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INVASION: Arm the Workers!

Germany has conquered Europe. The Channel bars her from the vista of adding Africa and Asia to the vast domains already conquered. But the German ruling class, no more than in the winter of last year, can afford to stand still. Despite the vast territorial conquests, they cannot say—"enough!" As thoroughly as they prepared the conquest of France, they are preparing to settle accounts with imperialist Britain which now bars the way. For the first time since 1066 the prospect of invasion has to be faced as a serious possibility.

During the winter months the German military machine, as thorough and efficient as German industry, has been making its preparations down to the last detail. For Germany, a successful invasion of Britain would solve the immediate problems facing German imperialism. For British imperialism, of course, it is a question of fighting against being reduced to the position of another Poland from the previous heights of domination of half the world.

Under these conditions British imperialism is determined to resist to the very end. But the young brigand who so confidently and ruthlessly bludgeoned his way to overlordship of a great empire is now old and palsied. Basing itself on the profits gained from the exploitation of the colonial peoples, the British ruling class has grown parasitic. There has been no incentive to greater efficiency and the improvement of industrial technique. This backwardness has been carried over into the military sphere.

The preparations which the British bourgeoisie is making to meet Hitler's invasion are little better than the preparations of Chamberlain & Co. last winter.

Their resistance would not be as feeble as that of the French bourgeoisie because of the advantages they possess—the morale of the people, an island position, a strong navy, etc. But as is now well known, the French ruling class surrendered not because it was impossible to defend the country, but because it was impossible to do so without placing the masses in a position, by arming them and mobilising, where they would not only have driven back the German invaders but could have easily ousted the French bourgeoisie as well. The spectre of the Commune hung over France in the days of June.

Churchill and the British capitalist class "sympathised" with the painful dilemma in which the French rulers were placed. They had no objection to Reynaud, Petain, Weygand & co. sending the French workers to the school of Hitler to teach them a lesson in obedience. This was made quite clear by the fact that they were quite prepared to see the surrender of all France: all they demanded was that the French Fleet should either be placed at their disposal or remain in a neutral port.

The howls that the whole of the British press set up against the traitors who had sold France into bondage were merely rage at the failure of this gang to come over to the side of British

imperialism. The spurious indignation had its cause in this and this alone.

Although Churchill and the British bourgeoisie generally knew well the character of the Weygands and Petains, they praised them to the end. How spurious was their rage is shown by their recent manoeuvres. Owing to the unexpected resistance of Britain the Vichy crew have had the possibility of manoeuvring for concessions between Hitler and the British Government.

The spread of the war to the Mediterranean lends importance to the French ports, and the French fleet would be of great assistance in Germany's invasion plans. This allows the prostituted French capitalism to raise its fee to the German customer.

But the British ruling class is not above vieing with the Germans for the favours of Petain. Forgotten are the recriminations. Petain is no longer a traitor, but once more the Grand Old Man of France. They are prepared to "overlook" the placing of the whole French nation into bondage to Hitler and the transformation of unoccupied France into a feeble imitation of Nazi Germany, with democracy officially declared dead. Churchill & Co. fawn upon this repulsive clique who have demonstrated before the eyes of the whole world that "democracy", liberty etc. at any rate have no place in their scheme of things.

As if to underline the hollow nature of the pretence that this is a war for the destruction of fascism, we have the appeal of Churchill to the ruling class of Italy to throw Mussolini overboard as a scape-goat and come over to the side of England. This single act of atonement would mean the ignoring of the crimes of Italian fascism which the British capitalists are willing to accept with equanimity since it serves their purpose. The fact that the Italian ruling class, and probably those of France and Spain, will be compelled to support Germany will at a later stage lead to the revival of propaganda about the actual horrors and bestialities which fascism has perpetrated. The press, pulpit, wireless, etc. will be beside themselves with rage when cataloguing the crimes of the dictator and slave states.

But Churchill and the ruling class have revealed that they are anxious to do a deal with any fascist gang—on the terms of British ruling class supremacy. It is the fascist gangs which have refused the outstretched hand of friendship. In the case of Greece, this is clearly demonstrated by the attitude adopted to the regime of Metaxas which is as bloody and repressive as any to be found in Eastern Europe. We can look in vain in the columns of the

British press or the speeches of the politicians, including the Labour leaders, for any remonstrance at the crimes of the Greek dictatorship.

The inevitable active intervention of American imperialism in the war—the war has resolved itself mainly into a conflict between Germany and America for world supremacy—forces the Germans to make haste. If Britain can hold out long enough, the inexhaustible resources of the American continent can be organised to build a military machine which will outstrip even the gargantuan efforts of Nazi Germany. But what is required for this is time: 12 to 24 months or so. This makes an invasion attempt to crush the British Isles even more urgent for German imperialism.

Everything is at stake for the British capitalists. The Empire, the very existence of Britain as a world power is placed in the balance. The British capitalist class is making as hurried and frantic preparations for resistance as it possibly can. We will suffer the fate of a modern Carthage if we are beaten—is their agonised appeal for resistance.

