

The New _____
INTERNATIONAL

**IS RUSSIA
A SOCIALIST
COMMUNITY?**

A DEBATE

BETWEEN

**EARL
BROWDER**

**MAX
SHACHTMAN**

The Tragedy of Romain Rolland

By Victor Serge

Reflections on a Decade Past

35¢

May-June, 1950

which the conquest had taken place and concerned themselves largely with the complex history of this strange and fascinating land. The purpose of this school of literature was to make India accessible to the Western World in acceptable terms. Not until much later, when the first wave of German specialists began their studies, was it realized that the 6,000-odd years of Indian history and thought had roots not so easily accessible to bourgeois historians.

But the social and national struggle of India, centering around the Congress Party and Gandhi, in turn produced a new type of literature, political and sociological in nature. Problems of economy, irrigation and agriculture, politics and government, were dealt with. Class analysis and class rivalries tended to blot out the traditional approach to Indian affairs. It appeared that broad divisions such as Hindu and Moslem, or Buddhism as opposed to Mohammedanism, were to be erased in the heat of the anti-imperialist and class struggles. The issue of caste faded before that of class.

Unfortunately for India, however, a sharp reversal of the historic trend set in. The reasons for this are well worth a detailed study which has yet to be made. The catastrophic division of India, now an accepted fact, took place. It is only natural under these circumstances that a corresponding reversal of literature dealing with India should accompany this; a throwback to a previous period when English historians objectively described traits of Hindu and Moslem, Hindu theology, Hindu caste and Buddhist doctrine. Such is this recently published work of Percival Spear, a fellow at Cambridge University.

As a historic and fairly illuminating introduction to the religious, communal and social problems of India, no fault can be found with this work. Spear finds that India has "twin souls"—Hindu and Moslem—and it must be admitted that the degree and depth of this distinction was sadly underestimated by socialist and Marxist writers. The main scope of this short book is to trace and outline the nature of this difference. Like English historians of the classic school, the author has an admirable skill in concentrating, digesting and summarizing a great mass of material and presenting it in the cool, somewhat ironical manner associated with such writers. His por-

trait of Hindu and Moslem soul is undoubtedly largely influenced by E. M. Forster's *Passage to India*. There is little economic or social analysis in this work and the influence of such factors is glossed over except for the casual remark (p. 91) that "...most of the industrial resources and nearly all the capital and skill of united India were in the hands of the Hindus."

In the concluding chapter, from page 212 onward, there is an admirable summary of the fantastically difficult problems, in all fields, which confront the ruling Hindu society—the caste problem, now brought to the forefront by the social reform bill proposed by Nehru; the problem of Hindu theology in relation to Western concepts; the problem of historic Hindu culture and its effort to survive. To this must be added, of course, the problem of tightening relations between India and Pakistan which constitute a permanent menace of war between these two areas of the sub-continent. In restating lasting problems in the light of the division of India, this work has perhaps begun a new phase of the vast literature dealing with the most important nation in the Asiatic world.

H. J.

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Compliments on the new format and the contents of the NI continue to come in from our readers. We are glad to get them.

But the important thing is to get more readers. Our subscribers could do a lot to spread the influence of the magazine. Why not make a special effort this month to get at least one friend or acquaintance to subscribe? Give it a moment's thought, and fifteen minutes of action.

A number of copies of the last issue were improperly collated at the bindery. We received several good-humored jibes, and requests for complete copies from subscribers. If your copy contains a repetition of some pages and omits others, just drop us a line and we'll be glad to send you a good one.

The Shachtman-Browder debate carried in this issue has been recorded on tapes. They are available for use by groups and individuals who might like to hear the debate with their own ears. Due to a technical error, Browder's final summary couldn't be transcribed but, as you can see from the text, these last few minutes do not seriously affect the argument.

If you want the tapes, write the business office of the NI. The rental fee is nominal.

NOTE:

Because of the space we have devoted in this issue to reprinting the text of the Browder-Shachtman debate, we have had to postpone the continuation of the series of articles, "Four Portraits of Stalinism," by Max Shachtman. The next and concluding installment, which will appear in the July-August issue, completes the critique of Bertram D. Wolfe's book, and also examines the study of Stalin by Isaac Deutscher. . . . The July-August issue will contain many other articles of more than ordinary interest to our readers, among them an exchange between Comrade Hal Draper and a European friend on the meaning of Titoism, and an over-all review of the situation in Asia by Jack Brad and Henry Judd.

Reflections on a Decade Past**On the Tenth Anniversary of Our Movement**

Man, the political animal, does not start with theory but with action. It is only after a variety of actions have accumulated that he feels the need of drawing conclusions and acquires the possibility of theory which is only a generalization from experience past to guide him in experience to come. Human progress is made only to the extent that this need is felt and the possibility utilized. If the known goal of that progress is true human dignity, the process of reaching it can be described as the growth of man's consciousness of his power over nature, including his own nature. And if this process is not straightforward or uninterrupted or as rapid as it might be, it is due in large measure to the fact that the mind, while the most remarkable organ we know, is also one of the most conservative: each idea which finally lodges in it after long and suspicious scrutiny offers resistance to every new idea or new theory.

All this holds true for man associated in political movements, including in different degrees the most iconoclastic or revolutionary. The greater his consciousness and his capacity for thinking, the more he strives to make his thoughts comprehensive, to bring order and system into them. But beyond a certain point, this striving, which is utterly indispensable for log-

ical thinking and fruitful action, runs the risk of sterilizing the movement and its action by freezing thought into dogma. This risk is run especially by the revolutionary movement, precisely because of the importance it attaches to theory. The consequences of this risk are not unavoidable. They cannot be conjured away, however, simply by repeating after Engels that our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action. To understand why it is not a dogma and cannot be, is much more important.

In a world where everything but change itself is continuously changing, and where action (or inaction) contributes to change, theory, which is a guide to action applied to given conditions, cannot possibly apply in exactly the same way or to exactly the same extent under altered conditions. If theory is to remain revolutionary and valid, it must of necessity always be open to the criticism of experience, reaffirmed where practice confirms its validity, modified where that is dictated by a modification of conditions, and discarded where it proves to be ambiguous, outlived or false.

This constant re-examination and readiness to revise itself is provided for by Marxism itself which, because it is revolutionary and scientific, is critical and therefore also self-critical. It is its only safeguard against shrivel-

ing into a dogma. It is only by resorting to this safeguard that Lenin was able to overcome the conservatism of the mind (the mind of the revolutionist has a conservatism of its own) and achieve the rearmament of Marxism without which no Bolshevik revolution would have been possible. By misapplying this safeguard, or ignoring it altogether, the Marxian movement of our time has contributed to its own enfeeblement. In this sense, it is not Marxism that has failed, as many gloomy critics find it so popular to say nowadays; it is the Marxian dogmatists who have failed.

These considerations have increasingly influenced the life of our movement in the ten years during which it has existed as an independent organization, first as the Workers Party and now as the Independent Socialist League. The impact of the war, which the working classes were entirely unprepared to cope with and whose outcome they did not determine, left most of the small international Marxian movement (the Trotskyist movement and those akin to it) with little more than theory-turned-dogma. It jolted us into a realization that the theory and politics of Marxism demanded a development or re-development without which it would lose all the massive force it once possessed. The unfolding of the war itself, the conditions under which it was concluded, and all the big events of the dubious peace that followed it, only enhanced this realization.

To enter the second half of the century with nothing more than the political equipment the movement had at the beginning of the war is not so much criminal as it is preposterous. Those whose greatest boast is an impressive capacity for boasting may claim as their proudest virtue a "finished program," as the auto-certified

Trotskyists do; they are only announcing that their program is as good as finished and they with it. As for ourselves, we lay no more claim to having a "finished program" (what a *stupid* phrase! Just when was it finished? Just what finished it?) than Marxists have ever claimed since the days of the Program of the Communist Party which Marx and Engels presented. We have a program that is more than adequate for the times. We seek constantly to clarify, renovate and strengthen it in harmony with the real developments and the needs of the struggle. Since it is a program for struggle, and not a home for elderly radicals, we cannot say just when it will be "finished." The question is of little interest to us.

THE PRINCIPAL NEW PROBLEM faced by Marxian theory, and therewith Marxian practice, is the problem of Stalinism. What once appeared to many to be either an academic or "foreign" problem is now, it should at last be obvious, a decisive problem for all classes in all countries. If it is understood as a purely Russian phenomenon or as a problem "in itself," it is of course not understood at all. It exists as a problem only in connection with the dying out of capitalist society, on the one hand, and the struggle to replace it by socialism, on the other. It is only in this connection that we can begin to understand it.

If our movement had done nothing more, in the past ten years, than to make its contribution to the understanding of Stalinism, that alone would justify its existence. It is our unique contribution, and all our views are closely connected with it. We consider it decisive for the future of capitalism, in so far as it has one, and for the future of socialism.

An understanding of Stalinism is too much to expect from the bourgeoisie. The modest theoretical capacities at its disposal are still further restricted by class interests which blind it in the investigation of serious social problems, especially when it is so exclusively preoccupied with frenzied but futile efforts to patch together a social order that is falling apart at every joint. To the extent that its thinkers and statesmen try to *explain* Stalinism in more or less coherent terms, they inform us that collectivism necessarily leads to tyranny—a homily usually prefaced by the well-worn banality from Lord Acton about how power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The explanation does not explain much, least of all how it happens that the tyranny of collectivism is supplanting the freedom of capitalism. But nothing more can be asked from a theory which was intellectually developed and popularized by the savants in the abattoirs of American yellow journalism. Most of the time, the bourgeoisie does not transcend demonology. It explains Stalinism in the simple terms of evil spirits, witchcraft, black magic, conjurations and other unnatural forces, which can be exorcised by adequate police measures or by stocking more atomic bombs than the demonic forces. Actually, Stalinism remains for the bourgeoisie what Winston Churchill, not its most obtuse representative, described as an enigma and a riddle and a mystery. The military mind of Mr. Churchill—which is only a species of the common police mind—hears no special call to undo the enigmas, ravel the riddles and pierce the mysteries of society. Explain Stalinism? It is enough to blow it up by an atomic bomb, even if it does not be-

long to him but to his more affluent cousin across the sea.

The international Social Democracy has little more to offer. Theory in general and Marxian theory in particular ceased long ago to hold its interest. In part this explains why it alternates between joining with the Stalinists against the bourgeoisie (in the East) and joining with the bourgeoisie against the Stalinists (in the West). About a quarter of a century ago, long before their recent division into pro-Stalinists and American patriots, the Russian Menshevik leaders who retained some respect for theoretical generalization described Stalinism as "state capitalism" or as "one of its forms." In more recent times, the same theory has regained a pallid existence, or a multiplicity of existences, among smaller groups in and around the Trotskyist movement: Stalinism is Red Fascism, or bureaucratic Fascism, or caste-ruled state capitalism, or bureaucratic state capitalism, or some other variety of state capitalism.

One inconvenience of this theory is that the Stalinist social system is not capitalist and does not show any of the classic, traditional, distinctive characteristics of capitalism. Another is that there is no capitalist class under the rule of Stalinism, and there are as many embarrassments in conceiving of a capitalist state where all capitalists are in cemeteries or in emigration as in grasping the idea of a workers' state where all the workers are in slave-camps or factory-prisons. A third is that nowhere can an authentic capitalist class, or any section of it, be found to support or welcome Stalinism, a coolness which makes good social sense from its point of view since it is obvious to all but those who extract theories from their thumbs that Stalinism comes to power by destroying the capitalist state and

the capitalist class. There are a dozen other inconveniences about the theories of "state capitalism," or any theory based upon the idea of a single "universal capital" which Marx, rightly, we think, jeered at as nonsensical. But the most important one is the fact that the theories preclude any understanding of the actual social conflict in which Stalinism is involved and offer no possibility of an effective political course for the working-class movement. To combat it as a capitalist force is like galloping with tilted rubber hose at a windmill that is not there.

There remains the Trotskyist movement. During the lifetime of Trotsky, his theoretical contribution to the understanding of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution out of which Stalinism was born, was the only serious and fruitful one produced within or outside the Marxian movement. In the Trotskyist movement today gnomes have succeeded the giant and misery has fallen heir to grandeur. The changing tides of events which sweep the islet on which they are marooned without sail or chart or compass or ship or pilot, seems to give them the illusion that it is they who are moving. Actually, they are immobilized victims of a dogma. They repeat ritually that although Russia is a vast prison of the workers and the peoples, it nevertheless remains a workers' state because property is in the hands of the state. This state is, however, completely in the hands of an uncontrollable bureaucracy which directs the economy in its own interests. And while it is totalitarian and counter-revolutionary, it nevertheless overturns capitalism in one country after another and extends the domain of the workers' state as it was never extended before. More baseless theories have been concocted about many

things; a weirder one is hard to think of.

This dogma is the substance that has made it possible, today as in the past, for Stalinism to exercise a strong magnetic attraction upon the Trotskyist movement, forcing it into reluctant alignment in most of the fundamentally important political developments and leaving it essentially only with the criticism not so much of what Stalinism does as the "methods" by which it does it. This was already true in part during Trotsky's leadership; since his death, it has become *the* trait of the Trotskyist movement, which is obscured at times only by its erroneous analyses of Stalinism's line as a "capitulation" to capitalism. This the bourgeoisie would like to believe in but it has come to understand ruefully that the "capitulation" is only chimerical. The growing frenzy of enthusiasm which the Trotskyist movement has worked up for the Tito regime, which is socially identical with the Russian Stalinist regime even if the Fourth International only yesterday solemnly designated it as Bonapartist capitalism, is only another case of the magnetic attraction to which it yields. This disoriented movement cannot, without radically reorienting itself, make any positive contribution to the reorientation of the working-class movement in general.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR served at least this useful purpose: it underscored the tendencies of development of capitalism and Stalinism, and by making more explicit what was already implicit in them, brought them into clearer perspective.

The decay of capitalist society continues at a rapid pace and almost without interruption. One after another, its organs are attacked by the

poisons of decomposition. The mere fact that one part of the capitalist world found it imperative to ally itself with so mortal an enemy of capital as Stalinism is, in order to assure its own existence and expansion at the cost of the other part of the capitalist world—a course which the other part found it just as imperative to adopt when the wheel of events made its turn—is enough to show that we are in the presence of a dying social order. The same thing is shown by the fact, now almost universally acknowledged by the bourgeois world, that the problems which the incredibly destructive war purported to solve are still unresolved and must wait for solution upon victory in the "cold war" which, it is not very sanguinely hoped, will prevent the open military collision of a third world war. Another world war, the third in two or at most three generations—and this one a war of incalculable consequences for whatever civilization we have—is more than any social system can endure. Yet there is no other perspective before world capitalism, and few serious representatives of the capitalist camp confidently offer any other.

The economy of capitalism has never been so chaotic, unstable and so far removed from classical capitalist economy. The reactionaries who complain, unavailingly, that the system of "free enterprise" is being undermined in all capitalist countries, *even* in the United States, by "socialist" measures, are quite right, in their own way. All they fail to understand is that for capitalism to exist *at all* nowadays it must allow for its *partial negation*, for that "invading" socialism of which Engels wrote some four-score years ago. However, the mixture of the "invader" with decaying capitalism produces an increasingly insufferable monstrosity. The chaos of

capitalist economy is organized, as it were, only by an ever heavier emphasis on war economy, on the production of means of destruction which do not re-enter the process of production to enrich the wealth of the nation and which "enter" the process of production of the enemy nation only to disrupt and destroy it. If the war budgets were reduced throughout the capitalist world to what was normal no more than thirty years ago, complete economic prostration would follow immediately and automatically. Such burdens, capitalism cannot escape. They are breaking its back, no matter how much they are shifted to the shoulders of the working people.

In the political sphere, there is a corresponding development. It would almost suffice to point out that in the last real fortress of capitalism, the United States, taken on the whole, there is today less democracy than existed under the Hohenzollern and Habsburg monarchies before the First World War. Partly under the necessity and partly on the pretext of fighting the "fifth column" of Stalinism, one long-standing democratic right after another is being assaulted in the country, undermined, restricted or wiped out altogether. The criminality of the assault is matched only by the hypocrisy of the Stalinist protestants, the cowardly flabbiness if not direct connivance of most of the liberal world, and the tacit approval of the drive by the official labor movement which conducts its own drive in parallel with it. In the other capitalist countries the situation is no better; in many of them it is worse and much worse.

The more the ownership and control of the means of production and exchange are concentrated in the hands of the few—the greater is the centralization of authority and power

in the hands of the state and the further are the masses removed from control of economic and political conditions. The deeper the economic crisis of capitalism, the shakier its foundations, the greater the ineffectualness of the market as the automatic regulator of capitalist production—the wider and deeper is the intervention of the state into the economy as substitute-regulator, substitute-organizer, substitute-director. The more extensive the wars and the war preparations, the vaster, more critical and more complex the efforts required to sustain them both in the economic and the political (add also the ideological) fields—the more the state is obliged to regiment and dictate in all the spheres of social life, the less tolerant it becomes of all “disruption,” the more it demands conformity to the “national effort,” to state policy, from all the classes.

The working class is least able to conform because the accumulating burdens rest primarily on its shoulders. To protect its economic interests it is compelled to oppose the prevailing trends. To resist effectively it must have and exercise those democratic rights which, while valuable to all classes, are absolutely indispensable to the working class. The more it exercises these rights out of the simple necessity of defending its economic position—the stronger is the tendency of the bourgeois state, out of the simple necessity of defending its position, to curtail these rights and even to nullify them entirely. Self-preservation generates in the working class a craving for democracy and dictates the fight for it *against the bourgeoisie*.

The socialist movement, which is (or should be) nothing but the conscious expression of the fight of the working class, can be restored to a decisive political force if it realizes that,

today far more than ever before, the all-around and aggressive championing of the struggle for democracy is the only safeguard against the encroaching social decay, and the only road to socialism. We are or must become the most consistent champions of democracy, not so much because the slogans of democracy are “convenient weapons” against an anti-democratic bourgeoisie, but because the working class, and our movement with it, must have democracy in order to protect and promote its interests. Above all because the last thirty years in particular have confirmed or reminded us or awakened us to the fact that without the attainment of democracy all talk of the conquest of power by the working class is deceit or illusion, and that without the realization of complete democracy all talk of the establishment of socialism is a mockery. A socialist movement, grant it the best intentions in the world, which ignores or deprecates the fight for democracy—for all democratic rights and institutions, for more extensive democratic rights and the most democratic institutions—which is suspicious about such a fight being somehow not in consonance with or something separate from (let alone inimical to) the fight for socialism, which trails along behind that fight or supports it reluctantly or with tongue in cheek, will never lead the fight for socialist freedom.

THE STATEMENT OF THESE VIEWS requires no renunciation of our past; at most, it requires abandoning misunderstandings about it. The most basic and durable program of Marxian socialism rightly equates the raising of the working class to the position of political supremacy with the establishment of democracy. The Russian Marxists, the Bolsheviks, were the

most militant and consistent champions of democracy Russia ever knew. The Russian Revolution was the most democratic revolution in history—far more democratic, in every respect, than the French or American revolutions of the eighteenth century—and it established the most democratic political regime in the world, the original soviet system which Lenin prized and praised as a thousand times more democratic than the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments.

It can be granted, however, that with the deepening of the split in the world labor movement between communists and reformists, the polemical battle between the two camps, sometimes fought out in civil war, did not always serve the purpose of clarity. To those who look back upon it today without relating it to the conditions of the times, the polemics are downright misleading. Reformists appear as supporters of democracy; revolutionists as advocates of dictatorship. Leaving aside all exaggerations, which were abundant, the reality was quite different from the appearance. “Democracy” was the shorthand or summary expression of the reformist view that the road to socialism lay through the beneficent expansion of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, with the transition from capitalism to socialism represented by a parliamentary coalition between the socialist proletariat and the so-called progressive or democratic bourgeoisie. “Dictatorship” was the shorthand term for the Marxist view that the road to socialism ran through the transitional period of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat organized in workers’ councils (soviets).

In the civil war or semi-civil war conditions that existed in Europe in those days, the principal obstacles in the path of the fight for socialism

were the parliamentary illusions which reformism fostered in the working class. These illusions—that’s what they were and what they are today—had to be dispelled as quickly as possible by the revolutionists in those urgent days. They did not succeed in time; neither, however, did socialism. However that may be, what must be borne in mind is what the watchwords “democracy” and “dictatorship” referred to concretely in the early days of the Bolshevik revolution and the Communist International.

