureaucratic imperialism. The Anglo-American bourgeoisie and the Social-Democrats permitted themselves to be deceived by Stalin's "democratic" maneuver and now cry to high heaven because of the Stalinist coup.

But the real facts of the matter are somewhat different. The Stalinist coup was accomplished with the Kosice pact of 1944, when the Stalinist Fourth Republic was created, camouflaged by Benes's presidency and a coalition government. Now the Fourth Republic has been succeeded by a Stalinist protectorate, and events demonstrate that in 1944 Benes played the role that Hacha did in 1939, just as the latter played the role that Benes did in 1938.

The government was and continues to be Stalinist. It is only a question of the degree of Stalinization and not of the change from a democratic government to a totalitarian government. It is a question of a government that is ready for the emergency of war.

Benes—"Mädchen für Alle"

Benes has passed through all the phases of political development of European reaction. He served the Czech bourgeoisie and the agrarian reactionaries; he capitulated before the European reaction of Munichism, calling his people to calm and peaceful submission to Nazism; after giving this counsel he escaped into exile, offering his services to Roosevelt, as he declares with cynical frankness in his memoirs. He headed the resistance against the Nazis only in order to deliver it to Stalin with the pact of Kosice. Now he has declared that the "parliamentary regime continues," and that he has accepted the new solution "conscious of his duty." In a short time Benes will once again be in exile, and will offer his services to Truman.

The opportunists are tenacious of life; they have seven lives while revolutionists only have one. The opportunists and capitulators have many alternatives; the revolutionaries only one: to conquer or die. Benes knows how to crawl on his belly: the Liebknechts die standing up. Such is the despicable character of our times.

Stalin's clique governs Czechoslovakia brutally, crushing the democratic rights of the people, introducing totalitarian "monolithism," persecuting the Social-Democratic workers, the National-Socialists, the peasants and intellectuals. All this has

as its aim the enslavement of the Czech and Slovakian people in the service of Stalinist imperialism. It signifies a new advance of the Stalinist counter-revolution to the right, camouflaged as a "left turn" and accompanied by the barking of the bourgeois hired press against the new "conquest of Communism."

In our world, reaction is concentrated at both poles of contemporary society, at the capitalist and the Stalinist poles: at Washington and Moscow. But in spite of the mortal antagonism between both imperialist blocs, the two objectively complement each other, each from its own point of view combating revolutionary Marxism.

The events in Czechoslovakia are symptomatic: in 1938 the dismemberment of the republic signified the approach of the Second World War; in 1939 the occupation of Czechoslovakia brought the world to the brink of war. Now the "totalization" of the Stalinist regime undoubtedly signifies the growing danger of the third world war. The motor force of the Stalinist coup is to be found in that danger.

Tasks of Revolutionary Socialists

The Marxists and revolutionary workers throughout the world are under the obligation of unmasking the Stalinist reaction and defending the democratic rights of the Czechoslovakian people and proletariat; of defending the Social-Democrats and Benes's National-Socialists from the ruthless persecutions of the Stalinist "bloodhound," Nosek. Of defending the right of the peasants and Catholics to criticize the regime; to defend the struggle of the Czech workers for free unions and against Stakhanovism and the dictatorship of the bureaucracy in the factories; to defend the right of the Czech students and intellectuals to free and democratic expression of their views; to defend our Fourth Internationalist comrades, who are fighting in the ranks of the Social-Democracy, and whose lives and freedom are undoubtedly threatened; to defend the comrades of the *Alarm Group*, also Fourth Internationalist in tendency, who carried on an heroic opposition to the Stalinists and Nazis from 1936 on.

The road of Benes is not the road of the Czech and Slovak people, because the people do not crawl on their bellies but struggle. The road of the Czech and Slovak people was not capitulation to Munich nor collaboration with the Nazis: it was the road of Lidice, the road of heroic and self-sacrificing struggle, the road of the *Rehenes* and the *Yanosiks*.

Though the Zapotockys now boast of the "general strike," though they invoke the "proletarian majority," *their road is not the road of the proletariat nor of the people. The road of the people is that of the conscious minority, our road, the road of revolutionary Marxism, of the third proletarian front which bows its head neither to the tyrants of Moscow nor the gangsters of Wall Street.* It is not the road of Benes, who first capitulated to Stalin and will soon crawl before Truman, but the road of the revolutionary workers who struggle always for their program, who conquer, or if it is necessary, die standing up.

It is the road of the third proletarian front, the only alternative to capitalism and Stalinism, which leads to victorious world socialism.

ANDRZEJ RUDZIENSKI

Struggle for the Image of Gandhi

"Now Gandhi belongs to the ages."

These words contained more than the triteness implied by the self-conscious westernized intellectual, Jawaharlal Nehru, as he gazed at the white ashes of his spiritual father. We think instinctively of the famous chapter on "The Struggle for the Image of Jesus," contained in Kautsky's book, *Foundations of Christianity*. Gandhi, of course, is not comparable to Jesus either in a moral, spiritual or religious sense. He was no founder of a world religious order ushering itself in together with a new world social order. The doctrine of "non-violence" and "passive resistance" associated with Gandhi's name, together with other aspects of his personal philosophy, are bits and scraps collected from other religious and moral systems and shrewdly put together for the fulfillment of flexible goals.

Yet if Gandhi bears no resemblance to Jesus or any other great religious founder as the creator of a new idea, there is bound to be a marked resemblance in a different sense—a struggle over which movement, in the future, best lays claim to the rounded meaning of the man's life, his works and activities. Let us recall the words of Kautsky, writing of the period after the death of Jesus:

... a crown of legends began to form about this character, into which pious spirits would weave whatever they wished their model to have spoken or done. But as Jesus thus came to be regarded more and more as a model for the entire sect, the more did each of the numerous contending groups, of which the sect had consisted from the start, attempt to assign to this personality precisely those ideas to which each group was most attached, in order then to be able to invoke this person as an authority. Thus the image of Jesus, as depicted in legends that were at first merely transmitted from mouth to mouth and later set down in writing, became more and more the image of a superhuman personality, the incarnation of all the ideals developed by the sect, but it also necessarily became more and more full of contradictions, the various traits of the image no longer being compatible with each other. [*Foundations of Christianity*, p. 38]

Which Gandhi Will Survive?

So now is it also with Gandhi. As a doctrinaire, saint, and religious figure, the Gandhi known as the Mahatma is dwarfed by the Gandhi who was the head of the All-India National Congress and leader of his country's civil-disobedience movements.

Yet here we do not wish to assay Gandhi's doctrine or his role as the nationalist leader of India. To begin with, all this is well known and has been familiar for years. The question that interests us is: What place will Gandhi occupy in India's future struggles? Will the conservatives and industrialists succeed in completely burying his true image beneath the cold and artificial saint they are now attempting to manufacture?

This effort began with the emphasis on the religious rites surrounding the cremation and burial of Gandhi. Every custom and practice of orthodox Hinduism was faithfully carried out as the process of enshrining and sanctifying the Mahatma got under way. All the ritual and mystification associated with holy beings, including the preservation of ashes and bones, the carving of statues, etc., has begun.

The aim of all this is clear: to mummify the image of Gandhi in the interests of "the nation"—that is, the governing group represented by the increasingly reactionary Congress party; and to synthesize from his being a sacred symbol, standing for inner unity of the nation, to which the ruling class can appeal in time of crisis. In China, a similar operation

was performed upon Sun Yat-sen, but every indication signifies that the Congress leadership will attempt to go much further with Gandhi.

Then who can justifiably claim the image of Gandhi? Shall we leave him to the Indian bourgeoisie whose spokesman, organizer and tactician he most certainly was? Or to various among the intellectuals who concern themselves solely with the psychology and personality of the man, seeking to relate these to their own doubts and difficulties with the modern world? Gandhi, an anti-modernist and a traditionalist in the most naive and backward sense of the term, has a particular appeal for our intellectuals.

Thus, on the one hand, we find a chronic vulgarizer of Marxism, J. R. Johnson, who writes in *The Militant* that the death of Gandhi "is an important political event"! To him, the sum and substance of the Gandhi problem is exhausted by calling him an agent of the Indian capitalist class. Or again, on the other hand, we find a series of "appreciations" of Gandhi penned by various intellectuals in the winter 1948 issue of *Politics* magazine, each of which assumes the man to be "purely" an individual, and a non-political one at that! From Mary McCarthy, who thinks the real horror is "that any man could look into the face of this extraordinary person and deliberately pull a trigger," to the absurd Paul Goodman who, in a brief piece performs a quickie psychoanalytic job (Gandhi was an "oral sadist") with attached poem, the same impression is presented. A man with an appealing personality, abstracted from his life and reality, one in whom each one can find the image sought by his confused and bewildered soul. Gandhi's appeal is truly a broad one, but we cannot accept either the cheapening of the sectarian Johnson or the self-projections of Macdonald and his friends. Both distort the man and his relation to the life of our time.