This is true. The fate of Ireland haunts the imagination of the British bourgeoisie. Ireland which was systematically despoiled and plundered and converted into an agricultural colony in the interests of British imperialism in the last century; Ireland where they deliberately organised famine and forced the emigration of a great part of the population—America has 20 million Irishmen, Eire only 3 million. It is the impossibility of reconciling the interests of British capitalism with those of German capitalism which compels that "fight to a finish" into which the war is resolving itself. For British imperialism there has been no other choice except that of acting as satellite of her mightier rival across the Atlantic.

But despite the tremendous jeopardy in which they are being placed—the speech of Hitler in which he boasted of the thorough preparations of the German army has probably a solid foundation—we see the British capitalist class refusing to take the one course which would doom any invasion, however formidable, to inevitable futility and defeat: the arming, mobilising, and organising of the entire working-class for resistance, factory by factory, street by street, house by house.

No more than the French ruling class dare the ruling class of Britain place the working class in a position where it would be possible for them to play an independent role. A thousand times rather accept the possibility of Hitler occupying Britain than risk a workers' revolution by arming the workers is the dominating thought of the ruling clique.

Nevertheless, in defending their imperialist loot they are compelled to appeal to the anti-fascist sentiments of the masses. The overwhelming majority of the working-class hate fascism and do not wish to be placed under the heel of Hitler. They do not wish to be in the position of Poland, France, Holland and the other countries under the Nazi jackboot. This is the sentiment which the ruling class is using for its own ends.

Under these circumstances the position of the Labour leaders is quite clear. Utilizing the hatred of the masses for Hitlerism, they have betrayed the interests of the workers by entering the Government and justifying all attacks on the workers by the necessities of the conflict. But in spite of these attacks the working-class for the time-being continues to stand, albeit critically, behind their leaders.

By itself, all the propaganda in the world explaining the real aims of the ruling class could not move the working-class one inch from this position. It is on this rock that the Communist Party has at the present time shattered itself. The working-class, especially after the events of the last months is determined to resist to the uttermost any incursion from Nazi Germany.

This attitude of the masses must be the point of departure from our propaganda. The way to win them over is not by the sterile repetition of the Marxian axiom that only the Socialist revolution can solve the problems of the working-class. It is to convince the masses of this by their day to day experiences. The main task of the Revolutionary Socialist is to separate the workers from their leaders who place them behind the capitalists. This can only be done by showing them the absolute contradiction between their interests and those of their mortal enemy.

Taking the argument of the capitalists that every resource must be exploited in order to vanquish the coming invasion, we must emphasise that the capitalists have a greater hatred and fear of the working masses at home than of their imperialist enemy abroad. The damning fact stands out that the only advice given by the Government as to any action to be taken by the broad masses in the event of invasion is to "stay put." This despite the experience of France where the terrified and helpless civilians materially assisted the Nazi invaders in their advance. This decisive fact must be burned into the consciousness of the masses.

The Labour leaders have used this anti-fascist sentiment of the masses to enter into a coalition with the capitalists in order to "wage war against Hitlerism." But the elementary precautions which would guarantee victory over a fascist invasion from abroad or a coup like

that of Petain at home are not being advocated or prepared by the Labour leaders. Taking them at their word, we demand that they immediately struggle for the putting into operation of the following measures: the arming and organising of the workers under their own control; the election of officers by the workers; control of production by the workers to end the chaos in the war industries; the immediate nationalisation of the armament industry, mines, banks, railways, and big industry; the granting of freedom and self-determination to India and the colonies. Socialist appeal to the workers of Germany and Europe.

Only by measures such as these can the country really be defended in the interests of the masses. Launching a campaign on a programme of demands as outlined above cannot but get the Labour leaders the overwhelming support of the masses. The alternative policy is that of capitulation to British imperialism which is not in the least interested in the struggle against fascism, and which cannot but lead either to a victory for Hitler or that of a British Hitler.

We see steps in the direction of reaction being taken at the present time. Bevin as Minister of Labour, under the pressure of the bourgeoisie, has introduced the militarisation of labour, which works to the benefit of the bourgeoisie only as they draw colossal super-profits at the expense of the workers. Morrison has introduced compulsory fire-fighting, and again the main burden is borne by the toilers. The rationing, high prices, etc. place the whole burden of the war on the shoulders of the workers and lower strata of the middle class. Naturally the masses, although passive at first through fear of doing anything that might aid Hitler, will sooner or later react violently against these monstrous impositions on the part of the ruling class.

If power continues to rest in the hands of the capitalists they will wage not a war against fascism but one in defence of their profits, a war waged with even greater ferocity against the workers than against their capitalist enemy. If capitalist control is to continue it must mean the speedy extension of the totalitarian methods, which can only end in a complete obliteration of all the rights of the working-class. The suppression of the *Daily Workers* is the first significant step in this direction. It marks the twilight of bourgeois democracy in Britain. The methods of the Labour leaders in "fighting Hitlerism" lead directly to the destruction of the organisations of the working class and to concentration camps.