To cling to the terms of the old polemic nowadays, in a radically different situation, is political madness. The Russian Revolution has been destroyed; it is no longer the polestar of the socialist proletariat. The socialist proletariat is no longer on the offensive; its struggle for power is nowhere on the order of the day. The main obstacles on the road, not to socialist power, but simply to the reconstitution of a socialist working-class movement, are not the parliamentary illusions of the proletariat. They are the illusions of Stalinism. Today, not reformism but Stalinism is the principal threat to the integrity, the consciousness, the interests of the working class. Today, the term dictatorship does not bring to the mind of the worker the image, clear or dim, of the inspiring soviet democracy of the Bolshevik revolution. It represents what he has experienced in his own day and on his own back: Fascist or Stalinist totalitarianism. The fear and hatred which these despotisms stir in him are deep and justified. The worker of today who wants “democracy” and rejects “dictatorship” does so for entirely different reasons than the worker of 30 or more years ago. And he is unerring in his class instincts, and right in his “prejudices” for democracy, despite the confused form in which he may

express them. The meaning of political terms especially is determined in the long run by the people and not by an elite, and even if that elite is socialistic and scientific it loses little or nothing by bowing to the popular verdict. This is, despite its limitations, a good rule.

THE CLASS INSTINCTS of the proletariat are a safeguard against many things. But they do not suffice for the victory of socialism. For that, a *conscious* proletariat is required, a socialist proletariat. The question that once arose as an academic one is now posed as a real one: what is the social trend when capitalism has become ripe and overripe, objectively, for the socialist reorganization, and the working class, for one reason or another, fails to develop its socialist consciousness to the point where it is capable of dealing capitalism the death-blow? Socialism does not and cannot come into existence automatically. Does capitalism then continue in existence automatically and indefinitely? We are familiar with the theory that Stalinist Russia is a workers' state which decays and decays and decays further but which will nevertheless always remain a workers' state until overturned by the capitalist class. There is evidently also a theory that capitalism continues to decay and decay and decay still further but that until it is overturned by the socialist proletariat, no matter how long that may take, it will continue to exist as a capitalist society. Neither theory, for all the stereotyped references to dialectics, is worth the paper devoted to it.

To say that capitalism is decaying is to say that it is increasingly incapable of coping with the basic problems of society, of maintaining economic and political order—that is, of course, order on a capitalist foundation. Modern society, based on large-scale ma-

chinofacture and world trade, is an intricate and highly integrated complex. Every serious disturbance of its more or less normal operation—crisis, war, sharp political conflict, revolution—violently dislocates the lives of millions and even tens of millions all over the world. The dislocations in turn render difficult the return to normal operation. The difference between capitalism flowering and capitalism declining lies in the growth of the number, scope, gravity and intensity of these disturbances. It is increasingly difficult for capitalism to restore an equilibrium and to maintain it for long. Where the crisis reaches an acute stage, and the forces of capitalism are more or less paralyzed, the proletariat is called upon to restore order, its own order, by the socialist revolution.

But what if the proletariat is not organized to carry through the socialist revolution? Or, having carried it out, as in Russia in 1917, what if it remains isolated and is therefore not yet able to discharge its only task as a new ruling class, namely, to abolish all ruling classes by establishing socialism? From the days of the Paris Commune to the defeat of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the answer was always the same: the proletariat pays for failure in bloody retribution inflicted by the bourgeoisie restored to power.

In the last quarter of a century, an epoch of the exceptionally rapid disintegration of capitalism, we have seen that the answer to the failure of the working class may also take another form. Where the bourgeoisie is no longer capable of maintaining (or, as in the case of Russia), of restoring its social order, and the proletariat is not yet able to inaugurate its own, a social interregnum is established by a new ruling class which buries the

moribund capitalism and crushes the unborn socialism in the egg. The new ruling class is the Stalinist bureaucracy; its social order, hostile both to capitalism and socialism, is bureaucratic or totalitarian collectivism. The bourgeoisie is wiped out altogether and the working classes are reduced to state slaves.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE NEW RULING CLASS are created under capitalism. They are part of that vast social melange we know as the middle classes. Concentration of capital, capitalist crisis—these uproot the numerous strata which are intermediate between the two basic classes. They tend more and more to lose their stake in the capitalist system of private property. They lose their small properties or the properties lose their value; they lose their comfortable social positions or their positions lose importance. The sharper and longer the agony of capitalism, the more of these elements become declassed. Their old social allegiances give way to new ones, the choice depending on a whole mass of circumstances. They are attracted to anti-capitalist movements, real or spurious. When the proletarian movement is in a growing, healthy, self-confident condition, they are drawn to it, become its valuable allies and are greatly influenced by its democratic and socialist ideology. Under other circumstances, many of them are drawn to a fascist movement which promises to check the excesses of capital without permitting the rule of labor. However, fascism in power proved to be a cruel disillusionment to the anti-big-capitalistic middle classes and, particularly since its defeat in the war, suffered a tremendous moral-political blow on a world scale. Today it is Stalinism, in the absence of a revolutionary socialist movement

which it has helped so signally to strangle, that exercises a magnetic power over these elements.

Stalinism is represented by a powerful and seemingly stable state. Outside of Russia it commands, or tries to command, powerful mass organizations. Its authentically anti-capitalist nature is established in the minds of all social groups, including the precariously-situated or declassed elements from the old middle classes: intellectuals, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled; individuals from the liberal professions; officials and employees of all sorts, including those from the swollen but impoverished governmental apparatus; and above all else, labor bureaucrats. They have less and less to lose from the abolition of private property by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, and more and more to gain from a movement which will overturn capitalism without imposing upon them the democratic discipline and equalitarian principles of the socialist proletariat. In Stalinism they find a movement able to appeal to the masses for the struggle against capitalism, but yet one which does not demand of them—as the socialist movement does—the abandonment of the ideology which is common to all oppressor classes, namely: command is the privilege of superiors, obedience the lot of inferiors, and the mass must be ruled by kindly masters for its own good. Such elements gravitate easily to the Stalinist bureaucracy precisely because it already has, or has the possibility of acquiring, the leadership of one of the main social classes, which has in common with them a growing disinterest in the preservation of capitalist property.

Given the existence and normal growth of the proletarian movement and its assimilation of a socialist consciousness, all these elements taken to-

gether would not constitute a very decisive social force. But the weight of social forces is not absolute but relative. The socialist consciousness and coherence of the working class have suffered tremendous blows in the past three decades from reformism, on the one hand, and from Stalinism, on the other. Its disorientation and demoralization have been aggravated by the continuing decomposition of capitalism. While we do not believe for one moment that this condition will continue without end, the fact is that this is what the situation has been for some time. Compared with a working class in such a state, the elements we have described, *especially when bolstered by a big Stalinist state*, can for a time act as a decisive social force in one country after another where the crisis has prostrated the bourgeoisie. What is more, this force can destroy the bourgeoisie, its state and its economy, and transform itself into a new ruling class. It can do it and it has done it. That the auto-certified Marxists refuse to recognize this fact is small comfort to the bourgeoisie that has already been crushed and the working class that has already been subjugated.

WHILE THE POWER OF STALINISM was confined to Russia, this analysis and conclusion may have appeared premature. The reserve is no longer necessary today; actually, it is no longer possible. It is possible now to re-read the history of the Russian Revolution with greater profit. It proved that the working class, democratically organized, self-acting and class-conscious, can carry out the socialist revolution, can "establish democracy." Unless this is attributed to some we-do-not-know-which quality unique to Russians, it is valid for the working class as a whole. It proved also that the working

class in power either moves toward the socialist reconstruction of society, or loses power altogether.

It proved other things, too. Isolated in one country, the workers' democracy cannot organize the productive forces *socialistically*. But, by definition, so to speak, workers' power is an obstacle to the organization of the productive forces on a reactionary foundation, which implies an exploitation of the working class that its power cannot tolerate. The bourgeoisie was incapable of restoring its power in Russia, either by its domestic or its international forces. In 1905, it could restore its power; a quarter of a century later, it could not. The "obstacle" was thereupon removed, not by the bourgeoisie, but by the elements that consolidated themselves into the new ruling class, the collectivist bureaucracy. It proceeded to organize the economy of the nation, not on a socialist or even socialistic basis but on a reactionary basis. It subjected the Russian people to the fiercest and most ruthless exploitation known in modern times and established as the guardian of its rule and privilege the most barbarous of totalitarian regimes, differing from Hitler's, generally speaking, like one pea from another.

During and after the Second World War, the new Stalinist bureaucracy became the master of just those more-or-less peripheral countries in which the most striking and complete collapse of the bourgeoisie—economic, political, military and ideological—occurred, and precisely because of that collapse. Poland, Hungary, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, China—these are not yet the world, or the decisive part of the world; far from it. But whether Stalinism conquered them from abroad (regime imposed by the Russian army)

or by means of a native movement, the symptomatic significance of the events is clear. A new state machine, replica in every respect of the Russian state machine, is established by the bureaucracy and under its exclusive, totalitarian control; all the means of production and exchange are sooner or later converted into state property; the decadent and demoralized bourgeoisie is sooner or later exterminated; the working classes are deprived of any right whatsoever and transformed into modern slaves.

PRIMITIVE AND CONSERVATIVE theoretical minds, while frowning on the "methods" of Stalinism, argue, with an ignorance (or is it cynicism?) which they regard as objectivity, that after all is said that should be said, Stalinism does represent a workers' state of a kind, or else that it plays a progressive role of a kind. Why? Essentially, it appears, because it expropriates the bourgeoisie and statifies property; because it "develops the productive forces"; and because after all it is only a caste and not a class, for only historically-necessary social groups can be designated as classes, and Stalinism is not historically necessary. To go through this galimatias as it should be gone through would require a volume at least. Short of that, a few words added to what has often been written and said by us will have to suffice.

Healthy or sick, upright or bent over, a workers' state deserves that designation *only* if the workers or their chosen representatives hold the political power. Nothing less will do. Whoever teaches otherwise is not teaching socialism or Marxism. It is not the statification of property that makes the state proletarian; it is the proletariat in command of the state which centralizes property in its hand

that makes it a workers' state. Where classes own property, the character of the state can usually be determined by asking which class owns the property—the slaves, the land or the capital. Where no class owns property, but where it is all in the hands of the state, its character can usually be determined by asking which class controls the state. Under Stalinism, the workers own no property, they have no control whatever over the totalitarian state which disfranchises and controls them utterly, and oppresses and exploits them mercilessly.

Capitalism has become reactionary and obsolete not because it no longer develops the productive forces but because it converts more and more of those forces at the disposal of society into means of destruction which do not enrich but impoverish it, and prevent it from making the progress which a rationally-organized economy would assure. That—according to Marx and according to what we can see all around us with the naked eye. The reactionary character of Stalinism is determined in the same way. The productive forces available to society are converted into means of destruction to no smaller—perhaps even to a larger—extent under Stalinism than under capitalism. The enormous wastage in production under Stalinism is notorious and inherent in bureaucratic collectivism. The physical using-up of the most important productive force in society, the workers, and their downright annihilation in the slave camps, is appalling under Stalinism; it has yet to be exceeded by capitalism. The vast technological advantages of state ownership are constantly undermined precisely by the social relations established by Stalinism and its parasitic ruling class.

To determine the class character of the Stalinist bureaucracy by asking if

it is historically necessary, in the way Trotsky demanded and his unthinking epigones repeat, is, to put it quietly, erroneous. They would be hard put to it to prove that all ruling classes in history were historically necessary in the sense they give to this phrase. Was the feudal ruling class historically necessary? It would be interesting to hear what the theoreticians in New York, Brussels and Paris would answer to this question, and how their answer would differ from, let us say, the one given by Engels.

The Stalinist bureaucracy in power is a new ruling, exploitive class. Its social system is a new system of totalitarian exploitation and oppression, not capitalist and yet having nothing in common with socialism. It is the cruel realization of the prediction made by all the great socialist scientists, from Marx and Engels onward, that capitalism must collapse out of an inability to solve its own contradictions and that the alternatives facing mankind are not so much capitalism or socialism as they are: *socialism or barbarism*. Stalinism is that new barbarism. The old Marxists could foresee it in general but could not describe it in detail. We can. The workers will fail to take command of society when capitalism collapses only on penalty of their own destruction, warned Engels. Stalinism is that gruesome punishment visited upon the working class when it fails to perform the task, in its own name and under its own leadership, of sweeping doomed capitalism out of existence and thus fulfilling its social destiny. For this failure it must record not the triumph of the invading socialist society but of the invading barbarism.

THESE ARE THE BASIC THOUGHTS that determine the outlook and politics of

the Independent Socialist League.

They determine our attitude toward Stalinism and other currents within the working-class movement. The analysis we have made of the social forces and trends excludes any consideration of Stalinism as a working class tendency. It operates *inside* the working-class movement, but is not *of* the working class. Those who put the Stalinist bureaucracy on the same plane with the reformist labor bureaucracy are like people digging a well with a washcloth. The security and progress of the reformist leadership require the maintenance of a reformist labor movement—but a labor movement!—of some form of democracy—but not its complete abolition! The triumph of the Stalinist bureaucracy *requires* the destruction of the labor movement and of all democracy. Whoever cannot see this after the victory of Stalinism in a dozen different countries, cannot see a fist in front of his nose.

Therefore, drive Stalinism out of the labor movement! BUT *only* by the informed, democratic decision of the working class itself, and *not* by supporting the reactionary police measures of the bourgeois state and *not* by the bureaucratic methods of the reformist and conservative labor officialdom! We are for democracy, in full and for all, in every field, including above all the labor movement. Complete and equal democratic rights for the Stalinists in the labor movement and outside of it, we say, and not the aping of Stalinism in the fight against it. Relentless struggle to uproot Stalinism from the labor movement by democratic political and organizational means, and combination with all democratic elements in the labor movement to defend it from conquest and subjugation by the champions and protagonists of the

most outrageous anti-labor regimes in the world! Whatever scores there are to settle between socialists and reformists or conservatives in the labor movement—and there are not a few—will be settled democratically and at the right time inside the labor movement. But no thinking socialist, no thinking worker, will combine with Stalinism, or do anything but resist it, when it invades the labor or, in general, the democratic movements and seeks to replace the present leadership with its own.

Our views determine our attitude toward bourgeois democrats and Social Democrats. We do not differ from the former because they are for democracy, but because to support capitalism, to tolerate it, to do anything but work for its replacement by socialism, is to be reconciled to a narrow class democracy and to be disarmed in face of that sapping even of bourgeois democracy which capitalism requires for its continued existence. It is not necessarily true that to fight against capitalism is to fight for democracy, we grant. But it is decidedly true that to fight for democracy is to fight against capitalism.

We do not differ from the Social Democrats because they are for democracy as the road to socialism. That we believe—in the sense given that idea by Marx and Engels, in the sense that the attainment of democracy is possible and equated to the winning of political power by the socialist proletariat. We differ with them because of their belief in the growing democratization of capitalism. It is an illusion. We differ with them because of their belief in the collaboration between classes which are irreconcilable. We differ with them because of their own bureaucratic regime and methods, because of their own not-very-well concealed contempt for the

workers, because of their own resistance to the complete independence and self-reliance of the working class. We differ with them because, hating Stalinism without understanding it, they oppose it by tolerating and even urging the subordination of the working class to the doomed and dying capitalist regime. That is the particular contribution which the Social Democrats make to the new barbarism! It is this very policy of reconciliation with capitalism instead of socialist struggle against it that has made possible the rise of Stalinism and its victories. The workers need a lifebuoy to carry them out of danger from the foundering ship of capitalism and the Social Democrats throw them the anchor. We are revolutionary socialists, we are democratic socialists; we are not Social Democrats.

WE CALL OURSELVES Independent Socialists. A clever man, rising to his most indignant public mood, has recently chided us a little for our name. Genuine socialism has always been independent, he remarked, and the truth was in him. Genuine socialism was always international, yet the French friends of the clever man call themselves the Internationalist Communist Party; genuine socialism was always revolutionary, yet his British friends called themselves the Revolutionary Communist Party; genuine socialism was always working-class, yet his friends here, and they are legion, call themselves the Socialist Workers Party. We have taken our name precisely in order to distinguish genuine socialism from Washington "socialism" or Moscow "socialism." We seek to emphasize that genuine socialism is not tied to the anchor of sinking capitalism or to the noose of Stalinist barbarism, and does not support their wars against civilization.

Another little but not so clever man has sometimes reproved us because our theory of Stalinism is not only "pessimistic" but "deeply pessimistic." It shows that politics cannot cope with all phenomena; in some cases nature and the soothing effect of time must be allowed to play their part.

If a socialist can at all permit himself the overly youthful luxury of using such terms as "optimistic" or "pessimistic" about theoretical questions or even political perspectives, it would be in another connection. Pessimism does not lie in stating that Stalinism has conquered here and there and defeated the working class, any more than optimism consists in claiming that Tito is the new rallying center of proletarian revolutionary internationalism. Our "optimism" does not consist in the belief that the working class is always revolutionary, or is always ready to make the revolution, or that it cannot be defeated, or even that it is always right. It derives from our belief, scientifically grounded, that the working class, no matter what the setbacks it suffers, has a solid position in society which gives it inexhaustible powers of self-renewal and recuperation to resume the attack against the conditions of its existence. These attacks have continued; they will continue because they must.

Capitalism is dying and even disappearing, along with the capitalist classes. But the working class cannot be killed off, and it cannot exist without struggle. Stalinism has, it is true, appeared on the scene, but before this regime of permanent crisis can think of consolidating itself all over the world its first excursions beyond its original frontiers have already brought it into a violent and irresolvable conflict with itself which is doing more to reveal its real nature to the working-class world than a dozen good theories.

The idea that the working class can struggle but never win, that it can do nothing more than suffer under new oppressors, is a superstitious prejudice which ruling classes have ever been interested in cultivating. The idea that the workers, whose numbers are overwhelming, can forever attack but never break through to self-rule, is worthy of an inventor of perpetual-motion machines. The working class learns more slowly than was once thought; but with interruptions and distractions it learns. Sooner or later it will learn its emancipating task, and the power it has to perform it. On its banner then the watchword of democracy will be indistinguishable from the watchword of socialism. We are here to help make it sooner.—M.S.

Is Russia a Socialist Community?

The Verbatim Text of a Debate

Introduction by Chairman C. Wright Mills

Ladies and Gentlemen: I am happy to say that neither of the speakers that we are going to hear tonight in any way represents the official line of U. S. ideology toward the Soviet Union. This does not insure, but I think that it does make possible, and perhaps even more likely, that what they have to say separately and particularly when taken together may enlighten our understanding of what is going on in the world, and particularly those portions of it that are now within the Russian zone.

There is no need for me to introduce either of the speakers. You know Mr. Earl Browder, former General Secretary of the Communist Party in the United States from 1930 to 1944, and Mr. Shachtman, Chairman of the Independent Socialist League. The topic that they are going to debate is, "Is Russia a Socialist Community?" And this debate will be organized in the following way, to which both speakers have agreed: Mr. Browder will speak for approximately 45 minutes on the affirmative. Mr. Shachtman will then speak for the same length of time for the negative. There will then be a few announcements by Mr. Kaplan, the president of the Debs Society, and then there will be rebuttals. Mr. Browder will speak then for about 20 minutes; Mr. Shachtman will speak for 25 minutes, and finally the debate will be ended by a statement by Mr. Browder not to exceed 5 minutes. That is the timing, which was not in my hands but was agreed to by both of the speakers, as I think

We print below the verbatim text of a debate, held in New York City's Webster Hall on March 30, between Earl Browder, former general secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, and Max Shachtman, national chairman of the Independent Socialist League. In many ways the most unusual political meeting in this country in decades, the debate aroused an exceptional amount of interest which was only barely indicated by the more than 1200 people who came to Webster Hall. For a full report of the circumstances attending the debate and its aftermath, its coverage in the press and so forth, we refer our readers to Labor Action for April 10 and 17.

The debate was arranged by the Eugene V. Debs Society of Brooklyn College. (We are informed that the debate is still very much a living issue on the Brooklyn College campus and on other New York City campuses.) Victor Kaplan, president of the Debs Society, opened the meeting with a brief address, and introduced the chairman for the debate, Professor C. Wright Mills of Columbia University's Department of Sociology.

