

THE COMMUNIST

Vol. XII

FEBRUARY, 1933

N. 2



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A New Victory of the Peaceful Policy of the U.S.S.R.*

THE NON-AGGRESSION PACTS

THE peaceful policy of the Soviet Union has again won a number of important successes. The non-aggression pact between U.S.S.R. and Poland has been ratified, and a non-aggression pact between the U.S.S.R. and France signed. The conclusion of these treaties is particularly noteworthy owing to the fact that they have been signed with countries which, until recently, represented the most aggressive forces of intervention against the land of the proletarian dictatorship, countries which, in the past, repeatedly attempted with arms in their hands, to overthrow the power of the proletariat by means of war and counter-revolutionary conspiracies, to break the republic of the workers and peasants.

What do these new successes of the land of the proletarian dictatorship, successes which were manifested this time in the form of diplomatic acts, signify, what processes do they testify to?

In the first place they testify to the tremendous change in the relationship of forces between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist world, a change in favor of the U.S.S.R., and against the lands of capital, which was noted by the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in its decisions. The non-aggression pacts concluded between the U.S.S.R. on one hand and France and Poland on the other, the growing tendencies among a section of the capitalist circles of the United States towards recognition of the U. S. S. R. and conclusion of a trade agreement with her, the resumption of diplomatic relations between U.S.S.R. and China constitute an international recognition, in the diplomatic field, of the change in the relationship of forces between these two worlds.

On what basis did these changes develop? On the basis of the victory of the Leninist line of building Socialism in the U.S.S.R., on the basis of industrialization and collectivization of agriculture.

What Comrade Stalin said in the year of the great change (1929) the first year of the Five-Year Plan, being essentially completed at the present time, is being realized at a truly Bolshevik pace. Comrade Stalin said:

* Reprinted from the *Communist International* Vol. IX, No. 20.

"We are moving at full speed on the road of industrialization to Socialism, leaving behind our age-old Russian backwardness. We are becoming a land of metal, a land of automobiles, a land of tractors. And when we put the U.S.S.R. upon the automobile, and the *mujik** upon the tractor, let the honorable capitalists, who are so proud of their 'civilization' attempt to overtake us. We will yet see which of the countries will then be defined as backward, and which as advanced."

If we are to state concretely what are the basic factors in the change in the relationship of the two systems, if we are to sum up the early results of the fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan in four years, it will be necessary to state, first of all, that the Socialist forms of economy in the U. S. S. R. have emerged victorious, and captured a predominate position, not only in the city but also in the village. It is a fact of world historical import that, in the spring of 1932, 80 per cent of the arable land of the Soviet Union was sown by collective and state farms, and only 20 per cent by individual peasants.

This was primarily what enabled Comrade Molotov to state at the Congress of Engineers and Technicians of the Soviet Union † that:

"Fortunately, we are already able to say that the main range of our internal difficulties has been passed. The Leninist question 'Who will be the victor' has been decided in our country finally and irrevocably."

Those successes of collectivization have become possible, only thanks to the consistent policy of Socialist industrialization which resulted, at the end of the Five-Year Plan, as its most important consequence, in the creation of an internal base for the technical reconstruction of every field of the national economy, including industry, the transport and particularly agriculture.

It is quite obvious that this victory of the Five-Year Plan has secured the economic independence of the U.S.S.R. against the world capitalist market (thus, despite the colossal construction work going on in the country, the U.S.S.R. in 1931 imported only 14.7 per cent of its machinery for the year, while in 1913, Czarist Russia imported 58.6 per cent of its machinery) and considerably strengthened its defensive powers.

The enormous growth of the proletariat in industry and on the State farms, the rise of its revolutionary activity in the work of building Socialism, the conversion of the middle peasantry when joining collective farms into allies of the proletariat, and a firm

* Peasant.

† For full text of above speech see pamphlet *Technocracy and Marxism*. Workers Library Publishers, 5 cents.

foundation for the proletarian dictatorship in the village, the liquidation of the kulaks as a class in the main agricultural regions, and the stamping out of the counter-revolutionary wrecking organizations and of the degenerating opposition groups; all insured the further internal consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, convincingly demonstrating, even to a large section of the world bourgeoisie, that the Soviet power and Soviet government, from the point of view of its strength and stability, stands alone of all powers and governments in the world.

Thus, *the policy of peace systematically pursued by the U.S.S.R. was reinforced by the weighty arguments of its tremendous economic growth, by the strengthening of its economic independence and defensive ability.* It would be a miracle if all these factors did not find a reflection on the international arena, especially under the conditions of the end of the capitalist stabilization, deepest economic decline of the entire capitalist system, and extreme instability of the governments of all, even the greatest imperialist powers.

Indeed, these factors reflected themselves in both tendencies which the U.S.S.R. encounters in its relations with the capitalist world; the tendency of a section of the capitalists, who, despite all their uncompromising hatred for the U.S.S.R., are more inclined, in the present conditions, to extend the trade relations with the Soviet Union, and establish "peaceful relations" with her; and the tendencies of the other section of the capitalists toward the immediate rupture of these relations, and the speeding up of the interventionist preparation.

The conflicts growing, during the period of the end of the capitalist stabilization, within the camp of the bourgeoisie itself, manifested themselves also in the questions of the relations to the U.S.S.R. Are not these conflicts revealed in all their force in Rumania, for instance, where the ruling bourgeois clique, headed by Titulescu, which continues to orientate itself on the "Comite des Forges" and other extreme interventionist groups of the world bourgeoisie, pursues an adventurist policy outside, and the most reactionary policy inside the country; and, where a considerable section of the ruling classes, in fear of its class rule, was inclined to establish more normal relations with the Soviet Union.

Apart from the recognition of the danger portended to the bourgeois system itself, by an intervention against the U.S.S.R., this strengthening of the tendency of a certain section of the capitalists to establish "peaceful" relations with the Soviet Union is due largely, also, to the grisly hand of the economic crisis, which prompts the bourgeois groups to snatch at every possibility of maintaining economic activity, among them, the extension of economic connections with the Soviet Union.

All this does not, however, weaken the danger of an intervention against the U.S.S.R. in the least. "The preparation of intervention has entered a new phase." This thesis of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. applying primarily to the occupation of Manchuria by Japanese imperialism, not only does not contradict the fact of the conclusion of non-aggression pacts, but on the contrary, is fully corroborated by it. *

The world bourgeoisie is forced to rebuild its interventionist plans in accordance with, and on the basis of, an account of the change in the relationship of forces in favor of the Soviet Union. And this rebuilding of the interventionist plans, which began in 1930-31, marked, first, the recognition of the failure of the previous plans at intervention, the plans of a "small" war to be waged by the forces of the small border States (Poland, Rumania) as well as by the forces of the counter-revolutionary conspiracies (the Industrial Party, the Menshevist centre) and kulak uprisings within the U.S.S.R. Second, it marked the adoption of a policy of preparation of a large-scale intervention against the Soviet Union, to be carried out by the forces, both of the border States and of the "great" imperialist powers, or some group of these imperialist powers. Even then, in 1931, we wrote:

"The imperialists were compelled to admit that there was no possibility of restoring capitalism in the U.S.S.R. with the help of the internal counter-revolutionary forces and intervention on the old scale they were forced to postpone intervention which they had fixed for 1930-31, and to begin universal preparations for intervention on a more extensive front."

Obviously this preparation required a certain amount of time to knock together a new anti-Soviet bloc on a broader base. The sharpening of the imperialist contradictions, in turn, interfered with the formation of such a bloc. This caused a certain lengthening of the "breathing space" for the Soviet Union. It is necessary, in this connection, to remind the entire world proletariat of the fact that this preparation of a great war against the U.S.S.R. has been carried out by the interventionists under cover of *pacifist manoeuvres*. *Imperialist France (represented at that time by Laval and Briand) opened precisely at this time negotiations for the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R.*

However, very soon the smoke-screen of pacifist phrases was replaced by cannon fire in the Far East. The occupation of Manchuria by Japanese imperialism (which marked the beginning

* See the editorial of the *Communist International*, No. 21 for 1931 entitled, "The Intervention Against Manchuria and Preparations for the Great Anti-Soviet War."

of a new partition of China) signified, at the same time, the creation of a spring-board for intervention against the U.S.S.R. from the East. The roaring of the guns in Manchuria was accompanied by sharp attacks upon the U.S.S.R. in the west, primarily by the suspension of the negotiations for a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union on the part of France, a number of measures tending to organize an economic boycott (discrimination against Soviet trade), attempts to drag Germany into the anti-Soviet bloc, etc., etc.

In the editorial of the *Communist International* No. 21, (1931), cited above, we wrote in this connection:

“From the moment when Japan began military intervention against Manchuria . . . these preparations for the great war against the Soviet Union took on a new and more acute form.”

However, the imperialists this time failed to inveigle the U.S. S.R. into war. The peaceful policy of the Soviet Union frustrated all provocations. The essential completion of the Five-Year Plan in four years tremendously strengthened the position of the U.S.S.R. and its situation internationally. The outlook of imperialist contradictions (in the Pacific, around Versailles) handicapped the formation of an anti-Soviet bloc. The revolutionary upsurge of the masses, the development of the revolutionary crisis in Germany and Poland, in turn, prevented the imperialists from supporting the Japanese blow from the east, by a co-ordinated attack from the west.

Under these conditions, the ratification of a pact with Poland and conclusion of a pact with France obviously signifies the strengthening of the Soviet Union, and the weakening of the positions of world capital. Naturally, the Communists support these pacts, while clearly understanding, and explaining to all toilers that no treaties (not excluding the non-aggression pacts) can eliminate the immediate danger of war. The non-aggression pacts merely handicap the interventionist preparations on the part of the imperialists. The forces most aggressive to the U.S.S.R., partly utilizing the fall of the Herriot Cabinet, endeavor to prevent the ratification of the agreement. Should this not succeed, then, *under cover of the treaty the forces representing war continue vigorous preparations for it.* This is imperialist pacifism, and the slightest abatement of the struggle against it, on our part, represents a great danger. The world bourgeoisie is impelled to reconstruct the intervention plans in accord with, and on the basis of, the change now proceeding in the relation of forces in the interest of the Soviet Union. The Communists must explain to the workers that the intervention against the U.S.S.R. is being prepared in new forms.

Attempts are being made to organize it on a broader basis, on

the basis of the encirclement of the U.S.S.R. both from the west and the east. The external evidence (which is open) of this is as follows: The creation of a jumping-off ground by Japanese imperialism in Manchuria, and the openly interventionist plans of the Japanese military, headed by the War Minister Araki; the cancellation of the trade agreement with the U.S.S.R. by the British imperialists, and the unbridled anti-Soviet campaign in England; the virtual seizure of Tibet by British imperialism; the disruption by the Rumanian government (and the interventionist cliques of France and Great Britain behind it) of the non-aggression pact which had already been prepared for signature; the continuing construction of strategic railways along the Soviet borders, the final failure of the Disarmament Conference, etc., etc.

The future holds no period of peace and co-operation among the nations in store, but a new series of revolutions and wars.

This makes it the duty of the Communists to fight against all attempts at intervention *with particular vigilance and energy*. The bourgeoisie lulls the masses, while preparing war, by spreading the idea of imperialist pacifism. This makes it even more imperative for the Communists to sound the alarm, and urge all workers and toilers to struggle against imperialist war and intervention, to a struggle in the defence of the Soviet Union.

* * * * *

What is the second lesson and second cause of the conclusion of the non-aggression pacts?

The conclusion of the pacts testifies again (and in a very ugly form) that the League of Nations has entered a deep crisis, and the Versailles system of oppression and enslavement of the nations has broken down, that the contradictions between the imperialists are becoming more and more intense and acute. The conclusion of the pacts reflects those changes and regroupings in the camp of imperialism which are a result of the breakdown of the Versailles system, and sharpening of the relations between the capitalist nations.

This is not only urged by the Communists; it cannot be concealed, even by the bourgeois press.

Thus the Polish newspaper *Nasz Przeglond* makes the following far-from-complimentary remarks on the League of Nations:

“The peaceful cooperation between Poland and France in eastern Europe, based upon complete equality, is being strengthened by facts quite independent of the League of Nations. It appeared that bi-lateral agreements are possible which facilitate Poland’s active diplomatic role, whereas the Geneva apparatus assigned to Poland the unattractive role of a client of the great power.”

But the crisis of the League of Nations cannot but signify a considerable change in the international position of French imperialism, the leading force of the League of Nations.

Responding to the conclusion of the pacts, the German bourgeois newspaper *Berliner Boersencourier* notes that "A crack has appeared in the allied system of France's vassals." The organ of the Slav clericals (Jugo-Slavia) expresses itself even more categorically, discerning in the latest events a "collapse of the anti-Soviet front" of the Baltic and Danubian states which has been created during the last ten years.

The Rumanian newspaper, *Kuwentul*, bitterly complains that:

"In the long run Rumania's interests were not taken into account; precisely at the moment when the Soviet Union is most sharply placing our borders in doubt."

(The newspaper is referring to Bessarabia which, it will be remembered, was forcibly annexed by the Rumanian boyars from the U.S.S.R., and which continues to suffer under the Rumanian imperialist yoke.)

Is this appearance of fissures in the system of the French vassal states accidental? No, of course not! All of these border states are in the throes of the deepest crisis, on the brink of state bankruptcy. Besides, the activation of German imperialism places the Eastern borders, established by the Versailles Treaty, in doubt. The Polish-German conflict over the Prussian corridor, Danzig and Silesia, constitutes one of the sharpest imperialist conflicts, fraught with a new imperialist war. Under these conditions, the border states lying side by side with the Soviet Union (whose strength is constantly growing) cannot but develop the tendency to establish peaceful relations with it. Under these conditions, the policy of French imperialism represented by the cautious Herriot government, which is capable of large-scale manoeuvres, could not but undergo certain changes. France was compelled to come to terms with the Soviet Union, in order thus to attempt to stop the deepening of the crack in its system of vassal states in the east. Certain bourgeois newspapers maintain that the Soviet pacts of non-aggression with Poland and France are directed against Germany. This is not merely untrue, but such a statement is obviously calculated to inflame nationalism, and precipitate a worsening in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and Germany.

Has the policy of the Soviet government been subjected to changes, in connection with the fact that the U.S.S.R. took into account the re-groupings taking place among the imperialist powers, took advantage of the contradictions between them, and concluded non-aggression pacts with Poland and France?

No, of course not! The Soviet policy has always been designed to *insure peace* and its treaties were not directed against any other third country.

Is the conclusion of pacts with Poland and France a change of the Soviet attitude towards the Versailles system?

No, it is not. This was explained with perfect clarity by Comrade Stalin, long before the conclusion of the pacts, in his interview with the German Professor Ludwig:

“Is this (conclusion of the pact) a recognition of the Versailles system? No. Is it perhaps a guarantee of the borders? No. We have never been Poland’s guarantors, and will never become such, just as Poland has not been, and will not be, guarantor of our borders . . .

“These fears will disappear when we publish the pact, should it be signed with Poland. Everybody will then see that it contains nothing against Germany.”

But does this mean that the U.S.S.R. will ever support German imperialism, which is dreaming of a revision of the Versailles system by means of a new imperialist war, a war of revenge? Of course not. The Soviet Union has demonstrated by fifteen years’ policy its hostility in principle to all imperialism, and any imperialist war. The Soviet Union has no reason to change its position. It never connected the prospects of the final collapse of the Versailles system with an outbreak of imperialist clashes. The Soviet Union has always regarded the world revolution of the proletariat as the only thing capable of definitely cutting the Gordian knot of insoluble contradictions in Europe, and throughout the world.

What is the third lesson and the third cause of the conclusion of the non-aggression pact?

It unquestionably consists in the enormous growth of sympathies for the U.S.S.R. on the part of the workers of the capitalist countries, and the toilers of the entire world.

Is not this the cause of the fact that the Prime Minister of the French government, this “son of the people and the toilers” as he styles himself, though, in reality, a representative of the same aggressive French imperialism, suddenly begins to “sympathize with the republic of workers” and admire nothing else than “the Socialist construction projected with such courage and valiance by the republic of workers and peasants.”

Of course this is the cause.

“Among the great masses of the working-class, outside the boundries of the Soviet Union, the belief is growing that their better future is inseparably connected with the destinies of October Revolution and its international prospects.”

Of course the cause it that:

"By no maneuvers of the pseudo-Socialist parties of Europe and America is it possible to hide the growing revolutionary indignation in the masses of the proletarians, who are finally passing over to the side of the international Socialist revolutions." (From Comrade Molotov's address to the Congress of Engineers and Technicians.)

The working class of the whole world has inscribed on its banner the most important demand addressed to its bourgeoisie: "Hands off the Soviet Union."

It has repeatedly demonstrated in the course of its revolutionary struggle, what this slogan means. This has also been demonstrated by the French toilers, when, with Comrade Marty at their head, they started the mutiny in the French imperialist squadron sent to the Soviet Union during the memorable years of the civil war.

*The great masses of workers and toilers of the imperialist countries, the workers and peasants of France and Poland particularly, are beginning to realize that their governments support a new imperialist slaughter, and new intervention against the U.S.S.R. Their resistance and struggle against war grows. The Amsterdam Anti-War Congress, * its tremendous success, testifies the growing struggle of the workers and toilers against the preparation of imperialist war by the governments of the capitalist states.*

Under the conditions of the transition to the new series of revolutions, the world bourgeoisie cannot but take this determination of the working masses to defend the Soviet Union and carry on a revolutionary struggle against new imperialist wars into consideration. Under these new conditions and in new forms, it cannot but attempt to weaken the determination of the working class to fight in the defense of the U.S.S.R., and conceal the preparation for imperialist wars and intervention, by lying talk of peace. And the first to aid it in this matter is social democracy.

By what means does social democracy seek to achieve this? Firstly, by spreading ever new insinuations and calumnies designed to throw suspicion upon the Soviet Union, in connection with the non-aggression pacts concluded by it, and secondly, by spreading the ideas of imperialist pacifism among the masses.