Nevertheless, the bourgeoisie has to move cautiously. Without the support of the Labour leaders they could not carry through such

measures. But the Labour leaders themselves are in a contradictory position. They cannot destroy the foundation on which they rest without destroying themselves. British totalitarianism has not a solid foundation. While the Trade Unions, and especially the shop-stewards etc., continue to exist it is impossible to carry through anything but a military dictatorship. There is no mass support to back up anything else. With a big percentage of the workers called up in the Army, and the main mass of the army stationed in Britain and in contact with the civil population, the army is in closer contact with the toilers than at any time in history. The big bourgeoisie, even more than in the last war, is dependent on the services of the Labour leaders to keep the masses in check. They rest primarily on the acceptance by the masses of the yoke of privations as an inescapable necessity in the cause of the "destruction of Hitlerism." The British bourgeoisie rules much more by deception than by force. Without the Labour bureaucracy they would be in a precarious position. The entire stock-in-trade of the Labour bureaucracy consists in the "fight against Hitlerism at all costs."

The road to the masses lies in showing them a real alternative, a genuine struggle against the danger of a victory of Hitlerism from abroad and at home. Accepting the argument of the Labour leaders that it is necessary to fight Hitlerism, we must point out that it is impossible to do this under the leadership of the capitalist class which must inevitably lead to the victory of Hitler or of a British Hitler or Petain. The ground can be cut from under the feet of the Labour leaders by demanding that they take power on the programme of demands listed above. First on that list must come the arming of the workers against Hitler and the capitalist Fifth Column at home.

Accepting the coalition with the bourgeoisie leads the Labour bureaucracy naturally to the imposition of repression to force the masses to accept the privations which this involves. The position in which Blum, Jauhaux & Co. found themselves in France was almost identical. But suppression leads naturally to an enhancing of the power of the capitalist clique of bankers and generals. Blum helped to suppress the workers in the "sacred" cause of anti-fascism—only to find himself unceremoniously pitched into jail by his colleagues of yesterday who, incidentally, embraced the Nazis in the same act. Morrison-Bevin, despite tremors of anti-

cipation (the speech in which Bevin denied that there could be a Fifth-column among the workers and asserted that it always came from the "higher-ups") are compelled by the inexorable logic of events to travel the same road as their French brethren. Collaboration with the capitalist class cannot mean anything else. This is the fatal path against which we must warn the workers. Hitlerism cannot be fought by a cowardly attempt to use homeopathic doses of Hitlerism at home. Moreover, once started, it would require bigger and bigger doses of the same medicine to keep the masses in check. If repression must be used, let it be used by the workers against the root of all Hitlerism and Fifth Columnism—big finance and big business.

Nevertheless, it is significant that the suppression of the *Daily Worker*, a preparation for the coming invasion and an onslaught on the working-class, has been accepted by the masses of the workers, if not enthusiastically then passively. Morrison's whole argument was the accusation that the *Daily Worker* helped Hitler by the propaganda which it put forward.

This charge could not but meet with acquiescence by the masses owing to the propaganda developed by the Communist Party in the last few years. First the demand for a capitalist Popular Front Government (Churchill, Attlee, Sinclair) to "stand up to Hitler." Then actual support for the war. Then "Stop the War" on terms which would have meant victory for German imperialism. And now the vague, ambiguous "People's Government" and "People's Peace" which are meaningless to the main mass of the workers, who continue to support the Labour leaders. Previously they deceived the workers into believing that fascism could be fought under the leadership of a capitalist (Popular Front) Government. Now they have no programme for the workers on how to fight invading fascism—or for that matter, fascism at home; the two problems are not separate but identical and simultaneous.

Now that *The Worker* is suppressed we find the Communist Party, in a desperate attempt to rally the workers, compelled to appeal for support on a caricature of the policy outlined above. There cannot be any other policy which would have the slightest hope of securing the support of the masses in their present mood. But the Communist Party appeals in a way which cannot lead to an independent mobilis-

ation of the workers round their own programme and their own banner. It is of absolute significance that the slogan of the arming of the workers which was put forward for an incautious fortnight last June by the *Daily Worker* has never been revived in any form whatever. This demand is an elementary and fundamental one which goes right to the heart of the needs of the masses, especially with invasion but a few weeks or months ahead. The Communist Party leadership always sows demoralisation and confusion within the ranks of the working-class.

With the programme of demands outlined above, the Revolutionary Socialists can raise the question of power in a way which can be easily understood and welcomed by the masses. The problem of a genuine revolutionary war against Hitlerism, which can only be solved by the working-class conquest of power, will then appear in its correct perspective, as the only programme of salvation for our epoch. The Fourth International alone has such a banner and such a programme. Once they adopt it the masses will be unconquerable. For the struggle against Hitlerism only Socialism can suffice!

Trotskyist Success In U.S. Elections

The Fourth International has established a place for itself in America. The result of the Minnesota State election for U.S. Senator leaves no room for doubt on this score. The Socialist Workers Party put up a candidate in this state, which includes the important industrial cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The Party, owing to legal technicalities, was not allowed to use its own name at the polls and the candidate, Dr. Grace Carlson had to stand as the representative of the "Trotskyist Anti-war Party."

On this ticket she polled 8,761 votes. This was more than the combined totals of the Socialist and Communist Parties.

Comrade Carlson made the question of War the central plank of her appeal to the workers of Minnesota. The programme she put forward on this central issue of our time was on the lines laid down by James P. Cannon in the speech printed in the January issue of W.I.N.

It was the contrast between this realistic, fighting programme and the miserable pacifism put forward by Thomas and Browder that won over the workers of the Twin Cities. The demands for workers' control of military training and election of officers made an appeal to militant workers which the pacifism of the other parties could not make.