A tape record was made of the debate. The text we publish herewith is a word-by-word transcription of the debate as recorded, unaltered by either of the speakers. Unfortunately, the final section of the tape, containing Browder's three-minute sur-rebuttal (he had five minutes at his disposal but did not use all of his time) was defective, and only the first word is audible. We sincerely regret this omission.

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is the usual manner of proceeding in these occasions. So without any further ado I give you Mr. Earl Browder on the affirmative: Mr. Browder.

Presentation by Earl Browder:

Ladies and gentlemen, friends: Is Russia a socialist community? This is the question presented by our sponsors tonight, the Eugene V. Debs society of Brooklyn College. I assume that you are not interested in the proper usage of words so much as in estimating the significance of the new society in Russia for the world and for America in particular. I will discuss history, therefore, rather than philology. I speak for myself alone as a student of Marxism, and not on behalf of any organization. I address myself to those who seek the truth as the prime value in life. Now to our subject.

I am aware, of course, that some people deny the right of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics to use its own chosen name. They say it is not socialist because it does not conform to their preconception as to what socialism must be like. There are many varieties of socialism and there is little profit in disputes as to their right to use the name. The USSR has not asked our permission to use the name socialist. It has proclaimed itself a socialist country for about 33 years, has organized the new type of economy under that name, and has achieved certain successes, for which it has paid a very heavy price. It sustained its right to existence as a socialist country by victory in the greatest of all wars.

Words are useful to explain history, but they have no primary role in determining history. On the contrary, it is history which determines the meaning of words. The only type of socialism

existing in the world of fact as distinct from ideas is that of the USSR. You may like it or not, understand it or not—but there it is. It is a fact, a very important one. It is the course of prudence and wisdom to recognize facts and try to understand them. It is a question of history as to whether the new system in Russia which calls itself socialist is an entirely new variety of socialism or whether it realizes a pre-existing body of ideas identified by that name. Specifically, this is the question—whether the Russians are correct in claiming their new system as a realization of the body of ideas known as Marxism, or scientific socialism. This is a question the answer to which is capable of proof by reference to objective facts and not merely by citation of theories.

Marxism is an interpretation of history which explains the progress of society as a product of the expansion of the forces of production of the material means of life, that is, the development of economy. The stage of the development of the productive forces determines the political and ideological superstructure of society which are crystallized into a system of social organization. The social system grows rigid but the productive forces continue to expand, and conflict ensues between the forces of production and the social conditions of production. This conflict finally reaches a stage in which a fundamental change of the social conditions becomes necessary to bring them in harmony with the continued growth of production. This is the stage which produces revolution, a relatively brief period in history in which outmoded social forms are discarded and new ones are created which free the shackled productive forces for a new leap forward in their expansion.

Marxism traces this process in past

history from the primitive tribal commune through slavery, feudalism, early capitalism in the form of simple artisan manufacturing, the rise of modern capitalism in power-driven machinery, and the final stage of capitalism marked by huge trusts and monopolies and the trend toward state capitalism, in which state power becomes the collective capitalist. Marxism conceives of the new system of socialism as the necessary outcome of all previous history made possible and necessary only by that previous history. Because capitalist society has expanded the productive forces so enormously, the social conditions under which it arose lag behind and become fetters holding back the further growth of productive forces.

Socialism is nothing more nor less than the social, political and ideological system which breaks the fetters upon economic growth created under capitalism and opens the way to a new period of economic and social expansion on a much larger scale. So long as bourgeois society, that is, capitalism, reigned supreme throughout the world and dominated the lands of free capitalist development, the dispute between various schools of thought was conducted primarily on the level of theory, that is, the struggle between ideas, as to which most correctly foreshadowed the next stage of development in history which had still not appeared in fact, in life.

But in 1917 the Russian Revolution introduced a new phase, that of testing theories in their practical application in life. Socialism was introduced as a living reality. It is now to be tested not only in theory, in the mind, in thought, but also by reference to fact, to objective reality, to the real world. The question as to whether Russia is a socialist community is thus reduced to the question of fact, as to

whether this new system has introduced a higher stage of economic development into the world. Since the new system has existed for one-third of a century, since it has overcome the challenges to its very existence, it may now be judged first of all by this test.

What do the facts show? Has the new system in Russia proved itself to be socialist in this Marxist sense by demonstrating a higher stage in the growth of the forces of production? In past history, it has not always been possible to give final proof of this nature in economics of the progressive character of great political changes so soon after such a change was initiated. American independence, for example, was judged by most European intellectuals throughout the 19th century as having condemned America to the status of a backward and uncivilized nation. Such a distinguished mind as that of Charles Dickens, for example, reporting on a personal visit of inspection to America, delivered the judgment of backwardness against it, which, if his premises were granted as being the decisive ones, was annihilatingly conclusive. Even American intellectuals suffered from a crippling sense of inferiority to Europe from which they have not entirely liberated themselves in 1950.

We know today, however, that Dickens and all who followed that line of judgment on America's role in world progress were profoundly mistaken. They were misled by exclusive preoccupation with secondary and irrelevant matters. Despite the handicap of lacking self-conscious understanding of her historical role, America was in the vanguard of political progress during the 19th century. What Dickens and his school of thought considered the root of American backwardness, namely, its deep

cleavage from the older civilizations of Europe, was in fact the absolutely necessary precondition to realization of America's tremendous productive potentialities which finally made America the giant of the bourgeois world, the highest expression of productive forces under the now declining capitalist system. Liberation from Europe and its outmoded social and political system alone could and did clear the ground for the free development of America's potential productive forces. This was the foundation, the moving force of America's role in the vanguard of world progress throughout the 19th century. Everything else was secondary or irrelevant to this basic consideration.

My central thesis in tonight's debate is that the role played by America in the 19th century in leading the development of the world's productive forces under capitalist society has passed to Russia in the 20th century in the development of the world's productive forces to a stage higher than capitalism, which is the foundation of socialism. The evidence which proves this thesis is known to all, even if it is still generally overlooked by Americans for much the same reasons that Dickens overlooked the American vanguard position in the 19th century, because of preoccupation with secondary matters.

The new system called socialism came to power in Russia about one-third of a century ago. It took over a backward, shattered and defeated country, the chief laggard among the great powers. It had been defeated and shattered precisely because of its backwardness, its huge heritage of medieval reaction that had crushed the potentialities of progress of its peoples for centuries, keeping its vast area and population outside the main current of historical progress. Under

its new system called socialism, the Russian people and the smaller nationalities which had formerly composed the Russian Empire speedily forged ahead from last place among the great powers of Europe and Asia to a position of unchallenged pre-eminence as the first. In the whole world, only the USA is today at all comparable in power and influence with the USSR. This radical transformation of world power relationships reflects primarily in the case of both the USA and the USSR the growth of the productive forces. Not only did the new socialist system overtake and surpass all other powers in Europe and Asia; in its rate of growth it has already surpassed America. In broad historical outline, this fact is seen in the span of 150 years required for the rise of America to its present position as one of the two world giants compared with the span of 30 years required by the USSR to make the same transition.

Let us bring this broad historical fact into closer focus and examine some of its details. Let us compare the highest rates of economic growth measured in decades of the two great powers as exhibited in manufacturing production, the heart of modern economics.

In the five decades of the 20th century, American economy experienced only two periods of relatively rapid expansion. These were concentrated in the ten years 1914-1924 and the similar period of 1938-1948. In the first, volume of manufacture rose from an index of 100 to 266, about one and two-thirds times; and in the second, when the similar index figures were 100 and 180, something less than double. These are the decades of maximum growth of American manufacturing industrial production.

The new socialist economy system

went into full operation in the USSR in 1928 with the inauguration of the Five Year Plan. In the ensuing decade of 1928-1938 the growth of production in manufacturing industry is measured by the index figures of 100 and 700, a sevenfold increase, or more than four times the high American rate of the decade of 1914-1924. During the following decade of 1938-1948, Soviet socialist economy suffered the most extreme disruption and destruction ever visited upon any country in modern times through the invasion of Hitler's army. It lost about 40 per cent of its industrial area where its oldest industries were located, and when the enemy was driven out everything had been systematically destroyed, down to the individual dwellings. Its entire economy had to be switched to war production and entirely subordinated to war economy. The country went on to a military subsistence basis. Direct war losses exceeded the total capital value of the country in 1928.

Yet the socialist economy overcame these war losses and reached the end of the decade in 1948 with a net growth over 1938 of about 60 per cent, that is in the same general scale of magnitude experienced in America during the period without direct war devastation. When allowance is made for replacement of direct war losses, it is clear that the rate of growth of socialist manufacturing industry was even greater than in the previous decades.

In the light of this evidence, if the proposition is valid that the growth of productive forces is the basis for progress, then the new system in Russia called socialism is the most progressive that history has ever produced. This is progress on a hitherto unknown level. It is revolutionary progress. The economy of the USSR

has satisfied the basic test of socialism that is set up by the theory of Marx and Engels in full and in a relatively short historical span of time.

Our newspapers and magazines tell us in a thousand variations that Soviet production figures are mere Potemkin villages built by Bolshevik propaganda. It is true, of course, that statistics can be falsified. But Soviet statistics of production were confirmed in resistance to the Nazi invasion backed up by the industry of conquered Europe. Modern war is first of all a battle of production. When Hitler lost the war, those who denied the validity of Soviet production records lost their argument. Artillery, planes and tanks were the direct means whereby the war was won. Such things as modern armaments, including atom bombs, do not come from falsified statistics. They are produced only by modern industry with the highest technique, with the most highly skilled labor, and with the most advanced and socially organized science. For all these things have come into existence so recently and so rapidly, and so little was inherited from a previous stage of development, they prove the existence of a progressive society of the highest order able to readjust itself quickly to changing social problems and conditions. They presuppose a rapidly rising standard of literacy and education, stable and improving conditions of life for the masses and the other most necessary accompaniments of progress. They guarantee continued peacetime progress.

Many Americans fail to correlate the different parts of their thinking. They believe simultaneously that the USSR is powerful and that it is backward and unprogressive. But a backward, unprogressive nation cannot become powerful. A nation that has

become powerful can turn blackly reactionary. That is what happened to Germany under Hitler and might happen to America to the same full extent if the American people do not stop the process.

But if Russia under her new system was really as pictured by official American propaganda today, or by my opponent, she could no more master all the elements of economic progress and develop them to a higher stage than could Chiang Kai-shek in China. Political reaction puts a halt to all progress, as American science is feeling so keenly today under the hysteria of the current Red scare. Political reaction results in a decline of power, not its rise. Reaction can only loot the treasures produced by the past but cannot create new ones.

It is true that the economic progress of the new socialist system is not fully translated at once into the abundance of the luxuries of life. Life remains hard and austere in Russia. The main bulk of the economic gains go to the support and development of three phases of Soviet life which are not included in the average American's conception of the good life. These are, first, the expansion of the means of production, that which in capitalist America we call accumulation of capital and in which the average citizen here plays no conscious part. Second, an enormous expansion and intensification of public education in science. And third, the guarantee of national security by a military establishment able to meet all possible dangers. From the point of view of the Soviet peoples, these three are the supreme necessities of life, and their satisfaction by the new socialist system is the final proof to them of its superiority. If these things had not been always their first consideration, the result would have been that Hitler would

today be ruling them and the world. They are, therefore, willing to wait a while for fine clothes, rich foods, refrigerators and radios in every home, and all those lighter amenities of life which make up the popular concept of good living that has been created for America, not so much by their enjoyment directly by the people as by the influence of Hollywood movies.

The cold war that rages between the USA and the USSR hinges primarily around the American refusal to recognize the Soviet requirements of national security, and as this cold war has developed it has become an official American policy, a crusade to halt the spread of socialism in other countries. The world is being organized in two blocs between which there is constantly diminishing practical contact and understanding. This is the major problem for America and the world today. The cold war is bringing more hardships to the American people, and if not halted may well bring catastrophes, if not of war itself, then of economic crisis which might be almost as damaging.

It is folly to expect to solve the cold war by preaching the desirability of socialism to America. But it is an essential contribution to bringing this war to an end, to spread a more realistic understanding of what the new socialist system really is, and the facts about the relationship of forces between the socialist and capitalist parts of the world. It is certainly not impossible to rouse and organize an effective public opinion that will demand and secure a halt to and eventually a settlement of the cold war. But mutual vilification of Russia and America certainly is not a serious contribution to anything, not even to a real struggle between the two.

I must sadly admit that I have no

complete blueprint for achieving peace between Soviet socialism and American capitalism. But I do know what are some of the essential conditions for such a peace. First of all, I know what all America is slowly beginning to recognize, that war as a method of attempting to settle the disputes involved has become entirely impractical for either side. A military decision of the rivalry between capitalism and socialism is impossible. No one can win a war of world proportions. War was scientifically defined in former times as the continuation of policy by military means. But this definition is no longer accurate. A major war today makes sense for no conceivable policy. It means only a collapse of policy. The advance of military technique has reached the point at which between major powers it can bring only mutual extermination of mass populations. Between the major camps in the world there exists a military stalemate. If there is not to be war, then peace must be organized.

The Trotskyite slogan of neither war nor peace was always stupid. But today it serves the suicidal war party to quiet the people while moving surreptitiously toward war. There is no condition of peace in the world until its main terms in state relationships have been defined and generally accepted. The terms of such a peace cannot be dictated by either side of the present cold war, and America must understand that it is impossible to deny to the USSR those measures of security which the USSR considers essential and already has the power to take over by her own unilateral action if necessary. Among these measures are the elimination of Germany and Japan as bases for possible hostilities against the USSR. It may be difficult for Americans, who have not experienced hostile armies on our soil

since the War of 1812 with England, to understand the importance of this to Russia, who suffered major attacks from her neighbors twice in one generation. For our own good, we should make an effort of the imagination as to what lengths America would go, placed in a similar situation, to guarantee that Germany and Japan would not be able to invade a third time.

A defined peace settlement between the great powers is thus a *modus vivendi*, a way of living together without war between antagonistic systems. It is no refutation of this idea to say that the two systems are irreconcilable. America herself was founded on two irreconcilable systems within the body of a single nation, the system of commodity production by free labor, and the system of slavery, with an unstable and explosive *modus vivendi* between them. The terms of such a problem were very fully explored in American history, where for several generations the central theme of wisdom and statesmanship was to maintain this *modus vivendi*, to reconcile the irreconcilable. Without this wisdom and statesmanship of early American leaders, the American continent would have been Balkanized for a century, and world progress would have received a major setback. It would have been historic folly and irresponsibility to demand a show-down settlement between the two systems as a condition for establishment of the United States as a single nation. It will be equally folly and irresponsibility to demand the final conflict between capitalism and socialism as the condition for the establishment of a functioning United Nations organization under a defined peace settlement.

As matters stand now, America is losing battle after battle of the cold war. This fact, after several years in which our statesmen and newspapers

assured us of victory after victory, is now being generally recognized. So long as the USA was supposed to be winning the cold war, we were assured that peace was not necessary. Now that the USA is admittedly losing the cold war, we are told that peace must wait until the US is winning again. According to these formulae from our supposedly wise men, the time to make peace will never come, until the Soviet Union runs up the white flag and agrees to accept a counsellor appointed by Washington. If King George III had adopted a similar position toward the revolting American colonies in the last years of the 19th century, he would have been much more realistic than the present American attitude toward the Soviet Union which was never our colony—and may I predict never will be? King George III knew when he was licked, and signed a peace treaty, which did not prevent Great Britain from enjoying some years of prosperity thereafter. And today the British themselves, in accepting largesse from America, congratulate us on having won the War of Independence, proving thereby that the political passions of a historical moment do not last forever.

The main problem of the world today is peace. This problem has different connotations for different countries. For much of Europe the struggle for peace has become indissolubly united in the immediate struggle for socialism. In America the struggle for peace has an immediacy that is not shared by the issue of socialism. For America the realization of these two goals is not to be achieved at the same time, even though both are a part of the same continuous historical process. In America all adherents of socialism have the duty to fight for peace as a form of co-existence of the

two systems, capitalism and socialism. It is fortunately a fact that the leaders and spokesmen of the new socialist system in the Soviet Union clearly recognize the historical necessity for a long-term peaceful co-existence of the two systems, organized in business-like and mutually beneficial relations between the states involved, as a basic component of Soviet policy. This fact is itself further evidence of the socialist, in the Marxist sense, character of the new system in Russia. Socialism developed on Marxist principles is essentially peaceful. It has no urge toward war, and finds no profit in it. It justifies and supports wars of national liberation, and wars of defense against reactionary invasion. It does not justify war as an instrument for the spread of socialism to unwilling and unprepared peoples and nations. Socialism is not a commodity for export and import. Socialism cannot be imposed on the points of bayonets. Socialism must be firmly grounded in the material conditions and the history of each major nation before it can be realized there. Socialism requires the free choice of conscious people as the main condition for its realization. These are fundamental principles of the Marxist theory of socialism, and these principles are deeply imbedded in the new society that has arisen in Russia under the banner of Marx and his disciples.

What conditions does America, continuing under capitalism, require from a peace settlement in order that it shall be mutually beneficial to both sides? What America needs above all, without the slightest doubt, is to have markets for the surplus products of her industry and fields of investment for surplus capital, both of which far exceed the capacity of the domestic market. That is indeed the aim of the cold war, to obtain such markets by

conquest and subjugation, by all means of coercion short of shooting war and by the threat of shooting war. This type of market is the traditional one of the past, but it is no longer possible to achieve. Markets on the scale America requires can only be organized by agreement, not seized by power. Such markets must be mutually beneficial to all the peoples involved, not merely to America. Such markets cannot be gained by crusading against socialism, but only by cooperating with socialism, which must be an essential and growing part of those markets. The cold war, or any conceivable hot war, cannot produce the needed markets for America. But a durable peace with the socialist part of the world can and will do so. Peace, and only peace, will open up the markets of the world on a new and larger scale than ever before—the rise of socialism has enlarged the world market, not diminished it—once America is ready to make peace with socialism, instead of trying to wipe it out.

One of the most confusing things about our American ruling class in modern times is its habit, when it is about to embark upon some historic line of development, to firmly proclaim to the world its determination to do the exact opposite. Thus, at the opening of the 20th century, America adopted the Sherman anti-trust law, which declared trusts and monopolies in industry to be outside the law, to be destroyed. This step initiated a period of the most feverish growth of the greatest trusts and monopolies the world has ever seen. The more these monopolies dominate American life, all the more does the American bourgeoisie pledge its allegiance to the ideology of free enterprise, of which monopolies are the negation.

When the Second World War was shaping up, and during its first period

of the phony war, it was certain that America would be in it. The only uncertainty was which side America would be on. The American ruling class solemnly and emphatically proclaimed neutrality in its determination not to join the war under any conditions. The rule seems to be that the American bourgeoisie firmly and resolutely faces the past and then moves into the future by backing up. Under this rule, we may possibly assume the present war-like attitude of the American bourgeoisie really represents its preparation to move into peace, backward as usual. We may say of this method, not that it is the best one, but that it is better to make progress by moving backward than not to make progress at all. The technique of backing into the future is possible only for an established ruling class with a great apparatus of power under its control. It is not at all suitable for a democratic mass movement of the people, the leadership of which must make crystal-clear the immediate objectives for which it fights. It is a fatal weakness for a democratic mass movement to permit any ambiguity in the definition of its immediate goals.

In the fight for peace and the mobilization of the American masses for peace, we may set the immediate goal as the establishment of peaceful co-existence of two systems, or we may declare that peace can be achieved only by establishing socialism in America. The first aim, properly, energetically and intelligently pursued, has the possibility of raising a powerful peace movement in America that will influence the course of history. The second course, while it has much lower potentialities of immediate power and influence, is at least intelligible even if mistaken in its judgment.

But to try to combine both aims in

one single mass movement, as seems to be taking place in America, produces nothing but chaos, confusion and disunity among the masses. It produces a combination of the weakest sides of both approaches and loses the strength of both. It produces a movement of the limited aim of the first and the limited mass influence of the second. It is a sterile hybrid. That is why in America we have the most tremendous, diffused and unorganized peace sentiments and aspirations but the most pitifully weak organized mass movement for peace. Only political idiots can believe that socialism can be smuggled into America, that this country can be backed into socialism, maneuvered into a fundamentally new system of society without its own knowledge. There are such idiots, of course, on both the Right and Left, and their influence makes of American politics a bedlam of confused babbling. They dominate the newspaper headlines, even if not the thinking of the country. They run the party machines, they write the slogans of the day.