The "pacifist" variant of the social democratic agitation is well known to the advanced workers. It is as follows:

"The Bolsheviks are fond of shouting about the intervention threatening them. They suffer from a persecution complex even when no one is attacking them. They also shout about an immediate danger of a fresh imperialist war. Is not the conclusion of non-aggression pacts with France and Poland direct evidence of the peaceful policy, even of those capitalist governments which the Bolsheviks regard as the most aggressive?"

* See pamphlet, *The World Congress Against War*. Five cents.

To this, Comrade Stalin replied on one occasion, with perfect clarity:

“There are some fools who think that there is imperialist pacifism, there can be no war.

“This is entirely incorrect . . .

“And the most important part about it all is, that *social-democracy is the chief agent of imperialist pacifism in the working-class, it is the main support of capitalism in the working-class in the preparation of new wars and interventions.*”

Even now, from the few articles of the social democratic newspapers it is possible to judge the position of social fascism on the question of the pacts. Their press was first dismayed by the obvious successes of the Soviet Union, and maintained a morose silence; but has now assumed the part of the meanest insinuations. The first to break silence was the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. What did this paper say about the pact? It said the following:

“The Bolsheviks, as this shows, are able to behave very meekly and be extremely law-abiding to the bourgeoisie. They thereby clearly guarantee the continued existence of capitalist class rule in France.”

What does the “meekness” and “law-abiding” spirit of the Bolsheviks consist of, in the view of this corrupt fascist paper? It consists in the fact that the Bolsheviks are alleged to have renounced, in the treaty, the “economic boycott which Russia applied in its former decrees against France.”

But is it not known to the whole world, that it was precisely the French government of Tardieu, which enforced a number of discriminations against Soviet trade; putting it in an unequal position as compared with trade with the other countries, which caused the Soviet Union to take measures protecting the U.S.S.R. against such aggression, which is similar to an economic boycott?

Is not the conclusion of the pact, and the negotiations for a commercial treaty with France, which are to begin soon, evidence of the success of the Soviet Union, which is systematically pursuing a policy of struggle against economic discriminations?

Another argument, allegedly showing that the U.S.S.R. “guaranteed the continuation of capitalist class rule in France” is based on the point of the treaty (Article 5) providing for mutual non-interference in the internal affairs of the other country, particularly the pledge to refrain from encouraging “any agitation, propaganda or attempts at intervention aiming to violate the territorial integrity of the other party, or to alter by force the political or social system of all, or of a part, of its territories.”

It is curious, incidentally, that this part of the treaty is quoted

by the social-fascist sheet in a falsified form which is designed to show that the U.S.S.R. has undertaken some one-sided obligation towards France.

“The Bolshevik government has undertaken not to cause, or promote, any agitation pursuing, the object . . . the violent alteration of the political or social regime of France, or of any part of the territories subject to France.”

The real text of Article 5 of the Non-Aggression Treaty between the U.S.S.R. and France reads as follows:

“Each of the high contracting parties undertakes to respect in every sense the sovereignty or rule of the other party over its entire territories defined in Article I of this treaty, under no circumstances to interfere in its internal affairs, and particularly to refrain from any action tending to cause or encourage any agitation, propaganda or attempt at intervention designed to violate the territorial integrity of the other party, or to alter by force the political or social system of all, or of a part, of its territories.

“Each of the high contracting parties undertakes in particular to desist from creating, supporting, subsidizing or permitting in its territory either military organizations aiming at an armed struggle against the other party, or organizations, assuming the functions of a government or representative of all, or of part, of its territories.”

Does this article of the treaty demand an alteration of the policy of the Soviet power? It certainly does not. The Soviet government has never interfered in the affairs of other countries, and has not permitted the existence, in its territory, of organizations “assuming the functions of a government” of another country.

On the other hand, this point of the treaty most obviously does not mean that the U.S.S.R. guarantees to the French bourgeoisie the “continuation of its class rule,” i.e., guarantees it against the proletarian revolution within the country, or even against the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat under the leadership of the French Communist Party. On the contrary, the Soviet power has never, and not not conceal now its position in principle to the capitalist structure, does not conceal that the happy future of the international proletariat is inseparably connected with the October Revolution and Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. It is sufficient to read this point of the treaty in order that the complete absurdity and slander of this assertion of the social-fascist sheet should become clear. Only social democratic scribes, who have lost all sense of truth, could discern anything of this kind, in the fifth point of the treaty. Will not the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* declare in the name of consistency, that French imperialism—for the treaty is mutual in character—“guarantees” the continuation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R., and the building of the full Socialist society during the Second Five-Year Plan?

Why do the social fascists maintain complete silence on the concluded part of this clause, where the pledge to refrain from interference in internal affairs, and desist from propaganda, agitation and intervention is expressed in the concrete obligation not to permit "either military organizations which aim to conduct an armed struggle against the other party, or organizations assuming the functions of government, or of a representative of all, or of a part of its territories"?

Is it not because this point directly affects the *white guard bands on the territory of France* and the so-called "governments," from the governments of the numerous "grand dukes" to the Menshevist Georgian "government" of Noy Jordania and Tseretelli?

Of course, this is so. Of course, because the systematic protection and defence of the fragments of the Russian white emigration, constitutes one of the functions of international social democracy, of its work in covering up the preparation of intervention against the U.S.S.R.

But even more characteristic is the following fact: upon breaking the "sensational" news that the U.S.S.R. has guaranteed the French bourgeoisie the continuation of its class rule, the social fascist sheet immediately explains this as follows:

"Thus the weakness and impotence of the Communist Party of France, which has not the least influence over the political struggle, is entirely in the interests of Moscow."

This new social fascist trick shows the dexterity with which the social fascists use the traditional interventionist formula, saying that the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries, and the Soviet power, are one and the same thing. The social fascist sheet in maintaining that "the impotence of the Communist Party of France is in the interests of Moscow," today pursues the demagogic aim of *discrediting the Soviet Union* in the eyes of French revolutionary proletarians. *Tomorrow* the social fascists will use the same traditional formula for *provocative* purposes. *Tomorrow* they will say: The French Communist Party continues to work, hence the Soviet government continues to support it, hence the Soviet government is violating the treaty. Hence the treaty must be annulled.

This will also serve the cause of preparing the *prohibition of the Communist Party*, of placing it outside bourgeois law, of unleashing white terror against the Communists.

The position of "left" social democracy differs little from the open anti-Soviet social democratic agitation discussed above.

The "lefts" do not, of course, carry on the same sort of clumsy, undisguised anti-Soviet work, but disguise it by "left"

phrases and recognition of the great diplomatic success of the Soviet Union. But, at the same time, they write:

“Of course, such treaties, to a certain extent, hamper the revolutionization of the capitalist world.” (*Sozialistische Arbeiterzeitung*, Editorial of November 30th).

Obviously, such a formulation serves only one purpose.

It serves the cause of *dampening* the revolutionary sympathies of the world proletariat for the Soviet Union. The right social democrats do this openly, slanderously attacking the U.S.S.R., which is alleged to “guarantee the capitalist system in France” or “support German imperialism.” The “lefts” do this more cautiously, hiding the basic motives of their activity (to dampen the revolutionary sympathies of the proletariat for the U.S.S.R.) under “left” phrases, hypocritically regretting the Soviet “concession” to the capitalists, and the influence of the non-aggression pacts in retarding the revolutionization of the masses.

But nothing will break the growing will of the world proletariat to support and protect the Soviet Union. Branding with scorn the lying inventions of social democracy about the Soviet Union, they will reply to the “left” hypocritical “friends” of the U.S.S.R. who actually represent the advance guard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie: “Can the new successes of the Soviet Union fetter the revolutionization of the masses? We, the workers of the capitalist world, are developing our counter-offensive against the robbery of our wages, against fascism and against imperialist war. We know full well that the most important thing for successful action is firm confidence in our own forces. Is it not clear that everything testifying to the power of the Soviet Union strengthens the energy of our fighters, instils new courage in the wearied and hesitant, increases our faith in the final victory?”

The Revolutionary Upsurge and the Struggles of the Unemployed

By I. AMTER

“What is taking place at the present moment is the *transition* to a new round of big clashes between classes and between states, a new round of wars and revolutions . . . Precisely because little time remains before the revolutionary crisis matures, is it necessary, without losing a moment, to *intensify and accelerate our Bolshevik mass work* to win over the majority of the working class, to increase the revolutionary activity of the working class . . . Hence the necessity for really carrying out the task of winning over the majority of the working class—which was put in the forefront at the Tenth and Eleventh Plenums of the E.C.C.I. . . .

“The main link which the Communist Parties must seize upon in solving this problem is the struggle for the everyday economic and political interests of the broad masses, against the increasing poverty, against oppression, violence and terror.” (From Thesis of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.)

The Twelfth Plenum of the E. C. C. I. took place in the early part of September. More than four months have passed—and the complete correctness of the thesis and resolutions of the E.C.C.I. must be made clear to every worker. Wars are taking place in two parts of the world—South America and China—and threaten in other parts. The menace of intervention and war against the Soviet Union increases. The impoverishment of the working class, the toiling farmers and petty-bourgeoisie proceeds apace. The necessity of winning the majority of the working class—a task that was set to all the Parties of the Comintern, remains the outstanding task. The Communist International declares categorically that the “main link . . . is the struggle for the everyday economic and political interests of the broad masses.”

That the Party is making headway no one can dispute—although we are still far from being at the head of the broad, rapidly radicalizing masses in their struggle. Wage cuts, sweeping in character have taken place in many industries, but our Party and the T. U. U. L. have not been at the head of the struggle against them. The relief of the unemployed has been cut in many localities, so that the workers and their families starve to death, without the Party

and the Unemployed Councils being able to meet these attacks on the workers.

Headway has been made—but it is *totally insufficient*. The prestige of the Party, T. U. U. L. and Unemployed Councils has risen, without our being able to crystalize into organization the sentiment that exists for us.

LESSONS OF THE NATIONAL HUNGER MARCH

The National Hunger March is an illustration. This March was a splendid example of the willingness of the workers to struggle. Preceded by mass struggles in all parts of the country, reaching its broadest and finest expression in the demonstration in Chicago led by the Unemployed Councils against the 50% relief cut, the National Hunger March proves that the Unemployed Councils have the support of wide masses of workers, both actively and passively. Not only were about 300,000 workers involved in the struggles and elections of the marchers, but unestimated hundreds of thousands more greeted them as they passed through the industrial towns from the four corners of the country on the way to Washington. Funds were collected from them in their own cities and on the way to Washington. Workers stopped work to greet them; in Trenton, the doll workers, who recently won a strike and formed a fighting union, declared a stoppage to meet the marchers.

The unions participated in the struggles and elections of the marchers more than ever before, although they are far from performing their full revolutionary duty with respect to the unemployed. Several union leaders participated in the March. The composition of the marchers was good—a large group of Negro workers, men and women, particularly from the South; nearly 1,000 young workers; 285 marine workers. The success of the National Hunger March in achieving its goal and presenting the demands has heightened the prestige of the Unemployed Councils.

The shortcomings of the March are symptomatic of our entire work: a narrow united front, with only a few new A. F. of L. unions involved (although there were about 250 members of the A. F. of L. among the marchers). This takes place despite the rising revolt in the ranks of the A. F. of L., which has compelled the A. F. of L. bureaucrats to reverse their position, *demagogically*, on the question of unemployment insurance—to be sure, not only with no intention of fighting for it, but as has already been shown, of *dropping* it. (William Green has already discarded the demand for unemployment insurance, for which the A. F. of L. convention went on record, in favor of the 30 hour week. In the latter

he has already also dropped the demand for "no reduction in pay", by supporting the Black Bill now before the U. S. Senate commission.) We reached few Socialist and other reformist locals and branches. We made little progress in drawing the other unemployed organizations into the united front and the March.

The crisis is deepening. Nearly 17,000,000 are totally unemployed, and a like number are working part-time, some only one or two days a week, at wages frequently below even the relief standard. Not even the most optimistic capitalist economist predicts an early upturn, although the newspapers have been instructed to write "optimistically." The federal government is trying to balance the national budget, at the expense of the workers and toiling farmers by wage cuts, stagger plan, sales taxes, inflation, farmers' allotment plan at the expense of the worker-consumers. Municipal governments are approaching bankruptcy, this including some of the largest cities. They are cutting wages of government employes, reducing relief, conducting energetic relief campaigns in the shops and factories to collect funds from the workers. While relief to the unemployed in some cities is as low as 1½c a meal per person, and the payroll of the workers is down to 38% of the period 1926-1929; at the same time the profits and dividends of the corporations are 160% of the same period of 1926-1929. A Connecticut economist declares that there is liquid in the banks of this country \$50 against each unemployed worker. When the United States government announced a bond issue of \$265,000,000, at very low interest, more than \$4,000,000,000 was subscribed.

An army estimated at from 200,000 to 2,000,000 homeless youth, girls and boys, is roaming the country, having been driven out of their homes by poverty. Fully 10,000,000 children are suffering from undernourishment. The worst destitution faces the working class, and the capitalists and the government are determined that the costs of the crisis shall not be put on their, the capitalists' shoulders. They are maintaining high profits—while starvation faces the masses.

SOCIAL FASCISTS AND THE UNEMPLOYED

In order to shift the burden, the demagogues are very active. Roosevelt's promises and pledges to the "forgotten man"; the "insurance" schemes of the various governors, A. F. of L., Socialist Party, etc.; the 30 hour a week movement, which is even supported by some manufacturers against their weaker competitors; the "share the work" movement of Teagle, which is the stagger plan of Hoover, and, it is reported, is supported by 67% of the employers (and is correctly styled the "share the poverty" plan); forced labor,

which is increasing; the threat of deportation to militants, which hangs over the heads of hundreds of thousands through the Dies Bill, now before the United States Congress; the increasing terror throughout the country, as manifest during and since the National Hunger March—all mark the determination of the capitalists to shoulder the toiling masses with the burdens of the crisis.

More and more they are using the services of the social fascists and other reformists. The various scrip, barter, self-help and mutual exchange plans, some of which are organized by social fascists for the "training of workers in cooperation", which is supposed to lead to the "new society" or "cooperative commonwealth"; the various reformist unemployed organizations—Unemployed Citizens Leagues (Musteites), Workers Committee on Unemployment (Socialist, Borders), the Irish Independent Political Association, and the Souffi movement among the Negroes in New York—are examples of how the reformists are serving the capitalists in shifting the burden of the crisis to the shoulders of the workers. Finally "Technocracy" comes forward, clothed in mysterious language, promising disaster, on the one hand, and "wonders", on the other. All of them are efforts of the capitalists to overcome the crisis at the expense of the workers.

The Unemployed Councils have not been able to prevent these organizations and movements from enlisting large numbers of workers. Many hungry workers (it is reported that fully 200,000 are embraced in these reformist schemes, which have the full support of the capitalist organizations, and their press, etc.), join them. They attempt to satisfy the immediate demand for food; they present a "peaceful" way out of the crisis; they protect the worker from terror or blacklisting. These illusions must be broken down.

Despite these efforts of the bourgeoisie, the Unemployed Councils enjoy the prestige of being the *only fighting* organization in the United States, meeting with the admiration of the workers everywhere. Nonetheless, the Unemployed Councils comprise only a small fraction of the unemployed and part-time workers. The crisis deepens, the war danger intensifies every day, the threats against the Soviet Union may be turned into reality at any moment—while *sectarianism— isolation from the basic masses, failure to realize the intimate daily contacts with the workers and to carry on daily struggle for their demands, remain our basic shortcomings.*

The Party is conscious of the necessity of unemployed work, of "intensifying our Bolshevik mass work to win over the majority of the working class", but is guilty of crass right opportunism in failing to carry it out in the daily work. The resolution of the Prague Conference on Unemployment in August, 1931, declares:

"The organization of the struggles of the unemployed and the setting up of a close fighting alliance with the factory workers who are threatened with wage cuts are one of the central tasks of the revolutionary trade union movement."

In how many of the red unions do the Communists and revolutionary workers take this seriously? Very few. Some progress has been made in the miners', steel, food and shoe workers' unions. The tremendous unemployment and large part-time schedule make the question of unemployed work, and the linking of unemployed work with factory work, of basic importance. The comrades may not yet have found the proper methods, owing to the capitalist terror, but are carrying on day-to-day work. In the needle union, material results have been gained, with the result that unorganized workers and workers belonging to the A. F. of L. have been drawn into the movement. This has essentially aided in the splendid victories of the left wing in the cloakmakers' locals of the A. F. of L. union. In the marine, auto, railroad and textile industries we have made little or no progress.

ROLE OF UNIONS IN UNEMPLOYED STRUGGLE

In all cases, however, it is still not a *conscious* and *integral* part of the union's work. It is the work of a few comrades who are assigned to the work, which they do not carry on on a broad united front basis. At most it is a committee which carries on the work *for* the workers, instead of mobilizing and organizing them for the struggle.

"The Communist Party," says the Twelfth Plenum Resolution on The Lessons of Economic Strikes and the Struggle of the Unemployed, . . . "must not allow the red trade unions and the red trade union opposition to serve as substitutes for the broad organization of the unemployed."

"The tendency to have these unemployed councils nominated by the Red trade union movement or to subject them to it, must be combatted because it hampers the development of the united front movement. (Prague Resolution).

As yet the work of assigning the unemployed not only to work in the markets, around the factories, etc., but also in the blocks and neighborhoods, has not been initiated, although at their homes, the workers can be mobilized to struggle—against high rents, evictions, etc.

The strike struggles have shown that the unemployed do not scab on the factory workers, but, on the contrary, are most active on the picket line, etc.; nevertheless, it has been most infrequent that workers in the shops have supported the unemployed in their struggles. The Twelfth Plenum Resolution states:

"The Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade union organizations *have not succeeded* in organizing serious mass activity by the *employed workers* in defense of the interests of the unemployed, although it has been possible more and more frequently, to get the unemployed to actively support workers on strike."