Significant was the fact that support for comrade Carlson came not only from the cities but also from the radicalised farmers throughout the state. Votes were cast for her in every County of Minnesota.

This result is only a tiny spark in a vast expanse of darkness. But when we compare it with the position of the Revolutionary Socialists after 15 months of the first imperialist war we can justifiably feel hopeful for the future. We can draw inspiration from the fine efforts of our American comrades and the magnificent response of the Minnesota workers and farmers.

'PEOPLE'S' CONVENTION AND NOW....?

After a campaign waged principally by the Communist Party lasting months, the so-called "Peoples Convention" has concluded its "epoch-making" deliberations. 2,234 delegates representing 1,200,000 it is claimed, attended the Conference. One and a quarter million people supported the Convention, is the boast of the sponsors. This, to say the least, is fantastic. The majority of the delegates present, could by no stretch of imagination be depicted as actually representing the opinions of the members of the organisations they claimed to represent. If the Convention represented one tenth of the number published, it would be an approximate estimate of the influence which it possessed among the masses. The fake character of the mass support claimed, was shown by the action of the workers in Napiers, one of the biggest engineering factories in Britain, whose shop committees are dominated by supporters of the Communist Party, and which the Communist Party considered as one of their strongholds. 2,000 workers repudiated the delegates who were supposed to represent them at the Convention. They had neither been consulted on the policy of the Convention, elected delegates, or given permission to the shop committees to do so. 400 workers in De Havilland's aircraft factory did the same. Most of the other delegates had no more support among the rank and file for their policy than these. For example Park Royal, one of the biggest industrial centres in Britain, but which is mainly unorganised even into Trade Unions, is supposed to have sent over 20 delegates representing thousands of workers.

The capitalist press, including the "Daily Herald" has made ample use, for its own reactionary ends, of this counterfeit representation on the part of the organisers of the Peoples Convention. We criticise this from a Marxist aspect—from the point of view of achieving clarity in estimating the actual situation.

However it is a fact that large numbers of the most militant sections of the workers in trade unions and factories, especially those actually members or supporters of the Com-

munist Party, looked to the Convention as an expression of an alternative to the present coalition government waging the war for imperialist aims. They saw in it the means of realising the overthrow of capitalism and the first steps on the road to socialism. It would probably be correct to estimate the percentage of members and supporters of the Communist Party as at least one half to two thirds of the entire numbers of delegates present. So far as the main mass of even the organised workers is concerned, the Convention left them completely indifferent.

The whole tragedy of this vicious masquerade consists in the fact that on the one hand it isolates the militants from the working class in a sectarian manner, and on the other the programme is that of Popular frontism in a new garb and holds the danger of being used as a brake on the real workers struggle when it develops at a later stage in Britain. The safety switches, when the ordinary channels for holding the masses in check are exhausted, are being prepared in advance by the Stalinist leadership.

The programme adopted is typically vague and ambiguous: how it is to be achieved is not in the least explained. The "People's Convention" is to be elected as an alternative to the present Government—but how? The Convention is to shake the Government—but with what weapons? Let us listen to Harry Pollitt on the results of the January 12th meeting.

"There is a political truce between Tory, Liberal and Labour Parties, but all that it was hoped that this truce would accomplish has been smashed to smithereens by the development of the mass movement behind the People's Convention. Now the unity of the Tory, Liberal and Labour Parties in their attacks on the People's Convention is the most salutary proof of how correct this movement is . . . The Convention was the most outstanding political event that has taken place in this country since the outbreak of war . . . What alarm was displayed in Government circles, in Fleet Street, and among the Party managers of the Liberal, Tory and Labour Parties."

The emptiness of this puerile boastfulness

was revealed by the lack of response on the part of the workers to the Communist Party's campaign against the suppression of the "Daily Worker." The masses remain behind the Labour Leaders despite the reactionary legislation enacted with the assistance of these leaders. If they are to be torn away from the Bevins and Morrisons, they must be given a simple, clear fighting programme. The first necessity is to rally them to separate themselves from the capitalists. They must be mobilised on an independent class basis.

The masses follow the Labour leaders and will continue to do so until it is demonstrated by experience that their needs cannot be served by collaboration with the bourgeoisie. We have to take as a basis the feeling among the workers at the present time in order not to lead them backward, as the amorphous programme of the Convention does, but to lead them forward to the Socialist revolution.

The Convention has the disastrous effect of separating from the main body of the workers who still continue to support the Labour Party and the war, the best, most self-sacrificing, courageous and militant workers who are conscious of the impasse into which capitalism has led them and who support the Communist Party for that reason. It also separates the militant workers, disgusted with the Labour leaders, who are looking for a way out. The result is that all their work in the factories and workers' organisations is doomed to sterility and meets with the opposition of the workers and arouses actual antagonism against them as "Fifth Columnists" and "defeatists". On the other hand, when the inevitable reaction of the workers against the betrayal and deception of the Labour leaders takes place, there is a danger that from lack of an alternative they might be rallied round the class collaborationist programme of Popular Frontism. This programme, therefore, has the worst features of both opportunism and adventurism.