Gandhi and the Masses

Here is not the place to attempt any elaborate estimation. One must see and watch the evolution of India over another decade for that. Will the subcontinent disintegrate into warring communal and semi-national sects, or will it achieve a reunification under a new leadership? Only the answer to this question, at present unanswerable, will permit a final placing of Gandhi's role as the organizer and leader of India's national consciousness.

Clearly, his lifetime was not crowned by success. He was the founder of a semi-independent and disunited India, that is, his two great goals of complete independence and a united India failed of achievement—at least under his leadership. In this sense, one may say that he was the last great bourgeois national figure that we shall probably see, with all the properties and limitations that this implies. Likewise, as a personality, it strikes me that all the self-conscious intellectuals who seek to sing his praises have missed the real appeal of the man and thus lost the key to understanding the full measure and qualifications of his popularity throughout the world.

Gandhi was both loved and ridiculed, sympathized with, but laughed at by the masses of people. Why? They knew little about his so-called theology or life doctrines and justifiably ignored them as of no consequence. It was his activities, his actions, which awakened responses everywhere. He opposed imperialism (oppression and foreign domination); he

opposed war (violence and killing); he wanted a harmonious society (peace and constructive building). It was his utter simplicity in presenting these ideas and attempting to activate them which made him popular among great masses. Far more than any complex intellectual, he understood the simple things.

Why was he, at the same time, laughed at? Because his methods struck people as woefully inadequate in relation to the focus standing between himself and his objectives, because his simplicity of style and conception appeared grotesque in the world of power, violence and absurd complexity. Convention, authority, government and power—Gandhi, with all the limitations of his tactics, had the capacity for making all these appear ridiculous. And this corresponded to a fundamental feeling, as widespread as it was inarticulate, among the masses of people. What Gandhi referred to as the voice of God guiding him was really his keen instinctual sense for what was disturbing people and his ability to give it expression.

The real Gandhi, the organizer of the civil-disobedience and non-cooperation movements, is a man of the masses, not a spiritual confessor for intellectuals nor a calculating politician. It is this appreciation, we believe, that provides the answer to the problem of the struggle for Gandhi's image.

Gandhi's strength derived from his organic ties with the Indian nationalist movement. Without this movement he would have been a quaint and unimportant utopian doctrinaire. But the handful of Hindu landlords and industrialists, now heirs to Gandhi's Congress Party, do not exhaust this movement. The reactionary politician Sardar Patel, who claims the mantle of Gandhi, has nothing in common with the Gandhi who launched half a dozen mass campaigns, marched to the sea in defiance of the then powerful British Empire and courted death to halt communal violence. Just as Gandhi drew his power out of the nationalist movement,

so did this movement obtain everything from the masses of poor peasants and city workers.

Thus, the real origin of Gandhi's role lies in his relations with the vast Indian peasantry and working class. All that was progressive and reactionary, right and wrong, revolutionary and limited, can be discovered by a study of Gandhi's links with the people of his nation.

The present leaders of India, including Nehru, would evoke the image of Gandhi to halt the progress of the nation and rest content with its present semi-independent, disunited status. Nehru, who never understood the sources of his master's strength, has rapidly cut his ties with the masses and accepts the characteristic intellectual's vision of Gandhi. But the struggle between the Indian bourgeoisie, now a substantial partner of imperialism, and the people of the country will obviously continue. It is a struggle for the *completion* of the national revolution which has been halted in its tracks. And the struggle for the true evaluation of Gandhi is a part of this new struggle.

The Indian bourgeoisie must not be permitted to claim, without challenge, and sanctify the image of Gandhi. Rather does he belong to the masses of people and the new, revolutionary socialist leadership which it is slowly and painfully attempting to build up. If it is true that Gandhi's work is incomplete, that full independence, unity and a peaceful social system have yet to be built, then it is also true that only the achievement of socialism can bring this about. The present leaders of India will not only never finish Gandhi's work but will betray it each day.

In this sense, it is perfectly correct and justified for India's revolutionary socialists to struggle for the image of Gandhi, as his continuators and as the only ones capable of successfully concluding the tasks he first brought to the consciousness of the Indian people.

HENRY JUDD

Portrait of James Connolly - - V

The Link Between Connolly's Catholicism and Marxism

I

R. M. Fox in his biography, *James Connolly: The Forerunner* (which has led me to write this series of articles) remarks:

He (Connolly) was a man of great individuality, combining an acceptance of the Marxian view of economics and of history—as a record of social struggles—with the Catholic outlook which emphasized the value of the human soul. Connolly is not by any means the first man to realize the revolutionary implications of Christianity. If a man is simply a bubble of gas, a product of chemical action, he may be used as a machine or as cannon fodder without any question of the degradation of humanity. But once admit his possession of a soul and the case against human degradation becomes infinitely stronger.

Here, it is clear that Fox is seeking to explain the fact that Connolly was both a Marxist and a Catholic. And while this explanation is, in a sense, true to the spirit of Connolly, it is, I think, unnecessary.

The revolutionary implications of Christianity need to be seen historically. The Christian idea of the immortality of the soul—even though it be the soul of a slave—was, in the hu-

mane sense, an advance over the ideas of the pagan world. The concept and the practice of charity, the ideas of love and of brotherhood of Christ and of the early Christians—these also should be seen as attitudes which signified moral progress.

But even so, we shouldn't regard the pagan world and pagan ideas in a monolithic sense. It is a well known fact that the Greeks laid the basis for western civilization. Also, prior to the rise of Christianity, the ideas of the Greek materialists had already been exhausted, and the main streams of Greek thought had been given their course by Socrates, Aristotle and Plato. Lange, the nineteenth-century scholar, in his *History of Materialism*, points out that when the great progressive ideas of an age wear out, become exhausted, insights and observations are then linked up with regressive ideas; and that inasmuch as human beings do constantly have good insights, they tend to believe that these are *necessarily* related to regressive ideas, if these regressive ideas are the dominant ones of an age.

Lange here was criticizing Socrates, Plato and Aristotle; he defended the early Greek materialists. One of his argu-

ments was that materialism had produced a high conception of morality. This is true for all ages. Philosophical materialism—as distinguished from the crude materialism of money-grubbing—has given voice to the most noble moral sentiments and ideals, and it stands in no need of apologizing before the bar of anti-materialist criticisms. Many examples could here be cited, but I shall merely refer to the nobility of expression of Lucretius.

At the same time that we realize this fact, we need also to see that Christianity and its contributions to western civilization cannot be taken merely on the level of philosophical discussion and criticism, as the anti-materialists so often tend to take it when they attack materialists. Socially, Christianity made a major contribution to civilization. It advanced a broader idea of the dignity of man. This relates to the positive side of Christian ethics: The negative side is to be seen in the doctrine of Christian meekness.

Christianity cannot, then, be seen as a unified and strictly logical and intimately consistent body of ideas. And our consideration of Christianity here is not a philosophical one. The above remarks have been made merely in order to try to clarify issues.

Ethical Conceptions and Reality

Just as Christianity registered an ethical advance for mankind, so did the philosophy of political democracy. The best of Christian ethics was absorbed by democracy. There is a direct connection between the idea of the equality of the soul of man and the ideas of such great democrats as Thomas Jefferson. Thus:

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; and among these rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

At the same time, we should observe that mankind has advanced in the realm of ideas much more than it has in the realm of overt action. In all ages, we can observe that, on the one hand, there is a wide and frightening difference between the ethical conceptions of conduct of the noblest thinkers of the age, and, on the other, the gross realities of day-to-day living. The entire history of civilized mankind is a history of exploitation, slavery, cruelty, war and injustice.

In my previous article, I quoted from Swift's *Modest Proposal* concerning conditions in Ireland in the seventeenth century, and I have, mainly with references from Connolly's own writings, given additional quotations which indicate the injustices from which the Irish people have suffered. Readers of these essays will be sufficiently familiar with the story of the injustices in advanced capitalist countries, in the past and in the present, so that I need not document these facts here. Suffice it for me to point, in modern America, the freest and the richest country in the world, to the phenomenon of Jim Crow, of lynchings in the South, and of the slums of all of our major cities.