But when socialism comes to America, it will not be through the back door. It will come only when a Marxist party, having won the confidence of the working class through its correct leadership in the struggle for all progressive measures short of socialism, is able further to convince the majority of the country that socialism, that is, the social ownership and operation of the means of production, has become necessary also in America. Are there steps which the country takes toward socialism without knowing it? Yes, of course, there are. Everything of a progressive nature is a step toward socialism. Even the building of every new great modern factory is a step toward socialism. If Mr. Taft and Mr. Dewey want to halt all steps to-

ward socialism, they will have to pass a law against the building of modern industry. These are the most powerful steps toward socialism that are being taken in America today.

But a socialist society is not created by steps toward socialism. Socialism is a result of conscious social building, planned and conducted by the organized workers who have won political power and supported by the majority of the population. There are no short cuts and no new routes by which America can reach socialism. Every country must find its own path and its own forms for the transitions of history, but in the finding of its own path and its own forms, it will be working out the universal laws of social development, and it will not be going in violation of those laws, which are the laws of science, not the decrees of some political authority.

Yes, the new system of social organization in Russia, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, is socialist, the kind of socialism of which Marx and Engels conceived as the inevitable product of historical progress. We in America have much to learn from it as the first manifestation of socialism in life, in history. We will learn, however, through thinking, and not through imitation. Those who wish us to imitate the Soviet Union would follow the method of the old chicken farmer who, to encourage his hens to lay bigger and better eggs, hung the egg of an ostrich above their nests on which was a placard reading: "Look at this and do your best." That system does not work with chickens; it will not work with men.

Chairman Mills:

Mr. Max Shachtman will now speak for the same length of time. Mr. Shachtman.

Presentation by Max Shachtman

Mr. Chairman, comrades and friends: I have been waiting for an occasion like this for a long time—more than twenty years! Like so many of you, I have waited patiently for a free and public debate between a revolutionary socialist and a spokesman of the Communist Party, authorized to defend the position that the Stalinist regime in Russia represents a socialist society.

It seems that the only way you can get a Stalinist to defend this position in fair debate, like tonight, is when he has been cast out of the inner darkness into the outer light, and branded publicly as an agent of capitalism and as an enemy of the Soviet Union. So, for a debate with the genuine article, we must still wait patiently, or, rather, impatiently. Meanwhile, beggars can't be choosers: I must content myself with the second-hand article, the somewhat used (applause) — don't take away my time, please—the somewhat used, or, as I read the *Daily Worker*, the somewhat abused article.

I am not here debating this evening—that was not my understanding of the subject—war or peace. Any time Mr. Browder is ready to debate that with me, 24 hours' notice will suffice. I can state, and it will be adequate for the purpose tonight, that our organization and I with it are uncompromisingly opposed to the cold war, uncompromisingly opposed to American imperialism, to American capitalism, to the American capitalist regime and to the American capitalist ruling class, uncompromisingly opposed to the atom bomb or its use. We didn't endorse it in the last war; we didn't approve of it in the last war. And if Mr. Browder is prepared to debate that, I will also give him an answer on the

"stupid Trotskyist slogan of neither peace nor war" that he won't forget for a year.

Our debate simply concerns one of the most vital questions of our time—indeed, *the* most vital question, and I start on it from these fundamental considerations: If the cold horror of Stalinist despotism, that vast prison camp of peoples and nations, represents the victory of socialism, then we are lost; then the ideal of socialist freedom, justice, equality and brotherhood has proved to be an unattainable Utopia; then the National Association of Manufacturers is right in saying that while capitalism is not perfect and has a couple of defects here and there, socialism is a new slavery; then we must be resigned to that appalling decay of modern civilization that is eating away the substance of human achievement. But if it can be shown that Stalinist Russia is *not* socialism, that it has nothing in common with socialism, that it is only another and very ominous lesson of what happens to society when the working class fails to fight, and extend its fight, for socialism, or when its fight is arrested or crushed; if it can be shown that Stalinist Russia is a new barbarism which results precisely from our failure up to now to establish a socialist society, to extend the Revolution of 1917 that took place in Russia — then, despite the agony that grips the world today, there is a hope and a future for the socialist emancipation of the race. It is from that standpoint and no other that I will seek to show that Stalinist Russia has nothing at all in common with socialism. The best way to begin is by defining socialism.

Socialism is based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and exchange, upon production for use as

against production for profit, upon the abolition of all classes, all class divisions, class privilege, class rule, upon the production of such abundance that the struggle for *material* needs is completely eliminated, so that humanity, at last freed from economic exploitation, from oppression, from any form of coercion by a state machine, can devote itself to its fullest intellectual and cultural development. Much can perhaps be added to this definition, but anything less you can call whatever you wish, but it will not be socialism.

Now, if this definition is correct—as it has been considered by every socialist from the days of Marx to the days of Lenin—then there is not only *not a trace of socialism in Russia*, but it is moving in a direction which is *the very opposite* of socialism.

It is absolutely true that by their revolution in 1917 the Russian working class, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, took the first great, bold, inspiring leap toward a socialist society. And that alone, regardless of what happened subsequently, justified it and made it a historic event that can never be eliminated from the consciousness of society. But it is likewise true that the working class of Russia was hurled back, it was crushed, and fettered and imprisoned, and that every achievement of the revolution, without exception, was destroyed by the victorious counter-revolution of the Stalinist bureaucracy which now rules the Russian empire with totalitarian absolutism. Let's examine a few decisive aspects of life in Stalinist Russia as it *is*, not in the propagandist mythology but in the incontrovertible reality.

The most heavily emphasized claims—we heard them here only tonight—of Stalinism are based upon the tremendous growth of industry. The fig-

ures are exaggerated; the figures are juggled and twisted; but I don't have the time to dwell upon that, and I have no need to do so. I will simply grant without hesitation that under Stalinist rule, *under Stalinist rule*, Russia has experienced a vast increase in the industrialization of the urban and rural economy. But I will add the following comments which will throw some light on the social significance of this increase:

First: If we were to accept every single one of the exaggerated figures on industrialization in Russia, how would that prove that there is *socialism* in Russia? At the end of the 19th century, over 50 years ago, Russia in six years more than doubled her production of cast iron and steel, almost doubled her production of coal, naphtha. Lenin wrote at that time—I am quoting him—"The progress in the mining industry is more rapid in Russia than in Western Europe and even in North America. . . . In the last few years the production of cast metal has tripled." And so on and so forth. Russian industrial output under the Czar doubled between the Russo-Japanese War and the beginning of the World War. The Czar built the Trans-Siberian, for example, the longest railway in the world. But that didn't show that Russia was a "socialist community"—it was what it was, Czarist autocracy.

Between 1932 and 1937, according to the official Stalinist statistics, the total value of the Russian heavy-industry products increased 238 per cent. That's impressive. But in the very same period, 1932-1937, heavy-industry production in Japan—a country far less endowed with population and natural resources—increased by 176 per cent. That, too, is impressive. But nobody thought of saying—nobody, I hope, will—that this proves

the existence of socialism, or—to be statistically exact—three-fourths socialism in Japan.

The Communist Manifesto over a hundred years ago went out of its way to pay tribute to the bourgeoisie which, as it said, "has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts and Gothic cathedrals," but Marx and Engels didn't, therefore, call capitalist society a socialist community. We will see in a minute what wonders the Stalinist bureaucracy has accomplished and what it has surpassed. The statistics of production by themselves tell us nothing whatever about the social nature of production.

Second: Labor productivity, in industry and agriculture, to this hour is much lower in Russia than it is in the United States, the outstanding capitalist country in the world, which, from the socialist standpoint, i.e., this capitalism of ours—is exceedingly backward. According to *Planned Economy* for December, 1940, the Russian miner, in spite of the vicious speed-up system of Stakhanovism, produced less than half the tonnage of the American (370 tons as against 844). What's more, while production in an American mine is three times as large as in a comparable Russian mine, the latter uses eleven times as many technicians, twice as many miners, three times as many office workers, and twelve times as large a supervisory staff. Twelve times as large a supervisory staff!—wherever you go, the dead hand of bureaucratism in Russia!

According to another journal, *Problems of Economy* for January, 1941, agricultural labor in America exceeds the productivity of the Russian kolkhoznik: 6.7 times in the production of wheat, 7.7 times in oats, 8.1 times in sugar beets, 3.1 times in

milk and 20.1 times in wool. Now, the function of technique is what? It's to economize human labor, and nothing else. Socialism must guarantee—*socialism must guarantee*—society a higher economy of time than is guaranteed by capitalism, but by capitalism at its best! Otherwise socialism represents no advance. What kind of socialism is it where the productivity of labor is so inferior to that which prevails in an advanced capitalist state?

Third: Browder wrote a book a few years ago—*What Is Communism?* I read it—a very radical book. He referred to the construction of Boulder Dam, to the fact that Roosevelt was very proud of it. What did Browder ask in commenting on that? He said, this dam, achievements similar to it—what have they contributed to the material welfare of the American workers? That's the challenge he threw in the face of the American bourgeoisie in connection with Boulder Dam. Legitimate question to ask of it. It's not less but more legitimate to ask it of those who claim that the industrialization in Russia is *socialist* in character, that the big technological advances there prove that Russia is a socialist community. And is that not what we are discussing right now? Now let's look—*official figures*.

I want to emphasize first of all that I'll not refer to Russia during or since the devastation of the country by the war. I will refer to 1939 and the years before it. It makes no difference really. As early as 1935 the Stalinists officially announced that socialism had already been established in Russia—and irrevocably at that!

At the end of the Second Five Year Plan, in 1937, the output of steel was four times as great as in 1913, the last pre-World War I year in Russia—dairy products lower than 1913; petroleum

products three times higher than 1913—tea was available only to one-third the extent of 1913. There's a big airplane industry non-existent in Czarist Russia, absolutely. But in 1912, Russia had 1,166,000 department stores, wholesale units and retail shops, which the consumer depends upon—while on October 1, 1937, according to *Planned Economy* of 1938, issue No. 2, with a population far greater—no less than 160,000,000—there were only 228,000 distribution stores and 98,000 warehouses. The plan for rolled steel was completed almost 100 per cent; they now have a big chemical industry; but the plan for the production of soap was not even 40 per cent completed. Browder refers so lightly, as we Americans can, to radios and refrigerators, and television, and other Hollywood products, that even we don't really enjoy and that the Russians don't care about. *Tea*, we're talking about, not television sets! *Soap!* The production of machines is twenty times as high as in 1913, at the end of the Second Five-Year Plan. But wages were lower than in pre-war Russia—*real wages*.

Which brings me to my *fourth* comment: The only valid criterion for *socialist* industrialization—and we're not talking about industrialization in general, are we? We're talking about whether Russia is a socialist community—the only valid criterion, I repeat, for that, is the improved economic welfare of the workers—that's a minimum, that's basic. What's happened to wages—what's happened to *real wages*—under Stalinist rule? In other words, what's the real standard of living for the masses under Stalinism—not in terms of television sets, not in terms of radios, refrigerators, and Buick automobiles. No, not many workers have them here, not as many as should. We're talking about ordi-

nary standard of living. Have real wages kept pace with the growth of industrialization, which has been great—with the growth of production, which has been great—with the growth of the national income, which has been great? By Stalin's official figures or any official figures? No, they have declined! The real facts are hard to find in the official Stalinist press, which does everything to conceal and twist them out of shape. The Stalinist press for years has not published one single line officially about prices of commodities. You don't find that there. But although it's hard to find, it's not impossible. I will take my figures only from the Stalinist press, in Russia.

According to *Pravda*, May 14, 1938, the average wage of workers in 1938 was 259 rubles a month. Bear that figure in mind. That's *Pravda*. What could the Russian worker buy with this wage? What could he do with it? Inadvertently, *Pravda* itself tells us. On April 8, 1938, it reports that food for a patient in a Moscow hospital costs 7 rubles a day, that is, 210 rubles a month. On May 17th of the same year, it says, and I quote, "The fee for a child in a Pioneer camp should not be more than the cost of maintenance, 250 to 350 rubles a month." Now everybody knows that hospitals and children's camps do not provide the richest variety of food, the best food. Not at all. Everybody knows that hospitals purchase in large quantities; they purchase collectively, they prepare collectively. Things are cheaper. If a hospital patient requires for food 210 rubles a month, if a kid in a Pioneer camp requires from 250 to 350 rubles a month for food, what could the Russian worker buy with an average wage of 259 rubles a month? That's not after the Hitler invasion; that's in 1938, after socialism had irre-

vocably been established in Russia. The average is wretched, but it doesn't yet tell the whole story, because we have to find out what are the extremes. Averages are the most deceptive things in the world sometimes.

What about inequality? There is no country in the world, bar none, where inequality is as great, as deep, as extensive as it is in Stalinist Russia—nowhere. In the United States, the spread between the poorest-paid and the best-paid worker is what—three to one, four to one, and, in extreme cases, five to one? Is it much more than that—in extreme cases?—the best paid and the poorest paid? In Russia, according to a very objective and fair economist and statistician, Dr. Abram Bergson, in his book on *The Structure of Russian Wages*, in October, 1934—I am quoting him now—"the earnings of the highest paid Soviet worker were more than 28.3 times the earnings of the lowest paid worker at that time." And it's much worse today. It's much worse today. 1947, average annual wage: 7100 rubles. The Stalinist press reports all the time earnings of some workers between 10 and 15 thousand rubles a month, that is, 120 to 180 thousand a year, when the average is 7100. Typical report is in *Trud*, the labor paper, so-called, for January 1, 1949, which reports that three Donbas miners averaged 60 to 75 thousand rubles for the three years 1946-1948. Now if with the lowest paid the average is 7100, is it an exaggeration to assume that the lowest paid do not go over 3000? That makes a ratio of what between the lowest paid and the highest paid?—anywhere from 50 or 60 to 1! Find me a working class anywhere in the world that shows that disparity. Now if that's how it is among workers, imagine the gap between workers and the ruling

class—the factory directors, the managers, the army and navy officers, the brass, the millionaire kolkhozhiks, as they call them in the Stalinist press, the bureaucrats of all varieties, stripes, ranks, sizes and weights!

The Russian Revolution established the socialist principle: no official is to be paid more than the average worker—the skilled worker, if you wish; no functionary, no official. That's the principle of the Commune, said Lenin. Marx praised that principle, as the only socialist standard. That's one of the means, he repeated a thousand times, for shattering bureaucracy, for making possible rotation in office, for introducing workers' democracy as the prelude to socialist democracy. No official above that of the skilled worker in income. And then he added later on, when the problems became a little more complex than he had imagined, if we have to pay a lot more to bourgeois "spetzes," the specialists—he repeated that a hundred times later on—it is only because we are forced to. But, he said, that's *not socialism*; that's a concession to capitalism, that a violation of the socialist principle, the Commune principle; that's a *retreat* from socialism! There are a thousand quotations from Lenin, and I refer to them not because they are quotations but because they are correct.

What did Stalinism do to this Commune principle, this principle of Bolshevism? We have already seen the division of the workers into paupers at one end and aristocrats at the other. What about the ruling classes themselves, the bureaucracy of all shades? Here is the decree of January 17, 1938. (Remember the average worker is earning an average in that year of 259 rubles a month, according to *Pravda*.) The decree provides that deputies, *deputies*, that is hand-rais-

ers, Russian Gil Greens, get a thousand rubles a month, plus 150 rubles expenses for every day's session they attend; presidents of the eleven federated republics, as they are jocularly called in Russia, get 12,500 rubles a month; presidents and vice-presidents of the Union get 25,000 a month. What does that mean, that figure? One hundred times more than the average worker's wage, 100 times more! A 10,000 per cent increase as over the average wage of the worker! That's socialism? Why, John L. Lewis would almost break his back getting that kind of socialism! Show me such a spread in that miserable capitalist-exploited United States—and that's what it still is! Wouldn't the National Association of Manufacturers be delighted with such a differential in this country? The only thing they'd have to worry about is to conceal their delight. It would be too, too revealing, would it not? That's what you call socialism? You make a mockery of that ideal!

In 1939, Marshal Voroshilov—under socialism we have marshals! living ones and dead ones!—Voroshilov announced publicly that a lieutenant in what they jocularly call the Red Army is to get 625 rubles a month, a colonel 2000 a month. Now, relatively speaking, is an American colonel better off, as compared to the average worker's wage in this country? Not at all. Between 1934 and 1939, according to official statistics, wages for workers increased, nominally, 120 per cent; for army lieutenants, 240 per cent; for generals 305 per cent. I say nothing about the exceptional privileges that the bureaucracy, including the brass, enjoys in Russia. You call that socialism? Is that what you expect to introduce into this country, openly or behind the back, or any other way? Go peddle your socialism

to the Pentagon Building!

When the Russian workers yearn for greater equality, what does Stalin, the leader of the country, say? He answers to this at the 17th Congress of the Party in 1934, that it is, and I'm quoting—this is the leader of socialism, its spokesman and idealist, its best disciple—it's "a reactionary, petty bourgeois absurdity worthy of a primitive sect of ascetics but not of a socialist society organized on Marxian lines." That's what the yearning for equality is. Naturally, the applause from the assembled bureaucrats was deafening! It would be just as deafening and enthusiastic at a convention of the National Association of Manufacturers, wouldn't it, if you could get anybody to advocate it openly there. And that's where it belongs, and it also belongs in a convention of the Stalinist ruling class, the collectivist bureaucracy. It's an abomination to socialism.

There is not a working class in a single modern country—modern country—that's as brutally exploited as the working class of Russia, not one as cynically disfranchised and deprived of its elementary rights. The Russian worker has no trade unions. The Russian worker cannot determine hiring and firing—forbidden by law—wage scales, working days, working conditions. Trade unions are pure and simple speed-up organisms of the state. And what organisms! I quote, just typical, believe me, from *Izvestia* of May 16, 1937, that the central trade union committees are composed entirely of appointed officials. What's Lewis got that they haven't got? We hear from Andreyev, a Political Bureau member, in *Pravda* of December 9, 1935, and I'm quoting: "The wage scale must be left entirely in the hands of—[whom, under socialism, whom?—the heads of industry. They

must establish the norm." No wonder unions hold no conventions and leaders are appointed by the state. In no modern country do the workers have to endure the regime applied to the Russian workers.

Every worker must carry a labor book. Are we to have that under socialism in this country, introduced in the back door, the front door, or whatever door you want to? It was first introduced by the imitation Bonaparte, Napoleon III, in 1854. It was introduced into Germany in 1935 by whom? Hitler! And you've got it now in Russia, don't you? It lists all your fines, your dismissals from work with the reason therefor, your insubordinations.

The decree of September 24, 1930, reaffirmed on August 11, 1940, in the Russian press, not in the press of the NAM, says that workers are forbidden to leave their factory without permission of the employer, the boss, the director; violation of that is desertion, and the penalties go up to 10 years in prison.

The decree of October 11, 1930, renewed January 1941: Worker must accept work wherever he is ordered to be or to go.

Decrees of December 16, 1932, reaffirmed June 26, 1940: Absence from work without justification can be punished by dismissal, involving loss of the so-called trade union card and lodging; three latenesses totalling 20 minutes per month are equal to an absence.

The Czar, the Czar—not the socialist one, the real one—had the system of internal passports. The revolution abolished them, because, as they said—the Bolsheviks said—it's a police means for oppressing the people. Naturally, Stalinism reintroduced the internal passport on December 27, 1932. It exists to this day. It lists your par-

ents, your grandparents, their class position and social activity; the members of your present family; the divorce record of the bearer; dismissals from work, the reasons for them; organizations you belong to; decorations, if any; dates of subscriptions to the "voluntary" loans, and how much you subscribed. Without a stamped authorization on your internal passport, you cannot take a train out of the city, you cannot move from one city to another, you cannot be absent from home for more than 24 hours at a stretch. And permission is granted only by the bureau of the GPU in the factory. You cannot leave the country without authorization; you cannot get authorization.

On June 6, 1934, they adopted a new decree on "flight" abroad, that is, leaving the country without permission which you can't get. It's punishable by death, and if there are extenuating circumstances—ten years in prison. That's a permanent, not a wartime, regulation. It's not applied to the military personnel but to the civilian population.