In the December issue of W.I.N. the proposed platform was carefully analysed. The programme adopted is no different in any major aspect from the original Six Points, and it is not proposed to deal with it in any detail in this article. But it is essential to counterpose to it a programme of demands which gets right to the needs and aspirations of the workers. The demand is that Labour break the truce and takes power on the following programme:— (1) Arm the workers. (2) Officers in the army to be elected by the workers and soldiers from their own ranks. (3) Workers control of production. (4) Nationalisation of the arms industry, mines, banks, land, trans-

port etc. without compensation. (5) Freedom for India, Ireland and the Colonies. (6) An appeal to the European workers for peace on the basis of the establishment of the Socialist United States of Europe. These demands together with those catering for the everyday needs of the workers—adequate A.R.P., sliding scale of wages to rise automatically with rising prices, etc. could be made the basis of a real campaign among the working-class: a campaign which would expose the rottenness and treachery of the sell-out of the Labour leaders to the capitalist class.

The real impotence of the Convention was best revealed by the attempt to adorn it with some show of popularity by getting the support of Bohemian celebrities who had no influence whatever among the main mass of the "people". Actors, dance-band leaders, professors, parsons, anybody who desired cheap publicity and an air of being "progressive" were asked to give support to the Convention. At the first sign of trouble these people made for the door. Immediately the bourgeois Press exerted pressure, they made haste one after the other to repudiate their support and to demonstrate that they are reliable citizens of the "democracy". The small shopkeepers, professional people, etc. cannot be won for Socialism by pandering to their prejudices, but only by a programme which will demonstrate that Socialism alone can cater for their needs. The crying need of the hour is to mobilise the masses of British workers round a programme of demands which will put their leaders to the test and demonstrate that only the Socialist revolution can solve their problems.

Harry Pollitt gives a fine quotation from Lenin in a recent article in "World News & Views" about the Convention. Pollitt aims the quotation at the variety of programmes of social reform put forward by the various petty bourgeois, such as J. B. Priestley and Acland, who sense the feeling that is stirring among the whole toiling population and who are preparing a harmless outlet for its inevitable explosion. "Once we forget the crude and cruel conditions of capitalist domination, all such platforms, all such lists of high-sounding reforms are nothing but empty words which in practice turn out to be either the most pious wishes or simple deceptions of the masses by ten-a-penny bourgeois politicians." No better words could be written to characterise the programme and idea of the People's Convention.

The job now is to "patiently explain" to the masses, round a programme which they can immediately support, the role of the Labour leaders and the fact that the "war against Hitlerism" which the Labour leaders make

the axis of their policy just now, can never be carried out under the leadership and control of the capitalist class, but can only be accomplished by the working-class taking power.

We appeal to the Communist workers, those shop-stewards and militants who are in the van of the struggle today: Do not allow your leaders to confuse and mislead you. The People's Convention is a trap which can only plunge you into disaster. Do not separate yourselves from the mass of the workers today by the adventurist slogans of the Convention.

Do not allow yourselves to be used to put a bridle on the real aspirations of the masses tomorrow by the slogans of the Convention. Labour to Power on the programme briefly given above, is the only means of approaching the workers today.

Not the "People's Government" but only Workers' Power and Socialism can solve the problems of the working-class. The Fourth International alone has this correct approach to the problems of our epoch.

LEON TROTSKY'S LAST ARTICLE

Comrade Trotsky never saw this article in written form. He had dictated it into his dictaphone, as was his custom, part of it merely as notations for later elaboration. Further sections would come later, and the whole would be considerably revised, some paragraphs cut out altogether, others placed at other points in the manuscript, and so on. For, contrary to popular myth and despite his enormous production, Trotsky did not write easily. What follows is, therefore, a literal translation of the transcription made by his Russian stenographer from the records dictated by Trotsky. Despite its unfinished form, however, this article belongs among Trotsky's most important contributions. More precisely and sharply than elsewhere, he established here the historical law that fascism is successful only after the radicalization of the masses and after the proletarian vanguard has failed to lead the radicalized masses to the conquest of power. The profound importance of this concept, particularly for the workers of the United States, will be clear to every serious reader—EDITOR.

In his very pretentious, very muddled and stupid article* Dwight Macdonald tries to represent us as holding the view that fascism is simply a repetition of Bonapartism. A greater piece of nonsense would be hard to invent. We have analyzed fascism as it developed, throughout the various stages of its development and advanced to the forefront now one now another of its aspects. There is an element of Bonapartism in fascism. Without this element, namely, without the raising of state power above society, owing to an extreme sharpening of the class struggle, fascism would have been impossible. But we pointed out from the very beginning that it was primarily a question of Bonapartism of the epoch of imperialist decline which is qualitatively different from Bonapartism of the epoch of bourgeois rise. At the next stage we separated out pure Bonapartism as the prologue to a fascist regime. Because in the case of pure Bonapartism the rule of a monarch is approximated and

in Italy

In post-war Italy the situation was profoundly revolutionary. The proletariat had every opportunity

the Ministries of Bruening, Schleicher and the

Presidency of Hindenburg in Germany, Pétain's Government in France, but they all have proved, or must prove, unstable. In the epoch of imperialist decline a pure Bonapartist Bonapartism is completely inadequate; imperialism finds it indispensable to mobilize the petty bourgeoisie and to crush the proletariat under its weight. Imperialism is capable of fulfilling this task only in case the proletariat itself reveals its inability to conquer power, while the social crisis drives the petty bourgeoisie into a condition of paroxysm.