At the present time, various Christian and especially Catholic thinkers deal with the phenomenon of modern injustice, cruelty and slavery from the standpoint of Christian moral precepts. They argue on this basis that inhumanity in capitalist countries flows from the principle of bourgeois liberalism, and that the inhumanity of Stalinism¹ flows from the

1. In passing let me observe that Stalinism has even abrogated those rights which man had in feudal society. Morally it represents a backward swing of history which goes beyond the abrogation of the rights of man attained through the rise of political democracy and bourgeois liberalism.

principles of socialism as a continuation of bourgeois liberalism. Later on, I shall have more to say on this point. Here I shall only suggest to the Christian critics of liberalism, socialism and materialism that they consider the history of men in society since the advent of Christianity. I shall offer merely passing reminders to them.

On the opening page of the first volume of Henry Charles Lea's great scholarly work, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, we can read:

History records no such triumph of intellect over brute strength as that which, in an age of turmoil and battle [the twelfth century and the early thirteenth], was wrested from the fierce warriors of the time by priests who had no material force at their command, and whose power was based alone on the souls and conscience of men. Over soul and conscience this empire was complete. No Christian could hope for salvation who was not in all things an obedient son of the Church, and who was not ready to take up arms in its defense; and, in a time when faith was a determining factor of conduct, this belief created a spiritual despotism which placed all things within reach of him who could wield it.²

And Lea also writes of the priest:

Not only did the humblest priest wield a supernatural power which marked him as one elevated above the common level of humanity, but his person and possessions were alike inviolable. . . . The man who entered the service of the Church was no longer a citizen. He owed no allegiance superior to that assumed in his ordination.

The Material and Moral Levels

Here we can see some of the historical factors which served as a basis for the Inquisition. And Lea shows that the development of the Inquisition "was . . . a natural—one may almost say an inevitable—evolution of the forces at work in the thirteenth century. . . ." Lea documents statements such as these with the most minute detail. He shows that the Inquisition was a development of the social struggles of the times. The punishment of heretics, the burnings at the stake, the tortures, all of this was part of a complicated historical evolution in the process of which Rome emerged triumphant over local interests. Writing of the rise of the mendicant orders—one of which was founded by the great and lovable St. Francis—he concludes that even though their work was not lost "they soon sank to the level of the social order around them." This social order was marked by cruelty, pitilessness, misery. Heresies, called forth by the wretchedness of the poor and by their desire to find the early Christ, were mercilessly crushed. Out of such social conditions, the Inquisition was founded.

The life of mankind goes on, as it were, on both the material and the moral level. The written history of mankind reveals to us, in a confused way, the growth of moral ideas which are, however, constantly contradicted by actual practice. Moral realities and moral statements do not harmonize. And yet moral and ethical ideas do have their influence. They have given even a sense of dignity to slaves, to the poor and

2. It is my opinion that Aquinas' conception of God can be correlated with spiritual despotism: ". . . God is not only His own essence . . . but also His own being. . . . God is the first efficient cause. . . . There can be nothing caused in God, since He is the first cause. . . . God is absolute form, or rather absolute Being. . . . God is His own existence. . . ." These and many other sentences could be culled from Aquinas to show that God, as conceived by this scholarly saint, is completely and totally independent of man and of all the laws of matter. He is utterly sufficient unto Himself, a principle above all principles. God, demonstrated as a self-evident existence and proved by the principles of Aristotelian logic, is so above humanity that I would consider Him here to be unapproachable. Face to face with God as He is verbalized in the cold pages of Aquinas, humanity becomes **totally dependent**. I would suggest that the interested reader compare Aquinas on God with Augustine, who was a poet and an artist as well as a theologian. The conception of God as a logical principle, in my opinion, offers the best possible source for, and rationalization of, **spiritual despotism**.

ignorant. The story of the growth of moral ideas is as elevating as the story of their repudiation and betrayal is in practice odious and frightening.

The continuity in ideas and ethical conceptions in our society is one which stands in the background of Connolly. From Christianity he absorbed its moral values, and in his mind there was no apparent contradiction between his Catholicism and his socialism. This is, I think, an important point to keep in mind if we study his life.

II

....

In the previous articles of this series, I have indicated that there were circumstances in the history of Ireland which easily led Irishmen to see the Reformation differently than did European Continentals. On the European continent, the Reformation was a major revolutionary development leading to the breaking of the chains of spiritual despotism. Early voices of the Reformation, such as Martin Luther, were spiritually revolutionary and socially conservative. The Reformation was part of the complex historical development which saw the rise of capitalism.

As Tawney says in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, "The storm and fury of the Puritan revolution has been followed by a dazzling outburst of economic enterprise. . . ." This economic enterprise, with all the suffering entailed, led men a step nearer to that emancipation of which they still dream and from which they are still so far away. But Ireland, as we have already noted, was part of the underside of this development. As Fox states, the Reformation was to Connolly "the capitalist idea appearing in the religious field." He quotes Connolly:

... as capitalism teaches that the social salvation of man depends solely upon his own individual efforts, so Protestantism, echoing it, taught that the spiritual salvation of man depends upon his own individual appeal to God.

Fox further remarks on this conclusion of Connolly's that capitalism is the parent, the Reformation is the child, and that it is irrational to condemn only the child.

Political Democracy the Link

In Connolly's mind, ideas of the dignity of the individual and of community were linked together. "We are all members of one another," he declared in *The Reconquest of Ireland*. And in his conclusion to this same book he declared:

... the objective aimed at is to establish in the mind of the men and women of Ireland, the necessity of giving effective expression, politically and socially, to the right of the community (all) to control for the good of all, the industrial activities of each, and to endow such activities with the necessary means.

Here is one of the ways in which Catholicism was tied in with his thinking. He linked up ideas of community and conceptions of the dignity of the individual. The link, historically, in the chain of political and moral ideas in Connolly's mind was political democracy.³ This is important. He absorbed, largely through his Irish predecessors like Lalor and others as well as from Marx, the political ideas of the Great French Revolution.

He did this as an Irishman. The differences in the historical experiences of the Irish and of the English and the continental Europeans here tell in the whole outline of Connolly's ideas. To him, individualism was moral and it was also political—political democracy. As a moral doctrine, it found its

3. Connolly also wrote in *The Reconquest of Ireland*, "As Democracy enters Bureaucracy takes flight."

source in his feelings and beliefs as a simple Catholic. He believed in the equality of souls. The ideas of community flow into the ideas of the nation. The struggle for a free Ireland was, for Connolly, the idea of a free Irish community. Among the Irish, the race is often seen as a family. The Irish nation, the Irish community, the Irish as a family, these ideas touch on one another.⁴

Connolly's ideas about the Irish nation and his views on democracy are similar to the view of the nation as the republic of virtue held by the earlier French revolutionaries, particularly the Jacobins. In the Abbé Sieyès' pamphlet—*The Third Estate—What Is It?*—which was so influential in the Great French Revolution, the author's emphasis was on the legal and political arguments which would justify and show the rights of the third estate to constitute itself the nation. In their thinking, Jacobins like Robespierre and Saint-Just went a step further than this. They envisioned the nation not only in terms of popular will and sovereignty but also in terms of the individuals who would be the members of the nation.

In their thinking, one finds an austerity suggestive of Protestantism. And the dignity of man, to them, was not associated with Catholic thinking. Reason and republicanism provided them with their basic premises. To them, the foreign foe was outside the country. The enemies within were the aristocrats. This suggests a difference in the outline of their political ideas as compared with the outline of political ideas in the mind of Connolly, who was, in a sense, one of their heirs.

Speaking of religion and theocracy in his *Esprit de la Révolution*, Saint-Just expressed the opinion that if Christ were reborn in Spain—in the time of the French Revolution—he would be crucified again by the priests, on the ground that he was a factious man who, under the signs of charity and modesty, meditated the ruin of church and state. He argued that a reign of virtue, patience and poverty would be a danger to monarchy, and also that the Christian churches had lived most purely in countries that had become republican. He thought that the people of Spain—a Catholic country—would be the last to conquer their liberty, and he contrasted Spain, with England where the hand of the priests did not lie heavy on the people as it did in Spain. Historically, of course, Saint-Just is a predecessor of Connolly. But he serves as a good concrete illustration, nonetheless, to suggest more clearly the historical features of Connolly's own thought.