Article III provides, under the socialism of Stalin, that if adult members of the military personnel family helped him to flee abroad, or failed to denounce him to the authorities in time, five to ten years in prison for them, with loss of wealth. Other members of the traitor's family living with him or dependent on him, even if they knew nothing about the preparations for the flight—this is Article III—lose their citizenship and get five years in Siberia. It's the system of hostages, in peacetime, for the civilian population. Tell me another country in the world that has it.

The czarist regime, the regime of Nicholas the Bloody, abolished capital punishment for all crimes except assaults on the Czar, political assassi-

ist Russia, they have the death penalty. In Stalinist Russia, in Stalinism for counterfeiting gold or silver money; acts of sabotage—and almost anything is interpreted as that; for strikes in enterprises, death penalty; for illegal slaughter of cattle, death penalty.

On April 7, 1935, another decree. As reported in *Izvestia*, for example: All children from 12 years upward, guilty of theft, violence, murder or attempted murder, go to criminal courts and may be punished to the full limit of the law, which includes the highest measure of social defense, which is translated, as you know, as execution. From 12 years on. Am I vilifying Stalinist Russia? I'm giving you a photograph of it. Where else will you find such barbarism?

The workers have no rights! The workers live in terror! If I'm told, by the way, I almost forgot—if I'm told: but how do you explain, didn't they whip Hitler? Doesn't that show superiority? Doesn't that show its socialism?—I'm aghast! The most powerful army in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century was whose? Napoleon's! The man who spread bourgeois rule over feudal Europe. Napoleon! The Grand Army of the Republic! Who whipped him? Czar Alexander, with his serf army, with his Marshal Suvorov. They fought well, didn't they? Does that prove that bigoted, semi-feudal, backward, czarist Russia of the early 19th century was socialist, or that Czar Alexander was the best disciple of Lenin, or that he was the sun who radiates light throughout the world, as you read about Stalin in the Stalinist press, or that he created the world, as you read about Stalin in the Stalinist press? No, he was the Czar, the autocrat of all the Russias.

Bernard Shaw went to Russia in

1931 and he made a broadcast about his visit to the United States, and here is what he said—listen: "A considerable share of the secret of the success of Russian Communism consists in the fact that every Russian knows that if he will not make his life a paying enterprise for his country, then he will most likely lose it. An agent of the GPU will take him by the shoulder and will conduct him to the cellar of this famous department and he will simply stop living. And his relatives will be politely informed that they need have no anxiety about him because he's not coming home any more." Who am I quoting—a vilifier of Russia? A man who wants to create war, not peace? Bernard Shaw! And where do I take it, from, this excerpt? *Pravda*, May 13, 1932, where it is printed without one word of comment!

We hear a lot about housing. I wish I had the time. Housing conditions have grown worse for the workers under Stalinism. The legal minimum is a miserable six square meters, about six by ten feet, per person, the minimum required for hygiene. Nizhni Novgorod, about which we have figures from the Stalinist press: five by seven, as compared with larger quarters before, in 1928. Moscow: average floor space, habitable floor space in 1937, a decline as against 1928. But—BUT, on March 9, 1936, Mr. Dyelukin, the Moscow construction chief, announced in *Izvestia* that in 1937 the city will build 400 buildings with apartments of two or five main rooms, with latest improvements and servants' rooms of six square meters, with master rooms of from 12 to 24 square meters. Who's that for? Who? The worker? The skilled worker? The workers live, as everybody in Russia calls them, in "coffins."

We hear a lot about rest homes. I

hope it will be referred to, then I will refer to it in my rebuttal. We'll see what the rest homes are like, and who they're for, and who enjoys them, and what kind there are for the heads of industry, and for the workers who get them. The Russians like to employ a phrase: *Gnyat e peregnyat*, catch up with and outstrip! Catch up with and outstrip the capitalist world. In inequality, *gynat e peregnyat*, far exceeding anything that we know in any modern country. Don't insult the good name of socialism by applying it to this brutal regime of exploitation and social inequality.

Lenin wrote early that the legislation on women alone would justify the Bolshevik revolution. He was right. It was the most advanced in the world, admired not only by socialists but by every sincere reformer. What has Stalinism done to the status of Russian women? Take two things, which are not only sufficient by themselves, but which amply and accurately reflect the whole social structure, the whole social situation of women under Stalin.

First, divorce: Engels said, and so rightly, a long time ago, when love is at an end, "a separation becomes a blessing for both parties and for society." Under socialism, he said, "humanity will be spared the useless wading through the mire of a divorce court." Lenin said, and not once, it is impossible to be a socialist and a democrat without immediately demanding complete freedom of divorce.

On July 8, 1944, there is a decree, printed next day in *Izvestia*, and what does it do? It reforms the divorce laws. Now you have to go through two courts and drag your case through the mire, and there is no formal basis now for allowing divorces; it is entirely up to the judge. The proceeding

is humiliating, it's drawn-out, expensive. The mere registration fee is now raised from 500 to 2,000 rubles. Do you know what the wage of the worker is? Do you know who can now enjoy divorce legally? Not only that, but they now record your divorce in your labor book. You not only have to wade through the mire but they splash some of it on you permanently.

Infinitely worse, infinitely more shameless and depraved is the Stalinist legislation on abortion. The decree of June 27, 1936—in spite of numerous protests, so great that they had to be printed in the Stalinist press!—a penalty of two years in prison for the physician performing the abortion; public rebuke to the mother for the first offense, 300 rubles' fine for the second. Abortion is a dreadful business, and every socialist, every human being with intelligence, with feeling, must recoil from this blow at what might become a human life. But we are neither hypocrites nor religious bigots. If a law prohibiting abortion is an abomination in this country, in the United States, it's a double abomination in a country like Russia. Just think! A low standard of living; hospital service which is exceptionally poor. You can't buy shoes for kids. *Pravda* of March 30, 1938, reports—this is an absolutely typical and current picture—"To buy shoes, a coat or a change of underwear for the newborn, the parents spend a great deal of time going from one store to another. For the entire railway district of Moscow with more than 100,000 inhabitants there was only one store for infant wear, and this store has been a long time without infant underwear or shoes for school children. Because of the lack of goods, the store sold underwear only six or seven days in the month. In the stores of the capital city [Moscow itself] mothers searched

in vain for an infant bathtub or a round basin for bathing the baby and a tub for washing the clothes.”

Say what you want about Russia, that's the situation. Let us not blame Stalin for that. Let's say that is not his fault at all. But to prohibit abortion under those circumstances? To force the woman to have an unwanted child under those conditions? At a time when contraceptives are at a premium, when diapers are almost impossible to get, when there is little or no food, when you cannot find a baby basinette or a basin for washing its underwear, when it's even hard to find a nipple for the baby's milk bottle—the dirty, mailed fist of the bureaucracy grabs the working woman by the throat and snarls at her: “Breed!”

The law of 1936 provides that mothers of more than six children get 200 rubles' premium annually for five years for each additional child; mothers of ten children receive 5000 rubles at birth of each additional child, and so on. The bureaucracy does not hesitate to intervene into the most sacred and intimate precincts of the personal life of the working woman. We need more labor slaves; more cannon fodder! Here is your bribe! Produce! If you're with child, whether you want it or not, whether it is a child of love or not, whether you can afford it or not, produce! Breed! That's socialism? You call that monstrosity, copied straight from Mussolini, straight from Hitler, you call that socialism? You have the nerve to speak before an audience when that happens? I say to the Stalinists everywhere: Go try to peddle it to the women who have freedom and fearlessness enough to give you their answer.

You have destroyed the Russian Revolution. You have garrotted it! Lenin wrote a hundred times: “The

proletariat cannot achieve the socialist revolution unless it is prepared for this task by the struggle for democracy; [I'm quoting] victorious socialism cannot retain its victory and lead humanity to the stage when the state withers away unless it establishes complete democracy.” Where is there democracy in Stalinist Russia today? What democratic rights does the worker have? The right to vote for Stalin whenever Stalin decides to allow what he calls an election? Is that the kind of elections Browder proposes for the United States? It would be interesting to hear something about that! Does the worker have the right to organize a trade union, to elect his own officials? Does he have the right to form a political party of his own—except for the Communist Party, as it is called jocularly? Do I have that right in Russia? Let me hear from an expert! Does Norman Thomas have it? Does Wallace have that right in Russia? Does Browder have that right in Russia? What would happen if he tried to exercise that right? Let me hear from some political idiots to whom Browder refers! What would happen if he tried to exercise that right in Russia? Isn't he an agent of American imperialism? Isn't he a class enemy spreading the poison of the bourgeoisie? I know that's true—that's what he is—I read that in a pamphlet by that pitiable Robert Thompson. I read it in the *Daily Worker*. Now, suppose Browder tried to exercise that democratic right in Russia?

Does the worker have the right to read any paper but the Stalinist press in Russia—any? Does he have the right to listen to any broadcast but the Stalinist broadcast? Does he have the right to organize a public meeting of his own, like here—not just this one, but any one? Does he have the

right to put forth his own candidacy in the election? I want to nominate Browder! Can I do it? Can he run? Does he have the right to recall a single significant public official? Lenin considered that right absolutely indispensable for a workers' state, let alone for socialism! He underscored it a thousand times, laid the heaviest stress on it. He pointed to the Commune as a model. Not only election of all officials, but *recall, recall*, so that if the scoundrel doesn't turn out right you can yank him out of office. Show me a single Stalinist official of any consequence who has ever been recalled by the workers and peasants of Russia. One! *The GPU recalls*—that's all—and that is not only all but it's fatal, too!

Does the worker have the right to strike? Where? Does he have the right to move from one city to another without police permission? Stalinism has destroyed every right that the Russian workers ever had! Name me one of the tiny miserable rights that the workers had under czarism, *under czarism*, in Russia. They were miserable, tiny, microscopic—name me one that he has in Stalinist Russia today. You call that tyranny socialism? I know Stalin has given him “security.” We have heard that; we hear it time and again: He's given a roof over his head, he's fed two or three times a day; he's given all the work he can stand—and a lot more! And there's no unemployment like under capitalism—and that is a curse of capitalism that you can never get rid of, that's true. But we're talking about if there's socialism in Russia. Is it a socialist community? If that is socialism, Browder, among others, has already had two experiences in socialism in the United States alone: one in World War I in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary; the other in World

War II in Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. Those are nationalized penitentiaries, commonly owned. He had work there. The bourgeoisie gave it to him as it is given to all other political prisoners, and to all prisoners in general. But at least he could get out when his term was up! Can the Russian worker? No, it's flight and treason; his family is held as hostage; he is imprisoned for life.

Look at what they have done to the great emancipating principles of the Russian Revolution! They butchered the whole revolutionary generation, with one or two exceptions! Not a word from Browder about that. A trifle! Industry is progressing—*finyat e peregnyat!* They wiped out the whole leadership of Bolshevism, of the October uprising, of the victory in the Civil War! Are they any better than the Czar? No, worse by far! Under czarism from 1826 to 1905, almost a century, 102 persons were executed for political reasons, 102! In the period of black reaction from 1905 to 1906, after the revolution, the blackest reaction cost the lives of 4,352 people. That's all! That's horrible! That's all! And they've murdered tens of thousands of the same kind of revolutionists that the Czar murdered by the hundreds. There were just twenty-two members of Lenin's Central Committee in October, 1917, the eve of the insurrection, the people who organized the insurrection: three of them died more or less normally—Lenin, Dzerzhinsky, Uritsky; two are still alive—Kollontai, Stalin. Five out of the 22. Where are the other 17, where are the other 17 who founded the Russian Revolution? Seventeen others shot as mad dogs, as fascists, as spies, as wreckers, as counter-revolutionists, as enemies of the people, as enemies of the working class, enemies of socialism, by Stalin. Stalin mur-

dered five out of the seven chairmen of the Soviet executive committee; almost all the members and candidates of the Soviet executive; the heads and the leaders of practically every Republic—Ukraine, Georgia, White Russia, Uzbekistan, Transcaucasia—all the others. The majority of the commission that wrote the Stalin Constitution, the most democratic Constitution in the world—the majority of the commission that wrote it became fascist and were shot down like dogs. Two out of five marshals of the Red Army; three army group commanders out of six, ten army commanders out of fifteen, 57 army corps commanders out of 85, 110 divisional commanders out of 193, 202 brigade commanders out of 400 shot as mad dogs, spies, agents of Japan, of England, of France, of Germany. Thousands of lesser officers! The whole life of these men was devoted to the fight for socialism. They breathed, they thought, they dreamed, they ate, they drank nothing else. What happened to drive them—if we are to take Stalin's version of these butcheries—what happened under Stalinism that drove them away from Stalinism, away from socialism, and into the arms of arch-reaction, Hitlerite fascism? That's if we take *your* version! Isn't that the most damning indictment that Stalin could make of his own socialism? That practically every one of the leaders in the fight for it, with trivial exceptions, hated and feared and despised his socialism so much that rather than share it, rather than tolerate it, they sold themselves to the most reactionary, the most sordid, the most rotten and corrupt imperialists in the world? You murdered the leaders of the Red Army, its great captains in the civil war, its giants, its architects, and its epic heroes. Then Stalin was free to destroy the army of socialism,

of course, and establish the army of reaction which he has now.

The "International"—you sing it, don't you? Not in Russia; it's no longer the national anthem. They have a new national anthem of how "Great Russia established an indestructible union." Great Russia! The term "general" was hated under the Czar, restored by Stalin. "Marshals"—that rank was destroyed under the Czar—restored by Stalin. Ranks, grades, class divisions, distinctions, privileges—restored by Stalin. And who were made the inspirers and models of the army? Under the names of whom did they go out to fight for socialism? Marshal Suvorov, the man who crushed the national revolution of Stanislaw Poniatski, and Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the man who drowned in blood the peasant uprising of Pugachev! They even made medals—and the big breasts of the generals and marshals to this day are loaded down with them, aren't they, or Suvorov and his right-hand man Kutuzov. They created an Order of Bogdan Khmelnytsky, the Ukrainian Ataman who centuries ago first introduced mass pogroms against the Jews and the Poles. It was under their banner, with their names on his lips, that Stalin sallied forth for his socialism! That's what he has; Suvorov socialism, Khmelnytsky socialism! But not socialism as we ever understood it; not socialism to which we aspire with every fibre of our passion for freedom and the comradeship of man!

What have they done to the Bolshevik revolution, with its noble sentiments, its noble ambitions, and its noble goal? They've destroyed it and made Russia a nation of slave labor. Doesn't every child know that there are millions of slave laborers in Russia? I don't have the time, I will in my rebuttal; I will read you from the kodex, the photostatic copy of the

kodeks for "corrective labor institutions," as they call them there—10 millions of them at an absolute minimum. Here in "correction camps," federal penitentiaries and state penitentiaries, we have what?—from U. S. Census Bureau—141,000 odd in state and federal penitentiaries out of a population of 145 million, five out of every 5,000 in prison. In England, 30,000 out of a population of 50 million, three out of every 5,000. In Russia, 10 million at least out of approximately 180 million, 277 out of every 5,000! Is that a sign of socialism? Is that what your socialism leads to?

[Interruption by Chairman Mills asking Shachtman to conclude. Shachtman asks for an extension which he will take from his summary if Browder doesn't object.]

I want to conclude hastily.

I say even if Browder wants it, he'll never live to see it!

What does he have to say about Tito? One word! One word! We're discussing war or peace, Tito is an element in it. Why must Tito and his regime be liquidated? Aren't they the same—the same regime as in Russia, same medals, same economy, same politics, same structure? He must be liquidated because he insists on exploiting the Yugoslav people instead of letting the Russians do it! That's why he must be crushed, must he not? He must be crushed like Rajk was crushed in Hungary, like Gomulka is about to be crushed in Poland, like Kostov was crushed in Bulgaria.

Browder's loyalty to Stalinism cannot be questioned, can it? His defense of Stalinist socialism, of Stalinist Russia, can't be questioned, can it? You heard it yourself. But supposing this same Browder were in Russia, what would happen to him, what would have happened to him as far back as 1946? Suppose this same Browder,

who calls Russia socialist, were in Hungary or Bulgaria, what would be his fate? Or suppose Browder's Stalin-socialists were successful in establishing their socialism in this country, with Foster, and Green, and Dennis, and Childs and Minor and Don and all the rest of that perfidious crew at the head of it—[turning to Browder] they are perfidious, aren't they?—who would be the first to go? Who would be the first to get the GPU bullet in the base of his skull? Who would be the first to be denounced in the obituary articles as a counter-revolutionary mad dog, a viper, a restorationist, a wrecker? Who would it be—Browder or Shachtman? That's a sporting proposition!

[Interruption by Chairman Mills: Time's up.]

When I saw him standing there at the podium, I said to myself: Rajk was the general secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, and was shot, or hanged, or garrotted. Kostov was the general secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party. And when I thought of what happened to them, I thought of the former secretary of the American Communist Party, and I said to myself: There—there but for an accident of geography, stands a corpse!

Chairman Mills:

There seems to be quite some difference between the two speakers. Before we have a rebuttal from Mr. Browder, whom I'm going to give 23 minutes because Mr. Shachtman exceeded his time to that extent, I want to let Mr. Kaplan of the Debs Society make an announcement. [Mr. Kaplan makes his announcement.]

May I have your attention, please? Mr. Browder will now give his rebuttal of 23 minutes. Mr. Browder.

Rebuttal by Earl Browder

As I listened to the passionate indictment of that monstrous reaction that spreads from the East, the backward, barbarian East, gradually engulfing the progressive and civilized West, I had a feeling that, well, now, if this is true, I'd better enlist in the crusade that is led by those who formulate policy today, to wipe out this menace which is worse than Hitler, because it is so much more efficient, because it can even make progress in the material development of life while it is destroying everything which we hold dear, which makes life worth living.

And as I was debating and listening in this war to destroy the Soviet Union for which a recruiting sergeant made a very effective appeal this evening, I was forced to hesitate a little, because I had to ask myself: what is happening in Poland today, which had been engulfed by the monster, and what is happening in Italy today, which has been saved from the monster and saved for our higher concept? And I happen to know that in Poland being engulfed by this monster has meant for the first time in history that Poland has been able to rise and begin to organize its life, and is organizing it in a way that even every simple honest capitalist who has gone there has had to speak of it with admiration. For the first time in history the land of Poland is in the hands of the masses who cultivate it. For the first time in history, landlordism has been abolished. For the first time in history, the economy of Poland is rising. And I turn and I look at Italy, or France, which America has saved from the monster. And what do I see in Italy? The saving of Italy from the monster has been at the cost of riveting again upon the Italian farmers

the rule of the most bloodsucking class of landlords that has been seen outside of Eastern Europe, where it has been destroyed.

We heard a lot today about declines in living standards. It is strange that you didn't hear a word about the decline of the living standards of the Italian masses who've been saved from that monster. We saved France from the monster, and yet in this morning's newspapers you may read how the average monthly salary of the French workers has declined since the day of liberation from the Nazis. Since the Americans went in to direct French affairs, the average wage of the French worker has declined from \$50 a month—a month!—to \$24.50 a month. The price of saving the French workers from this monster was to slash wages in half. Slice them in half!

What is happening to wages in Russia and in those countries who have been swallowed by the monster, those countries where they are building socialism of the kind which is objected to by my opponent? It is quite well established that the standard of living of the workers and of the peasants has risen steadily in every one of these countries. You may say very cheaply and very easily it is a lie, but figures of production do not lie. My opponent this evening can make great play with the development of his sort of statistics to prove that the material standard of life of Soviet workers today is lower than in 1914. But in order to give you that lie, he has to conceal from you simple, basic facts of production in the Soviet Union. He tells you the bureaucrats enjoy all the production in the Soviet Union. Well, in 1914, the standard of production of shoes, for example, to take one little thing, was 29 million pairs per year. In 1948, the produc-

tion of shoes was 380 million pair. 350 million new bureaucrats, I suppose, put on shoes. The production of textiles in the Soviet Union in 1948 was four times the production of textiles in 1914. I suppose those trillions of metres of textiles produced above that of 1914 are all worn by the bureaucrats of the Soviet Union. There must be an enormous number of them. The whole country is composed of bureaucrats, of course.