The sharpness of the social crisis arises from this, that with to-day's concentration of the means of production, i.e., the monopoly of trusts, the law of value—the market is already incapable of regulating economic relations. State intervention becomes an absolute necessity. Inasmuch as the proletariat

The present war, as we have stated on more than one occasion, is a continuation of the last war. But a continuation does not signify a repetition. As a general rule, a continuation signifies a development, a deepening, a sharpening. Our policy, the policy of the revolutionary proletariat toward the second imperialist war is a continuation of the policy elaborated during the last imperialist war, primarily under Lenin's leadership. But a continuation does not signify a repetition. In this case too, continuation signifies a development, a deepening and a sharpening.

WE WERE CAUGHT UNAWARES IN 1914

During the last war not only the proletariat as a whole but also its vanguard and, in a certain sense, the vanguard of this vanguard was caught unawares. The elaboration of the principles of revolutionary policy toward the war began at a time when the war was already in full blaze and the military machine exercised unlimited rule. One year after the outbreak of the war, the small revolutionary minority was still compelled to accommodate itself to a centrist majority at the Zimmerwald Conference. Prior to the February revolution and even afterwards the revolutionary elements felt themselves to be not contenders for power but the extreme left opposition. Even Lenin relegated the socialist revolution to a more or less distant future. (In 1915 or 1916) he wrote in Switzerland: (quotation). *If that is how Lenin viewed the situation, then there is hardly any need of talking about the others.

This political position of the extreme left wing expressed itself most graphically on the question of the defense of the fatherland.

In 1915 Lenin referred in his writings to revolutionary wars which the victorious proletariat would have to wage. But it was a question of an indefinite historical perspective and not of tomorrow's task. The attention of the revolutionary wing was centred on the question of the defense of the capitalist fatherland. The revolutionists naturally replied to this question in the negative. This was entirely correct. But this purely negative answer served as the basis for propaganda and for training the cadres but it could not win the masses who did not want a foreign conquerer. In Russia prior to the war the Bolsheviks constituted four-fifths of the proletarian vanguard, that is, of the workers participating in political life (newspapers, elections, etc.). Following the February revolution the unlimited rule passed into the hands of defensists, the Mensheviks and the S. R.'s. True enough, the Bolsheviks in the space of eight months conquered the overwhelming majority of the workers. But the decisive role in this conquest was played not by the refusal to defend the bourgeois fatherland but by the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets!" And only by this revolutionary slogan! The criticism of imperialism, its militarism, the renunciation of the defense of bourgeois democracy and so on could have never conquered the overwhelming majority of the people to the side of the Bolsheviks. In all other belligerent countries, with the exception of Russia the revolutionary wing toward the end of the war all

In so far as the proletariat proves incapable at a given stage of conquering power, imperialism begins regulating economic life with its own methods; the fascist party which becomes the state power is the political mechanism. The productive forces are in irreconcilable contradiction not only with private property but also with national state boundaries. Imperialism is the very expression of this contradiction. Imperialist capitalism seeks to solve this contradiction through an extension of boundaries, seizure of new territories, and so on. The totalitarian state, subjecting all aspects of economic, political and cultural life to finance capital, is the instrument for creating a super-nationalist state, an imperialist empire, the rule over continents, the rule over the whole

world.

All these traits of fascism we have analyzed each one by itself and all of them in their totality to the extent that they became manifest or came to the forefront.

THE POINT AT WHICH FASCISM SUCCEEDS

Both theoretical analysis as well as the rich historical experience of the last quarter of a century have demonstrated with equal force that fascism is each time the final link of a specific political cycle composed of the following: the gravest crisis of capitalist society; the growth of the radicalization of the working class; the growth of sympathy toward the working class and a yearning for change on the part of the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie; the extreme confusion of the big bourgeoisie; its cowardly and treacherous maneuvers aimed at avoiding the revolutionary climax; the exhaustion of the proletariat, growing confusion and indifference; the aggravation of the social crisis; the despair of the petty bourgeoisie, its yearning for change, the collective neurosis of the petty bourgeoisie, its readiness to believe in miracles; its readiness for violent measures; the growth of hostility towards the proletariat which has deceived its expectations. These are the premises for a swift formation of a fascist party and its victory.

It is quite self-evident that the radicalization of the working class in the United States has passed only through its initial phases, almost exclusively in the sphere of the trade union movement (the CIO). The pre-war period, and then the war itself may temporarily interrupt this process of radicalization, especially if a considerable number of workers are absorbed into war industry. But this interruption of the process of radicalization cannot be of a long duration. The second stage of radicalization will assume a more sharply expressive character. The problem of forming an independent labor party will be put on the order of the day. Our transitional demands will gain great popularity. On the other hand, the fascist, reactionary tendencies will withdraw to the background, assuming a defensive position, awaiting a more favorable moment. This is the nearest perspective. No occupation is more completely unworthy than that of speculating whether or no we shall succeed in creating a powerful revolutionary leader-party. Ahead lies a favorable perspective, providing all the justification for revolutionary activism. It is necessary to utilize the opportunities which are opening up and to build the revolutionary party.