The red unions do not aggressively put forward demands for the unemployed, such as no overtime, dismissal wage (or even more vigorous fights against dismissals), the taking on of unemployed workers, unemployed relief for the laid-off workers of the factory from the owner, etc. The question of the shorter work week with no reductions in weekly earnings, must be energetically put forward, with stubborn resistance to speed-up. Factory gate meetings of the unemployed, joint demonstrations, etc., must be arranged. The part-time workers are the best link between the unemployed and the employed workers. These meetings and activities, and the Penny Contribution Tickets, which the Unemployed Councils have introduced (which are to be sold at factory gates, in the neighborhoods, unions, etc.) will be effective means of creating this unity of the employed and unemployed, and of getting contact in the shops for building up the red trade unions.

In the neighborhoods, the work of building block and neighborhood committees and of conducting the unemployed work is still the work of a small number of comrades. There is still the *appointment* of committees and organizers. Unemployed work is still the work of comrades assigned to it, just as they are assigned to a mass organization. In few units is there a grasp of the political importance of neighborhood work, be it factory or unemployed work, and of building organization for the "every-day economic and political interests of the broad masses." Only if we understand and apply with Bolshevik surety the tactic of the united front with all the workers, under the rule of proletarian democracy will we be able to rally the masses to struggle against hunger.

The left wing opposition in the reformist unions is still not equal to the possibilities. The rising revolt against the bureaucrats, and the mass unemployment among the membership, open a vast field for work. The progress in the rank and file movement in the A. F. of L. shows the possibilities. The achievements in the building trades, needle and printers unions of the A. F. of L., based primarily on the issues of unemployment, demonstrate how much can be done. The "left" and right opportunist attitudes to work in the reformist unions must be liquidated. Open struggle against the social fascists and other reformists, with special exposure of the demagogy of the "left" social fascists, particularly on the issue of unemployment relief and insurance, serve not only to build up the

struggle that can win material gains for the unemployed, but also to strengthen the fight to oust the bureaucrats from position. Joint activities of the Unemployed Councils and A. F. of L. committees must be effected on a local scale.

UNITY OF EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED

Unity is the outstanding desire and need of the workers in the struggle. Just as the bureaucrats are splitting the unions by expelling hundreds of thousands for non-payment of dues and assessments, so too, the reformists, acting for the capitalists and with their assistance, are splitting the ranks of the unemployed. With the growth of the Unemployed Councils and their prestige and influence, there also grow the reformist organizations. Despite the fact that wherever there is a fighting Unemployed Council, the rate of relief is *higher*, the number of unemployed aided is *greater*, the number of evictions is *reduced*—as notably in Chicago—nevertheless the reformist organizations persist.

The Communist and revolutionary workers must be in the *fore-front in the fight for unity*. It is only the Communist and revolutionary organizations that can unite the working class in the struggle. With the deepening of the crisis and the greater poverty facing the workers, there is a real *yearning* of the workers for unity. The Unemployed Councils must propose unity to the workers in the reformist unemployed organizations. In the daily struggle for the immediate needs of the workers, we must propose united front actions, putting forward our proposals, exposing the reformist leaders and their deeds. Thus we will demonstrate to the workers in these organizations that only through our program of mass action can the demands of the working class be realized..

“Communists must fight not in words, but in deeds, for the *united front of the unemployed and the employed workers* on the basis of a joint struggle for social insurance, against forced labor, against the worsening of social insurance conditions, and mass dismissals, and the attraction of the unemployed into the strike struggles of the proletariat. While creating and strengthening extensive organizations of the unemployed, while carrying on a decisive struggle against the replacement of mass unemployed organizations by bureaucratic trade union organs formed by the reformist trade union bureaucracy with aim of splitting the unemployed movement (Germany, England), Communists must at the same time *actively participate* in all the organizations of the unemployed which are formed by the social democrats, fascists, and other counter-revolutionary organizations.” (*Twelfth Plenum Resolution*)

Just as we must build the left wing in the reformist unions, so too we must penetrate the reformist unemployed organizations, to

expose the reformist leaders and win over the rank and file. Through work from within and the united front we will win the workers for the leadership of the Unemployed Councils.

POLICY OF UNITED FRONT

To meet the deepening crisis and the growing moods of the workers to struggle, we must be flexible in the form of the unemployed organization. The basic form is the unemployed committee in the block or neighborhood, in the union, fraternal lodge, in day rooms, markets, flop-houses, Hooverilles, etc. The workers in the block assemble at the meeting and select militant workers for the block committee, who conduct the work. The block meeting must be called regularly, and comprise *all* the workers in the block, whether unemployed or employed, whether they have registered as supporters of the Unemployed Council or not. The block committee should report on all activities and decisions, which the meeting may reject or modify. Only by the broadest proletarian democracy will the workers be made to feel and understand that it is *their* organization, in which *their* word is decisive—and not an organization given to them by leaders who are superimposed on them. This does not yet prevail in the Unemployed Councils. The result is fluctuation both in supporters and leadership.

However, in certain localities the workers demand firmer organization. We must not oppose this desire, whether it takes the form of a W.I.R. branch, or a club, etc. But the organization must be open to all workers in the block, and must be connected up with the Unemployed Council and participate in its work. If this is not done, it will become a self-contained group, separated from the main stream. Language organization must also be allowed to those foreign-born workers who can conduct their work better in their own language. At all times, however, we must stress the need of the fundamental form of organization and use the branch or club to form block and neighborhood committees. The Unemployed Council has no dues; nevertheless in localities the workers may desire to adopt a dues system. This should not be fought, but systematically be broadened to conform to the general need of the unemployed movement, based upon the broadest united front of all workers.

The block committees, although primarily struggle organizations, must supply the workers with those advantages that accrue through the club. There must be developed *cultural, social, athletic and sport* activities, drawing in the youth and women. Classes, forums, debates should be initiated for the political education of the workers. The block committee must politicalize its work by becoming the center

of all political activities in the block, taking up the local political problems, linking them up with the broader political issues.

The development of cadres is a burning question for the unemployed movement. Thousands of new leaders are needed. This cannot be achieved by working the active workers to death, but allowing them time to study and read. Means of maintaining the active workers must be found. One of the reasons for the growth of the self-help and other reformist organizations, is the question of food and shelter. The Prague Resolution states:

“Collections for the most impoverished can be carried out with the assistance of the W.I.R. and of the cooperatives, and soup kitchens be established for the children of the unemployed. However, *these institutions must not occupy the foremost place in the unemployment movement*; we make use of them so as to mobilize the unemployed for the struggle against the capitalists and against capitalist rule.”

This was stated in the Central Committee Resolution on Work Among the Unemployed, in October, 1931. In very few places has this been carried out, out of a fear of opportunist deviations. With the deepening of the crisis and the growing starvation of the masses, as well as the need of providing the active workers with food, this becomes a more important task of the Unemployed Councils.

Simultaneously with the deepening of the crisis and the growing difficulty of the capitalists in solving it even in their way, the terror increases. The instructions to the Illinois national guard not to shoot above the heads of the mob and not use blank bullets, indicates the growing terroristic means to be used against the workers. The shooting of the Negro sharecroppers in Talapoosa County, Ala., the bringing forward of old moss-covered laws to throw the militant workers into jail, indicate the need of workers' defense corps in the unemployed and other movements.

INNER DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT OF CADRES

Commanding and domineering must cease in the revolutionary movement. The appointment of functionaries and committees from outside; the imposition of decisions from above are signs of bureaucracy, which must be combatted and rooted out. Fractions of the Communists and red trade union members must be established in all unemployed organizations, through which the proposals of the Party and T.U.U.L. shall be brought to the workers. *The Party and T.U.U.L. will gain leadership in the unemployed movement only through their correct proposals and the daily work in contact with the masses.*

The penetration of the war industries, and the mobilization of

the unemployed and employed workers for joint struggle are imperative. The spreading war situation in South America and China, and the growing provocations against the Soviet Union, demand action by the workers of the United States. In this action against the imperialists we must not fail to popularize the achievements of the Soviet Union, especially in relation to the liquidation of unemployment and the social insurance system in operation in the Soviet Union.

Our immediate tasks are the broadening of the united front in struggle for unemployment relief and insurance, against evictions, for lower rents etc. Into this united front we must draw the workers of the neighborhood, especially penetrating the Negro and Latin American sections. We must penetrate the reformist trade unions and unemployed organizations. We must be the champions of *unity* of the unemployed movement. We must make the workers understand that which they feel: that *there is no need of more than one unemployed movement in this country, and that we are the champions of unity.*

NEXT STEPS IN UNITED FRONT ACTIVITIES

Our next steps on the basis of the broadest united front of the unemployed and employed workers in the struggle for their burning needs, are:

March 4. On the inauguration of Roosevelt, in every city and town, there must be gigantic demonstrations, surpassing those of March 6, 1930. This is not only possible, but on the basis of struggles in every block, neighborhood and locality, we must build up these demonstrations. Simultaneously in Washington there will take place a meeting of the National Committee of the Unemployed Councils and a conference in preparation for the presentation of demands to Roosevelt. This will necessitate the mobilization of the entire Party, the shop nuclei, the fractions in the trade unions, Unemployed Councils and mass organizations, and through them the revolutionary organizations for carrying on the fight. Out of these struggles must come more trade union and unemployed organization.

Homeless youth and children. These two sections of the working class are worst sufferers. The homeless youth, who are by the police hounded from place to place, are being mobilized by the Young Communist League and Unemployed Councils for regional conferences, to discuss their demands and need for organization, which should result in a national action. The bourgeoisie is trying to corral the homeless youth into military camps to fascicize them and use them against the struggles of the working class. We must fight against this and save and mobilize the youth for the working

class struggle. A nation-wide campaign against child misery has been inaugurated by the Young Pioneers, Unemployed Councils and Workers International Relief. The struggle against child misery is the struggle, in the main, of the parents and adults. It is part of all struggles, but by dramatizing it we can draw new strata into the fight against the destruction of child life.

Building the Communist Party and Y.C.L. in these struggles and leading the masses to higher forms of struggle, fighting against the right danger as the main danger as well as against "left" deviations, will equip us to perform our Bolshevik duty in this period of the end of capitalist stabilization— at a moment of a new round of wars and revolutions. *There is not a moment to lose.*

For additional material on the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. don't fail to read the COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL magazine, No. 20, (Vol. IX). Price 10c per copy. Subscription: \$2.00 per year.

On the End of Capitalist Stabilization in the U.S.A.

By H. M. WICKS

FREQUENTLY during the past year we have been regaled with optimistic utterances of the capitalist leaders of industry and their "business forecasters" to the effect that the economic crisis was passing. On the basis of the rise in production during the months of August and September the whole capitalist press began to shout that the bottom of the "depression" had been reached and that henceforth there would be a steady, perhaps a rapid, rise. An analysis of the basic factor in this rise (cotton goods) reveals the distortion of the actual picture. By withholding from the market some three million bales of cotton the price was temporarily stimulated, cotton stocks on hand in the factories were worked up ready for the market in anticipation of a rise in prices of such goods. Although this increased production correctly anticipated response from the market in the form of an increase in demand, it soon died down for the simple reason that in a short flurry of buying the ever-narrowing home market was exhausted.

This flurry in cotton was so short-lived that it in no way tended to cause increased demand for products of heavy industry in this country. The production trend in heavy industry has been uninterrupted downward from the temporary rise in April of 1931.

Such things as facts do not disturb the serenity of the prophets of prosperity. In face of all facts to the contrary we are still told that this crisis will be, in due time, conquered by capitalist ingenuity, the same as all other crisis and that we will assuredly reach a new, higher level. In plain words the capitalists and their professional economists deny that the end of capitalist stabilization has come to the United States.

How far from the facts of life are those who try to see in the present situation any hope for a revival is seen when we consider that in spite of production sinking to the level of thirty to forty years ago, the stocks of goods on hand are approximately what they were at the beginning of the crisis. The index numbers of the United States Department of Commerce, representing 53 basic

commodities of which 34 are manufactured goods and 19 raw materials show the following:

	October 1929	October 1931	October 1932
Manufactured goods	114	104	98
Raw Materials	185	201	197
Total stocks	155	160	155

These figures are on the basis of 100, as of the years 1923-25.

Thus, while the stocks of manufactured goods have decreased 14 per cent from October, 1929, to October, 1932, raw materials during the same period have increased $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, the combined stocks of both raw materials and manufactured goods have remained the same.

When the further fact of the world stocks of these commodities having increased 56 per cent during the same three-year period is taken into consideration, along with the constantly declining purchasing power of the masses in industry and on the land, all talk of a rise in the immediate future sounds silly indeed.

One of the most important economic characteristics of the end of capitalist stabilization is that this crisis has resulted in production sinking far below the starting point of this "business cycle", which is 1921. Never before has such a thing occurred. In all previous crises production never sank below the starting point of the cycle. Even on the basis of figures supplied by the United States Department of Commerce for the year 1931, the production of steel, iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, silver and coal had sunk to, or below, the 1921 level. Lead and zinc for instance had sunk to the level of 1910; copper back to 1908; anthracite coal back to 1900; bituminous coal back to 1911.

But figures thus far available for 1932 show that production in the United States has gone back thirty to forty years. Consider the steel and iron industry, the basic heavy industry of this country. Production of steel ingot and castings descended to 13,500,000 tons, or back to the level of 1902—thirty years back. Pig iron and ferro production registered only 8,800,000 tons which is the lowest for 37 years, or back to 1896. Such figures, taken by themselves, do not give a correct picture, although they are based upon the absolute decline in production. To get some idea of the social consequences involved in this marked decline we need to recall that the population of the United States in 1896 was only 62 million, while today it is 124 million.

The figures given for steel and iron are by no means isolated. They indicate the basic economic trend in all production in this country; a fact that can be verified by anyone who takes the trouble to consult the statistical records in regard to building and

other construction, to all light industry, to production of clothing, shoes, hats, furniture, etc.

Pig iron and ferro production in the United States is lower than the average world output (which has receded to the level of 1898). This is not due so much to the relative decline in this country compared to other capitalist countries, as it is due to the fact that the statisticians of the publication *Steel* (from which our figures are obtained) include the pig iron production of the Soviet Union in their survey of world production. The Soviet Union is the only big iron producing country in the world (with the exception of Japan whose figures include Manchuria and Korea) exceeding pre-war production in steel and iron. But to include the Soviet Union in estimating world capitalist production is to present a distorted picture more favorable to capitalism. In this regard those who dislike to recognize the Soviet state, are not averse to recognition of its contribution to world production.

A further important fact to remember is that six years ago the United States contributed more than half the output of iron and steel in the whole world. In 1932 the share in steel was 27.5 per cent and in pig iron it was 23 per cent.

So bad is the situation that *The Iron Age* for January 5, 1933, says: "At the end of 1931 comparisons were made with the depression year 1921, but the decline of 1932 leaves the 1921 output of 19,783,797 tons of ingots and castings as a mark of mild prosperity when placed alongside the 1932 record."

Thus, according to the most authoritative capitalist publication in the steel industry, the crisis year of 1921 was so much better than 1932 that it seems, in retrospect, a prosperous year. Never before in history could those words have been uttered about any previous crisis. However, this fact does not seem to have caused another prominent steel authority to regard this crisis as anything out of the ordinary. With great assurance Mr. E. L. Shaner, editor of the trade publication *Steel*, says over his own signature in his January 2 issue: "Production of iron and steel at lowest levels since the 19th century has given rise in certain quarters to doubt about the future of the steel industry." Then Mr. Shaner proceeds to expound a theory to the effect that there is accumulating a demand for steel products that will result in the greatest production rise ever known. He correctly states that railroad equipment is rusting away, that locomotives are wearing out and not being replaced, that only a percentage of automobiles taken out of service and scrapped are being replaced by new cars and these replacements are for the most part lighter and cheaper cars, that building is at a standstill, that all kinds of machinery of light

industry is deteriorating. But he incorrectly concludes that there will again come a time when industry will revive and surpass its previous high level.

None of the capitalists or their economic soothsayers and medicine-men seem to perceive what this terrific decline in production means in terms of the ever declining home and foreign markets—what it means in unemployment and its resultant misery, poverty, destitution. Such people are still able, thanks to the terrific offensive against the toiling masses, to place such burdens upon the workers and farmers and the oppressed of the colonial and semi-colonial world that they enjoy an uninterrupted flow of profits. The figures covering total interest and dividends received by the ruling class are positively astounding when one considers the price fall, the low level of production and the mass impoverishment ravaging the ranks of the workers and farmers and declassed elements of the lower middle class. At a time when production has sunk far below pre-war level the total of interest and dividends are five times as large as in 1913. The crisis years of 1930 and 1931 were the two most prosperous years known to the Wall Street coupon clippers. The three crisis years—1930, 1931 and 1932—show interest and dividends that are equal to 90 per cent of the total for the ten years from 1913 to 1922, which included the years of speculative war profiteering.

The *Journal of Commerce* published the following table which gives a picture of the pyramiding of interest and dividends during the past twenty years:

Year	Interest and Dividends	Year	Interest and Dividends
1913.....	\$1,777,000,000	1923.....	\$4,085,000,000
1914.....	1,788,000,000	1924.....	3,840,000,000
1915.....	1,865,000,000	1925.....	4,086,000,000
1916.....	2,135,000,000	1926.....	4,391,000,000
1917.....	2,389,000,000	1927.....	5,570,000,000
1918.....	3,029,000,000	1928.....	6,028,000,000
1919.....	3,189,000,000	1929.....	7,584,000,000
1920.....	3,415,000,000	1930.....	8,572,000,000
1921.....	3,342,000,000	1931.....	8,220,000,000
1922.....	3,299,000,000	1932.....	*6,030,000,000

* First ten months of 1932.