It is silly to contend, and nobody does, that life is easy in the Soviet Union and problems are solved. I made it clear in my presentation that the rise in the material standard of life in the Soviet Union in no way corresponds to the rise of total production. I explained why that is so, because for the future of socialism, especially in a country which begins as one of the most backward in the world, it is necessary to go through a prolonged period, which would be quite unnecessary in America, of the basic accumulation of capital, that is, the accumulation of the material means of modern production—to have enormous expenditures in mass education to lift a whole nation up which had been kept back for centuries, to lift it up to modern standards of literacy and science. And that it above all is necessary to provide a national defense for that country, in order that socialism should not be made into an illusion by its destruction in a world of enemies. I heard not one word from my opponent about these things. Are these things important, or is immediate consumption the only test of socialism, as he says?

I say to you that anyone who can talk like that about the problems of building a new socialist society in a country where the forces of production were not developed by capitalism, that such a person is committing

a vulgar fraud when he speaks to you in the name of Marx. There is nothing of Marx in that whole approach. There is only the vulgar demagoguery of such schools of socialism as, for example, that of the famous Disraeli of Great Britain. You probably know the name only as one of the great founders of the British Empire. But at the same time, Disraeli the Tory was a socialist of sorts, a violent enemy of capitalism—the kind of socialism that wants to protect the working class from the evils of industrialization and substitute the benevolent protection of the kind-hearted men like Disraeli who founded the British Empire or developed it to a higher stage. The socialism of the Tory Disraeli is equally respectable with that socialism that has been expressed here by my opponent.

Marx said that the course which brings socialism and makes socialism inevitable is the expansion of the productive forces which reach a limit under capitalism beyond which they cannot go until they have discarded capitalism and adopted socialist forms, abolishing private ownership. My opponent this evening rejects this basic principle of Marxism. In so doing he moves to the position of the reactionary forms of socialism if it is to be dignified by that name. Utopian, clerical socialism, not Marxist socialism, certainly; a Christian socialism, perhaps.

We heard a great deal about democracy and the necessity for the thorough realization of democracy as the precondition for the establishment of socialism. I yield to no one in my valuation of democracy, but when it is brought forward to us as the precondition for the realization of socialism that thorough democracy must be achieved, I can only tell the gentleman that he has a touching faith in the possibilities of capitalism

which I cannot share. I have learned from Marx and Engels that socialism is the precondition for the full realization of democracy, not that the thorough realization of democracy is the precondition for the realization of socialism. If the fullest realization of democracy is possible before you have socialism, what's socialism necessary for? Socialism is a means of reaching the full development of democracy. If you can get it before you have socialism, you won't need the means.

In the same way, the substitution of the goal as the obstacle preventing us from getting the means is used on this question of consumption. Of course, the final purpose of all production is to give the good things of life to men, women and children to enjoy. Of course, that's the final aim. But when my opponent this evening comes here to tell you that because the new socialist system in Russia has not given all those good things, therefore, it is not socialism, and that that is the only test of whether it is socialism or not, what he is actually doing is telling you that because you can't have the goal of socialism today, he is going to destroy in your minds the understanding that the means of reaching that goal is being created. And because of its being created today, he is denouncing it to you here as false.

I listened with amazement to the statement that the growth of the forces of production in Russia are simply a repetition of what has been repeatedly, and everywhere where it was attempted, done under capitalism. That message, I am quite sure, would be applauded in the United States Chamber of Commerce, in the National Association of Manufacturers. But it happens to be a flat falsehood. I cited to you the basic figures to show to you that—and these figures

cannot be successfully challenged—to show to you that in the Soviet Union four times the rate of the growth of production in America is now normal in the Soviet Union; that we are comparing the normal rate in the Soviet Union with the highest rates in American history so that the average rate is much faster than that. My opponent this evening tells you that's merely capitalism normally at work, a bureaucratic capitalism but capitalism nonetheless. Exploitative society, he says, which I presume is a pseudonym for continued capitalism. When given all those good things, therefore he makes this concession to capitalism, I assure you it is quite unwarranted. Capitalism does not have such possibilities of the growth of production any longer.

He also described to us with great admiration about how the rate of productivity per worker is four to six or eight times as much in America as in Russia. That is true and proves exactly the opposite of what he was trying to tell us. It is true we have the technical achievements of productivity in America far beyond anything they have in the Soviet Union. Why then do we not have the growth of the economy as a whole that should result from it? Because capitalism prevents the utilization of these techniques. Why, with a much more backward technique in the Soviet Union are they able to make greater progress than America? Because socialism gives such higher utilization of the forces of production that a backward—technically considered—country can outstrip the most technically advanced capitalism today.

The chairman tells me I have about two minutes left. I really have taken more time than I considered was necessary to answer the shoddy presenta-

tion of the anti-Soviet case that was placed before you tonight.

Chairman Mills:

Mr. Shachtman will now give a counter-rebuttal.

Rebuttal by Max Shachtman

Mr. Chairman, comrades and friends: My opponent did a very imprudent thing. He mentioned a name he should have left unmentioned—the National Association of Manufacturers. I was afraid he would—I hoped he would not. I have here a pamphlet, *Communists and National Unity*, an interview of *PM*—that's a New York newspaper, or was—with Earl Browder, dated March 15, 1944; interview with Mr. Harold Lavin, assistant managing editor of the New York newspaper *PM*. "Question by Mr. Lavin of Mr. Browder: 'I had a discussion with two friends of the National Association of Manufacturers; and I must say that you would get along with them fine. In large sections they almost sound word for word like you.' Answer by Mr. Browder: 'That's fine. I'm awfully glad to hear that. I'm not sorry when you say that leading members of the NAM talk like me. My report to the Plenum of our party was distributed to every delegate at the economic conference of the NAM, and I am told most of them read it through.'"

Now, I'm a socialist. I don't distribute my literature at the NAM. I don't defend the NAM. I have no friends among them. I don't defend its social system. I've been combatting it for 30 years almost to the day—I'm about to celebrate a modest anniversary—I've never relented in it! I didn't support American imperialism in the war! I didn't support the throwing of

the atom bomb! I didn't defend the system of American capitalism and point out how it can grow.

[There is a slight break here between reels; voice unclear.]

I give a whole series of absolutely unassailable facts. I refrain as carefully as possible from taking them from enemy sources. I take them from the official Stalinist sources. I don't take accidental or incidental little things that appear in any newspaper; I take the central items which describe the regime and how it operates.

Typical is the reply. Typical is the reply. "What about Italy?" "What about France?" It's become a joke, a rotten joke. You know of the timid American visitor who is being shown around in Moscow, its glories, taken into the magnificent subway with its marble panels—by a guide, of course. They wait . . . they wait 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes. The timid American says: "Your trains don't run very often." "Yes, what about the Negroes in the United States?"

But I'm not defending the persecution and lynching of Negroes in the United States. I'm not defending the Marshall Plan. I'm not defending the landowners in Italy. I'm not defending the landowners in Poland. I'm not defending the bourgeoisie in France. I'm opposing them. *And I opposed them when Browder was on their side!* Wasn't he? I was never allied with them. Browder was. The Communist Party was. Stalin was.

My comrades were murdered because they were accused of having made a pact with Hitler. Browder says, of course, there were no documents to prove it. The Opposition, he says in one pamphlet, were clever enough to burn their documents. But there's one document that was not burned. It was printed in the *Daily Worker*, wasn't it, by Mr. Browder?

And he had an article on it, didn't he —when he could write in the *Daily Worker!* And the signature of Hitler or von Ribbentrop was on that document, wasn't it? What Russian signature was on it? Trotsky's? Rakovsky's? Tukhachevsky's? Whose signature was on this document of alliance with Hitler and Soviet Russia?

You talk to *me*, a revolutionary socialist and an internationalist, about Italy? Who cares about Italy tonight? I'll discuss Italy with you in another debate! I'll discuss American imperialism with you in another debate! I have a few words to say about it. I'll repeat the things I've been saying for thirty year.

I'm talking about: Is Russia a socialist community? That's supposed to have been the subject of the debate tonight. Not one of the things I spoke about were referred to or dealt with, were they? My speech "called for a crusade of the progressive West against the reaction." Why? Why? Who said anything about "the progressive West"? Yes, Browder once spoke about that. Not I. I never did.

When Browder was an internationalist, when he opposed the imperialist war of 1917 in this country, what did the patriots say to him? On what basis was he railroaded to prison, along with hundreds and thousands of revolutionary socialists, of IWW's? What did they tell him? "By criticizing the United States you're working for the Kaiser!" Browder spit in their faces, didn't he? Debs spit in their faces! Haywood spit in their faces! Kate Richards O'Hare spit in their faces! Now he tells me that I'm recruiting for a crusade against Russia!

In 1917 when he was a socialist, when he was a revolutionist, Browder said: "I'm against German imperialism. I'm against American imperialism." Among other examples, his

was one I learned from. I haven't changed: I'm against Stalinist imperialism! I'm against American imperialism! I'm against their cold war! I'm against their atom bomb! I'm against their H-bomb! I'm against the war that they're preparing for the destruction of civilization. Doesn't Browder know that? Of course! But years of training in the Stalinist movement teach you how to "answer" criticism of Stalinist Russia.

Browder was the editor of the paper of the Trade Union Educational League when I first met him. It was a good paper, and it was well edited. And I remember how it used to expose the rottenness of the labor leaders, and how page after page, month after month—things that I was raised on when I was a kid—would show: you've got gangsterism in your unions, you scoundrels. You've got murder in your unions. You exploit workers. You live off the fat of the land. You get \$20,000 income as president, and the worker gets only \$20 a week. And what of the Greens, and the Gomperses, and the Hutchesons, and the Lewises? What was their answer to the propaganda of the Trade Union Educational League? What did they answer Earl Browder? "You're attacking the labor movement. You're playing into the hands of the employers. You're playing into the hands of the open-shoppers. They also say the labor movement is rotten. They also say there's racketeering." What did Browder answer? The way I answer him tonight: *The truth never hurts the working class!* I want to tell the truth about Russia, and I don't want to be told by any paid or unpaid agent of the Stalinists that I can't tell the truth about Russia because it will play into the hands of the reaction! Who has played into the hands of the reaction more than any other sin-

gle force in the labor movement—who, if not the Stalinists?

"Shachtman doesn't understand"—excuse me—"My opponent doesn't understand—first you have socialism, then you have democracy. That's what I was taught by Marx and Engels," he said.

I quote again from Lenin, just one of the dozen quotes I can get you like that. I not only know them, Browder knows them; he has quoted them in his time. Lenin writes in 1916: "The victorious socialism cannot retain its victory and lead humanity to the stage when the state withers away unless it establishes complete democracy." Now, I stand on that. I stand on that now more than ever before in my life. I stand on that now so much the more firmly after I see what has happened, the degeneration of the Russian Revolution under the Stalinist counter-revolutionary absolutism.

It's plain: If you're moving toward socialism, which is a complicated business, I know, which is difficult, which is beset by a million obstacles, most of them inherited from capitalism, with its rottenness, its corruption, its depravity, you can always tell, however—not every single day, but over periods—you can tell, are we moving *toward* socialism or *away* from socialism, by two simple criteria:

One, is the standard of living of the workers going *up*?

Two, is state coercion going *down*?

Is there a trend *toward* equality? Nobody but a political idiot—to quote the elegant phrase of "my opponent"—would expect you to have it overnight—equality. We're a long way yet. But is it going *toward* equality, or is it going *toward* inequality? Isn't that simple? Isn't that an old established criterion for socialist evolution after the proletarian revolution takes

place? Browder doesn't even talk about that. Now I say, if you could show me that the Russian workers' standard of living is not only as good as the low standard of living of the American workers, but four times as good—four times as good—and if I should answer, while the standard of living of the worker in Russia has gone to four times as good as the American worker's, at the same time the ruling group—call it what you want—has improved its economic position a hundred times, I say you're moving *away* from socialism. If you could show me that the working class has *more* control over the state, if you could show me that state coercion, in the form of this blood-stained GPU, is diminishing, I'd say you were moving *toward* socialism. But it is not diminishing; the Stalinists announced it twice: the state is being reinforced. We have socialism *and* the state is being reinforced!

Now (a), you won't find that in Marx or Lenin—that's not important; (b) you won't find that in Russia—and that is important. You'll find a reinforcement of the state such as has never existed. But you won't find a trace of socialism.

He imputes to me the position, since he has nothing else to say, that I claim the only test for socialism is the consumption of the masses. When did I say that? Tonight? A year ago? Fifty years? More likely fifty years ago! But not tonight! Not tonight! I say it takes two criteria: Are class lines disappearing? Is there an increase toward equality, or is there, as there is in Russia today, an increase toward inequality? Is the state coercion increasing in intensity or decreasing?

He says, is defense important, or is consumption the immediate task for socialism? God knows that under Stalinism it's not the immediate task, it's

not the remote task—consumption for the masses. I don't deny that defense is important. Of course, it's important. It's important in the United States; it's important under Hitler's Germany; it's important in every country. It will disappear when there's world socialism. But that's not the point, is it? I didn't say anything about how much they're spending on tanks. I don't know, Browder doesn't know. It's not important. I leave that aside, I don't want to argue that aspect of it at all. I ask a simple question and I give the simple incontrovertible fact: for the masses, the standard of living declined. That fraction of the production which is available to the people for consumption goes to the bureaucracy first and foremost. That's the fact and that's what's important.

He says I deny the Marxian contention that the expansion of the productive forces is what makes progress possible. I didn't; I don't dream of it. I'm talking about socialism tonight. I want to ask simply, does every expansion of the production of forces, granted all the figures of the Stalinists a hundred times over, does that produce socialism? I say categorically NO! Does it make possible socialism? I say categorically YES! When? How? When, as the *Communist Manifesto* said 102 years ago, the proletariat is raised to the position of the ruling class, is raised to political supremacy, when democracy is established! That is the first demand in the *Communist Manifesto*, the first: to establish democracy. When the working class democratically takes the destiny of the nation into its hands, then the previous preparation—by capitalism or by bureaucratic collectivism—can and will serve the proletariat in power as the economic or technological basis for the rational order of socialism.

That says a good deal for this preparation, but no more.

You have to make up your mind about the fundamental question: Is Russia a socialist community? And there I say what I said at the very beginning: If a "socialist community" is to be used to characterize a society where the development of the productive forces, where the control of the productive force, where the control of what Marx calls the conditions of production are entirely and exclusively in the hands of a totalitarian reactionary bureaucracy; if you're going to apply the name of socialism to a regime in which the economic conditions of the working class, which is the only mover toward socialism, the only living motive force toward socialism—where the economic conditions are worse than they are, or worse than they were in the last years of czarism, where they have not even now reached the development of what I still consider a backward capitalist country—backward as compared with what the USA can and will be some day; at a time when inequality is growing, when all the political privileges, all the economic privileges, are in the hands of this reactionary upper crust, when the precepts and ideas of socialism are banned from the country, when the revolutionists who were the bearers of the socialist ideal are exterminated, only more thoroughly than Hitler exterminated the Social Democratic militants and the Communist Party militants—then I say socialism is lost! Then I say you have given to the reactionary bourgeoisie not only of this but of all other countries a murderous weapon with which to crush the socialist movement and its aspirations, by saying: here are the socialists themselves claiming this monstrosity, this reactionary society, this new slavery—that's their social-

ism. Is that what you want? That's the demagogical way of the reaction. We understand it perfectly. And I say that the Stalinist movement in and out of Russia has done more than any other single force in the world, more than any single force in the world's history, to give weapons against socialism, against the working class movement into the hands of capitalist reaction.

We don't say, as again "my opponent" imputes to us, that Russia is bureaucratic capitalism; we don't contend that Russia is capitalism at all. We distinguish it both from socialism and capitalism by the phrase, perhaps not too elegant, bureaucratic or totalitarian collectivism. The Stalinist bureaucracy represents a new reactionary social order. If you are to argue that this is not provided for in Marx, then you don't understand anything about Marx. Marxism constantly, from the beginning, posited the possibility either of socialism or barbarism. The conditions conforming to that barbarism could not be envisaged by Marx a hundred years ago. We see that barbarism developing in capitalist society in futile wars of extermination, for example. We see it developing in Stalinist society, a new barbarism, a new slavery for the workers and the peasants. They are converted into state serfs, into state slaves. Engels foresaw it, Marx foresaw it, Rosa Luxemburg foresaw it, Lenin foresaw it. They kept warning, as we do to this day, kept warning the working class: You must take over society, remold it, reshape it, in the interests of socialism, on a rational basis; otherwise, society will decay into barbarism. If you do not take over, they said a hundred years ago, and I repeat it tonight, if the working class does not take over, if for example, as really happened, the working class of Eu-

rope did not come to the aid of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, there will be decay, and this decay will mean your ruin. It will mean your ruin, that's what Engels repeatedly said to the working class. At that time it was almost only a literary flourish. Today it is a bitter and cruel reality that stares us in the face.

I say again that the Stalin regime has nothing in common with socialism. It represents a form of the new barbarism. It is proof, I repeat, of the prophetic words of Frederick Engels, which I should like to remind you of again:

If the working class itself does not take the leadership of the nation and by its democratic rule reorganize it on a socialist basis, Engels said, it will sink to the level of the Chinese coolie. He says again: If the working class does not take into its own hands the power to achieve the new social order, it will pay the penalty of its own destruction.

Capitalism is dragging us down into the primitive slime of reaction and universal destruction. We don't feel it so acutely here in the United States today. Browder is absolutely right in referring to what it means in Italy, in France, tomorrow or the next day for all capitalist countries. In that he is absolutely correct. But the Stalinist alternative to capitalism, *which he offers us on the same platter with which he must offer his own head*, is nothing but a new barbarism. That's why we reaffirm our own faith in the liberation of humanity by socialism, the product of the freed consciousness of the working class. We have seen despotisms like Stalinism before. We have seen them come, we have seen them prevail, and we have seen them go!

We affirm, and we reaffirm it in the teeth of that hideousness which is

known as Stalinism, that socialism for us, yesterday, today, tomorrow still means the end of class rule; the end of class privilege; the freeing of the people from all chains and all coercion, the fullest realization of democracy, the emancipation of women and of children; the end of slave camps, police terror, frame-ups, butchery of the socialists, abundance for all, and therefore liberty for all.

In spite of the black pall that Stalinism has hung over the heads of the working class in so many countries, despite the mean and cruel shame and discredit with which it has stained the shining shield of socialism, we are confident, now as ever, that socialism

will triumph by the power of that invincible force, that irrepressible force, which the young Karl Marx called "the power of the expansion of democratic ideas and humanity's innate thirst for liberty."

Chairman Mills:

According to the rules of the debate to which both speakers have agreed, Mr. Browder will now give a final statement of his position lasting five minutes, after which the meeting will stand adjourned. Mr. Browder.

BROWDER:

(The remainder of the debate is inaudible on the tape.)

WIRE-RECORDINGS for SOCIALIST EDUCATION

Branches of the Independent Socialist League and Socialist Youth League may obtain, from the Chicago SYL, the following wire-recordings for use in educational programs. They may be borrowed free of charge, except for mailing costs, for short periods of time. First come, first served. One set at a time to each borrower. Please order well in advance. Specify the exact date on which you wish to use the wire-recording, in case more than one branch wants the same recording at about the same time. Write to: Socialist Youth League, 333 West North Avenue, Room 3, Chicago.

"Freedom Under Capitalism and Socialism"—A Debate Max Shachtman vs. Frederick Hayek

(Debate for Politics Club, U. of C., February 3, 1950—2½ hrs.)

"The International Significance of the Tito-Stalin Split" by Max Shachtman

(U. of C. SYL Forum, February 5, 1950—2 hours)

"New Economic Trends in American Imperialism" by Hal Draper

(A class session at the SYL summer school, Sept. 1949—2 hrs.)

"New Political Trends in American Imperialism" by Hal Draper

(Ditto—2 hrs.)

"Lessons of the Russian Revolution" by Max Shachtman

(Ditto—3 hrs.)

The Tragedy of Romain Rolland

From the Diary of Victor Serge—IV

Erongaricuario, May 4, 1945. I would very much like to write a "personal history" on "How Comrades End Up" and among them I would find a place for Romain Rolland, who died a few weeks ago while writing a biography of Péguy and swearing to Aragon¹⁹ his faithfulness to the CP. The old man on the point of disappearing wrote still another letter to Maurice Thorez—the totalitarian bureaucrat with neither conscience nor scruples.