France was the cradle of modern liberty in Europe. The progressive features of national ideas, of ideas of the nation, come from France. The French Revolution would inevitably have influenced the Irish, as it did, and its political features and ideas would be absorbed by the Irish. The Irish did not pay a price for the French Revolution; they did for the earlier English Revolution—the price of the Cromwellian invasion of Ireland. From France, the Irish could get ideas of the politics of liberty; from England, they got the economics of capitalism. Along with the latter came the Puritan invader with gun and cannon.

A man as deeply sincere as Connolly, a self-educated Irish

4. An interesting illustration of this is to be seen in Frank O'Connor's great short story, *Guests of the Nation*. This story, told in the first person, recounts how members of the IRA, during the Black and Tan struggle, hold two Limeys as hostages. They become fond of the Limeys, who, in turn, regard these Irish boys as friends. Then the Irish lads are ordered to execute their prisoners. The human sentiments of the narrator are wrenched as a result of the execution. Heretofore he had felt that "disunion between brothers seemed to me an awful crime." These are the words with which he translated national spirit into personal emotion. This feeling was, however, shaken by the execution of these English guests of the nation.

working lad, a man devoted to the struggle of his own people like Connolly, most obviously would not see the Reformation as a Continental would see it. The so-called peculiarities in historical developments register not only in social and economic relationships, but also in the outlines of the thought of men and in their feelings. Connolly's own thought was one such register of the peculiarities of Irish history.

III

R. M. Fox quotes an article of Connolly's in which he replied to a priest, Father MacEarlen, who had criticized socialist thought. In this reply, Connolly wrote:

I admit unquestioningly the obligation resting upon the Holy See to recognize the *de facto* Government and the *de facto* social order in any given country or age. But side by side with, part and parcel of, that admission, and not to be divorced from it, I insist upon the right of the individual Catholic to disregard that obligation and to be a reformer of, or a rebel and reformist against, the Government which the Holy See is compelled by its international position to recognize.

Without this right, Catholicity would be synonymous with the blackest reaction and opposition to all reforms. As an example Ireland is illuminating. For the greater part of seven centuries, the *de facto* Government of Ireland has been a foreign Government imposed on the country by force, and maintained by the same means. The Holy See was compelled by its position to recognize that government, but the holiest and deepest feelings of the Catholics of Ireland were in rebellion against that government, and, in every generation, the scaffold and the prison and the mar-

tyr's grave have been filled in Ireland with devout subjects of the Holy See, but with unrelenting enemies of the *de facto* government of Ireland. The firm distinction in the minds of Irish Catholics between the *duties* of the Holy See and the *rights* of the individual Catholic has been a necessary and saving element in keeping Ireland Catholic, and he, by whatever name he calls himself or to whatever order he belongs who would seek to destroy that distinction, or make acquiescence in the political obligations of the Papacy, a cardinal article of Catholic faith, is an enemy of the faith and the liberties of our people.

And also in the same article, he declared:

As individual Catholics, we claim it as our right, nay, as our duty to refuse allegiance to any power or social system whose authority to rule over us we believe to be grounded upon injustice.

Connolly then fused in his thought Christian and democratic ideas of the past. He was not, however, fighting the battles of the past, but those of his own present. As he indicated, he considered these to be battles against injustice. He believed in economic justice, and he wrote:

Socialism is neither Protestant nor Catholic, Christian nor Freethinker, Buddhist, Mohammedan, nor Jew; it is only human.

It was his idea of what was human, of human dignity, which was central in all of his thinking.

We will continue our analysis of Connolly in the next issue.

JAMES T. FARRELL

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Year One of Russian Revolution

II—The Counter-Revolutionary Socialists

[Our second installment of Victor Serge's history of the first year of Bolshevik power is a condensation of Chapter III, "The Urban Middle Class Versus the Proletariat." Some omitted passages are replaced by a short paraphrase in italics within brackets. Serge's footnotes, mainly bibliographical, have been omitted.]

[The bulk of the chapter is concerned with the counter-revolutionary role of the anti-Bolshevik socialists.—ED.]

The first Soviet government was set up at this same meeting [the Second Congress of Soviets—Ed.] after a lively debate. The congress elected a new All-Russian Soviet Executive Committee of 102 members: 62 Bolsheviks, 20 Left Socialist-Revolutionaries [S-Rs], and several Internationalist Social-Democrats, besides various groups of less importance. The first Council of People's Commissars—the term was proposed by Trotsky to avoid the now discredited appellation of "ministers" — was composed solely of Bolsheviks. . . .

The Left S-Rs, prey of incessant hesitation, refused to enter the Council of People's Commissars although they were invited to do so by the Bolsheviks, who had no desire to govern alone. . . . But the Left S-Rs, those precious allies, in the name of the peasants they represented, demanded a coalition government comprising every party in the soviets, a government in which the Girondin counter-revolutionists would have posts.

"There was nothing for us," says Trotsky, "but to leave the Left S-Rs the task of persuading their neighbors to the right to come over to the revolution. We believed it our duty to assume all responsibility in the name of our party, while they devoted themselves to that hopeless enterprise."

The Second All-Russian Soviet Congress dispersed on the morning of October 27 after an all-night meeting. On the same day that it addressed its peace proposals to all the belligerent powers, the Council of People's Commissars abolished the death penalty.

The Junkers' Mutiny

The insurrection was victorious. But the situation was desperate. Petrograd had supplies for only a few days. None of the government agencies functioned. The new government had neither offices nor officials. Every hour delegates from the armies, the regiments, the soviets in the provinces, and from trade unions testified to the sympathy of the masses. But denunciatory telegrams also poured into Smolny. General Headquarters, the Municipal Dumas, the provincial councils, every former government body, in a word, announced to the "usurpers," to the "traitors," to the "bandits who are unleashing civil war" that order would be restored and the insurrectionists punished.

The bourgeois newspapers continued to appear, filled with sensational revelations of underhand plots, announcing the approach of loyal regiments from the front, the pres-

ence of Kerensky at the head of two army corps a few miles from the capital. A new provisional government was set up in secret: counter-revolutionary socialists, Mensheviks, and S-Rs prepared for a coup d'état. The central telegraph agency refused to send dispatches from the People's Commissars, the leaders of the railway workers' union were hostile to the new government and sabotaged transportation. The news from Moscow was confusing: street battles, negotiations, seizure of the Kremlin by the Whites.

The "public" opinion of the bourgeoisie, of the middle classes, of the foreign press was that the Bolshevik regime would not last. At first they did not give it more than a few days, then several weeks, then several months. The idea that the proletariat would succeed in holding power seemed ridiculous.

A well-clothed mob filled the Nevsky Prospect, the central avenue of the city, commenting on the news, predicting the re-establishment of order, and jeering the Red Guard. Several isolated workers and soldiers were slain.

The cadets of the military schools (the Junkers) suddenly occupied the central telephone exchange. On the 28th day of October, the Red Guard surrounded the engineers' club and the military school in the center of the city where the Junkers were quartered. Armored cars took up stations at the corners of these buildings. Artillery cannon cast their thin shadows across the pavement. Summoned to surrender in ten minutes, the Junkers replied with a volley

of rifle fire. Their resistance was broken by the first shell that tore a large gap in the façade of the military school. Some of the Junkers tried to flee, arms in hand. They were massacred.

Why did these sons of the petty bourgeoisie take up arms? One of the leaders of the S-R Party wrote to General Krasnov who was marching on Moscow: "Our forces consist of two or three hundred Junkers and fifty party members armed with grenades." The S-R Party, which commanded the sole forces opposed to the proletariat, had counted on supporting, inside the city, the military offensive of Kerensky, of Krasnov, and of the GHQ from Mogilev.

The Cossack Division Marches on Petrograd

What forces did the "Leader of the Provisional Government," Kerensky, command in his quarters at Gatchina? What forces opposed him? The troops of the Petrograd garrison, confident of the power of agitation, showed themselves little disposed to fight. Many of the officers were in hiding. The rest were hostile, with few exceptions.