What such interest and dividends means in actual purchasing power can be realized when we consider the rapid price fall that has taken place since the beginning of the economic crisis. However, it is seen from the above table that there is a decline in actual money received of hundreds of millions of dollars during the past two years and the final figures for 1932 interest and dividend

payments will probably show a decline of a billion dollars from the high point of 1930. This decline must continue because with production at such a low point and with markets declining because of mass impoverishment it is not possible for the Wall Street gang to gouge such enormous amounts out of the toiling masses in industry and on the land and out of the pillage of colonial and semi-colonial countries. Besides direct exploitation of the workers and farmers, not an inconsiderable amount of the money to pay this interest and these dividends has come from the unsavory deals put through by the gamblers on the stock exchange which has resulted in fleeing thousands upon thousands of small business men, professionals, retired middle class elements and even a section of the better paid workers who sought to "cash in" on the speculative wave. To these victims of Wall Street may be added the millions of depositors who have lost their savings in the ruthless wrecking of thousands of banks. Add to these the horde of small business men, home owners and small manufacturers who have been driven to bankruptcy or foreclosed by holders of mortgages and we get somewhat of a picture of the methods by which the imperialist parasites carry on their pillage against all other parts of the population.

By its every move American imperialism more clearly demonstrates its parasitic character. It is not capable of maintaining and operating its own productive machine. It can survive only to the degree that it can degrade, deprave and desolate the world in which it exists. Here in the United States we have the clearest example of the monopolist character of finance capital aggravating the crisis. It beats down prices of raw material, dictating by virtue of its monopolistic control such prices. It charges monopoly prices for the products of the trustified industries, while forcing starvation wages upon workers, and while forcing farmers to sell their products far below the cost of production. By this same procedure American imperialism also imposes onerous conditions upon the colonies and semi-colonies by paying low prices for raw material and charging the highest prices for its industrial products. At this point it is necessary to deal with one illusion regarding monopoly capital that is now frequently encountered and that is demagogically put forward by imperialist apologists. That is the illusion that the rapid fall in prices indicates the weakening of the power of monopolies. Such an assumption is utterly wrong. The fall in prices does not in any way indicate that they are not monopolistic, any more than a rise in prices is always and everywhere indicative of the intervention of monopolies.

By its policy of robbery and pillage, by its parasitic nature, monopoly capitalism stifles the development of markets that might

absorb its products. It compels a reshifting of class forces by its insatiable drive to plunder all and sundry to maintain its profits.

But the end of capitalist stabilization is not brought about merely by economic processes. The most decisive factor in the end of capitalist stabilization is the increased determination of the toiling masses of the world to beat back the capitalist offensive. It is the revolutionary upsurge that is shaking the very foundations of capitalist rule.

The Wall Street imperialist brigands, in face of the threat to their existence, implicit in the whole world economic and political situation, are becoming more and more involved in the drive toward a new world war. Like all imperialist powers the United States government views with fear and hate the matchless achievements of the Soviet Union which stands as a beacon light showing to the toiling masses of the whole world that only by shattering capitalism and establishing the rule of the workers and farmers can the productive forces be used in behalf of the majority of mankind. This accounts for the fact that the United States ruling class and all its agents are enthusiastic accomplices in every foul plot, every vile slander against the Soviet Union and initiates special campaigns bearing the imprint of ineffable Wall Street political degeneracy—such as the Grover Whalen forgeries, the Hearst fabrications and the tall tales of Boris Brasol, the dumping yarns. It explains why Henry L. Stimson (whose foreign policy is to continue uninterrupted under the Roosevelt administration) uses every device known to diplomatic intrigue to force Japan to turn its arms against the Soviet Union. Under the time worn and hypocritical “open door” policy Yankee imperialism tries to grab the wealth of China for itself. But Japan stands in the way. If Japan can be involved in a war against the Soviet Union the Wall Street government thinks it will help to prevent the final liquidation of classes in the Soviet Union and thereby increase the possibilities of a restoration of capitalism and at the same time so weaken Japan that American battle and air fleets can blast its forces out of the Pacific. In pursuit of this same objective, the domination of the Pacific which carries with it the looting of China, American imperialism is determined at all cost to maintain its bloody grip upon the Philippine Islands. In Latin America the puppets of American imperialism are hurling into the slaughter of undeclared wars tens of thousands of workers and peasants to fight against puppet governments subservient to England. In addition to these intrigues the henchmen of American imperialism are busy in every court and every parliament of Europe utilizing every issue, fomenting new conflicts, plotting every sort of crime from rifling diplomatic mail to plotting and instigating assassinations—all in behalf of extending the power

of the Wall Street brigands. At the present moment the war debts are being adroitly connected up with the question of armaments. This is done to try to weaken the armed forces of the rival powers of Wall Street, to try to bring into the orbit of Yankee imperialist policy other nations.

In order to whip up public sentiment in behalf of the policy of the war mongers the starving masses of this country are told the war debts are responsible for the crisis. However, both President Hoover and President-elect Roosevelt, know these debts can never be paid. The fall in prices is such that in order to pay interest on the debts it would be necessary for the debtor nations to find markets for from five to twelve times the amount of commodities that would have been required in 1929. Now we are told, especially by Roosevelt, that the debts will be used to obtain other economic advantages, such as tariff preferences, exclusive markets, etc.

While the leading elements of both the Republican and Democratic parties will continue the Wall Street policy of using the debts as a weapon in diplomatic intrigue, in attempts to strengthen its position in the drive toward imperialist world war, there are within each of these parties representatives of petty bourgeois elements that loudly demand payment of debts; these elements parade as howling nationalists, their job being to whip up chauvinist sentiments that can be turned in any direction by the imperialists at any convenient time. Thus there is division of labor between the various groups in the old parties in pursuit of the same warlike and imperialist objectives.

Equally deceptive, but equally useful in the international arena, is the high tariff policy of the United States government. But this also intensifies the crisis by injuring exports, reducing production and cutting down the home market.

The tariff and war debts are being used both as offensive and defensive weapons in the international arena by American imperialism. But instead of retarding the decay of relative capitalist stabilization they have been factors in intensifying it. Neither of them are the cause of the growing antagonisms; they are merely symptoms of the sharpening antagonisms between nations at the end of capitalist stabilization.

The heaviest blows delivered against capitalist stabilization are those arising on the basis of the revolutionary upsurge, which is concisely and comprehensively outlined in respective countries as follows by the Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International:

“China: A mass upsurge of the anti-imperialist struggle, the development of the Soviet movement and the great successes of the

heroic Chinese Red Army. *Spain*: A rapid growth of the mass movement with the tendency to develop into a popular armed uprising. *Poland*: A wave of mass strikes, numerous militant actions by the peasants, and the rise of a new wave of the national revolutionary movement in the outlying regions of the country. *Germany*: An increase in the mass influence of the Communist Party; social-democratic workers, in spite of their leaders, have begun to resist the terror of fascist gangs. *Great Britain*: Strike in the Navy; turbulent workers' demonstrations in Autumn, 1931, and the strike movement in Lancashire. *Czech-Slovakia*: General miners' strike in North Bohemia and a revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants in Carpatho-Ukraine. *France*: Big strikes in the North; disruption of the military air maneuvers. *U.S.A.*: Big strikes and unemployed demonstrations, the march of the war veterans in Washington and the militant action of the farmers. *Belgium*: The General Miners' strike which is of foremost international importance. In most capitalist countries the strike struggles were accompanied by fierce clashes with the police and strike-breakers. *Japan*: The militancy of the workers, peasants, soldiers and students has broken through the military and police terror. *India*: An increase of the revolutionary unrest in the towns and villages and stubborn mass strikes. In many countries the struggles of the proletariat are interwoven with the mass revolutionary fights of the peasants."

These growing conflicts between states and the world-wide class conflicts, in varying degrees of development in different countries, are conclusive evidence that the world is in transition to a new round of wars and revolutions.

All these developments undermine United States imperialism and decisively show how impossible it is for capitalism here to realize the fulfillment of its expectations to ever again reach, say nothing of surpassing, the high point of the period of relative capitalist stabilization.

Here in the United States, since the Twelfth Plenum held last September, there have developed new struggles that clearly indicate the determination of the masses of workers and farmers to engage, in ever larger numbers, in the fight against rapacious American imperialism. The National Hunger March, indicated that larger numbers than last year were involved in the struggle against hunger. The March itself, in turn, with its 3,000 organizers and fighters, raised the movement to a higher level and today, throughout the entire country there are daily local and state struggles with a whole series of partial victories. That new strike struggles are developing is indicated by the action of the steel workers at Warren, Ohio, and the recent successful strike in the Briggs plant at Detroit. The new outbursts of farm struggles in Pennsylvania and Iowa, with the Communist Party playing an important role in the latter, are of tremendous significance as indicating the beginning of unity of action of the workers in the industrial centers and the farmers

in the country against the common enemy. The upsurge of the share croppers' struggle in Alabama, where Negro share-croppers and tenant farmers living under conditions of semi-slavery for the second time within two years defended themselves with arms in hand against the blood-thirsty lynch gangs trying to carry out a massacre wrote new pages in the history of the growing agrarian movement in the South that must culminate in the agrarian revolution and the struggle for the right of self-determination of the Negro majority in the Black Belt. Most significant, as showing the sharp class alignment was the sheltering of Negroes from the roving bands of white lynchers. New sections of the toiling masses are being enlisted in the fight against the hunger and war program of American imperialism.

This rising tide of struggle is met with increased fury by the ruling class. Here in the United States demagoguery and parliamentary deceptions are being more and more supplemented with violent attacks against the toiling masses. From the camp of the bourgeoisie there is more frequently heard demands for fascist action to stem the growing revolts. All the forces of reaction are mobilized in behalf of defending the decaying structure of capitalism from the blows of the awakening masses. The official bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor strives to stem the mass struggle against hunger among the working class generally and the revolt in its own ranks by endorsing the Black Bill, ostensibly for a 30-hour week, but which in reality legalizes the Hoover stagger system. *The contemptible social-fascists, the Muscovites and the Socialist Party leadership, have been on the job at every stage in all the developing struggles to try to help the capitalist class stop the growing movement of the masses.* In every way Thomas and Company here, too, qualify as the main social support of the capitalist class by disintegrating and defeating the movement that is more and more following the path of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, the Communist Party. With the most servile demagoguery the *New Leader* depicts the crisis of capitalism as one in which the ruling class will realize its inability further to carry on and will give way for someone that can "run things." We are shown a picture of a ruling class sinking into its ruins. All this is the most wilful deception of the toiling masses. This period of ghastly misery and suffering will not end by the automatic decay of capitalism or the voluntary surrender of the capitalists.

Capitalism, no matter how desperate its economic situation, will never fall of itself. It must be smashed by the revolutionary proletariat and its allies.

As this crisis deepened from year to year and from day to day workers asked whether it was possible to sink lower yet. Each

downward plunge answered that question and as this is being written a new and more vicious drive against our standards of life is being carried out by new wage cuts, by cutting down the already hunger relief. The only thing that can stop this drive is the increased fighting capacity of the workers and farmers and other impoverished elements of the population.

That our Communist Party, at the end of capitalist stabilization, is not yet in a position to keep pace with the growing mass movement, is cause for the most serious evaluation of our defects and the most drastic action to overcome the barriers that stand between us and the masses—the chief of which is sectarianism. This can be overcome only by the most determined turn in our work toward becoming a mass Party, toward winning the masses for the struggle against capitalism and the revolutionary way out of the crisis. The broad outlines of how we must go about this is indicated in the speech of Comrade Gusev dealing with the tasks of our Party. With the utmost energy and determination we must carry out the four fundamental tasks as outlined:

- 1) Direct the basic strategic blows against social democracy, to win the masses away from it, to isolate it from the masses;
 - 2) Win over the majority of the proletariat and the poor farmers, to train them in a series of fights and to convert them into our political army;
 - 3) Organize our Party into a mass Party on the basis of Bolshevik inner-Party democracy based on iron discipline, into a revolutionary staff of this political army;
 - 4) Enlarge, strengthen and renew our Party general staff.
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The Revisionism of Sidney Hook

By EARL BROWDER

IN *The Communist* for January, Comrade V. J. Jerome opened up a very interesting and valuable discussion of the fundamentals of Marxian theory in the form of a critical examination of the writings of Sidney Hook. Comrade Jerome traced in great detail some of the essential departures of Hook from the principles of Marxism, and came to the conclusion that Hook's interpretation of Marx represents a systematic revision in the direction of the philosophical doctrines of the American bourgeoisie, notably the instrumentalist philosophy of John Dewey.

For American Marxist-Leninists, the question of relationship to the specific American forms of bourgeois philosophy is a crucial one. Marxism-Leninism is the ideological armory of the rising proletariat in mortal combat with bourgeois society. It is the weapon for the destruction of the principal instrument of the bourgeoisie for the enslavement of the toiling masses; namely, the control over the minds of the toilers, the control over their very methods of thinking, exercised through the press, church, radio, schools and in the last analysis by the various philosophical systems which they seek to impose upon all thinking minds. The fundamental struggle between Marxism-Leninism and all systems of bourgeois philosophy has the same sharp, deep-going character as the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class for the control of society. It is the class struggle on the philosophical field.

It is essential, therefore, that the issues, which have been so sharply raised in Comrade Jerome's valuable article, shall be followed up with all thoroughness in all their ramifications and details. It is further necessary that out of the detailed examination we shall bring forward in the clearest possible manner the large central issues involved in this ideological battle. Our interest lies in establishing these issues with the greatest objectivity and clarity. We want to deal with real issues and not with imaginary or manufactured ones. We want to conduct the struggle on the plane of precision and clarity and not upon that of an exercise in opprobrious epithets. In this respect the writer wishes to disassociate himself from the tone and method used by Comrade H. M. Wicks in reviewing *The Communist* in the *Daily Worker* of January 10. There we had an example of a certain harmful misconception as to what constitutes "strength" in ideological struggle.

Comrade Jerome's article, on the other hand, is a serious, well-documented preliminary examination of the battlefield wherein must be fought out the struggle against Hook's revisionism. In the main this article establishes its point quite firmly. Certain secondary questions may require further examination and restatement, with some small corrections (which we will deal with later) as a necessary accompaniment to the further development of the polemic.

Sidney Hook has submitted to the editors of *The Communist* a reply to Jerome's article. This reply is divided into two sections: First, an indictment of Jerome's method of interpretation of Hook's philosophical thought, and, second, a brief positive exposition of his own understanding of Marxism. It must be said that in the second part of Hook's reply, he effectively proves the thesis of Jerome's article which in the first part he disputes; namely, the thesis that Hook's philosophical thought represents a fundamental revision of Marxism.

In order to fully document the discussion, we are at this point including the first section of Hook's reply to Jerome in full as submitted and then will proceed to answer it point by point:

"WHO HAS BEEN UNMASKED?"

"*In crucial moments, stupidity is a crime against the Party.—Marx.*"

"*Our theories are not dogmas but guides to action, said Marx and Engels.*"—Lenin.

"*There is a dogmatic and creative Marxism; I accept the standpoint of the later.*"—Stalin.

"V. J. Jerome in an article in the January issue of *The Communist* seeks to expose me as a revisionist of Marxism. In his attack, he violates every principle of Leninist accuracy by tearing sentences and phrases from the context of my writings, thereby giving the reader an impression of my views which is the *precise opposite* of what I actually wrote. I do not object to honest criticism. Criticism by all means. But not a criticism based upon deliberate misquotation, distortion of meaning, disregard of qualification, and statements build up by pasting scraps from different sentences together.

"In this memorandum, I shall content myself with doing two things. I shall give some illustrations of Jerome's method of interpretation, and then briefly state my own position.

"In an article written some years ago ('Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx', *Symposium*, 1931) I sought to show that the German social democracy despite its lip-allegiance to Marxism

*The second section will be reproduced in the continuation of this article in the March issue of *The Communist*.

had abandoned its revolutionary content. *The struggle for the 'people's state' was substituted for the struggle for proletarian dictatorship.* This non-Marxian conception of the state contributed to the great betrayal of 1914. I wrote:—

“Once more the *Volksstaat* of Lassalle (who had derived his conception of the state from Hegel—a conception excoriated by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*) reappeared as an undertone in the discussion, especially in Bernstein's defense of the worker's *Vaterland*. Marx had written in the *Communist Manifesto*, 'The proletariat has no fatherland.' Bernstein added, mistaking a symbolic truth for an objective description, that since the worker had become enfranchised as a citizen this was no longer true. His duties as a citizen, his duties to the nation, were distinct from his duties as a member of a particular class. And it was with the heavy consciousness of their duties as citizens that the German Social Democracy voted the war budgets in 1914 for the defense of the potential *Volksstaat* in the actual *Vaterland*. This was not a capitulation to Bernstein but a fulfillment of its own reformist past. Wilhelm II's proclamation, 'Ich kenne keine Parteien mehr; ich kenne nur noch Deutsche,' was applauded to the echo by all parties to the Burgfrieden.

“With the collapse of the German Empire in 1918 *die Republik*, still a *Volksstaat* only *in potentia*, replaced *das Vaterland* in the affections of the German Social Democracy.' ('Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx,' *Symposium*, 1931, pp. 341-42.)

“How does Jerome report this passage? He selects only one sentence—whose very phrasing indicates that it cannot be understood by itself—and cites it as evidence that I am defending Bernstein! Here is the sentence:

“And it was with the heavy consciousness of their duties as citizens that the German Social Democracy voted the war budgets in 1914 for the defense of the potential *Volksstaat* in the actual *Vaterland*.' (*The Communist*, January, 1933. V. J. Jerome, 'Unmasking an American Revisionist of Marxism,' p. 70.)

“And here is how Jerome interprets it:

“What clearer apology could one find for the Bernsteinized traitors to Socialism in the parties of the Second International?' (*Ibid.*, p. 70).

“What clearer evidence is needed of Jerome's intellectual dishonesty? If this were the only instance of distortion of my meaning one might set it down to obtuseness. But this crude method of converting my views into their opposite is characteristic of almost every citation which Jerome gives from my writings.