I knew him well enough, indirectly, through Jacques Mesnil, who had been his friend for at least twenty years and broke with him—while irritating him with his infallible honesty—only when R. R. definitely chose the party of executioners.

Like all the First World War generation I had seen in him a "great conscience." *Jean Christophe* was for me a revelation of the nobility of life. And the author of *Jean Christophe* during the European catastrophe had been able to place himself "above the struggle"—to remain integrally human.

On the boat which was carrying us hostages from French concentration camps to Petrograd I noticed R. R.'s books in the hands of young French officers back from the front, and we were able to look each other in the face more easily. I knew that these books provoked a sort of persecution which he bore uncomfortably and firmly while suffering, the experience of which he related in *Clérambault*.

The bolsheviks to whom I spoke about him wanted to see in him nothing

but a troubled intellectual, weak and well-intentioned. This was also the opinion of Gorky, but Gorky expressed this judgment with an infinity of sympathy.

Later, in '22-'24, R. R. published in *Clarté*²⁰ articles on Gandhi and on revolutionary violence which irritated me all the more in that they contained the most exact, the most prophetic insights on the stifling character of dictatorship—all the while misunderstanding the terrible reality of a spontaneous revolution alive only by virtue of unceasing miracles of implacable activity.

I replied in *Inprecor*²¹ that we were "the party of free men." I believed it, I saw it, I felt it, I wished it, along with a mass of others—and all of us were not able to say where we were going, and it was doubtless not at all fatal. R. R. was dissatisfied with this rather harsh reply. He was to remember it years later when I was persecuted in turn and he was asked to intervene in my favor. He replied that he had only limited sympathy for persecuted persecutors. He nevertheless intervened for Francesco Ghezzi,²² imprisoned at Suzdal—and moderately for me. He was growing old (in '29-'30); belatedly married a woman who had worked in Moscow under the direction of a Heinz Kogan, whose life I had saved in '19 ("Princess" Kudacheva). He seized upon a faith in the declining Russian Revolution; he consented openly to all the repressions, to all the strangling of thought,

20. Originally a CP literary magazine. It later became oppositionist.

21. *International Press Correspondence*, an organ of the Comintern.

22. An Italian Bordighist.

he let Panait Istrati²³ be slandered—it was a complete abdication of clear-sighted personality and what remained of a “great conscience” reduced itself to a demagogic and deceptive renown. . . .

When I found myself deported to Orenburg, we entered into correspondence on the subject of the manuscript of my *Hommes perdus*, which he offered to receive and forward to my publishers, and which the GPU stole from me and from him on two occasions without his making the slightest protest.

He came to see Stalin in '35 and asked that a period be put to “l'affaire Victor Serge,” that I be either sentenced or freed. Stalin said he was “not up on the matter” and promised my liberty if it was at all possible. It was to this request in particular that I owe my life, it seems to me.

R. R. had been greeted warmly on arrival by Bukharin and amiably accompanied by Yagoda. He knew the régime well enough and I knew that the support he gave it was full of anxiety, doubts, of scruples overcome daily.

At the time of the trial of the old bolsheviks Piatakov, Muralov, Serebriakov, Boguslavsky I wrote to him, denouncing the forgeries, predicting a bloodletting, begging him—harshly—to intervene in time. I never received a reply and he did nothing, sadly insulted by my letter.

He had previously let it be known that along with other well-known intellectuals he approved of the massacres which followed the assassination of Kirov²⁴ at Leningrad; and he

kept silent during the trial and the execution of the thirteen (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov). Perhaps he knew his own powerlessness—but why did he refuse to free his conscience, at least?

The author of *Jean Christophe* at 70 let himself be covered with blood, shed by a tyranny for which he was the faithful apologist. It was incomprehensible to me, demoralizing, and Jacques Mesnil could find only one response: “He is old”—he was old himself, J. M., alone and hurt, but of an absolute uprightness.

I was all the more struck that such, identically such, as seen from without, was the attitude of Gorky whom I had known as so unremitting in his defense of the victims of the civil war.

There is an aging of the strongest personalities, of the highest, of the most humanely lucid, and neither their work nor their experience preserves them from decline through ossifying, through hardening, when at the end of their life they clutch the illusion of serving a great cause in spite of everything. . . .

And I learned in 1938 that R. R., tortured by a sort of remorse, was keeping a diary, destined to be published a long time after his death, in which he noted his scruples, his doubts, the drama of his fidelity to communism.

He was afraid to keep this diary with him and deposited it for safe-keeping in friendly hands. These pages will say in twenty or fifty years that his intelligence and his conscience were not dead but dimmed. Posthumous escape.

(Perhaps something will also be known of Gorky's crises, the reproaches he addressed to Stalin, the recurrent furies which consumed his last energies. . . .)

Justification of Duplicity

July 5, 1945. We were passionately talking about the leaders of the Polish emigration who have just consented to enter the government set up by Moscow. Someone said: “They are traitors and imbeciles!” I took up their defense: they are men caught between heroism and self-abdication. (That there are traitors in the group and careerists capable of becoming traitors does not interest me: only the others count.) They are playing an obviously desperate game; destined to be duped, dishonored, rejected when they are no longer needed—or destroyed. They know it.

History is also composed of the unforeseen, duty requires seizing the final chance, even if it is the only one. Whole peoples cannot emigrate and there is the obligation of sharing their fate, whatever it may be, in order to attempt their salvation or to bide one's time for the future. Emigration is necessary only when struggle has become completely impossible and paralysis a form of annihilation; or when struggle abroad offers more chance of success and is combined with action at home.

When I reasoned in this fashion I was reproached for justifying dubious, selfish and vile adaptations and the duplicity which hides them. All that exists like a gangrene. But it remains that a people cannot escape from defeats, that obvious submission is sometimes the last means of resistance, that terrorist despotism leaves room only for duplicity, a final defense by hypocrisy, shorn, reservations of conscience, secret heroism.

Russia having become the first finished totalitarian state, all the Russians know it, consciously or not. I was a member of a party which repudiated duplicity; I still prefer it that

way; all my character upholds it. I do not have the right, nevertheless, to fail to recognize the facts.

What a startling intuition is contained in these lines of André Salmon from his *Prikaz (Decree)*, written in 1918, in regard to the Russian Revolution which was beginning *without* traitors and without assassins:

“Traitors are saints.

“And the purest hearts are those of assassins.”

Heroes in a time of duplicity betray treason—and it is more bitter, more difficult, more perilous than condemning it from abroad. The faithful hero proclaims himself “traitor” out of devotion to the party which demands this confession from him before shooting him. Some of his fratricides, unacquainted with what lies behind the scenes, believe these confessions with a pure heart and reply by assassinating him. It is the eighth stage of Hell—the psychological stage. It proves that all the grandeur acquired up to now by mankind is menaced.

VICTOR SERGE

(Translated and annotated by
James M. Fenwick)

For Books and Pamphlets by

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Write for book list to
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23. The Rumanian writer, for whom Rolland had served as a literary patron.

24. The Stalinist bureaucrat whose assassination was seized upon as a pretext for the first of the long series of purges in the '30s.

Problems of Yesterday and Today

Toward Anti-Stalinist Union Unity in France

The problems which occupy the labor movement today are not at all new. There had already been one world war prior to 1939 which made deep rifts in the trade unions. In the years that followed there were splits, then unity again and once more splits. During this troubled period, we can state without contradiction that, side by side, there was an almost general movement, in all countries, towards the old trade unions and parallel to it the search for new forms of organizations. Someone will object, no doubt, that the present situation is different. I am not unacquainted with that. I even believe that the difference between the two epochs is more important than is usually thought to be the case, since after pointing it out, they do not seek to define its character or draw conclusions from it.

Just the same let us begin by recalling what happened in the trade union movement during the first world war. The working class never before had at its command such diverse and rich experiences, nor had it ever proved to be so unwilling or so incapable of profiting by them.

In all the warring countries, the leading bodies of the trade union centers immediately became part of the war policy of their own governments. As for the international federation of trade unions, we cannot even tell if it yielded its principles or betrayed them. Its program was so cautious and the bonds which united its members so tenuous, that we could not expect from it a slogan for international action against war. It had always refused even to discuss methods of international action against war, and had

not, unlike the socialist international, adopted solemn resolutions at its congresses. The German, the English, the French, would best adapt themselves to the war, would unite very firmly with their governments.

Opposition groups rose everywhere, and the first question posed was to decide if it was proper to vote in trade unions where attitude and activity were basically nationalist and warlike. We cannot continue, it was often said among unionists who had passed into the opposition, to pay dues and support the propaganda of the leaders who are betraying us. This current, which supported a split from the unions, was for a time quite strong in France, but it was almost completely blocked up. The men who were leading the minority opposition had been compelled to discuss this question before 1914 and had taken a clear position for struggle within the unions and the reformist international. They had to stay where the workers were. What is more, this minority, very soon to become important, grouped around the Metal Workers Federation. It assumed great importance and acted with the assurance that once the war was over and the majority would no longer benefit from favors given by the government, it would have to give an accounting for its abdication to those who returned from the front. The great majority of the workers would join them. Its calculations were correct. In 1921 it became the majority. Then Jouhaux and his war followers provoked the first split in the ranks of the C.G.T. (General Confederation of Labor).

So as to omit nothing, I will men-

tion that side by side with the minority, an independent trade union organization was formed with the pretentious name of Federation of the Workers of the World—after the Industrial Workers of the World in America. But in contrast to the latter, it never had more than a very small membership, activity on the same level, and a transitory existence. The contrast between its pretentious goal and reality gave it the character of a Marseillaise joke. Before it passed from the scene, it sent a delegate to the Red International of Labor Unions.

The tendency to leave the unions and create distinct and different bodies was strongest in Germany. There the question, unlike in France, was not to bring a trade union federation back to revolutionary positions abandoned in 1914. Karl Legien, Sassenbach and the other union leaders had always been known reformists who took pleasure in repeating the aphorism coined by one of them: the general strike is general stupidity. They dwelt within their corporate abode, sending for their "policy" to the Social Democratic Party to which they belonged and sometimes imposing their own "policy" on it. Consequently, in their case, no minority nucleus was organized to struggle against them and to win the majority. (In Germany there were unionists with their own organization and newspaper, but with only a few members and no power to attract; they did not grow during the war or after.)

The tendency to split from the unions was clearest within the Spartacus movement and had a serious development. At the first Congress of the Communist Party in Heidelberg, February, 1920, the first great debates took place. A large number of the delegates, probably the majority, now

defended participation in the elections and a split from the unions. They clung so stubbornly to their positions that they preferred to be expelled rather than yield their point of view. Then they formed, alongside the Communist Party, the Workers Communist Party of Germany (KAPD). This tendency found its theoretician in the Dutch Marxist, Hermann Goerter. According to him, a new era was opening in which Parliament had no meaning, an era in which, in opposition to the old unions, new organizations wide open to workers would arise, broad mass organizations for revolutionary actions. It was not confined to Germany. It found its followers in Holland, England, Austria, Hungary; in Italy, Bordiga and his group affiliated to it only because of its policy of abstentionism.

When the Communist International was formed, between the first Congress (March, 1919) and the second (June, 1920), this tendency had become so important that Lenin considered it necessary to attack it fundamentally. He attacked remorselessly, as was his wont, wherever he thought that communism was threatened. Not only was it out of the question for communists to leave the unions under the pretext that the leaders were reformists, but they had to fight to stay when they were threatened with expulsion. His criticisms were gathered in the books which he published in May, 1920, "Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder."

In the months which preceded the Congress, considering the progress made by "leftism," he believed for a moment that this tendency would be strong enough at the Congress to provoke a split in the ranks of the CI. But it did not take place. The KAPD, almost alone, clung to its position on

the two questions considered fundamental. Nevertheless, the Congress decided to keep it in the International as a sympathizing member. The Red Trade Union International was prepared by setting up a provisional International Council of Red Unions whose task was to unite and help revolutionary minorities everywhere in fighting against the reformist leaders. In this way, the breaking up of the union movement was avoided. If two trade union centers existed in France from 1922, the responsibility was entirely that of Jouhaux and his associates.

Why is the present period characterized by an entirely opposite movement—by a continually increasing dispersion, by a breaking up of trade union centers, with each political tendency seeming eager to have its own center; with “autonomous” and “independent” unions which, by their very nature, produce other autonomous and other independent unions?

The split—as it is called today—of the CGT was provoked by the great strikes of 1947. Since its cause was so clear, so manifest, why did it not bring the reply dictated by the situation, the formation of a union center, gathering together all whom Stalinist strategy, finally unmasked, had just set in action against the CGT? It is here that the characteristics of the present situation come into play.

To determine them exactly, we must go back to the “liberation.” At that time the French began with some extravagant ideas which still have a great influence on the general situation in France today. Hardest to believe is the declaration of “a policy of grandeur.” Although the formula was General de Gaulle’s, all his friends and collaborators adopted it as their own. Frachon made it part of the program of the CGT and he, too, de-

manded a strong army.

The “resistance” contributed its share in maintaining and adding to the confusion. Part of its members sincerely believed that it would be the starting point for a new regime. Besides its vague program it had all the defects of the Popular Front, aggravated by the fact that in the resistance movement were to be found all political opinions and all social groups. As the Stalinists had been the only ones to profit from the Popular Front, so the liberation movement allowed them to get the greatest benefit from the resistance—although they joined the resistance movement late and for their own reasons.

Among the trade unions, the resistance and the liberation led to a rebirth of unity. The betrayal of 1939 was completely forgotten, although it had played an important role in unleashing the war and greatly facilitated Hitler’s victory. Deserter and resister embraced in a “sacred union” compared to which that of 1914 was pale. The three great parties became part of the new regime. Each contributed his share, but the Stalinists were better prepared than the others, more cynical and devoid of any scruples. They played the major role. They were in the ministry and in the CGT, prepared to impose their authority. A real Stalinist terror ruled for a short time; criticism was not tolerated, especially when Russian policy was discussed.

However, when the Russian empire spread its tentacles everywhere, when its relations with its war-time partners progressively deteriorated, when those who had given much realized that Stalin was taking still more, a new situation developed. America, which at first had hardly any interest in Europe, especially in the France of General de Gaulle, was compelled to

change its plans. It is now in Europe, intent on setting up a barrier to Russian expansion. Such a situation is not yet war, but presages and prepares for it. The action of the Stalinists in the unions reflects every phase of it. Strikes are not called to support workers’ demands, they are only a pretext that we can sometimes do without. They are only actions to help Russia in some diplomatic negotiations. The so-called demonstrations for peace are in the same class. When they say they will never fight against Russia, and daily denounce the warlike policy of America, they are not strengthening peace but preparing for war.

In France, the Stalinists have at their command varied means for action, but their principal arm, by far the most important, is the CGT. We see that, although there have been numerous defections, their control of the union movement is still firm. The dispersion of its opponents serves it. In contrast, it forms a bloc and keeps its prestige among the workers.

The unionists who left the CGT in different periods and formed new organizations in opposition to it, are too easily deceived into believing they have protected themselves against its disastrous policy. They only gain greater freedom of movement for lim-

ited actions. The scatteredness of the union movement has a supplementary danger: it risks favoring the development of the narrowest form of corporatism, especially under the present system of rewards, bonuses, gifts and indemnities of every kind. Somebody can be led to believe that he is more qualified than another in getting some favor.

For all these general and specific reasons, it is clear that the dispersion of the non-Stalinist unions is a heavy handicap for the French working class movement. A fusion of all union organizations which have developed outside of the CGT is patently impossible. But it is possible and urgent to create the conditions for a rapprochement by means of bold actions carried out together, drawing in the greatest number of organizations possible. In this way we could move in stages towards the formation of a powerful union organization which would appear before the workers for what it is, allowing them to tear off the Stalinist camouflage. There are, of course, many difficulties to overcome, obstacles to conquer. That is why it is of vital importance to begin.

Alfred ROSMER

(Translated by B. Walker from *Confrontation*, September, 1949.)

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A Visit With Karl Marx

From the Notes of an American Journalist

John Swinton, an American journalist, visited Europe in 1880. He reported his travels for the New York Sun in a series which the Sun published as "Current Views and Notes of 40 Days in France and England." In his travels in England he visited Karl Marx, who was then nearing the end of his life. (Marx died on March 14, 1883). The Sun on September 6, 1880, published Swinton's report of his visit to Marx, and we reprint it here as an interesting, informal portrait of the creator of scientific socialism.

One of the most remarkable men of the day, who has played an inscrutable but puissant part in the revolutionary politics of the past 40 years is Karl Marx. A man without desire for show or fame, caring nothing for the fanfaronade of life or the pretence of power, without haste and without rest, a man of strong, broad, elevated mind, full of far-reaching projects, logical methods and practical aims, he has stood and yet stands behind more of the earthquakes which have convulsed nations and destroyed thrones, and do now menace and appall crowned heads and established frauds, than any other man in Europe, not excepting Joseph Mazzini himself. The student of Berlin, the critic of Hegelianism, the editor of papers, and the old-time correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, he showed his qualities and his spirit: the founder and master spirit of the once dreaded International and the author of "Capital," he has been expelled from half of the countries of Europe, proscribed in nearly all of them, and for thirty years past has found refuge in London.

He was at Ramsgate, the great seashore resort of the Londoners, while I was in London, and there I found him in his cottage, with his family of two generations. The saintly-faced, sweet-voiced, graceful woman of suavity who welcomed me at the door was evidently the mistress of the house and the wife of Karl Marx. And is this massive-headed, generous-featured, courtly, kindly man of 60 with the bushy masses of long

revelling gray hair, Karl Marx? His dialogue reminded me of that of Socrates—so free, so sweeping, so creative, so incisive, so genuine—with its sardonic touches, its gleams of humor, and its sportive merriment. He spoke of the political forces and popular movements of the various countries of Europe—the vast current of the spirit of Russia, the motions of the German mind, the action of France, the immobility of England. He spoke hopefully of Russia, philosophically of Germany, cheerfully of France and somberly of England—referring contemptuously to the "atomistic reforms" over which the liberals of the British Parliament spend their time.

Surveying the European world, country after country, indicating the features and the developments and the personages of the surface and under the surface, he showed that things were working toward ends which will assuredly be realized. I was often surprised as he spoke. It was evident that this man, of whom so little is seen or heard, is deep in the times, and that, from the Neva to the Seine, from the Urals to the Pyrenees, his hand is at work preparing the way for the new advent. Nor is his work wasted now any more than it has been in the past, during which so many desirable changes have been brought about, so many heroic struggles have been seen, and the French republic has been set up on the heights. As he spoke, the question I had put, "Why are you doing nothing now?" was seen to be a question of the unlearned, and one to which he could not make direct answer. Inquiring why his great work "Capital," the seed field of so many crops had not been put into English as it has been put into Russian and French from the original German, he seemed unable to tell, but said that a proposition for an English translation had come to him from New York. He said that that book was but a fragment, a single part of a work in three parts, two of the parts being yet unpublished, the full trilogy being. "Land, Capital, Credit," the last part, he said, being largely illustrated from the United States, where credit has had such an amazing development.

Mr. Marx is an observer of American action, and his remarks upon some of the formative and substantive forces of American life were full of suggestiveness. By the way, in referring to his "Capital," he said that anyone who might desire to read it would find the French translation much superior in many ways to the German original. Mr. Marx referred to Henri Rochefort, the Frenchman, and in his talk of some of his dead disciples, the stormy Bakunin, the brilliant Lasalle, and others. I could see how his genius had taken hold of men who, under other circumstances, might have directed the course of history.

The afternoon is waning toward the long twilight of an English summer evening as Mr. Marx discourses, and he proposes a walk through the seaside town and along the shore to the beach, upon which we see many thousand people, largely children, disporting themselves. Here we find on the sands, his family party—the wife, who had already welcomed me, his two daughters with their children, and his two son-in-laws, one of whom is a Professor in King's College, London, and the other, I believe a man of letters. It was a delightful party—about ten in all—the father of the two young wives, who were happy with their children, and the grandmother of the children, rich in the joysomeness and

serenity of her wifely nature. Not less finely than Victor Hugo himself does Karl Marx understand the art of being a grandfather; but more fortunately than Hugo, the married children of Marx live to cheer his years.