At a meeting of officers called by the government, Lenin and Trotsky were at first unable to find one single man willing to accept the supreme command of the Red Army. Finally Colonel Muraviev volunteered. He was a man of talent, energetic and ambitious. A member of the S-R Party, he had put down "Bolshevik leaders" here and there in the army, but had ended up as a Left S-R. The command was conferred on him, but a committee of five was appointed to accompany him, to keep an eye on his activities, and to shoot him at the first sign of treason. He proved to be loyal, filled with energy, a good organizer, and a good soldier. With Trotsky he divided the honors for the victory of Pulkovo. (The adventurer in him triumphed at the end of a few months; commander in chief of the Red Army on the Czechoslovakian front, he tried to escape to the enemy, and when caught committed suicide.)

Other officers joined with him, frequently moved by their aversion to Kerensky rather than by any attachment to the Soviets; their contempt for democracy led them to adopt the political line of the lesser evil. They were useful. Thus an old colonel, Valden by name, was in command of the Red artillery that was instrumental in saving the city from the heights of Pulkovo.

Everything had to be improvised. Sabotage had infected every department of the army. Cartridges, shells, and replacement parts for the cannon were all hidden, telephone and engineering apparatus was lacking. The Red Guard and the factory workers supplied everything, took every initiative, all the way from supplying the artillery with ammunition to digging trenches.

Kerensky had taken refuge among General Krasnov's Cossacks. . . . In the city itself, the military uprising prepared by the S-Rs was to clear the way. They occupied Gatchina and Tsarskoye-Selo, less than fifteen miles from the capital. Only the heights of Pulkovo remained between them and the city. [*But the Cossacks were demoralized and beaten back by the Soviet forces.*] Krasnov himself was, in truth, forced to surrender by his own Cossacks, who allowed the Reds to occupy the Palace of Gatchina without putting up the slightest resistance.

The revolution made the mistake of show-

ing magnanimity toward the commander of the Cossack division. It would have been far better to shoot him on the spot. He was set free a few days later on his word of honor not to carry arms against the revolution. But what are engagements of honor against the enemies of country and property? He later put the Don region to fire and sword.

Counter-Revolutionary Socialism

Nothing was more tragic than the collapse of the two great democratic socialist parties. Strong in prestige, in influence among the peasants, the intellectuals and the advanced middle classes, even among a small group of workers, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party had every opportunity for taking power within the bounds of legality and for setting up a socialist government. The country would have followed. The majority of the party, at the Fourth Congress, blamed the Central Committee for not having done so.

The leaders of the S-Rs, ridden by a mania for formal democracy, fearing mob rule above all, and dreaming of a parliamentary regime that would give their noble eloquence a fitting stage, preferred the road of collaboration with the liberal bourgeoisie to the more arduous road to power. The S-Rs exerted a predominating influence on Kerensky's government. Kerensky himself was a member of their party. So was the Minister of Agriculture, Chernov, the verbose theoretician of populist socialism, who was the author of the program of agrarian reform which he himself never ceased deferring. In the Soviets the S-Rs, with the support of the Mensheviks, had had the majority. They had the majority of the Moscow Municipal Duma; they had almost half the votes in Petersburg. Their leader, Avksentiev, presided over the Provisional Legislative Council of the republic. They disposed of a strong army of active members. Their Central Committee could unleash a wave of terrorists, offering themselves by the hundreds as heroes and martyrs to the revolution. Had not the autocracy once trembled at their very mention?

The Mensheviks, the minority of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, who had been at swords' points with the Bolsheviks for more than twenty years in factional warfare—which was in reality the war between revolutionary intransigence and socialist opportunism—were influential in the industrial centers, among the intellectuals, in the cooperatives, in the trade-union leadership, and in governmental circles where they had such men, remarkable both for their personal qualities and for their revolutionary past, as Chkheidze and Tseretelli. They had gifted theoreticians and agitators, such as the great founder of Russian Social-Democracy, G. V. Plekhanov, such as Martov, Dan, and Abramovich. With the same hesitation as the S-Rs, the Mensheviks pronounced themselves for class collaboration, for democracy and the Constituent Assembly, and against "anarchy," "premature socialism," "Bolshevik hysteria," and—"civil war" (sic).

In the Petrograd Municipal Duma on October 26, these two parties took the initiative in forming the Committee for the Salvation of Country and Revolution. They admitted three Cadets, representatives of the big bourgeoisie, to the committee (Nabokov, Countess Panina, and an unknown). The

military organization of the S-R Party took charge of the uprising of the Junkers, the students of the military academies. Gotz appointed a colonel to lead the movement, and Avksentiev signed the order to seize arms and start the battle. The official journal of the S-R Party, *Delo Naroda* (*People's Cause*), announced that "the president of the party Central Committee and honorary president of the All-Russian Peasant Soviet, V. M. Chernov, is leading General Krasnov's troops."

After the disarmament of the Junkers, the Committee of Public Safety, the Central Committee of the S-R Party, and the two signers of the order to fight, Avksentiev and a Menshevik, in chorus *disavowed*—to avoid the consequences so that they could start all over again—the uprising they had provoked, and which had cost the life blood of several hundred youths. The appeal of the Committee of Public Safety distributed on October 27 had plainly said:

"Resist this senseless adventure of the Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee by force of arms. We call on all troops faithful to the revolution to come to the Nicholas Military Academy and join the Committee of Public Safety."

Not one single army unit replied to this appeal.

After this piece of underhanded trickery, the Girondin conspiracy against the revolution took on a permanent character. Being more active and better accustomed to illegal work, the S-Rs played the dominant role.

Not that the Social-Democrats were any the less counter-revolutionary. During the battle they had written: "In this grave hour for Petrograd and for the entire country, the revolution had received a terrible blow, not a blow in the back from General Kornilov, but a blow right on the chest from Lenin and Trotsky." Conclusion: Workers unite, "to end civil war" (!) with the Committee of Public Safety, that is, with reaction.

On November 3, nine days after the revolution, a Menshevik conference met in Petrograd. Two opposing points of view were brought out there, summed up by Abramovich: "The minority held it necessary to oppose Bolshevik force with force, with bayonets. The majority said the Bolsheviks had the sympathy of the masses of the proletariat and the army, and that their suppression would drive the soldiers to black reaction and anti-Semitism, would unleash the forces of the extreme right. The majority held it necessary to end the civil war by conciliation." "In the early days," said Dan, "we counted on ending the Bolshevik conspiracy by force of arms. The attempt failed. . . . That is why we took a more conciliatory attitude." (Direct quotation from Dan!)

These ferocious hangmen of the Russian proletariat were against the civil war only as long as they could not win! Dan argued for a policy that would tend to split the Bolsheviks, for approaching the "reasonable Bolsheviks" for a democratic understanding, thus isolating and finally crushing "the military faction around Lenin and Trotsky." The arguments of a certain Weinstein deserve to be cited as an example of socialist casuistry in the service of reaction: "If we do not suppress the Bolsheviks, even by force of arms, someone else will do it, anyway." Those who were for struggle against

all the Bolsheviks without discrimination, the irreconcilables, outvoted Dan.

The men who spoke thus were not in the right wing of the party. The right wing of Social-Democracy was composed of the national-defense faction, with its newspaper *Edinstvo* (*Unity*), and its leader, Plekhanov, the father of Russian Marxism, the Russian Guesde. Sick and bedridden, old Plekhanov, receiving Jacques Sadoul on October 17, said of the Bolsheviks: "We must not only master, we must crush these vermin, drown them in blood. The salvation of Russia is at stake." Sadoul wrote to Albert Thomas: "Plekhanov is convinced that a showdown is coming soon, and he awaits it impatiently, to the point of saying—mind you, Plekhanov, whose democratic scruples you know—that if the uprising is not spontaneous it must be provoked. The 'Bolshevik bands' in his eyes are 'a horrible mixture of utopian idealists, imbeciles, traitors, and anarchist provocateurs.'"

The pit into which Plekhanov had fallen was deep—bottomless, in fact. At least he followed his national-defense position out to its logical conclusion.

Maxim Gorky's paper, *Novaya Zhizn* (*New Life*), then neutral, described the policy of the "moderate democrats" in these terms (speaking mainly of the socialists): their organizations "invite all good citizens to refuse to obey the Bolsheviks, to resist their orders actively, to sabotage and disorganize the supply system. Their slogan is: 'Against the Bolsheviks, anything goes!'"

Sabotage

"Anything goes!"

Not mere words. The counter-revolutionary socialists made wide use of a pitiless weapon usually considered outside of civilized practice: the systematic sabotage of all enterprises serving the general public, such as the food supply, public services, etc. From its start, the class war violated the conventional forms of military law.