“In the same essay I attempted to analyse the position of different groups which claimed to have inherited the real spirit of Marx's teachings. I begin the theme with a few introductory sentences which Jerome quotes:

“Of itself, however, this diversity of interpretation is not an unusual thing in the history of thought. There has hardly been a single thinker of historical importance who has not paid a price for having disciples; who has not been many things to many men.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 52)

“He stops short with this quotation and pretends that this ‘aside’ is a ‘thesis.’ He does not tell the reader that just a few paragraphs later I explicitly state what the real meaning of the conflicting interpretations of Marx is: (in order to show where I placed the emphasis, I even italicized in the original the key sentence of the following passage.)

“These conflicting doctrinal interpretations of Marxism were not mere variations on one intellectual theme. *They were different patterns of social response projected by different groups in a struggle to dominate the socio-economic scene.* They were ways of making history innocently paraded as methods of reading history. They told more about the orientation of these groups to the living issues which agitated them than they did about Marx.’ (‘Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx,’ *Symposium*, 1931, p. 330.)

“Jerome coolly writes:

“Hook explains the conflicting interpretation of revolutionary theories in terms of a hidden eternal principle; the fate in store for those who engender disciples. By this theory, the suppression, the corruption, and the betrayal of Marxism are to be explained . . . as an organic failing in Marx, the begetter of disciples’ (‘Unmasking an American Revisionist of Marxism,’ *The Communist*, January, 1933, p. 53).

“And of a similar passage Jerome writes:

“This statement can have but one meaning. The burden of the distortions of Marxism must not be allowed to fall on the distorters; it must be lodged with Marx himself.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 52.)

“In order to cover up this ‘editing’ of my works, Jerome lards his exposition thick with the epithets of fascist and social fascist. If he can make the readers of *The Communist* believe that I am ‘an employer of the tactics of the Second International,’ he can prevent them from actually going to the original articles. And if he can count upon readers of *The Communist* not reading my articles, there is nothing he cannot accuse me of. This he proceeds to do, selecting those points which he believes will discredit me in the eyes of revolutionary workers.

“He refers to me as ‘a materialist’ who can reply to Lenin’s warnings against revisionist attempts to undermine materialism by smuggling in religionism. (p. 55) This would indeed be a serious matter—if it were true! The evidence? Jerome quotes one soli-

tary sentence—no, only part of a sentence—from an old article in the *Journal of Philosophy* for 1928:

“‘God is dangerous to the social revolution only if he is an active God.’ (p. 55.)

“The passage from which this phrase is torn emphasizes the pronouncedly anti-theological character of Marxism:

“‘. . . if ‘causal reciprocity’ between thought and thing is unquestioned, why the emphasis, it may be asked, on the derived character of thought? The answer again brings us to the pronounced anti-theological spirit of the whole of Marxism. Every proposition in this philosophy, as we have seen, is so phrased as to rule out the notion of an ‘efficient’ God. God is dangerous to the social revolution only if he is an active God—only if he creates the worlds. And for the Marxist there is no other than ‘a creating God.’ If one calls the Universe or Humanity God—as in the popular interpretation of Spinoza, Hegel, Comte, etc.,—why, that is merely an abuse of terms.’ (‘Philosophy of Dialectic Materialism,’ *Journal of Philosophy*, ’28 p. 148).

“Nor does Jerome stop with this. He seeks to arouse the readers of *The Communist* against me by charging me with ‘utter contempt for Lenin.’ To understand the utter absurdity of this accusation, some historical remarks are in order.

“When Lenin’s *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was translated into English, I was called in to assist with the translation. (See editor’s note to Vol. VIII of Lenin’s *Works*. Eng. tr.) No one could be found who knew Russian and English and who was at the same time familiar with the technical terminology of philosophy. When the translation was published, I undertook a review in a technical journal to bring it to the attention of American philosophers. Some of them had made an attempt to read the book and were appalled by the strong language Lenin uses. Nothing in Anglo-American philosophy was like it. They complained that this was not a book on philosophy, but a personal attack whose nature was revealed in the very style of the book. In order to prevent the distaste for Lenin’s style to serve as a pretext for ignoring his book, I thought it my duty to point out that Lenin’s style was in no way ‘personal’ in the philistine sense; that it grew out of the controversial literature of Marxism about which little is known in English, and that it was to be explained not by an interest in pure ideas as such but with the problems of social revolution. And so I wrote:

“‘Lenin’s book is full-throated polemic from start to finish. Its style is peppered with opprobrious epithets and will turn the stomach of any one who is unacquainted with controversial literature of Marxism. But the defects of Lenin’s style are the defects of a

tradition. Vogt and Duhring began it with vitriolic attacks upon Marx. Engels and Marx, in their replies, repaid them with interest in the same coin and a whole host of epigoni have aped their literary manners. Compared to Lenin, however, they seem to be mere stammerers. But beneath this peculiar mannerism something more significant appears. These men are not interested in the play of ideas for their own sake. They are vitally interested in the practical bearings of ideas upon the matter in hand—the social revolution.' ('Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism,' *Journal of Philosophy*, 1928, p. 141-142.)

"Instead of taking issue with me on other points in the review, where I express genuine disagreement with one aspect of Lenin's theory of knowledge, Jerome seizes upon two sentences in the passage and pretends that I am expressing my disgust with Lenin. The sentences are:

"Its style is peppered with opprobrious epithets and will turn the stomach of anyone who is unacquainted with the controversial literature of Marxism. But the defects of Lenin's style are the defects of a tradition.'

"And for the benefit of the readers of *The Communist* who do not know the complete passage, Jerome exclaims:

"Turn the stomach! Such is the profound disgust this pretender that calls himself a Marxian feels at reading the work of the greatest of the Marxians.' (p. 55.)

"Marx somewhere says that no one can aspire to true scholarship who does not possess fundamental intellectual integrity. It is not surprising, therefore, that where Jerome does try to play the scholar—always by quotation, never by argument—he reveals himself to be incredibly ignorant of the elementary commonplaces of Marxism especially of Marxian economics which he accuses me of ignoring. The situation would be deliciously comical were it not spread upon the pages of *The Communist*.

"In the *Symposium* article, in the course of my criticism of the German social democracy, I asserted that to mask its social-reformism, the German Party taught that Marxism was a mechanistic science of social development rather than the theory and practice of social revolution:

"This shift becomes more pronounced in the writings of the self-styled orthodox like Kautsky, Hilferding and a host of lesser figures. Marxism was no longer regarded as essentially a theory and practice of social revolution but as a science of social development. The official theoretical emphasis implied that it was not so much a method of making history as of understanding it after it had been made. It was offered as something *sachlich* and free from value judgments, determining action in the same way as a mountain slope determines the movement of a glacier. It was objective and scientific in the

narrow sense. It carried the authority not only of power but of knowledge. It tried to prove its position by popularizing the deductions from the labor-theory of value in *Das Kapital* rather than by underscoring the revolutionary philosophy of the *Communist Manifesto* in which the labor theory of value was not even mentioned.' p. 335)

"Jerome disregards the main point of the passage. He fastens upon the final parenthetical expression, quotes a fragment of a sentence which out of context makes no sense, and interprets as follows:

"To Hook, in fact, the economic teachings of Karl Marx and the doctrine of the class struggle are not component elements of Marxism. As proof positive that the doctrine of surplus value is not basic to Marxism, he brings forward the idea of '... the revolutionary philosophy of the *Communist Manifesto* in which the labor theory of value is not even mentioned.' (*The Communist*, p. 56).

"The world of meaning which Jerome reads into this sentence is breath-taking. All it asserts is that the Marxian theory of value in the form in which it is found in *Capital*, is not contained in the *Communist Manifesto*. But Jerome presses on to deliver his death-blow. He cannot be bothered with minor details to which every honest critic pays attention. Here is his chance to reveal his own scholarship and to catch Hook, the distorter of Marxism, red-handed in his falsification. The labor-theory of value is found in the *Communist Manifesto*! So Jerome asserts. A momentous discovery—if true!

"The question is not where is the labor-theory of value mentioned in the *Communist Manifesto*? but; where is it not mentioned? The letter and spirit of every sentence in the *Manifesto* refute the Hookian assertion . . .' (*The Communist*, p. 56).

"The evidence? A passage from the *Manifesto* which expresses the Ricardian theory of the subsistent wage, a doctrine which Marx and Engels later expressly repudiated, and which turned up to Marx' intense scorn in Lassalle's writings as the discredited theory of the 'iron law of wages.'

"What is the essence of these words but the labor-theory of value?' asks Jerome. And then follows the passage from the *Manifesto*. 'Hence the cost of production of a workman is restricted almost entirely to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and also of labor, is equal to its cost of production.' (p. 57).

"So! This from one who would represent himself as the defender of the pure Marxist doctrine against attempts made to dilute it with the ideology of fascism and social fascism! Jerome

is ignorant of the fact that the distinction between labor and labor-power is the cornerstone of Marx's economic doctrines as expressed in the *Critique of Political Economy* and *Capital* and that the passage he quotes is not Marxian but Ricardian. That this is not a 'Hookian revision' is attested by Engels' introduction to Marx's *Wage Labor and Capital* where Engels explains why he substituted labor-power for labor in republishing Marx' early writings. The *Communist Manifesto* was never altered because it was an historic document of the first importance. After he has read Engels' *Introduction*, Jerome would do well to read Marx' *Critique of the Gotha Program*, where Lassalle and the German social democracy are dealt with, and thus prepared, should turn to *Capital* itself, Vol. I, Part II, chapter VI, p. 189, paragraph 2 (Kerr edition). And while he is about it, he might as well read the whole book!

"So much for Jerome's knowledge of Marxian economics. As for his knowledge of Marxian philosophy—are we not entitled to suspect a man who uses his terms wildly; now in this sense, now in that, and who is incapable of drawing a *logical* inference from what he reads? And, finally, as for Jerome's intellectual honesty—let the reader judge by the samples I have given. If he wishes to convince himself further, I invite him to make his own journey of exploration and track down Jerome's citations by going to my original articles.

"I believe I have given ample demonstration that no person like Jerome—or anyone who takes him on faith—can be trusted to give an accurate report, no less a valid criticism, of any man's thought, and *a fortiori*, of mine. I do not consider my thought above criticism. On the contrary, I have waited for it for many years. All that I ask is that it be honest. In order to facilitate this criticism, in the following section I shall state my position, necessarily in sketchy fashion. A fuller account will be found in a forthcoming book written to commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of Marx' death."

II.

What is the main characteristic of this reply by Hook? It is that Hook, in the most agile fashion, dodges or slurs over the main points of controversy. Instead of meeting the issues squarely, he takes refuge in the role of a misunderstood and abused person, the role of a martyr to stupidity. He complains of the "epithets of fascists and social fascist" seemingly under the belief that here we have possible application of that "principle" of instrumentalist philosophy which Hook stated in the following quotation:

"Marxism therefore appears in the main as a huge judgment of practice, in Dewey's sense of the phrase, and its truth or falsity

(instrumental adequacy) is an experimental matter. Believing it and acting upon it helps make it true or false." ("Marxism and Metaphysics," *The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 391.)

We are not in agreement with this pragmatic idea that we can make a fascist or social fascist of Sidney Hook merely by "believing it and acting upon it." It is our opinion that Hook's anxiety upon this score is groundless. In whatever direction he moves and in whatever camp he finally makes his home, he must look for the explanation within himself, and in the connection between his own thinking and acting and the social struggles of the day. And if it should chance that Hook some day becomes a consistent Marxist, it will be found that the "epithets" of which he complains have broken no bones. If they should play a role in the future development of Hook, it will be in the opposite sense to that embodied in the above quotation, i.e., if Hook should move toward Marxism and not away from it, they may help him to discard some of the ideological baggage which now weighs upon him and prevents such progress.

Now to the examination of some of the specific complaints by Hook of misquotation. Out of a long series of quotations he picks five which he claims are either distorted or show his own correctness as against Jerome. Let us examine the last one first as being the most important because most directly political. "The last shall be the first, and the first shall be the last."

Hook contends that Jerome, in denying Hook's assertion that the labor theory of value is not contained in the *Communist Manifesto*, merely exposes Jerome's "ignorance" of the fact that the theory of surplus value was formulated by Marx sometime after writing the *Communist Manifesto*. In this argument of Hook we are presented with some very interesting phenomena. Hook, the stickler for exactness, freely interchanges as synonymous the terms "labor theory of value" and the "theory of surplus value"! Without for the moment raising the question of the "fundamental intellectual integrity" of this juggling with two terms, it is certainly necessary to challenge Hook's "true scholarship" on this question.

What is the true history of the labor theory of value in relation to Marx' system? Perhaps we can prevail upon Hook to accept Lenin as an authority on this question. Lenin pointed out in his article "Three Sources and Three Constituent Parts of Marxism" that:

"His (Marx') teachings arose as a direct and immediate continuation of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and Socialism."

"It is the legitimate inheritor of the best that humanity created in the nineteenth century in the form of German philosophy, English political economy, French socialism."

“Adam Smith and David Ricardo in their investigation of the economic structure laid down the principle of the labor theory of value. Marx showed that the value of any commodity is defined by the quantity of socially necessary labor-time involved in its production.”

Why, therefore, is Hook so indignant that Jerome should be so “unscholarly” as to quote from the *Communist Manifesto* that terribly “Ricardian” paragraph expressing the labor theory of value? Marx never claimed to be the originator of this theory. He took it over from the classical economists and developed it further. It is true that the full development came only with the distinction between *labor* and *labor-power*, and the theory of surplus value, in Marx’s *Critique of Political Economy* which appeared in 1859. On the basis of this, however, Hook denies that the *Communist Manifesto* contains the labor theory of value. But of course it contained the labor theory of value, even though not in its final Marxian form, and of course this labor theory of value was an essential element in the *Communist Manifesto*. According to Hook, the labor theory of value only appears in Marx’s system in 1859. But what then is the significance of Marx’s pamphlet, *Wage-Labor and Capital*, which appeared in 1849? Does Hook insist that even *Wage-Labor and Capital* does not contain the labor theory of value? But of course it contained the labor theory of value, already so far developed that Engels in preparing this pamphlet for reprinting in 1891, was able to make it fully consonant with Marx’s *completed* economic system by a few changes in the text. As Engels himself explained:

“My alterations center about one point. According to the original reading, the worker sells his *labour* for wages, which he receives from the capitalist; according to the present text, he sells his *labour power*.”

But of course Hook knew these things when he wrote his reply to Jerome. He knew that the labor theory of value was a constituent part of Marxism as expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*. Of course he knew that the development of Marxism after the *Communist Manifesto* was not by the *introduction* of the labor theory of value, but by its *further elaboration* in the theory of surplus value and the distinction between labor and labor-power. Of course he knew that Marx and Engels never “repudiated” the labor theory of value as expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*, but developed it further and completed it as the keystone of their economic system.

We have for this the most authoritative statement—Marx’ and Engels’ preface of 1872, to the *Communist Manifesto*. Hook is

aware of this statement, since he makes reference to the preface in his reply. The statement reads:

"Though conditions may have changed in the course of the twenty-five years since the *Manifesto* was written, yet the general principles expounded in the document are on the whole as correct today as ever. A detail here and there might be improved."

It is in connection with possible improvement in a detail here and there that the authors state further in the preface that:

"Meanwhile, the *Manifesto* itself has become a historic document which we do not feel we have any right to alter."

Certainly the principle of the labor theory of value is not "a detail here and there." When, therefore Hook seeks to make the authors' hesitancy to introduce any change refer to the labor theory of value, we have the right to question the frankness of his argument.

Hook further tries to obscure the question by saying, with regard to the disputed quotation from his article "Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx", that "all it asserts is that the Marxian theory of value in the form in which it is found in *Capital* is not contained in the *Communist Manifesto*." But that is not what he said in the disputed paragraph, the argument of which was directed to proving that the theory of surplus value is not a necessary part of the Marxian system because it did not spring forth fully-grown like Minerva from the brow of Jove.

So much for the "distortion," in the examination of which we receive additional light on the "scholarship" not to speak of the "intellectual integrity" of Hook in conducting theoretical polemics. We will deal more fully with this point in dealing with the second section of Hook's reply, where he restates his revisionist theory.

On this point all that can be conceded to Hook's criticism is that Jerome did not bring forth the historical aspects of the development of the labor theory of value in Marx' system. But Jerome was absolutely correct in attacking this point in Hook's writing, and in interpreting it as an attempt to separate Marx' method from Marx' conclusions. This is even more clearly brought out when we examine the more extended quotation offered above by Hook. There we see clearly reflected Hook's fundamental idea of a contradiction between "objective and scientific" knowledge, on the one hand, and "revolutionary philosophy", on the other hand. This is only another expression of the idealist trend of Hook's thought. In the above it shows itself in placing the *Communist Manifesto* against *Capital*. In another place it shows itself in his placing Lenin's *What Is To Be Done* in contradiction with his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. In each case it is a way of placing theory in opposition to action. In each case it is a denial of the objective

scientific validity of the revolutionary program of the Communist Party.

Now let us consider "distortion" number two, i.e., the quotation of Hook's characterization of Lenin's polemics against the idealists in *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism*. Jerome clearly and correctly exposed Hook's acknowledged and unacknowledged "genuine disagreement" with Lenin and Marx on the theory of cognition. Here it might be said by the over-fastidious that Jerome proved too much when he interpreted this as expressing Hook's personal "disgust" with Lenin's polemics, because this is not a *necessary* but only a *possible* conclusion. And the *necessary* conclusion from the full paragraph as quoted above by Hook, is that it is an example of an apologetic attitude towards the characteristically Marxist-Leninist nature of the book under examination, its character as an energetic assault upon bourgeois philosophical systems. To apologize for the polemical nature of Marx' and Lenin's writings means to attack the essence of Marxism. Precisely the absence from Hook's writing of any attack against the bourgeois philosophies, precisely its replacement by a conciliatory attitude at best and in the worst case of the open identification with these bourgeois philosophies, serves as one of the best indications that Hook's Marxism is in reality a fundamental revisionism. Jerome would have made a stronger case against Hook on this point if he had ignored the irrelevant question of Hook's "stomach" and given more attention to Hook's mind where the disorder was more serious.