PROBLEM OF POWER POSED TO THE WORKERS

The second world war poses the question of change of regimes more imperiously, more urgently than did the first war. It is first and foremost a question of the political regime. The workers are aware that democracy is suffering shipwreck everywhere, and that they are threatened by fascism even in those countries where fascism is as yet non-existent. The bourgeoisie of the democratic countries will naturally utilize this dread of fascism on the part of the workers, but, on the other hand, the bankruptcy of democracies, their collapse, their painless transformation into reactionary dictatorships compel the workers to pose before themselves the problem of power, render them responsive to the posing of the problem of power.

Reaction wields today such power as perhaps never before in the modern history of mankind. But it would be an inexcusable blunder to see only reaction. The historical process is a contradictory one. Under the cover of official reaction profound processes are taking place among the masses who are accumulating experience and are becoming receptive to new political perspectives. The old conservative tradition of the democratic state which was so powerful even during the era of the last imperialist war exists today only as an extremely unstable survival. On the eve of the last war the European workers had numerically powerful parties. But on the order of the day were put reforms, partial conquests, and not at all the conquest of power.

The American working class is still without a mass labor party even today. But the objective situation and the experience accumulated by the American workers can pose within a very brief period of time on the order of the day the question of the conquest of power. This perspective must be made the basis of our agitation. It is not merely a question of a position on capitalist militarism and of renouncing the defense of the bourgeois state but of directly preparing for the conquest of power and the defense of the proletarian fatherland.

May not the Stalinists turn out at the head of a new revolutionary upsurge and may they not ruin the revolution as they did in Spain and previously in China? It is of course, impermissible to consider that such a possibility is excluded, for example in France. The first wave of the revolution has often, or more correctly, always carried to the top those "left" parties which have not managed to discredit

the opponents of the revolution on its very eve. Thus the German revolution in November, 1918, raised to power the social democrats who were the irreconcilable opponents of revolutionary uprisings.

Twelve years ago Trotsky wrote in an article published by "The New Republic":

"There is no epoch in human history so saturated with antagonisms as ours. Under a too high tension of class and international animosities, the 'fuses' of democracy 'blow out'. Hence the short-circuits of dictatorship. Naturally the weakest 'interrupters' are the first to give way. But the force of internal and world controversies does not weaken: it grows. It is doubtful if it is destined to calm down, given that the process has so far only taken hold of the periphery of the capitalist world. Gout begins in the little finger of a hand or in the big toe, but once on the way it goes right to the heart." ("The New Republic," May 22, 1929).

THE AMERICAN PHILISTINE PROTESTS

This was written at a time when the entire bourgeois democracy in each country believed that fascism was possible only in the backward countries which had not yet graduated from the school of democracy. The editorial board of "The New Republic", which at that period had not yet been touched with the blessings of the GPU, accompanied Trotsky's article with one of its own. The article is so characteristic of the average American philistine that we shall quote from it the most interesting passages.

"In view of his personal misfortunes, the exiled Russian leader shows a remarkable power of detached analysis; but his detachment is that of the rigid Marxian, and seems to us to lack a realistic view of history—the very thing on which he prides himself. His notion that democracy is a fair-weather form of government, incapable of withstanding the storms of international or domestic controversy, can be supported (as he himself half admits) only by taking for your examples countries where democracy has never made more than the feeblest beginnings, and countries, moreover, in which the industrial revolution has hardly more than started."

Further on, the editorial board of "The New Republic" dismisses the instance of Kerensky's democracy in Soviet Russia and why it failed to withstand the test of class contradictions and yielded place to a revolutionary perspective. The periodical sagely writes:

"Kerensky's weakness was an historic accident, which Trotsky cannot admit because there is no room in his mechanistic scheme

for any such thing."

Just like Dwight Macdonald, "The New Republic" accused the Marxists of being unable to understand history realistically owing to their orthodox or mechanistic approach to political events. "The New Republic" was of the opinion that fascism is the product of the backwardness of capitalism and not its over-ripeness. In the opinion of that periodical which, I repeat, was the opinion of the overwhelming majority of average democratic philistines, fascism is the lot of backward bourgeois countries. The sage editorial board did not even take the trouble of thinking about the question of why it was the universal conviction in the Nineteenth Century that backward countries must develop along the road of democracy. In any case, in the old capitalist countries democracy came into its rights at a time when the level of their economic development was not above but below the economic development of modern Italy. And what is more, in that era democracy represented the main highway of historical development which was entered by all countries one by one, the backward ones following the more advanced and sometimes, ahead of them. Our era on the contrary is the era of democracy's collapse, and moreover, the collapse begins with the weaker links but gradually extends to those which appeared strong and impregnable. Thus the orthodox or mechanistic, that is, the Marxist approach to events enabled us to forecast the course of developments many years in advance. On the contrary, the realistic approach of "The New Republic" represented the approach of a blind kitten. "The New Republic" followed up its critical attitude toward Marxism by falling under the influence of the most revolting caricature of Marxism, namely, Stalinism.