When the victorious Reds entered the Municipal Duma building in Moscow, they found nothing but ruins. The ledgers had been used to stop up the windows; the desks and filing cabinets were empty; the typewriters out of commission. The city officials, sixteen thousand of them, were on strike. Their strike against the workers' revolution lasted four months, and that in a city already ravaged by famine and epidemic before the insurrection.

"To get the city administration running again proved an almost insurmountable task under these conditions. The total strike of the city officials, doctors, teachers, and engineers was supported by a business boycott and by sabotage from the new officials. But we had to pay salaries (the civil and military administration of Moscow employed more than two hundred thousand men), feed tens of thousands of refugees, and keep the water, sewer, tram, slaughter, and electric services going. These were the problems that suddenly confronted inexperienced workers and party members, who could count on no assistance." The participation of a certain number of skilled workers in the sabotage and strike marked the influence of the counter-revolutionary socialists.

The same situation prevailed in Petrograd. The sabotage affected the great national ministries. In the Agricultural Sec-

tion of the Ministry of Supplies, every single official and employee went on strike, and took the current accounts along with them. The Supply Section of the Soviet, a handful of workers, occupied the vast, deserted offices of the ministry. Everything was gone. "Kalinin and I found several lumps of sugar in the bottom of a filing cabinet," wrote a comrade. "We made some tea. . . . The ministry had been deserted when it was captured by Schlichter with a Red Guard unit. . . ."

The strike at the State Bank started somewhat later, on November 14. A worker wrote: "I found the building empty. Obolensky, Piatakov, and Smirnov were sitting in one of the offices, trying to find some way of obtaining some money to buy paper and ink for the Council of People's Commissars. They negotiated with the clerks and the one lone official who had remained at his post. . . ." The Bolsheviks finally had five million francs turned over to them, after many formalities; V. Bonch-Bruyevich administered this treasure with parsimony. In some of the banks the employees consented to work, but fearing that they would later have to make good their compliance, demanded the supervision of the Red Guard to save appearances.

Trotsky found the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deserted. A Prince Tatischev consented to open the offices only after he was put under arrest. The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs functioned at Smolny with neither office nor personnel. Trotsky was preoccupied with military affairs, and had only a very summary idea of foreign politics. "I have taken this work," he said, "only to be able to devote more of my time to the party. My commission is limited: publish the secret treaties, and close up shop." Various documents were found to have disappeared.

Twelve office boys and one official remained at the Ministry of Justice.

To make a long story short: In every ministry, in every office, in every bank the story was the same; and in the same way the most important funds and documents had disappeared.

A clandestine government under the presidency of M. Prokopovich, who had replaced the "missing" Kerensky, was formed. This secret authority directed the strike of the officials in concert with the strike committee. The largest commercial, industrial and banking firms, such as the Tula Agricultural Bank, the Moscow People's Bank, and the Bank of the Caucasus, continued to pay the wages and salaries of their striking employees. The old All-Russian Soviet Executive, composed of Mensheviks and S-Rs, used the funds of the Executive, which had been raised among the working class, for the same purpose.

The Initiative of the Masses

"We need miracles of proletarian organization." The solution lay in these words of Lenin. The resistance of entire classes could be successfully combated only by the initiative of energetic and numerous masses.

The policy of the Bolsheviks in this period consisted mostly in watching over, stimulating, sometimes guiding, more often sanctioning the initiative of the masses. The People's Commissariats were ordered by decree "to work in close contact with the mass organizations of the workers, women, sailors, soldiers, and officials." The decree of

October 28 (November 10, New Style) assigned the administration of local supplies to the municipalities. Another decree of the same date urged them to solve the housing crisis by their own methods, and gave them the power to requisition and confiscate apartments. This decree was characteristic in its sharp solution of the problem, without regard for the principle of private property. A November 14 decree urged the workers' committees to take over the control of production, accounting and finance in the factories. As we know, the decree on land left the initiative largely to the rural soviets.

As there was no central government, the initiative of the masses accounted for everything. The Council of People's Commissars was nothing more than a very high moral authority. Shliapnikov wrote of the council: "Its first sessions were held in Lenin's little office on the second story of Smolny. Its staff was quite small at first: V. Bonch-Bruyevich and two or three assistants. I believe they did not even take the minutes of the first few sessions."

The sessions were long. A tremendous number of practical problems demanded immediate solution. They were discussed with delegations of workers. The council decided that the People's Commissars were to receive the same wage as a skilled worker (500 rubles a month), with an extra hundred rubles for each dependent. As the leader of the revolutionary government, Lenin devoted himself to consolidating its authority. He demanded that all formalities be observed, and observed them himself, thus inspiring in his collaborators, and by diffusion throughout the whole government, a feeling of power, confidence and respect. . . .

The Governmental Crisis

During the insurrection itself in Petrograd, and all during the street battle in Moscow, the Bolsheviks carried on negotiations with the socialist parties. The Left S-Rs insistently demanded the formation of a socialist coalition government; and as we shall see, this proposal met the approval of numerous influential members of the Bolshevik Party. The negotiations were opened by the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Railway Workers' Union (Vikzhel), in which the Mensheviks and Right S-Rs had a majority.

The Vikzhel was a sort of state within the state. On October 26, while the Council of People's Commissars was still without any real authority, the Vikzhel was already supreme on all the railways. It could stop the transportation of troops and munitions at its pleasure, and it did. "Resolutely against civil war," it equally opposed, with a weak impartiality, the transportation of either Red or White troops. The negotiations were carried on in the Petrograd Municipal Duma, the center of the activities of the Committee of Public Safety. Lenin and the majority of the Central Committee never took the negotiations very seriously, although they preoccupied the enemy.

As long as the issue of battle in Moscow was undecided, the Vikzhel and the democratic organizations around it demanded draconic conditions of the Bolsheviks: (1) All troops to be placed under the command of the Municipal Duma. (2) The workers to be disarmed and Kerensky's troops ad-

mitted to the city. (3) All political prisoners to be released. (4) The Military Revolutionary Committee to be dissolved.

The victories of Moscow and Pulkovo led the Vikzhel to take a more conciliatory attitude. The Bolshevik Riazanov, who was in favor of an agreement with the Vikzhel, carried the new conditions of the socialists to the All-Russian Soviet Executive (Vitsik).

They demanded a socialist ministry with not more than half the posts filled by the Bolsheviks. They were willing to give the Bolsheviks the Ministries of the Interior, Labor, and Foreign Affairs, but at the same time they demanded that neither Lenin nor Trotsky should be included. (This was according to the plan for splitting the Bolshevik Party advanced by the Mensheviks). This ministry was to be responsible to a Council of the Nation composed of one hundred and fifty members from the All-Russian Soviet Executive, seventy-five members from the peasant soviets, eighty delegates from the army and the fleet, forty delegates from the trade unions, and seventy socialist members of the Municipal Duma. A majority of one hundred and sixty-five was promised the Bolsheviks.

Acceptance of this proposal meant veiled capitulation on the part of the Bolsheviks. Their insufficient majority in the proposed parliamentary assembly would lead to hesitant political action. The power of the socialist minority, through its representatives in the government, would enable it to sabotage all revolutionary measures. This deception of the masses would weaken the Bolsheviks, while the bourgeoisie and the middle classes became increasingly conscious of their danger. The majority of the Bolshevik Central Committee, counting on the unreserved support of the party and the masses of the proletariat, turned the proposal down.

Shortly after this, there was a crisis in the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars. The Bulletin of the Central Committee for November 5 said: "The All-Russian Soviet Executive adopted the resolution of Lenin-Trotsky on freedom of the press by thirty-four against twenty-eight votes. The People's Commissars, Nogin, Rykov, Miliutin, Teodorovich, Riazanov, and Derbishev resigned. They addressed the following statement to the Vitsik and to the Council of People's Commissars: 'We believe it necessary to form a socialist government embracing all parties in the Soviet. Only such a government can ensure the fruits of the heroic struggle of the working class and the army in October-November. We believe that a purely Bolshevik government can maintain power only by the exercise of political terror. The Council of People's Commissars is taking this course; we cannot follow.'" Shliapnikov shared this view, but did not believe that he could leave his post. "Kamenev, Rykov, Miliutin, Zinoviev, and Nogin resigned from the Central Committee."