Now to "distortion" number three. Can it be said that Hook has improved the situation by giving the largest paragraph from which Jerome took the sentence about the dangerousness of the God idea? Hardly. It is quite true that in evaluating philosophical trends, Marxists have always gone behind the verbal form to find the true nature of the thought; and that they have found essential elements of materialist philosophy, and even the rudiment of a materialist system, embodied in the thought of idealist and deist philosophers. But can one jump, as does Hook, from this fact to the position that "God is dangerous to the social revolution only if he is an active God—only if he creates worlds"? By no means. One cannot do this, unless he abandons the ground of Marxism. It is not only a fully developed theology that is "dangerous to the social revolution", but also every fragment of religious ideology, even in its most attenuated form. Hook's refutation of Jerome, therefore, only serves to emphasize and round out the judgment, that on this question Hook departs from Marxism in a serious manner. That is, indeed, at the very least, opening the doors for "smuggling in religionism".

"Distortion" number four. Here Hook complains of a particular paragraph from which he is interpreted as ascribing to Marx himself the responsibility for the varying interpretations of Marx. Against this he quotes a different paragraph which, in a vague way, indicates another possible interpretation. Perhaps if these two paragraphs stood alone, it would be possible to concede a "Scotch verdict" to Hook on this question: "Not proved"! But unfortunately for Hook's rebuttal, this question has to be considered in connection with other things he has written. It would have been more to the point that Hook should explain the meaning in this connection of the quotation from his article reproduced in the January issue of *The Communist*, p. 66. There he said that "in Russia it (Marxism) is a symbol of revolutionary theology; in Germany, of a vague social religion; in France, of social reform; and in England and America, of wrong-headed political tactics." If in the light of this paragraph Hook wishes to refute Jerome's specific charge, it can only be by confirming the general charge that Hook had (and by implication still has until he publicly corrects himself), an understanding of Marxism in conflict with that of the Communist Party and the Communist International. But he cannot eat his cake and have it too. He cannot cry out against "distortions" and proclaim that our differences have been willfully created by us, for some mysterious reason, and at the same time maintain his own freedom to lightly-dismiss the Marxism of Lenin and Stalin as "theology."

And now the final "distortion"; namely, the quotation from the paragraph regarding the German social democracy vote for the war budgets in 1914. Here, if we were confined to the evidence given, formal justice would require a verdict for Hook against Jerome. Jerome's crime in this respect is serious, because he thereby detracted slightly from the full force of his attack against Hook's revisionism. The connection between Hook and Bernstein is more deep and fundamental (and at the same time more subtle) than can be disclosed by any interpretation of a crude endorsement of, or apology for, the voting of the war budgets. But this must not allow us to forget the *substantial* point under examination, that Hook insists that Bernstein's economic views "could all be retained with certain modification within the framework of the Marxian position." In other places Hook goes out of his way to praise Bernstein.

Jerome was fully justified in relating Hook to Bernstein. The true depths of this must be traced, however, in their common denial of objective scientific validity to Marxism, their common rejection of the goal of the proletarian movement as something that can be a matter of knowledge before it is reached, the exaltation of method over the product of the method, etc. It is not in the complicity in a particular historical action, or judgment of that action, that the

unity of thought between Hook and Bernstein is expressed, but rather in the fundamental direction of their thought on basic questions of philosophy, resulting in each case in efforts to revise the Marxian system.

So much for the first section of Hook's reply to Jerome. It is clear that Jerome's indictment stands. When Hook thought he was delivering a smashing "left hook" that would score an ideological knockout, he was swinging wide of the mark, and left himself more open for counter-attack than before. This may serve as an additional object-lesson in the futility of logical agility in conflict with the objective truth of the monolithic Marxian system. From the light exercise of countering these puny blows, we may pass on to more serious business.

(To be continued)

Prologue to the Liberation of the Negro People

By JAMES S. ALLEN

II *

THE period of reconstruction (1865-1877) was the historical antecedent to the national-revolutionary struggle of the Negro people in the present period. It is therefore not surprising that those who deny the national-revolutionary character of the Negro question should remain oblivious to the real revolutionary content of reconstruction. It is impossible to appreciate the full and real meaning of that period unless one grasps the whole range of historical development set in motion by it.

When Mr. Herberg¹ overlooks entirely the revolutionary traditions stemming from the struggles of the Negro people in the Civil War period he does so from the "vantage point" not of Marxism-Leninism but of the Lovestoneite position on the Negro question, which, like that position in general, constitutes a basic revision of Marxism-Leninism. The Lovestoneites have never been able to overcome the social-democratic position on the national question and, in particular, the Socialist Party stand on the Negro question. The "pure class" theory of the Socialists and the "race theories" of the bourgeoisie are combined to produce the Lovestoneite theory of "caste" which serves but as a convenient weapon with which to deny the Leninist conception of the Negro question as a national question. Mr. Herberg's peregrinations into American history are made from the "vantage point" of the coat-tails of the bourgeoisie.

It has been a commonplace among both the bourgeois and Bourbon historians and those who echo them that the Negroes were handed their freedom on a silver platter by the North, without they themselves exerting any effort to obtain or broaden it. To a man they assert that the Negroes blindly followed in the tow of the Northern bourgeoisie, helplessly submitting to the dictates of the "carpet-baggers" and functioning as an inert mass which by its

* The first part of this study was printed in the December, 1932, issue of *The Communist*, under the title. "Distorters of the Revolutionary Heritage of the American Proletariat."

¹ In his article "The Civil War in New Perspective," *Modern Quarterly* No. 2, 1932. See first article in the December, 1932, issue of *The Communist*.

mere weight acted as ballast for Republican Party power. In the same breath these historians deliver themselves of heated invectives against that very "Negro domination and aggression" which they a moment ago claimed did not exist, and with ill-concealed distaste record innumerable facts to controvert their own theses. This theory of the "inert mass" finds its expression today in the efforts of the white and Negro bourgeoisie to chain the Negro masses to the chariot of their executioners—Yankee imperialism. The whole coterie of present-day Negro reformists with their disdainful references to their own people as the "ignorant mass" tries to carry over an alliance with the bourgeoisie from a previous historical period to the present day when that bourgeoisie has long since become irrevocably reactionary. Today such an "alliance" can mean only the alliance of the Negro bourgeoisie with the white imperialists at the expense of the Negro masses. To overlook entirely, as Mr. Herberg does, the nature of that alliance during the Civil War period, and the revolutionary role played by the Negro people, not as a mute following, but as an active ally, is to lend support to a whole historical line of betrayal.

The events that transpired in the subjection of the South were so distorted and misrepresented by the ideologists of the bourgeoisie which had one foot on the path to counter-revolution before it had hardly entered upon the path to revolution, that even Negro historians and "Marxists", among whom is to be found Mr. Herberg, are unable to disentangle themselves from the mess. So laborious is the task of excavating the main contents of this period, despite the innumerable books that have been written by bourgeois historians about it, that we will be satisfied if, in the space of this article, we can give at least an indication of the revolutionary role played by the Negro people. Much original research by Marxist-Leninists will have to be done before this revolutionary decade will emerge in complete and distinct outline.

Even as they were emerging from chattel slavery the Negro people entered upon the struggle for bourgeois democracy. Both phases of the struggle were inseparable due to the fact that the bourgeois-democratic revolution occurred when American capitalism had already reached a relatively high stage of development in the North. The sweep of the revolution converted the ex-slave immediately into a fighter for bourgeois democracy. This process was accelerated by the fact that emancipation did not come as a result of a proclamation issued from above, but as the result of a bitterly fought war in which the Negroes themselves were involved. When Lincoln was convinced by the impact of events that, in the words of Frederick Douglass, "the nation would have to unchain against her foes her powerful black hand," and reluctantly per-

mitted the recruiting of Negroes into the Northern armies, free Negroes of the North, ex-slaves in the territory occupied by the Northern army, and slaves fleeing from the plantations in the interior, rushed to arms. Almost 200,000 Negroes enlisted, of whom 80,000 perished—they bore the brunt of the attack. “Curiously enough,” says a bewildered Southern historian, “Mississippi furnished more troops to the Union Army than it did to the Confederate Army, the number being 545 whites and 79,000 blacks.”² “Curious” only when one tries to reconcile such facts with the usual bourgeois slander.

The numerous slave revolts had been defeated in their isolation. This time thousands of Denmark Vesey, Nat Turners, Shields, Greens and Copelands are on the march in company with a powerful ally and on the path of a sweeping revolution. The Negroes—the ex-slaves, the “ignorant, illiterate mass”—give the army its revolutionary fervor. To the rear of the enemy lines slaves learn what is happening and act as scouts for Northern troops. Two slave insurrections are drowned in blood in South Carolina before the troops arrive—“a terrible ‘army with banners’, encouraging the Negroes to engage in pillage, fraternizing with them, and telling them that they were free.” Charleston, the scene of Vesey’s defeat, becomes the scene of his victory. The first troops entering the city are led by a Negro soldier bearing a banner inscribed with the word “Liberty.” The Negro regiments, led by the famous Fifty-Fourth of Massachusetts, follow singing “John Brown’s Body.” The streets ring with the cheers of the ex-slaves. Negro troops search every house in the city “for the purpose of proclaiming freedom and seizing firearms and abandoned property.” The slave pens and the auction blocks are destroyed and burned.³

The newly won liberty knows no bounds. The rough, calloused hand of the ex-slave brushes aside the polished lumber of the aristocracy. “Their whole manner has changed,” wails a maternal plantation owner. “They took to calling their former owners by their last name without any title before it . . . dropped the pleasant term of ‘mistress’ . . . walked about with guns upon their shoulders.”⁴ Peasants with guns upon their shoulders—foreboding, menacing. In Russia a half century goes by before the peasants in mass enter upon a revolutionary struggle. Here the struggle reaches a high plane at the start. The sun rises upon emancipation and sets upon the struggle for land and freedom.

² James W. Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi*, p. 19.

³ Francis B. Simkins and Robert H. Woody, *South Carolina During Reconstruction*, p. 15.

⁴ Frances B. Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation*, p. 132.

There is perhaps no parallel in history—with the exception of the formerly oppressed peoples of the Soviet Union—to the rapidity with which the American Negroes have passed through the various phases of their development as a people. This is due, not to any inborn quality of the Negroes, but to the peculiar condition brought about by the existence of slavery side by side with capitalism and the stormy impact of the two. Barely 60 years before the end of the Civil War, the slave trade with Africa had been barred by the American government. At that time there were 1,000,000 slaves in the country, who had come from different tribes in varying stages of primitive society. Under the blows of a concentrated slave plantation system, which began to attain its most rapid rate of development only at the beginning of the 19th century, the Negroes were welded together as an agrarian people on a common territory. And yet, barely 60 years after the abolition of the slave trade, this people can impart a tremendous revolutionary impetus to the development of American capitalism and itself take up the cudgels for bourgeois democracy.

For the ex-slaves, bourgeois democracy means first of all the possession of the land. The Northern bourgeoisie orders the expropriation of the cotton of the slave-owners—only to return it later. It stops to draw its breath before the first faltering expropriation of the land, the houses, the belongings of the Bourbons—and then faces right about. But under the first impulses of the revolution the ex-slaves advance in a direct line toward the fulfilment of its tasks. The first impulse is destruction of the outward implements of slave exploitation. “Upon the flight of the planters, the slaves’ hatred of the cotton industry showed itself in a savage destruction of cotton gins.”⁵ But this soon gives way to “unauthorized”, “illegal” expropriations. In Virginia, former slave-breeding center, “some freed men settled on abandoned plantations . . . where they constructed rude huts in which they dwelt until forcibly ejected from the property.”⁶ When Port Royal, S. C., is captured by the Union Army in November, 1861, “the freedmen occupied houses and smashed or appropriated their contents. They tore down churches and used the lumber to build cabins for themselves, and they broke open church organs and blew the pipes in the streets.”⁷ Churches for cabins and church organ pipes for blowing in freedom—the revolution in its first stages of ecstasy.

Negro soldiers play a leading role in the first open revolutionary

⁵ Edward L. Pierce, *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1863.

⁶ A. A. Taylor, *Reconstruction in Virginia*, p. 35.

⁷ Simkins, p. 7.

seizures. The daughter of a plantation owner outside of Charleston, S. C., complains that "they broke open the storehouse, smokehouse and barns, and threw out to the Negroes all the provisions they could find."⁸ These are not merely seizures of a conquering army in a vanquished territory, but revolutionary actions carried out together with the Negro toilers. Mississippi is but just conquered for the North, and already the New Orleans newspapers have alarming editorials about the movement for land. "Senator Lamar stated that in December, 1865, whites came into Vicksburg in great fear, saying that the Negroes were arming and demanding lands by Christmas, or they would take them by force."⁹

These first spontaneous actions of the Negroes raise sharply the issues at stake and pronounce a revolutionary course for their solution. Land and political liberty for the Negroes are the historical aims expressing themselves in these first spontaneous seizures. The slavocracy had realized full well the consistent course of revolution. The Confederate Congress, in its last address of March 1865, warned that the penalty for the defeat of the South in the war would be "the confiscation of the estates, which would be given to their former bondsmen."¹⁰

But the Confederates reckoned without the bourgeoisie. Much depends upon its action. For the Negroes do not have a class among them capable of leading the revolution through to its completion. A free Negro working class is almost nil, scattered in the cities of the North and South, still in its swaddling clothes. No less incipient is the Negro bourgeoisie. During slavery a small urban Negro petty bourgeoisie, chiefly in the North, had begun to breathe. It supplies ministers, teachers, journalists, lawyers who are to play an important part in the political leadership of the Negro masses during reconstruction. The white working class has not yet matured into an independent revolutionary existence. The small white farmers and "poor whites" must also look to a more decisive revolutionary class for leadership. The only class able to supply decisive revolutionary leadership in this period is the industrial bourgeoisie. Its revolutionary abilities and wants are bound by the conditions of capitalist development and its own class needs. It is revolutionary only insofar as it is necessary to destroy the pre-capitalist slave power and insure its own hegemony. It stops short at this minimum task for the process of its accomplishment has set it on an accelerated course of capitalist development, thereby sharpening all the class contradictions of the bourgeois democracy.

⁸ Simkins, p. 7.

⁹ Jesse T. Wallace, *History of the Negroes in Mississippi*, p. 23.

¹⁰ Walter L. Fleming, *North American Review*, May, 1906, p. 723.

Even in the early large-scale confiscation of the plantations during the war it was by no means assured that this land would be given to the ex-slaves, as was being promised by the leading bourgeois democrats of the North. Instead the Freedmen's Bureau and army officers were taking advantage of this confiscation to turn a good profit. Large tracts of abandoned or confiscated land were sold to speculators or leased to white contractors, many of whom were in the Northern army of occupation, and who contracted for Negro labor at \$7 a month. Governor Andrews of Massachusetts, the storm center of abolition, invested \$30,000 in a Mississippi plantation hoping to turn a tremendous profit in the process of freeing the slaves. Plantations were being worked with "contrabands" for the federal government, with wages at \$10 a month. The bourgeoisie was giving the former slaves their first taste of "free wage labor" on the very land it had promised them. But having faith in the promises of the Northern bourgeoisie, the ex-slaves helped the Freedmen's Bureau in the confiscation of abandoned lands, with the expectation that it would be theirs. When the slogans of the revolution were still being taken seriously by a number of Northern generals, the right of the Negroes to lands they had taken possession of was granted in some districts. By 1865 more than 40,000 Negroes had taken possession of the plantations on the Sea Islands, S. C., under leases or temporary grants, pending legislation by Congress which, the Negroes thought, would certainly grant them the land permanently.

During the two years immediately following the war the revolution in the South holds its breath and even retreats pending the outcome of the struggle of the industrial bourgeoisie for complete hegemony. The petty-bourgeoisie, represented politically by President Johnson and the Copperheads, seeks to prolong its political life by alliance with the Bourbons. In spite of his earlier invectives against the slave aristocracy, Johnson, following in the footsteps of Lincoln, attempts to strengthen his own position by a rapid restoration of the Southern states to the Union. He demands only that the ex-slaveowners recognize emancipation, already established by force of arms. Suffrage, social and political rights, land for the freedmen, he brushes aside. He is quick to patch up new state governments in the South composed of leading Confederates.

Marx follows events very closely and hardly is Johnson installed as president, when he writes Engels (June 24, 1865):

"Johnson's policy annoys me. Laughable affection of force against certain individuals; until now highly vacillating and weak in practice. The reaction has already begun in America and will soon become much stronger if the slovenliness existing up to now is not stopped."¹¹

¹¹ *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe, Dritte Abteilung, Der Briefwechsel zwischen Marx und Engels*, Marx Engels Verlag, Berlin, Band 4, p. 275.

The reaction, however, does not continue on a straight line. Another period of revolution is to intervene. In his reply to Marx's letter Engels points out that "without colored suffrage nothing can be done, and the decision of the question Johnson leaves to the defeated ex-slaveholders." But he sees that the revolution must yet complete its first lap. "However," he adds, "it must be counted upon that things will develop differently than the Mr. Barons imagine . . . The oligarchy is going to its doom finally, but the process could be now quickly finished at one stroke, while it is being prolonged."¹²

During the earlier period of the war, when Engels, "seeing only the military aspects of things," was highly disgusted with the progress of the revolution, Marx had written him that the situation at that time was "at most a kind of reaction that arises in every revolutionary movement."¹³ Now, too, Johnson's reactionary holiday (Presidential Reconstruction), is to give way before a period of revolution (Congressional Reconstruction), which in turn, is followed by counter-revolution.

But during this intervening period of reaction, in which the "doom of the oligarchy is being prolonged," the ex-slaveholders are returning to power in the South. The first Constitutional Conventions held in the Southern states under Johnson's reconstruction plan, are elected without the participation of the Negroes and consist for the most part of old Confederate leaders. These Conventions accept as a political expediency the emancipation of the Negroes, but for practical purposes pass the "Black Codes" which are intended to re-enslave the Negroes on the plantations as forced laborers minus the outward trappings of chattel slavery. The enlightened paternalism of the ex-slaveholders is expressed admirably by the president of the first Georgia Convention. His words have a contemporary ring: "Our conduct should be kind, magnanimous, just . . . we may indulge a hope that we may organize them [the Negroes] into a class of trustworthy laborers."¹⁴ The non-slaveholding whites form the "left" in these Conventions, hailing the emancipation of the Negroes as "nothing more nor less than that of the whites," for the poor-whites had been also disfranchised and excluded from any political liberty under the slavocracy.