Toward nightfall, he and his sons-in-law part from their families to pass an hour with their American guest. And the talk was of the world, and of man and of time and of ideas, as our glasses tinkled over the sea. The railway train waits for no man and night is at hand. Over the thought of the babblement and rack of the age and the ages, over the talk of the day and the scenes of evening, arose in my mind one question, touching upon the final law of being, for which I would seek answer from this sage. Going down to the depth of language and rising to the height of emphasis during an interspace of silence I interrogated the revolutionist and philosopher in these fateful words: "What is?" And it seemed as though his mind were inverted for a moment while he looked upon the roaring sea in front and the restless multitude upon the beach. "What is?" I had inquired, to which in deep and solemn tone, he replied: "Struggle." At first it seemed as though I had heard the echo of despair, but peradventure, it was the law of life.

JOHN SWINTON.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Variation on a Theme

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COMMUNISM, by R. N. Carew Hunt. The Macmillan Co. \$2.75.

The great concern of bourgeois ideologues about "communism," its theory and practice, is quite understandable in a world so sharply divided between capitalism and Stalinism and permanently threatened by war. So patent is the irreconcilability of these two forces that to elaborate upon them in this review would be to impose upon the readers of the *NI*.

There is no doubt, however, that one of the difficulties the bourgeois world encounters in its struggle against Stalinism is the failure to understand properly the post-revolutionary phenomenon in Russia. If Russia had remained truly socialist and internationalist, that is to say, had the present regime faithfully carried out the principles upon which the Russian Revolution was based, it is difficult to see how world capitalism could exist today. The degeneration of the latter, epitomized by two world wars and an almost endless world economic crisis, could not have withstood the force of genuine socialist economic and political progress. Moreover, a socialist and internationalist Russia would have stood before the world as the great hope for human progress, lighting the way toward social, economic and political freedom.

But the force of Stalinist Russia has produced something quite new in the world today. While capitalism continues to decay, socialism has not advanced (quite the contrary) and Stalinism has experienced an expansion that has surprised not only the bourgeoisie, but the anti-Stalinist adherents of the idea that Russia is a "degenerated workers' state" or some form, however distorted and mutilated, of the "invading socialist society." The bourgeoisie holds this latter theory, too. There is no doubt that while some of the leading bourgeois thinkers recognize in Stalinism a non-socialist monster, they for the most part affirm their antagonist as Marxian, socialist and internationalist.

The theoretical and intellectual spokesmen of capitalism try repeatedly to prove that Russia is socialist and Stalin its Marxist leader. They find confirmation for their views in the many writings of ex-Stalinists, social democrats, backsliders from socialism, and a host of former "friends of the Soviet Union" who have gone to great pains to "prove" that Stalinism is bolshevism, and that Stalin is the Lenin of our times. *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* has had to deal with these experts in confusion, ignorance and willful distortion on more than one occasion.

The difficulty in the struggle against Stalinism is that the world at large and almost the entire anti-Stalinist labor movement has accepted the Kremlin's description of itself. Stalin proclaims that Russia has completed its socialist development; it is now preparing for the complete communist stage of social development! His opponents say: yes, this is socialism! Given the decay of the world, ideological stalemate must result, for outside of the United States capitalism offers nothing to the people.

Mr. Carew's book is a strange contribution to the theory and nature of Stalinism. It provides no enlightenment; rather, it contributes to existing confusion. The author begins with a formula: the theory and practice of communism was originally produced by Marx and Engels; this theory and practice was elaborated and extended by Lenin, and finally reached fruition in the life and deeds of Stalin. Thus the theory and practice of communism involves an examination of their application under changing circumstances from Marx to Stalin.

The book cannot but produce strange contradictions and paradoxes which the reader will readily see. The author sees them too, but their significance is somewhat obscure to him. There is no point in dealing with his outline of Marxist theory or his refutation of Marxism. The refutation consists in the main of threadbare critiques; it is more than a little wearying to read, in 1950 this kind of criticism of Marx and his theories from a person who presumably has a considerable acquaintance with the literature of socialist theory but who obviously

misses its central ideas and development. It is precisely this failure which produces in turn the tortured analysis and understanding of Stalinism and the inability to place it in a historic setting or to understand its perspectives.

A few references, I think, will suffice to bear out what I have already said about the book. Following what the author undoubtedly believes is an annihilating criticism of Marxist philosophy, economics and politics, since he asserts repeatedly that one foundation stone after another is destroyed by this criticism, he adds, however, "any return to pre-Marxist social theory is inconceivable." Why? Because all pre-Marxist social theory was of no value, and it remained for Marx to direct the attention of the world to what is real, vital and instructive in the understanding of our society. And yet . . . yet, all of it is wrong in the main!

This isn't the worst by any means. Carew is trying to establish the logical thread that leads from Marx to Lenin to Stalin. It would have sufficed had he written what is abundantly clear: Stalin came out of the bolshevik movement; he was the product of a degenerated revolution; he distorted, violated and vitiated its doctrines, perspectives and hopes, and transformed these into their opposite; he represents a new force, anti-capitalist, anti-socialist. It would then have been possible for Mr. Carew to deal intelligently with the phenomenon. But he did something else.

He asserts the fundamental continuity of theory and practice between the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels and the totalitarian bureaucratic collectivism of Stalin. That is the pattern of the book. At the same time, Mr. Carew falls into some insoluble contradictions which we will set forth below. Thus, on page 170:

Stalin seldom wastes his words. But he is a *most* dishonest thinker, who invariably tries to prove that whatever he is saying is just what he has always said. And although he has all the Marxist-Leninist texts by heart, there is always an element of distortion in his use of them. He uses, indeed, all the old slogans. Yet in fact he has so transformed Marxist theory that its founder would scarcely recognize it. A new turn has been given to the theory of revolution; the character of the party has been changed, and

it has been converted into a centralized and all-powerful bureaucracy; the classical theory of the State has been virtually abandoned, although lip-service continues to be paid to it; an agrarian policy has been adopted which is contrary to Lenin's teaching; equalitarianism has been utterly condemned; and finally, the growth of national sentiment has been encouraged.

Not a bad indictment by one who has never been in the Marxist movement and never felt the inherent humanity and internationalism of socialist theory and practice. Further on, the author illustrates how these alterations in the theory of Marxism produced an utterly new type of practice which had nothing in common with the conceptions and practices of Marx and Lenin. But still he fails to grasp the significance of all this for one good reason: he does not appreciate the meaning of the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky over the theory of "socialism in one country," nor does he understand that the abandonment of socialist internationalism—which can be equated to Marxism—was the inevitable product of that theory.

Many things have been said to be the heart of Marxism. It depends on what you are discussing: philosophy, economics, the class struggle, etc. But if one were to summarize its world view, it could be said without contradiction that Marxism is characterized by its internationalist, socialist, and therefore democratic, perspectives which by their very nature preclude the adherence to and practice of nationalism, bureaucracy, totalitarianism, exploitation, class division, exaltation of state power, and so on. The theory of "socialism in one country" marks a rupture with all that Marxism stands for.

Thus, when Carew writes: "In a sense, indeed, it [socialism in one country] contained nothing controversial, as everyone agreed that socialism must be built up in Russia" and that "its importance lay in its implications and particularly the effect that its application would have upon the world revolution," he misses the crucial point.

This point was central to the dispute with Trotsky, but Carew, like myriad predecessors, doubts that Trotsky could or would have acted differently from Stalin. Why? They have the same origin and essentially the same doctrines. One of the reasons Carew does not understand the

crucial nature of the dispute over this question is that he accepts, at least in its theoretical aspect, the Stalinist version that the dispute was not over whether "it was possible to build socialism in a particular country, but as to whether it was possible to complete it. . . ."

But what is one to say today when Stalin and his satraps announce that socialism was completed in Russia more than ten years ago! Irrevocably completed, that is.

The author then proceeds to show the effects of the theory on the world movement of Stalinism, and without quite understanding his initial contradiction cites the destruction of socialist internationalism and the subordination of the world Stalinist parties to Russian interests. Then Mr. Carew shows in rapid succession what has happened to the Marxist theory of the state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the role of the party, the agrarian question, equalitarianism and nationalism. He concludes that there is obviously *nothing* in common between Stalinism and Marxism, except some of the language, tradition and trappings which have assumed a ritualistic character and act as a force to retain the support of great masses who mistakenly believe the former represents socialism and that Stalin continues the work of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

But Mr. Carew does little better than Stalinism. In the introductory chapter of his book, which is contradicted by the third part, he writes:

We have seen that the four apostles of Communism are Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, whose works alone possess authority, no others having ever been added to the canon of scripture. Chronologically they pair off, Marx and Engels being concerned with laying down the basis of communist theory and practice in the last century, and Lenin and Stalin with the application of their doctrines to the new conditions which arose at the beginning of the present century [it would be interesting indeed to learn what contributions Stalin made to Marxist theory during the first quarter of this century.—A. G.] Lenin developed Marxism in more than one direction, but broadly speaking it is true to say that his most important contribution was in the field of party organization and tactics; and that *Stalin's contribution has been his theory of "socialism in one country," with all that this implies.* We shall therefore first deal with Marx and En-

gels, and then with Lenin and Stalin. [Emphasis mine.—A. G.]

So you see, *Stalin's application of Marxism* to this century is a theory which *undermined the whole structure of Marxism!* That is how a bourgeois thinker understands the profound struggle which Trotsky carried on in defense of Marx's internationalist and socialist thought against Stalin.

Well, then, did Stalin prove he was right? Did he succeed where Trotsky and Lenin would have failed? Did he not demonstrate that much of Marxism and Leninism was utopian? Did he prove that the dispute was really whether you could complete, not merely build, socialism in one country? This is something for Mr. Carew to square and he does it by asserting that: "What the Russians have, in fact, introduced is not socialism, but state capitalism."

This idea is neither a true nor an original invention.

ALBERT GATES

Catholic Power

AMERICAN FREEDOM AND CATHOLIC POWER, by Paul Blanshard.

The Beacon Press, 350 pp., \$3.50.

This book contains highly useful and suggestive material for contemporary Marxist thinking. Blanshard has drawn almost exclusively from Catholic sources for his damning citations, and with scholarly thoroughness solemnly lists the *Imprators* who approved the statements from which he quotes.

Not so long ago in this country, socialist pens would hardly need have been lifted on this subject. The task of progressives of an earlier day was to defend Catholic communicants from indiscriminate and unwarranted persecution for the policies, real or imagined, of their church officialdom. Such bigotry has largely disappeared with the decline in influence of the narrow backwoods Protestantism that was its vehicle. The pendulum, indeed, has swung the other way.

The extent to which Americans think of the Catholic Church as "just another church" is shown by a recent Gallup poll. Taken in August of last year, it shows that four voters in ten favor public support for parochial schools. Increasing apathy toward Catholicism was shown by the high percentage of voters under 30 who would subsidize the hierarchy's

schools—49 per cent, where only 42 per cent of this group were opposed and 9 per cent had no opinion. The result reflects in part a victory for the quiet campaigns of the hierarchy. It undoubtedly also reflects the effects of the new American "chauvinistic tolerance" of the war and cold war years—the notion that racial or religious discrimination is bad *because* it weakens us in the face of Russia (or Hitler).

Blanshard's concern is with the hierarchy alone, and his description of it can be summed up as a state within a state. His comparison of the pope, hierarchy and laymen as the king, nobility and subjects of medieval society is apt, if not exactly original. The hierarchy, he points out, is the church—the lay congregation has *nothing* to say about the collection, expenditure or accounting of funds, the selection of personnel or the making of policy. (Laymen of churches organized on the congregational principle do have these rights.)

As Blanshard discloses church policy and influence in such non-religious areas as politics, law, medicine, foreign policy, education, economics, science, the judiciary and culture, a Marxist is moved to contrive a more precise definition of the hierarchy than Blanshard, the ex-Marxist, attempts.

The European hierarchy is a remnant of the feudal ruling class. It is largely shorn of its land, its former economic base, and continues as a parasitic caste in modern society. It has never abandoned the dream of again becoming a ruling class in its own right, as it was in large sections and for a long period, or of becoming an integral part of a ruling class, as it once was almost universally. However, the anti-scientific and anti-popular nature of the hierarchy makes this dream impossible of realization. This ambition for rule, however, is partially realized in historically ephemeral situations, such as those in Quebec and Eire. Where feudalism has lingered, as it did in Mexico or Portugal, the church has fought to preserve its most favorable milieu.

Given its inability to regain its former pre-eminence, the hierarchical parasites are forced to throw their influence politically behind that class or class segment most likely to allow them to retain their parasitic privilege. In return, the hierarchy tries to exact maximum tribute

for the service rendered. Thus the hierarchy is doubly parasitic. It is a parasite on its own believers, who constitute its social base, and it is a parasite as an adjunct of the ruling class which exploits all the people.

We have spoken of the believers of the church as being the social base of the priestly caste. Especially in non-Catholic countries, such as the United States and Britain, this base is used as a bludgeon to extract assistance or at least silence from politicians, the newspapers, educators, publishers, the radio and the films.

The absolutist church of Rome in 1776 had only about 1 per cent of the population of the United States in its fold. As a nation, the United States soon became noted for frontier democracy, a particular concern for science and a materialistic outlook. This presented two very difficult tasks for the church. One obvious task was to present itself in a democratic, an American "face." The other task, less obvious but more serious, was preventing the Americanization of the church itself.

For this, the organizational principles (and past experience) of the church were ideal; papal appointment of bishops (who control all church property and funds) and of all higher officials, and the overall supervision of the American hierarchy by the apostolic delegate to the United States (the J. Peters or Gerhard Eislars of the Vatican) who is always an Italian. As early as 1899, Leo XII penned a special letter condemning the heresy of Americanism. There is, as an extra safeguard, no one supreme primate in the American hierarchy who might act as a rallying center. The only national Catholic coordinating body is the National Catholic Welfare Conference. And even in it, the head of the "laymen's" division is—a bishop! Blanshard gives interesting historical material on the struggle within the hierarchy for and against "Americanism."

Blanshard discloses how false is the church's American face. When Spellman, for instance, trumpets that the separation of church and state is dear to him, he is, to be polite, dissembling. The church does concede certain areas to the state as separate from those it claims as its own. However, if a dispute arises as to who has "jurisdiction" in a given sphere of social life, the pope is the ar-

bitrator, according to the dogma.

The care, however, with which the hierarchy maintains its American front is illustrated by the interesting case of a Jesuit-led Catholic group in Boston. This group has been loudly shouting that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church. This is within an eyelash of the church's official position, but nevertheless the devout in question are close to excommunication because the hierarchy knows it is not politic to publicize such doctrine.

One fact begins to tell the story of the cost of the church. The archdiocese of New York alone sends more money to the church of Rome than the whole of Europe. The Catholic schools, from kindergartens to universities, drain off tremendous sums for education limited not only by church doctrine (it was recently announced in Baltimore that a Jesuit priest had driven a devil from a boy—literally!—by a ceremony of exorcism) but by lack of funds. There are scores of Catholic "colleges" with less than 25 students and some with six or eight! Throughout, the Catholic standards are abysmally low.

Add to this cost wrecked lives—and deaths—brought about because medical operations of various sorts are forbidden. Add the poverty and all its consequences of too many children in low-income families forbidden birth control. Add even the high cost of prayers, masses, funerals and weddings. (Blanshard lists the various more or less fixed fees for such services. In response to one of the many advertisements of religious orders in a Catholic magazine, Blanshard had prayers said to obtain him a new car. The money was accepted and the prayers presumably offered.)

Blanshard, who abandoned socialism to become a meticulous "democrat," can only advocate some sort of "resistance movement" such as the recently formed Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Defense of this democratic principle certainly meets with vigorous support from Marxists. Nor do we, as Lenin warned, fall into the trap of a narrowly conceived war against religion, Roman Catholic or otherwise.

At the same time, the church deserves increasing attention. Most immediately, there is the dubious ACTU. On the world scale, however, just as American

imperialism has become the only reliable protector of the hierarchy, so has the hierarchy become the only reliable servant of the State Department abroad—as witness Schuman, Adenauer, De Gasperi, Salazar, Franco and many more. For its services, the hierarchy will more and more attempt to extract its price, in America as well as abroad. Against this unappetizing alliance, Blanshard's book is highly useful.

G. McDERMOTT

Correspondence

Pro and Con on Guérin

To the Editors:

Henry Judd has done a disservice to the readers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL by the essentially negative character of his review of Daniel Guérin's *Lutte de classes sous la première république*. His mistake is similar to the mistake made by Jacques a few issues back in a review of Ruth Fischer's work on the German Communist Party. Jacques took a book whose primary value is its wealth of information, interestingly and intelligently presented on its subject, and spent all his time belaboring its biased criticisms of Trotsky, even its *dishonest* criticisms of Trotsky. Jacques' specific points were correct, but the total effect of a review overwhelmingly related to attacking what is only a very small item in the book would be to discourage readers effectively from consulting a book which is very valuable to all socialists who want to study the German experiences.

Judd does the same thing. The reader of his review comes away feeling that Guérin has spent all his time riding his own screwy hobbyhorse—trying to apply the theory of permanent revolution to the French Revolution. All Judd's time is spent polemicizing against Guérin's theoretical views, while in a brief aside Judd informs the reader that Guérin's work has been appraised from the standpoint of historical scholarship by Professor Palmer in the *Journal of Modern History*, which can be consulted by those interested. Practically nobody reads this *Journal*, and after reading Judd's review, no one will feel that he ought to find out more about the book.

The fact is that socialists should naturally be more interested than anyone else in the precursors of Marxian socialism and in the precursors of the nineteenth century proletarian movements. Guérin performed a service, recognized by all historians in the field, of doing a positively first-rate job of writing the history of these movements in the French Revolution to the left of Robespierre—the Hébertists, the Enragés. No one else has done it, and all historical scholars who have reviewed Guérin's work have agreed that he has demonstrated that previous historians underestimated the role of these groups, misunderstood many things about them, and as a result also misunderstood to some extent the role of the Robespierreans. This was especially true as the result of the work of an idolator of Robespierre like Albert Mathiez, on whom Guérin does quite a job.

It should be emphasized therefore that the book is very valuable to socialists as a study of some of their legitimate ancestors and as a study of class struggle in the French Revolution, and that Guérin's ultra-leftist views have not prevented him from writing a book that should be consulted by all of us if we want to understand the French Revolution.

SAUL BERG

If Comrade Berg has received the impression from my review of Guérin's work that I do not consider it of great merit or value, then he has indeed correctly understood my opinion. The sectarian and mechanically contrived approach of Guérin, to which the review called primary attention, hardly constitutes "a very small item in the book." The two volumes of the work are completely permeated with this, both in form and content, as anyone can easily see for himself by examining the table of contents alone. That Guérin did much original research work in uncovering material about the left wing of the French Revolution is undeniable and I thought this had been acknowledged. But even this work is ruined by the use Guérin attempts to make of it in bolstering up his sectarian hypothesis. Marxian historical writing is not devoted to stale scholarship, as Guérin would be the first to insist. Guérin attempts to use his "facts" in his running two volume po-

lemic against Robespierre. But he does not succeed, because everything is out of balance.

HENRY JUDD

Sees Flaw in Lens

To the Editors:

Walter Jason's review of Sidney Lens' *Left, Right and Center* in the January-February issue of the New International, while correctly stressing the positive contributions of the work toward an understanding of the American labor movement, has failed to deal adequately with Lens' analysis of Stalinism.

The title "Left, Right, and Center" is revealing. Stalinism to Lens is still a centrist movement operating between the left and right in the labor movement. On page 214 of the book, we read: "To understand Stalinism, one must understand that it is a movement based on cowardice and fear, that it has only one law, that of self-preservation and that all the Communist parties of the world are nothing but agencies to effectuate the preservation of the Stalinist clique within Russia—nothing more. The Communist parties do not want to destroy the fabric of capitalism. If they did they would have led revolutions in Italy and France at any time since 1945."

Lens' theory is not new, is more or less the theory of the Cannonites and the Ohlerites and does not correspond to what has happened on this planet. Stalinist parties have taken power in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, etc. Capitalism and capitalists in these countries are not exactly flourishing—to put it in a restrained sort of way. If the Stalinist party in France did not take power in 1945, all the evidence at our disposal indicates that it was not through fear or cowardice but because Russia was not yet ready for a showdown with American imperialism.

C. CRAIG

Philadelphia

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