The attitude of the remaining majority of the Central Committee was set forth in two documents. The first was the answering address of the majority to the minority, dated November 3:

"The present political line of the party is contained in the motion proposed by Comrade Lenin and adopted yesterday, November 2, by the Central Committee. This mo-

tion considers as treason to the proletariat any attempt to have our party divest itself of the power with which it is invested on the basis of our program by the All-Russian Soviet Congress, acting in the name of millions of workers, soldiers, and peasants." The minority was summoned to submit or leave the party. "A split would be extremely unfortunate, but an open and honest split would be preferable to sabotage inside the party, the non-application of our own resolutions, disorganization and prostration. . . . We do not doubt for a moment that if our differences are brought before the masses, our policy will be supported without reserve by the workers, the soldiers, and the revolutionary peasants, and the hesitant policy of the opposition rapidly condemned to isolation and powerlessness." This statement was signed by Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Sverdlov, Uritsky, Dzerzhinsky, Joffe, Bubnov, Sokolnikov, and Muranov.

Grave as it was, the crisis remained limited to the upper circles of the party and was of short duration. In the All-Russian Soviet Executive, Lenin made but short and disdainful mention of "the departure of several intellectuals." He added:

"Only those who believe in the people, who throw themselves into the trials of the living masses, will maintain power."

On November 7 *Pravda* published an appeal to the masses, of which the following were the important passages:

"May all those of little faith, the vacillators and skeptics, those who have let themselves be intimidated by the bourgeoisie, or by their direct or indirect agents, be ashamed of themselves. There is not a shadow of hesitation among the masses."

The members who had resigned were harshly criticized as deserters. On the next day *Pravda* published a *Letter to the Comrades*, signed by Zinoviev. Zinoviev stated that the Mensheviks and the S-Rs had refused to accept the conditions of the Soviet, and that under these circumstances he had decided to withdraw his resignation from the Central Committee, and he urged his comrades in the opposition to do likewise. He wrote:

"It is our right and duty to warn the party against mistakes. But we must remain with the party. We prefer to make our mistakes with millions of workers and soldiers and suffer with them, rather than cut ourselves off from the historical movement at this decisive moment. There cannot and will not be a split in our party."

History offers no other example of so grave a crisis in the working-class movement so easily and healthily solved. The great qualities of the Bolshevik party—its discipline, strong morale, collective thinking, its frank exploration of differences, the insignificance of personal pride among the members, and their strong attachment to the working class and the organization—were revealed once more. . . .

Reliance on the Masses

The Bolshevik proponents of a socialist coalition government feared that the Bolshevik Party—which they were accustomed to consider as the conscious *minority* of the working class—would be isolated from the worker and peasant masses, if it took power alone. They did not understand what im-

mense influence the party had gained since the July Days, nor the power contained in a policy which conformed with the vital interests of the whole proletariat. They feared civil war *within* the ranks of socialism; and their fears were legitimate at the time. The counter-revolutionary nature of democratic socialism had not yet been demonstrated, as it since has been so abundantly in Russia and Germany.

It was legitimate but illusory to hope that the socialists would hesitate to align themselves with the counter-revolution, to open fire on what they themselves called a people's uprising, to take arms against the true socialists. The proponents of a coalition government underestimated the democratic corruption of the socialist parties, their domination by the bourgeoisie, the reactionary spirit of their leaders, and the mentality and interests of their lower middle-class memberships. This was a patent error, especially after the edifying experience with democratic socialism in the war, when it had lined up with the imperialist governments in every country of the world. . . .

Lenin appealed incessantly to the initiative of the masses. The spontaneity of the masses appeared to him the necessary condition for the success of the organized activities of the party. On November 5 he signed an appeal to the people inviting them to combat the sabotage. The majority of the people is with us, and our victory is certain, he said:

"Comrades, workers! Remember that from now on you will run the state yourselves. No one will help you if you do not yourselves unite and take over *all* state affairs. . . . Organize around your soviets. Strengthen them. Get to work at the bottom, without waiting for orders. Institute a severe revolutionary discipline. Repress the anarchic excesses of drunkards, Junkers and counter-revolutionists mercilessly. Take rigorous control of production and administration. Arrest and deliver to the revolutionary courts whoever prejudices the people's cause. . . ."

The peasants were urged to "take full power for themselves instantly." Initiative, more initiative, and yet more initiative! That was the slogan Lenin gave the masses on November 5, ten days after the victorious insurrection.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Peace Prescription

HOW TO STOP THE RUSSIANS WITHOUT WAR, by Fritz Sternberg. John Day, New York, 1948, 146 pp.

Sternberg's thesis is that Russian expansion can be stopped short of war. He emphasizes that such a war, while it would be won by the United States, would result in terrible destruction on both sides, and leave this country—her progressive and democratic institutions destroyed—surrounded by a world of barbarism.

There must, says Sternberg, be a basic change in U. S. foreign policy. In China, threatened by Russia, mass support for the Kuomintang government can be gained only through instituting agrarian reforms. Such a change in policy can be effected only by strengthening the "liberal" wing of the urban bourgeoisie. This must be done by reconstruction and industrialization financed by the United States. In Europe the first step toward the containment of Russia is a "united Europe of the sixteen nations plus Western Germany," organized on a basis of "planned socialism and democratic development." The "democratic socialism" here envisioned is that of the British Labor Party. Sternberg's program is to be implemented by U. S. imperialism.

It will suffice to point out that the historic function of U. S. capital is not to usher in socialism. Rather than fool with social forces which might get out of hand, the United States is banking primarily on military methods. It does so cognizant of the dangers which Sternberg indicates are thereby involved. But it can do nothing else; that is one of its inescapable contradictions. The reconstruction of Europe on democratic lines and the defeat of Stalinism remain the tasks of the working class.

As in Sternberg's *The Coming Crisis* (a work far superior to the one under review) the descriptive analysis of the present situation has value, while the program of action remains an appeal to the throne—like all such appeals a little stupid, a little pathetic.

JAMES M. FENWICK

Slave Laborer's Story

TELL THE WEST, by Jerzy Gliksman. New York, Gresham Press, 1948, \$3.00.

Jerzy Gliksman was, until 1939, a leading member of the Jewish Socialist Bund of Poland. He was a brother of Viktor Alter, the famous Polish socialist who was subsequently to be murdered together with Heinrich Ehrlich, another leading Polish socialist, by the Stalinist regime.

When the war broke out in 1939, Gliksman remained in Warsaw until the Nazi armies were virtually at its gates, participating in the attempt to organize labor resistance to the Nazis after the Polish government had collapsed. He fled eastward when resistance seemed quite hopeless. Like many other socialists, he rather naively ex-

pected to receive, if not an enthusiastic, then at least a decent welcome from the Russians.

The welcome he did receive was arrest by the Stalinist secret police, incarceration for months without charges presented against him, and finally a five-year sentence to a Siberian labor camp as a socially suspect individual. The warden of the prison in which he was held slapped Gliksman on the back and told him he'd be reconstructed into a good Soviet citizen in Siberia.

Gliksman's book (a strangely impassive and therefore in some ways particularly impressive work) records his experiences in jail, on a cattle car riding across Russia to Siberia, and during a year in a Siberian *lager*. It would be useless here to repeat the incredibly bestial details of the suffering he underwent and of the life of slave laborers in Siberia. Suffice it to say that anyone interested in this question will wish to read the book: it is an absolutely honest, painfully restrained, completely apolitical record of human suffering, distorted neither by passion nor bias. Gliksman is not a skillful writer, but under the circumstances his very lack of skill is something of an advantage. For the mere dreary recital of the facts—of the inhuman labor conditions, the constant hunger, the degradation of prisoners in the camps—is eloquent enough.

By and large Gliksman's book supports the theoretical conclusions about forced labor in Russia that were discussed in this magazine several months back in connection with David Dallin's study of that subject. The object of Stalinism was, unlike Hitler's, not primarily to terrorize oppositionists, its object was primarily to find large supplies of cheap and expendable labor. In practice, the horror of one was duplicated by the other.

Add Gliksman's book to the gruesome list of books that describe the life of men under modern totalitarianism.

IRVING HOWE

Fighting Filipinos

THE PHILIPPINE STORY, by David Bernstein. Farrar, Straus & Co., New York, 1947, 276 pp.

As a historical survey of the Philippines, through the years of Spanish, American, and Japanese imperialist domination, David Bernstein's story is valuable for its wealth of encyclopedic fact on the development of this sprawling archipelago, in spite of the fact that the author—an ex-newspaperman and liberal advisor to the Philippine government during the war—has no insight into the politics of imperialism and even shows traces of the White Man's Burden philosophy.