But the president of the Georgia Convention reckons without the Negro masses who are not so willing to be organized into "a

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 276.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Band 3, p. 111.

¹⁴ Paul Levinson, *Race, Class and Party*, p. 34.

class of trustworthy laborers." The landless ex-slaves want land and, together with the Negro petty-bourgeois leaders many of whom have received training at the hands of the Abolitionists in the North, push the struggle for land and political freedom. Ex-slaveowners, who are being pardoned right and left by Johnson, are also being returned their right to the plantations which had been confiscated and many of which are in the hands of the Negroes. On the Sea Islands the Negroes arm themselves with every available weapon to drive off the returning landowners. The leader of a group of Negro squatters tells them: "You had better go back to Charleston, and go to work there, and if you can do nothing else, you can pick oysters and earn your living as the loyal people have done—by the sweat of their brows."¹⁵ Johnson intervenes and sends General Howard, head of the Freedmen's Bureau, to settle the situation in favor of the planters.

The Negro settlers were "angry and overwhelmed at the news he brought. They felt that the government had deceived them and a stormy outbreak was with difficulty avoided." The Negroes refused to abide by the compromise agreement which would turn them into share-croppers, and held to the land until ousted by the Johnson militia. Fleming, a leading bourgeois historian of reconstruction, tells with what revolutionary determination the Negroes fought for the land:

"They began to fear that they were being tricked. They had secured arms, and now some of the leaders threatened that, if the division did not occur, they would forcibly seize the land . . . In Virginia, when the blacks heard that their hopes were in vain, they destroyed the fencing and other improvements."¹⁶

Negro and white soldiers among the Federal troops and local Negro militias lead and participate in the struggle to retain the land already occupied and in the agitation for the seizure of new land. A reporter of the abolitionist *Nation* is shocked at the direct manner in which the freedmen choose to put the slogans of the revolution into effect. "In the best of our regiments," he complains, "there are a few mischief makers who persuade the field hands that they should refuse to work, that they are the rightful owners of the land." So active a role do the troops in Mississippi play in the land agitation that in 1865 Governor Humphrey complains to President Johnson that the Negro troops "did infinite mischief by misrepresenting the purpose and intentions of the state government, and by circulating reports among the freedmen that the lands would be divided among them, and by advising them

¹⁵ Simkins, p. 229.

¹⁶ Fleming, *op. cit.*, pp. 727-732.

not to work for their late masters." The agitation increases: the commander of a Negro regiment at Jackson tells the landless Negro peasantry that they must defend their rights "to the click of the pistol, and at the point of the bayonet." Finally the Governor sends a commission to Washington "to lay before the president the condition of affairs as regards Negro troops and the danger of insurrection among them, and to procure arms for the state militia."¹⁷ In Virginia the Bourbon press protests vigorously against the "nightly drilling and parading of armed Negroes in the principal cities of the state on almost every local or national holiday."¹⁸

Efforts to force the freedmen into share-cropping meet with sharp resistance. "I am offering them even better terms than I did last year," complains a large plantation owner. "But nothing satisfies them. Grant them one thing and they demand something more, and there is no telling where they will stop."¹⁹ The Negro peasantry presses the point. Share-cropping or forced labor contracts smell acutely of the old days. If freedom means anything it means land and the vote. The revolution will revolve around these points for a decade and finally give way to the counter-revolution. Every year there will be reports of "Negro insurrections and conspiracies" for the seizure of the land. The Governor of Mississippi again warns the Negroes in 1867 that "the first outbreak against the peace and quiet of the state would signalize the destruction of their cherished hopes and the ruin of their race."²⁰ But two years of petty-bourgeois vacillation in the North and alliance with the Bourbons have permitted the former slave-owners to regain their plantations. The revolution will never again reach the point of wholesale confiscation. By the time the Radical Republican forces gain control in Washington, the bourgeoisie is already engaged in another form of expropriation—the expropriation of the pioneer farmers of the West for the benefit of the railroad and mining companies.

Under the leadership of former Negro abolition leaders, an organized movement against Johnson reconstruction and the Black Code governments gets under way with the holding of Negro conventions in the Southern states. These represent the first concerted political action by the Negroes. The Colored Peoples Convention of South Carolina, held in Charleston in November, 1865, sends a resolution to the State Legislature and a memorial to Congress. The resolution demands the repeal of the Black Codes

¹⁷ Garner, p. 107.

¹⁸ Taylor, *Virginia*, p. 62.

¹⁹ Thomas J. Woofter, *Negro Migration*, p. 38.

²⁰ Garner, p. 176.

and the right to vote and testify in court. The memorial to Congress raises sharply the main demands of the Negro people in the revolution. Above all it demands that "a fair and impartial construction be given to the pledges of the government to us concerning the land question." No less does it stress the demand for equal suffrage. All the democratic rights are demanded for the Negro people. "We ask that the three great agents of civilized society—the school, the pulpit, the press—be as secure in South Carolina as in Massachusetts or Vermont . . . We ask that colored men shall not in every instance be tried by white men, and that neither by custom or enactment shall we be excluded from the jury box." The document demands "the right to assemble in peaceful convention, to discuss the political questions of the day; the right to enter upon all the avenues of agriculture, commerce, trade; to amass wealth by thrift and industry . . ." The Convention also adopts a vigorous resolution demanding free public education for white and Negro alike. The demands cover the whole gamut of bourgeois rights, from suffrage to private property. They bear the stamp of the bourgeois-democratic revolution more legibly than any other document produced by it.

But there is no illusion about peaceful evolution towards bourgeois democracy. The Convention protests to Congress against the effort of the State Legislature to disarm the Negroes and demands that the Negroes be permitted to retain their arms.²¹ Only the armed people can prevent restoration and push the revolution along the road of fulfilment.

The political victory of the industrial bourgeoisie in the North halts for a moment the Bourbon reaction in the South and at the same time institutes bourgeois reaction in the North against the workers and farmers. The passage of the Reconstruction Acts by Congress in 1867 marks the decisive defeat of the petty-bourgeoisie. The course of bourgeois victory had been marked during the past few years by new legislation forced through Congress. The moderate income tax of the war days was replaced by the highest tariffs yet reached; a national banking system had been established and financial legislation passed which accelerated the massing of capital in the hands of bankers; railroad corporations were obtaining tremendous grants of land through Congress. The Immigration Act of 1864 had permitted the importation of workers under contract (similar to the indentured servants of colonial days) to be used by the capitalists to keep wages down and replace the labor shortage caused by the migration of workers to the new lands

²¹ *Proceedings of the Colored Peoples's Convention of the State of South Carolina*, held in Zion Church, Charleston, November, 1865.

opened up by the Homestead Law. By the time the Reconstruction Acts are passed a cynical newspaper correspondent can suggest that Congress permanently adjourn and inscribe on its doors: "The business of this establishment will be done hereafter in the office of the Pennsylvania Railroad."

We have already shown in our previous article how the rapid development of capitalism brought about by the war itself sharpened the class antagonisms and that the workers were rapidly organizing unions and entering upon major class conflicts. Now the alliance of the farmers of the West with the bourgeoisie against the slavocracy is also disrupted by the tremendous land grabs in the West and the expropriation of the pioneer farmers and homesteaders, which begin at this time. Two years later, when it has reached its height, Marx, in a letter to Engels, writes that:

"The railroad to California is being built with the bourgeoisie giving itself through Congress an enormous amount of 'people's land,' expropriating it from the workers, while it imports Chinese laborers to push down wages and, finally, institutes a new layer of the 'finance aristocracy.'" ²²

It is with the growing and stormy protests of the farmers and workers against the "financial oligarchy" already ringing in its ears, that the bourgeoisie sets out to still the Bourbon power in the rear and assure itself complete hegemony over the nationally united home market which it had surrounded with a high tariff wall. The Reconstruction Acts set forth the course of action to assure the attainment of these ends. They call for armed dictatorship in the South, under which the Bourbons are to be completely disfranchised, the Negroes guaranteed the right to vote, and new Constitutional Conventions held. Only when these Conventions should pass new state constitutions approved by the majority of the voters and the new state legislatures have approved the Fourteenth Amendment (guaranteeing "equal protection of the law" to all born or naturalized in the United States, cutting down Congressional representation where the right of suffrage is abridged, and disqualifying for federal and state office all participants in the Confederacy) are the states to be re-admitted into the Union. By the utilization of the time-honored method of dictatorship, which is to rely almost entirely upon the armed Negro people, does the bourgeoisie plan to consolidate its rule over the South. Drawing the Negro people into the realm of bourgeois democracy is to assure to the North a powerful ally and a popular mass support for the dictatorship. Not a word is said about the land question in these Acts, for the bourgeoisie engaged in land expropriations for itself

²² *Der Briefwechsel*, Band, 4, pp. 219-220.

although Stevens, whom Herberg calls "the indomitable warrior," is chairman of the Committee on Reconstruction.

The Union Leagues, organized by the Radical Republicans, now become the center of organization for the Negro masses in the Black Belt and the "poor whites" in the hills. The national center in New York is dominated by the big industrialists and bankers among whom is Jay Cooke. In the South the Union Leagues play a role similar to that of the Jacobin Clubs during the Great French Revolution. Here they become the organizing center of the popular revolution, playing a decisive role in the preparations for the Constitutional Conventions and first revolutionary State Legislatures. In the up-country the Leagues had first become active in the organization of the small white landowners and landless whites at the close of the war and had organized the earlier anti-Bourbon state governments in Kentucky, West Virginia and Tennessee. Fleming estimates that by 1866, 30% of the white population in the traditionally anti-Bourbon upland country of all Southern states had been organized in the Leagues. But when the revolution enters the path of armed dictatorship its center is naturally in the Black Belt, the center alike of the Negro people and of the Bourbon power. It is here that the issues of Reconstruction are decided in action and the Negroes play the decisive role in their solution. The landless whites and non-slaveholding farmers are for a time to be the allies of the Negroes. For it is largely as a result of the awakening to revolutionary activity of the Negro masses, that democratic gains are made for the "poor whites" as well as Negroes. From the beginning the main strategy of the Bourbons is to split off this ally from the Negro people, taking advantage of the race hatred left as a heritage from the slave system, and only when this is accomplished will it realize the armed bands of the counter-revolution against the Negroes. It will be at the price of permitting the mountain folk and poor whites to retain the democratic rights deprived the Negroes by force, that the counter-revolution will be able to consolidate its victory.

The leaders of the Union Leagues are almost all Negroes. In many places its local councils are synonymous with the Negro militia and rifle clubs. In South Carolina the local League organizations have all been turned into people's militias and it is against them that the K.K.K., the first contingent of the counter-revolution, fears the creation of a new "intelligent and industrious yeomanry, equally removed from luxury and poverty," which Thaddeus Stevens saw as the main support of every bourgeois democracy. The prime question of the land, which has dominated the revolution in the South for the past two years, is thus passed over in silence, directs its energy. For the Leagues are in reality the heart of

the popular revolution directing the masses in the Radical Republican Party and pushing the revolution forward.

The following account, despite its obvious counter-revolutionary bias, gives some idea of how the "storm center" of the revolution functioned:

"The meetings of the Councils [of the Union League] were held once a week in Negro churches and schoolhouses, around which armed guards were stationed; inflammatory speeches were made by carpet-baggers [white Radical Republicans from the North] and Negro leaders; confiscation and division of property and social rights were promised . . . The members went armed to the meetings and were there trained in military drill, often after dark, much to the alarm of the whites [landowners, naturally] in the community. In South Carolina the Loyal Leagues were simply the Negro militia. Military parades were frequently held. If a white person became obnoxious to the League, his buildings were likely to be burned."²³

While the Northern bourgeoisie would not commit itself in writing on the land question, the platforms of the Union Republican Party and the Leagues call outright for "the abolition of the large estates." In addition they demand all the democratic rights for the Negroes and "poor whites". At the state convention of the Radical Republican Party in South Carolina in 1867, the proposal is made that a Negro be Republican vice-presidential candidate in the next election.²⁴

In South Carolina, Mississippi and Louisiana the course of revolution is the bloodiest, each battle the hardest fought, the counter-revolution meets with prolonged and stubborn resistance. These states were the center of the slavocracy; now they become the central battlefield of the revolution. For here the Negro population is the largest and the most concentrated and revolutionary energy the most intensive. In these states the parliamentary bodies created by the revolution are more completely people's assemblies, and especially of the Negroes. In South Carolina and Louisiana especially the Negroes dominate the Constitutional Conventions and the State Legislatures which follow. It is here that the "notorious Black Parliaments" invoke the greatest invectives from the Bourbons and later from the bourgeois historians. For these bodies represent the highest political expression of the democratic revolution.

The Constitutional Conventions take place only as the culmination of a stubborn struggle in which the Negro militias and Northern troops must give reality to the suffrage granted by the Reconstruction Acts. The former confederates attempt to prevent them by sabotaging the elections and by force. At an earlier

²³ Walter L. Fleming, *Documents Relating to Reconstruction*, No. 3, p. 5.

Convention in New Orleans, where the Negroes have left their arms at home on the pleas of some of their own petty-bourgeois leaders, the mass parade to the Convention Hall is attacked, but this does not deter the march. The procession is joined in its march by many who fall into line with their working clothes on. At the hall the white and Negro delegates are attacked with rifle fire by a Bourbon mob led by white policemen, and 38 are killed and hundreds wounded before the attackers are driven off with brickbats.²⁵

"Never more astonishing conventions, in personnel, in a civilized country," exclaims Claude G. Bowers, the present-day Bourbon and leading Democratic Party politician.²⁶ Astonishing indeed to Bowers, who foams at the mouth out of fear that history will next time speak in a gruffer and more decisive voice. For the social composition of the Conventions is overwhelmingly peasant and small-landowning with a sprinkling of urban bourgeois representatives. In South Carolina, out of 124 delegates, 76 are Negroes, nearly all of whom have two years before been slaves. The up-country is represented by some substantial farmers and many "low-down white" (scalawags). This convention of illiterate, newly awakened peasants without land proceeds to write a constitution which if put into effect today would revolutionize South Carolina. It sweeps aside all the cobwebs of history in the remotest corner of the oligarchy. It proclaims all the democratic rights—universal suffrage, no property qualifications for office-holding, representation by population and not by property, no imprisonment for debt, no discrimination against Negroes, universal education and a public school system, the rights of women, the reorganization of the county governments along democratic lines.

"These documents," rages Bowers, "framed by ignorance, malevolence, and partisanship, sounded the death knell of civilization in the South." They did indeed sound the death knell of the slavocracy.

The proceedings of the Conventions show their unmistakable roots in the soil. The land question is the most frequently and heatedly discussed in the South Carolina Convention. Through the eyes of a Southern historian we learn that "some of the reforms proposed by the colored delegates" are "born of ignorant self-assertiveness; for example, the suggestion that landlords be required to pay wages from January 1, 1863 [the day of Emancipation] and that wages be required to give their tenants one half of

²⁴ Simkins, pp. 82-83.

²⁵ John R. Ficklen, *History of Reconstruction in Louisiana*, p. 172.

²⁶ *The Tragic Era*, p. 216.

the crop.”²⁷ Although radical land legislation is not proposed by this Convention as a body, the cry for land is raised again and again. One proposal calls for an appropriation by Congress of \$1,000,000 with which to buy land for distribution among the landless Negroes. But this proposal is dropped on the insistence of Charles Sumner’s colleague, Senator Wilson of Massachusetts, who participates in the Convention as an arbiter for the Northern bourgeoisie. “Wait for Congressional action” has become the magical watchword by which the bourgeoisie hopes to prevent the breaking up of the estates and substitute faith for land.

This device has become a regular weapon in the arsenal of the bourgeoisie. The Russian bourgeoisie hoped to accomplish the same end during the Russian revolution by telling the peasants to wait for the Constituent Assembly, which, they knew very well, they would never call. Sumner talked of “abolishing the estates” and Thaddeus Stevens even calculated the number of acres to be divided and likewise promised Congressional action which would never take place.

The Convention, however, legislates in favor of the small farmers of the hill country by placing an exemption for forced sales on lands and buildings valued below \$1,000. At the same time Negro delegates fight against a stay law to prevent the forced sale of large plantations for debt. “It was class legislation,” declared R. H. Cain, Negro leader, “which would help the rich only. He was in favor of relieving the poor of both races.”²⁸ F. L. Cardoza, Negro reconstruction leader, opposes the stay law on the grounds that nine-tenths of the debts on the plantations were contracted for the sale of slaves, and by taking this opportunity to throw these plantations upon the market they would be striking at the very plantation system by breaking up the estates and selling them in small lots to the Negroes. “One of the greatest bulwarks of slavery was the plantation system,” he declares. “This is the only way by which we will break up that system, and I maintain that our freedom will be of no effect if we allow it to continue . . . Give them an opportunity, breathing time, and they will reorganize the same old system that they had before the war. I say, then . . . now is the time to strike . . . ”²⁹ Yes, the time, but not the method. The revolutionary method had already been used by the Negro peasants—the outright seizure of the land—and had called forth the united opposition of the bourgeoisie and the Bourbons.

²⁷ Simkins, p. 93.

²⁸ A. A. Taylor, *The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction*, p. 134.

²⁹ *Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina*, Volume I, pp. 115-118.

The bourgeoisie drags at the revolution until it can no longer restrain it, and finally steps on it. In the meantime, the Conventions and Legislatures will serve against the Bourbons and as safety valves.