THE NEWEST CROP OF PHILISTINES

Most of the philistines of the newest crop base their attacks on Marxism on the fact that contrary to Marx's prognosis fascism came instead of socialism. Nothing is more stupid and vulgar than this criticism. Marx demonstrated and proved that when capitalism reaches a certain level the only way out for society lies in the socialization of the means of production, i.e., socialism. He also demonstrated that in view of the class structure of society the proletariat alone is capable of solving this task in an irreconcilable revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. He further demonstrated that for the fulfilment of this task the proletariat needs a revolutionary party. All his life Marx, and together with him and after him Engels, and after them Lenin, waged an irreconcilable struggle against

those traits in proletarian parties, socialist parties which obstructed the solution of the revolutionary historical task. The irreconcilability of the struggle waged by Marx, Engels, and Lenin against opportunism, on the one side, and anarchism, on the other, demonstrates that they did not at all underestimate this danger. In what did it consist? In this, that the opportunism of the summits of the working class, subject to the bourgeoisie's influence, could obstruct, slow down, make more difficult, postpone the fulfillment of the revolutionary task of the proletariat. It is precisely this condition of society that we are now observing. Fascism did not at all come "instead" of socialism. Fascism is the continuation of capitalism, an attempt to perpetuate its existence by means of the most bestial and monstrous measures. Capitalism obtained an opportunity to resort to fascism only because the proletariat did not accomplish the socialist revolution in time. The proletariat was paralyzed in the fulfillment of its task by the opportunist parties. The only thing that can be said is that there turned out to be more obstacles, more difficulties, more stages on the road of the revolutionary development of the proletariat than was foreseen by the founders of scientific socialism. Fascism and the series of imperialist wars constitute the terrible school in which the proletariat has to free itself of petty bourgeois traditions and superstitions, has to rid itself of opportunist, democratic and adventurist parties, has to hammer out and train the revolutionary vanguard and in this way prepare for the solving of the task apart from which there is not and cannot be any salvation for the development of mankind.

Eastman, if you please, has come to the conclusion that the concentration of the means of production in the hands of the state endangers his "freedom" and he has therefore decided to renounce socialism. This anecdote deserves being included in the text of a history of ideology. The socialization of the means of production is the only solution to the economic problem at the given stage of mankind's development. The delay in solving this problem leads to the barbarism of fascism. All the intermediate solutions undertaken by the bourgeoisie with the help of the petty bourgeoisie have suffered a miserable and shameful fiasco. All this is absolutely uninteresting to Eastman. He noticed that his "freedom" (freedom of muddling, freedom of indifferentism, freedom of passivity, freedom of literary dilettantism) was being threatened from various sides, and he decided immediately to apply his own measure: renounce socialism. Astonishingly enough this decision exercised no influence either on Wall Street or on the policy of the trade unions. Life went its own way just as if Max Eastman had remained a socialist. It may be set down as a general rule that the more impotent is a petty bourgeois radical especially in the United States the more

FASCISM HAS NOT CONQUERED IN FRANCE

In France there is no fascism in the real sense of the term. The regime of the senile Marshall Petain represents a senile form of Bonapartism of the epoch of imperialist decline. But this regime too proved possible only after the prolonged radicalization of the French working class, which led to the explosion of June, 1936, had failed to find a revolutionary way out. The Second and Third Internationals, the reactionary charlatanism of the "People's Fronts" deceived and demoralized the working class. After five years of propaganda in favor of an alliance of democracies and of collective security, after Stalin's sudden passage into Hitler's camp, the French working class proved caught unawares. The war provoked a terrible disorientation and the mood of passive defeatism, or to put it more correctly, the indifferentism of an impasse. From this web of circumstances arose first the unprecedented military catastrophe and then the despicable Petain regime.

Precisely because Petain's regime is senile Bonapartism, it contains no element of stability and can be overthrown by a revolutionary mass uprising much sooner than a fascist regime.
ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO U.S. WORKERS

In every discussion of political topics the question invariably flares up: Shall we succeed in creating a strong party for the moment when the crisis comes? might not fascism anticipate us? isn't a fascist stage of development inevitable? The successes of fascism easily make people lose all perspective, lead them to forget the actual conditions which made the strengthening and the victory of fascism possible. Yet a clear understanding of these conditions is of especial importance to the workers of the United States. We may set it down as an historical law: Fascism was able to conquer only in those countries where the conservative labor parties prevented the proletariat from utilizing the revolutionary situation and seizing power. In Germany two revolutionary situations were involved: 1918-19 and 1923-24. Even in 1929 a direct struggle for power on the part of the proletariat was still possible. In all these three cases the social democracy and the Comintern criminally and viciously disrupted the conquest of power and thereby placed society in an impasse. Only under these conditions and in this situation did the stormy rise of Fascism and its gaining of power prove possible.

*National Defense: The Case for Socialism, Partisan Review, July-August, 1940.

Several citations from Lenin during that period fit Trotsky's description. We quote two:

"It is possible, however, that five, ten and even more years will pass before the beginning of the socialist revolution." (From an article written in March, 1916, Lenin's Collected Works, vol. XIX, p. 45, Third Russian Edition.)

"We, the older men, will perhaps not live long enough to see the decisive battles of the impending revolution." (Report on 1905 Revolution delivered to Swiss students, January, 1917, idem, page 357.)