The first portion of the book deals with the Filipino struggle against Spanish misrule and corrupt exploitation under soldiers of fortune and the clergy. The story is given of the first national hero of the Philippines,

José Rizal—well-born, conservative intellectual who rejected revolutionary methods of struggle against the overlords—whose execution by the Spanish was the spark that set off the national revolt in earnest toward the end of the nineteenth century. The principal leaders of this new movement were Bonifacio and Aguinaldo, who organized a central revolutionary committee for raising an army of 30,000 men. Despite a temporary deal between Aguinaldo and the Spaniards, this rebellion was still raging when America declared war on Spain in 1898.

When, at the conclusion of that war, a U. S. military governor was proclaimed supreme ruler of the islands, the *insurrectos* decided that it mattered little to them whether their oppressors spoke Spanish or English; the revolt continued, this time against the Americans. They were brutally crushed by 85,000 troops. Thus began the "American experiment in benevolent assimilation," as President McKinley sanctimoniously put it. The major portion of the book deals with this "experiment."

Bernstein plumps heavily for the fiction of "liberal imperialism" and, of course, he

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has accomplishments to point to: the use of Filipinos in administrative posts in the government, mass education, etc. But back in 1898 a franker statement of U. S. aims in the islands was made before Congress by Senator Lodge:

"We make no hypocritical pretense of being interested in the Philippines solely on account of others. While we regard the welfare of these people as a sacred trust, we regard the welfare of the American people first. We believe in trade expansion."

The war years are dealt with rather cursorily, but the capitulatory role of the Filipino bourgeoisie is duly noted. A serious shortcoming of the book, however, is the author's failure to deal with the peasant and labor movements more than in passing. The Hukbalahap, embracing tens of thousands of peasants, and the growing Congress of Labor Organization certainly deserve at least equal space with the intracabinet gossip that is given in such detail. The Huks, the militant peasant army that threw as much fear into the hearts of the Filipino bourgeoisie as it did into the hearts of the Japanese invaders, certainly deserve more than the meager paragraphs donated to them. This is merely a further indication of the author's reliance for progress from "above."

A revealing section of the book consists of an analysis of the economics of liberation, and if there remains anyone who still doubts the deceptive and spurious nature of the recently granted independence, let him pore over Mr. Bernstein's notes on the Trade Bill of 1946. He will be forced to con-

clude with the author that here again the United States is indulging in "nothing more than a streamlined and unsubtle demonstration of economic imperialism." And once more is established the irrefutable evidence that President Manuel Roxas, former collaborator with the Japanese, and elected president with the aid of General MacArthur, acts as a mere tool of American imperialist interests in the Philippines.

Twice in their history the hopes of the people of the Philippines of achieving genuine independence were shattered against the rocks of American imperialism—the first time in 1896 when American military rule replaced Spanish oppression; the second time in 1945 when Japanese imperialist rule was replaced by the American variety. This historical duplication is serving as the basis for educating vast numbers of Filipinos in the basic facts of imperialist politics: that if they are to write a happy ending to The Philippine Story, they must rely only upon themselves to do it.

M. YOUNG

Source Book on Imperialism

NEW CYCLE IN ASIA, edited with an Introduction and Notes by Harold R. Isaacs. Macmillan Co., New York, 212 pp., \$3.00.

The end of the war precipitated a series of events in the Far East and colonial world whose end is far from attained and whose historic significance is yet undetermined. The end of the Japanese empire, destroyed in war, occurred simultaneously with and partly helped along the end of the British, French and Dutch empires, at least in their familiar form.

This book, ably edited by Harold R. Isaacs, contains the more important selected documents on major developments in the Far East from 1943 to 1947. As source material for future studies, these notes and documents are of great value, particularly since the trend of modern imperialist diplomacy—in view of the acuteness of present-day conflicts—has been toward clearer, more open expressions of opinions and interests.

These documents deal with the defeat of Japan, the entire evolution of American post-war policy toward China, the struggle between the two great rivals over Korea, the Philippines, the development of the final position on India's partition, the framing of Burma's new position with respect to Britain, and the important documents relating to the colonial wars in Indo-China and Indonesia.

The fact that these documents have been brought together, with explanatory notes, is an achievement in itself. The larger problem of an over-all analysis of the new colonial systems, and the still more complex problem of interpreting the new situation through Marxist revolutionary colonial theory (above all, the adaptation of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution as applied to the colonial world)—these problems must now be tackled.

HENRY JUDD

Raw Facts on Germany

GERMANY: WHAT NOW? by Joachim Joesten. Ziff-Davis, New York, 1948, 231 pp., \$3.75.

For those who want a good deal of factual information and data about post-war Germany, this study has a definite value. Written in a rather dry and academic style, it contains enormous quantities of raw factual material dealing with the new constitutional setup in the various zones and states of Germany, a chronicle-like survey of the various political parties, and a general description of the economic systems prevailing in the four zones.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book consists in the account of the various political parties and their present heads. Joesten gives us a brief sketch of each leader, with some telling sidelights on his career and political philosophy, including such men as Pieck, Schumacher and Kaiser, to mention the most important. In addition, there is much data on the results of the elections that have been held up to now.

For those anxious to get a factual picture of Germany as it is today, battered and split, this book will provide at least a partial answer. The description of the new setup is exhaustive in its detail. Yet this reviewer ventures the opinion that the reader will *not* have a real picture of the new Germany. He will have touched the surface and perhaps grasped its form, but the book completely fails to penetrate below the superficial. It utterly lacks the "feel" (most important for the understanding) of this land of utter misery. There is nothing of the hunger and ruin, the spiritual and political regression, the confusion and fear without end, the sense of hopelessness and a future without future, that constitutes the real Germany. The author is a good collector of data, which he digests in popular and readable form, but not much else.

One of the interesting, if forgotten, documents he has dug up is Proclamation No. 2 (August 13, 1945) of the Allied Control Council. This document, signed by Zhukov, Eisenhower, Montgomery and Koeltz, is now used by the Russians to justify their seizure of German assets, both industrial and human. It provides that "...the German authorities will . . . provide such labor, personnel and specialists for use in Germany or elsewhere as the Allied representatives may direct."

Writing as a liberal, somewhat sympathetic to the Social-Democratic viewpoint, the author assumes the continuation of the occupation more or less in its present form, with the freezing and stabilization of the present split between Eastern and Western Germany. This is highly dubious, and undermines the prognostic nature of the book, as contained in its title.

The limitations of the author's method, for example, are illustrated by his section on the Russians' land reform in their zone of Germany. He states the facts, but even here he misses the still more important fact of its bureaucratic fulfillment, together with the Russian suppression of the spontaneous uprising of the landless peasantry. And he neglects the problems arising out of this land reform, as well as the now well-

known fact that the Russians collect substantial portions of the crops for shipment eastward.

Likewise, he sees nothing of the "national problem" (he links all resistance tendencies to reactionary Prussian chauvinism) and cannot see the larger and broader problems of Germany. The value of the book, then, lies mainly in its useful and handy collection of information.

HENRY JUDD

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57th & Lexington (NW)
1439—6th Av., at 59th
100—57th St., at 6th Av.
50th & 1st Av. (SE)
50th & 6th Av. (SE)
Gotham Bookstore, 47th west of 6th Av.
*42nd St. stands near Main Library
42nd & 7th Ave. (NW)
37th & 6th Av. (SE)
35th & 6th Av. (NE)
34th & 7th Av. (NE)
33rd & Park Av. (SW)
32nd & Broadway (NW)
23rd & 4th Av. (SW)
23rd & Broadway (NE)
*14th St., all stands from 6th Av. to 3rd Av.
Biderman's Bookstore, 2nd Av. & 11th
8th & Broadway (NE)
Waverly Pl. & Broadway (NW)
51 University Pl. at 9th
58 W. 8th, at 6th Av.
21 Greenwich St.
11th & 6th Av. (NE)
Cortland & Church (SE)
172 Fulton, at Church
33 Park Row
Chambers St., near City Hall
Park Pl. & Church (NE)
Delancey & Essex (NW)
Delancey & Clinton (NW)
Maisel's Bookst., 424 Grand, at Clinton
Jankowitz Bookst., E. Broadway, next to
Forward Bldg.

BROOKLYN
792 Franklin, at E. Pkwy.
9 Flatbush Av. (at Nevins sta. IRT)
Entrance DeKalb sta., BMT

(*These stands also sell LABOR ACTION)