But those very slogans and promises which the bourgeoisie had used to win the support of the Negro masses, are taken seriously by the Negroes and acted upon. The struggle for their realization by the Negro masses against the counter-revolution and the bourgeois compromisers, prolongs the battle and gives reconstruction its popular revolutionary character. Thus far the new State Constitutions are only on paper and each of the democratic rights proclaimed in Convention must be won in action. In New Orleans the soldiers and Negroes fight against the Jim-Crow "star cars" by forcing their way into the cars set aside for the whites "in spite of the fact that riots are almost started, and two weeks later, the star cars are abandoned."³⁰ In reply to the efforts of the Democrats to starve the revolution out by declaring lockouts in the workshops and by driving the Negroes off the plantations, Lewis Lindsay, a Negro worker of Virginia, declared that "before any of his children should suffer for food, the streets of Richmond should run knee-deep in blood; and he thanked God that the Negroes had learned to use guns, pistols and ramrods."³¹ Terrible words these, for they come from a Negro worker, and burst into a storm of direct mass actions.

In the State Legislatures which follow the Conventions, the Negroes play an important and more assertive part. In both Louisiana and South Carolina the majority of the legislators are Negroes and they play a decisive role also in the reconstruction legislatures of the other states in the deep South. So insistent are the Negro and "poor white" representatives in the Louisiana Legislature on completing the dethronement of the Bourbons that soldiers are massed outside to protect the assembly from counter-revolutionary mobs in New Orleans. The Negroes especially are adamant in their demand that all white Democrats take the "iron clad oath" (swear that they had never borne arms against the United States or aided the Confederacy—tantamount to complete disfranchisement for the former slaveholders and their allies.)

"It showed a disposition," admits the bourgeois historian Ficklen, "on the part of the Negroes and their white allies to adopt a more radical program in their treatment of the whites [read counter-revolutionary whites] than General Grant himself would authorize, and forecasted a determination to legislate wholly with reference to their own interests."³²

³⁰ Ficklen, p. 188.

³¹ Taylor, *Virginia*.

³² Ficklen, p. 204.

The social composition of the South Carolina Legislature, where 84 out of its 156 members are Negroes, is revealed clearly by the record of the taxes paid by its members. The total taxes for all the legislators amounts to \$700.63, out of which six members pay \$391.62. There are not many property owners here. But property, in the form of a plantation owner from the Black Belt, looks on from the balcony and declares in amazement: "My God, look at this!" His worst fears have come true. Negroes who but three years before had been slaves are proposing confiscation of the estates. The Black Codes are declared abolished and equal rights for all proclaimed.

Through the eyes of James S. Pike, a leading Northern Republican who after his first visit to South Carolina returned to the North to engage in a campaign of slander and vituperation against the "Black Parliaments", we can at least catch a glimpse of the South Carolina Legislature of 1873. Only revolutions in which the masses to their deepest layers are in motion can produce such a parliamentary body in which the voice of the embattled Negro masses continually makes itself heard over the demogogy of its bourgeois ally. Despite Pike's condescending jibes, even from his description it is apparent that this is primarily an assembly of landless peasants and small landowners:

"Every Negro type and physiognomy was here to be seen, from the genteel serving man to the rough hew customer from rice or cotton field. Their dress was as varied as their countenances. There was the second hand frock coat of infirm sentility, glossy and threadbare . . . There was also to be seen a total disregard of the proprieties of costume in the coarse and dirty garments of the field; the stub jackets and slouch hats of soiling labor. In some instances, rough woolen comforters embraced the neck and hid the absence of linen. Heavy brogans and short, torn trousers it was impossible to hide . . . These were the legislators of South Carolina."³³

While Negro intellectuals and bourgeois whites play a leading role in the Legislature, former slaves also assume political leadership and are uppermost in the demand for land. Beverly Nash, who is feared most by the Bourbon representatives, has been a slave and was afterwards a bootblack in one of the hotels. "Go into the Senate," says Pike. "It is not too much to say that the leading man of the Republican Party in that body is Beverly Nash, a man of wholly black. He is apparently consulted more and appealed to more, in the business of the body, than any man in it. It is admitted by his white opposition colleagues that he has more native ability than half the white men in the Senate."³⁴ No more than five or six of the Negro members are freeborn. Nearly all

³³ James S. Pike, *The Prostrate State*, p. 26.

³⁴ Pike, pp. 33-34.

the officials of the state and Legislature, with the exception of the Governor, are Negroes. And they by no means play a submissive role. Again Pike testifies that "two of the best speakers in the House are quite black . . . They are both leaders rather than lead." And the Senator from Georgetown who "boasts of being a Negro . . . appears to be one of the leading 'strikers', and is not lead, except through his interests."³⁴ We are especially emphatic in pointing out the important role played by Negroes in the political leadership of the reconstruction governments in order to make it plain that the Negroes were not simply being led by the nose, but played the role of an ally having their own demands for which they fought. The "Marxist" Mr. Herberg, following the usual bourgeois distortion, also speaks of the "newly emancipated slaves led by Northern men ('carpet-baggers') and some Southern white Radicals ('scalawags')"—no wonder he falls into a slavish idealization of Stevens and Sumner, and "overlooks" the heart of the revolutionary heritage left by reconstruction. That some of the Negro leaders betrayed the struggle and joined hands with the bourgeoisie and the Bourbons against the Negro masses is another matter.

"One of the things that first strikes a casual observer," continues Mr. Herberg's ancestral ally, "is the fluency of the debate . . . The leading topics of discussion are all well understood by the members, as they are of practical character, and appeal directly to the personal interests of every legislator, as well as of those of his constituents. When an appropriation bill is up to raise money to catch and punish the K.K.K., they know exactly what it means . . . So, too, with educational measures. The free school comes right home to them; then the business of arming and drilling the black militia. They are eager on this point . . . They have an earnest purpose born of a conviction that their position and condition are not fully assured, which lends a sort of dignity to their proceedings."³⁵

"A conviction that their position and condition are not fully assured"—the Negro people are not blind to the manipulations of Mr. Pike's Northern friends. On the plantations they have been gradually enserfed. By 1876, the year of the counter-revolutionary *coup d'etat*, only five percent of the Negroes own land. Land is the only assurance—together with the people's militia—that the Negroes will be able to retain any democratic rights. They are so "eager" about the militia, for outside the legislative chambers the Negro masses are continually embattled. By force of arms they must maintain their rights and defeat the armed bands of the counter-revolution. A continual struggle goes on for the right to vote, to ride on trains and street cars without segregation, for the

³⁵ Pike, p. 21.

maintenance of the public schools. Only the militia stands between them and a bloody reign of terror. For the North has already made steps towards an outright alliance with the Bourbons and the Negroes are already entering upon the defensive. As long as they have arms it will be a struggle; as soon as they are disarmed it will be a massacre.

The Negro masses have not gone through the revolution without learning. In a few years of revolutionary action they have learned more than in a century of "peaceful" development. The realization had long since struck home that the promises of the bourgeoisie of "forty acres and a mule" are worthless. They have engaged in battle with Northern as well as Southern troops for land and have inevitably been defeated. They have seen Negro politicians siding with reaction. But as a landless and enserfed peasantry they need the revolutionary leadership of the city to assure the carrying through of the revolution. And the bourgeois city no longer is able nor does it want to mature the revolution. Only the forces of further development within the orbit of capitalism will produce a new revolutionary class, capable of determined and consistent revolutionary action.

With the growing awareness of the treachery of the bourgeoisie, the Negro people turn to more independent activity. "The black man of the Legislature," says Pike, "feels his oats and considers that the time has already arrived when he can take care of himself . . ." Increasing assertiveness in the assembly is a reflection of the deep stirring and motion of the masses. The sentiment grows that "they [the carpetbaggers] will only stand by us so long as they can use us, and when they have no more axes to grind they will cast us aside."³⁶ The increased self-assertiveness of the Negro masses hastens the counter-revolution for which the Northern bourgeoisie is quick to remove all obstacles.

Although the Negro working class is almost entirely incapable of exerting an independent force due to its infancy, yet the reconstruction period saw the beginnings of the labor movement among the Negro workers as well as of solidarity between white and black toilers. Without minimizing the importance of working class organization in this period—the participation of Negro labor leaders in the 1869 session of the National Labor Union, the holding of a national Negro labor convention in Washington in the same year, the beginnings of trade union organization among the Negro workers and the first strikes—we will not enter into a discussion of this phase of the struggle here. We will only point out that the spectacle of Negro and white workers in action together

³⁶ Simkins, p. 124.

only a few years after the abolition of slavery—side by side with the rising labor movement in the North, the revolt of the farmers and the assertive action of the Negro people—arose to plague the bourgeoisie and drive it along the course of counter-revolution. It also drove some of the Negro petty-bourgeois leaders into the arms of the reaction and led Frederick Douglass to write an editorial in his paper, *The New National Era*, entitled “The Folly, Tyranny and Wickedness of Labor Unions.”³⁷

The Northern bourgeoisie prepared the path for the counter-revolution. It repealed the “iron-clad oath” in 1871, permitting the Bourbons to re-enter political life openly and gave them complete leeway by the general Amnesty Act of 1872. Former abolitionists and Republican leaders began to speak against the “degradation” of the Southern states, of “political liberty” for everybody, including the Bourbons. Reconciliation with the former enemy became the announced policy of the Republican Party in the North. Sumner, Mr. Herberg’s “incorruptible”, pleads for first honors in placing the garland of betrayal around the neck of the bourgeoisie: “It was our state [Massachusetts] which led in requiring all the safeguards of liberty and equality; I covet for her the other honor of leading in reconciliation.”³⁸ For the bourgeoisie now has a stake in the “new South” and wants tranquility to the rear at all costs. The new big landowning class—composed of former slaveholders and the “new rich” who have bought themselves in—has been placed on its feet by financial aid and credit from the Northern bankers. The rapidly growing textile industry of “abolitionist” New England needs cotton—plenty of it and cheap—no matter if it means a new slavery in the South to obtain it. Much capital has been supplied by the North in rebuilding and enlarging the Southern railroad system and this system needs to transport cotton if it is to “assure returns.” The maintenance of the *status quo* is the necessity alike of the Northern bourgeoisie and the big landowners. The aspirations of the Negro people for land and freedom must be crushed if they are to remain bound to the planter’s soil and provide the peon labor for the large-scale production of cotton.

The Radical Republican Party in the South retains its revolutionary character at this time only because it is the party primarily of the Negroes. The strategy of the Democratic Party, the party of the Bourbons, is to split the “poor white” and small landowning whites off from the Republicans and sever completely the alliance of these elements with the Negro people. How this is done we

³⁷ May 17, 1874.

³⁸ Edward L. Pierce, *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, IV, p. 552.

have already mentioned and the process is completed by 1876. The carpet-bagger elements help by splitting off compromise Conservative Republican Parties. The Radical Republican Party, in the short breathing spell left it in the South, becomes in reality a Negro nationalist party, attempting in vain to hold political power in the three decisive states, South Carolina, Louisiana and Mississippi.

The counter-revolution prepares for the final *coup d'état* by the widespread organization of "White Leagues" and rifle clubs. The "Red Shirts" ride armed through the South Carolina countryside. Fear of concerted armed action by the Negro peasantry dominates both Republicans and Democrats. In Mississippi the Governor signs a "peace treaty" to "prevent a violent overthrow of the state government," which provides, not for the disarming of the counter-revolutionary armies, but for the disbanding and disarming of the Negro militias. Once these are disarmed the counter-revolution has free reign. The Democrats prepare for the Presidential election of 1876 as they would for a war. In Mississippi the Democratic campaign manager is known as "the commander for the battle of the polls"—for "it was not a campaign he was to manage—it was a revolution."³⁹

But the Negro masses do not submit to being disarmed. In South Carolina they purchase "guns and ammunition to the extent that their means would allow" and prepare "to shoot and apply the torch in their effort to resist aggression." They begin, "moreover, to maltreat those Negroes who had gone over to the Democratic Party."⁴⁰ Armed clashes between the "White Leaguers" and armed Negroes are frequent. The battle is fought for the most part in the country, especially in the Black Belt counties where the Negroes hold complete political power. There they are gradually disarmed and defeated and the counter-revolution seizes power by armed force. Leading Negro reconstruction leaders are hanged and shot. Federal troops are sent by the conservative Republican state officials to disarm and disperse the Negroes wherever they have armed in a body. The state elections are a farce. With the aid of its armies the counter-revolution sets up its own state governments, and dual governments, one Radical and the other Bourbon, exist for a while in South Carolina and Louisiana. But these last holds of the revolution are blown up by the final act of bourgeois betrayal.

The presidential elections of 1876 are close, with the returns in South Carolina, Mississippi and Florida deciding the outcome. The bourgeoisie to assure its political hegemony buys victory for

³⁹ Bowers, p. 453.

⁴⁰ Taylor, *South Carolina*, p. 248.

the Republican Party at the price of complete and final desertion of the Negro masses to the tender mercies of the counter-revolution. History is favored with a written record of the unsurpassable infamy of the bourgeoisie. The document signed by its representatives and those of the counter-revolution is as clear as day:

"Referring to the conversation had with you yesterday in which Governor Hayes' policy as to the status of certain Southern states was discussed, we desire to say that we can assure you in the strongest possible manner of our great desire to have him adopt such a policy as will give the people of the states of South Carolina and Louisiana the right to control their own affairs in their own way, subject only to the constitution of the United States and the laws made in pursuance thereof, and to say further that from an acquaintance with and knowledge of Governor Hayes and his views, we have the most complete confidence that such will be the policy of his administration."⁴¹

Hayes received the required votes, and in return he left the counter-revolution in complete possession of the Southern state governments, removing the last Federal troops in 1877. And the Northern bourgeoisie has kept its confidence, as pledged in the agreement, to the present day.

* * * * *

The armed struggle of the Negro share-croppers in Tallapoosa County, Alabama, has shown this old battlefield of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to be more than merely an historical landmark. The fight for land and freedom by the Negro people rages again, but this time on a higher plane of social development, with new leaders and new allies. Tallapoosa has shown that every struggle by the Negro peasantry even for the most elementary economic and social demands strikes sparks just as certainly as when flint hits steel. The intensification of the national oppression of the Negro people, the creation of a Negro working class in the course of capitalist development side by side with a semi-feudal agrarian system, has made the Black Belt one of the most sensitive spots today on the home front of Yankee imperialism.

In the antecedent revolutionary period it was possible for the bourgeoisie in the North, because of both the sectional nature of the struggle and the weakness of its class enemies, to isolate the embattled Negroes, the Northern working class and the rebellious farmers and by alliance with the counter-revolution crush them all. But today, thanks to capitalist development, the working class has grown in power both in the North and South, among both white and Negro workers. That very national oppression which has

⁴¹ Charles R. Williams, *Life of Rutherford B. Hayes*, I, p. 533.

subjected the Negro people has at the same time created in the oppressed Negro people a tremendous revolutionary force capable of bringing to the proletarian revolution even greater energy and strength than they had contributed to the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The present catastrophic crisis has accentuated all the contradictions of capitalism and is now bringing the "kettle to a boil", as Marx expressed himself 50 years ago on the great upsurge of the labor movement in the 70's. It is well to recall his penetrating analysis in a letter to Engels at that time:

"This first outbreak against the associated capital oligarchy which has arisen since the Civil War, will naturally be defeated; it can, however, very well be the starting point for the building of a serious workers' party. There are two circumstances in its favor. The policy of the new president *will make the Negro*, and the large land expropriations (persily of the fertile land) in favor of the railway, mining, etc., companies, *will make the farmers of the west*, who are already rebellious, *into allies of the workers*. So the kettle is beginning to boil . . ." ⁴²

The struggle today of the Negro people for land and freedom plays no small part in heating the kettle. The development of capitalism has not only supplied the working class with powerful allies in the impoverished farmers and the Negro people, but has made that alliance inevitable, as events are proving today. Those tasks left unfulfilled by the bourgeois-democratic revolution of the last century pass into the domain of the proletarian revolution. The struggle of the Negro peasantry for land, of the Negro people against national oppression and for self-determination in the Black Belt have become an inseparable part of the proletarian revolution which will sweep away all the rubbish left by the past. "The social revolution cannot come about," said Lenin, "except as an epoch of proletarian civil war against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries, combined with a *whole series* of democratic and revolutionary movements, including movements for national liberation, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations."

We would not be worthy of the name of Communists, if we did not recognize the movement for national liberation of the Negro people and the blow that movement holds in store for American imperialism. Nor could we call ourselves Communists unless we lend direct aid to that movement and mobilize the working class as a whole for its support. The Civil War decade, the historical prologue to the struggle for Negro liberation in the present period, even then showed clearly the confiscation of the land in benefit of the Negro toilers and the right of self-determination to be the necessary conditions for the complete realization of freedom for

⁴² *Briefwechsel*, IV, p. 469.

the Negro people. The lessons of that period and the revolutionary heritage left by it are the property of the revolutionists of today, and if they are to be effective in the struggle, they must be assimilated by the revolutionary movement and their content preserved against falsification and distortion.

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Technocracy — A Reactionary Utopia

By V. J. JEROME

IT NEED hardly be said that our discussion of the subject of Technocracy is not purposed by a disposition to indulge in a fad, any more than it has been the purpose of the bourgeois authors and promoters of this movement to do so. For us, as for them, the approach is purely political—for them, to defend capitalism; for us, to destroy it.

Regardless of the worthlessness of Technocracy as a scientific theory, of the hollowness of its claims, and of the manifest charlatanism of its positions, we cannot afford to dispose of the subject by laughing it off, by dismissing it curtly as undeserving of attention. Through bombastic and melodramatic capitalist press-agentings, Technocracy succeeded in temporarily arresting the attention of the more backward sections of the masses, who, groping for a way out of the deepening economic crisis, are as yet disposed to listen, if only for a moment, to Utopian panaceas. This is particularly true of the petty bourgeoisie, which, by and large, is at this moment still wavering between the hopes for rehabilitating capitalism and the turn to the proletariat for leadership. Large sections of the petty bourgeoisie still prefer to hope against hope and to clutch at another capitalist straw, before admitting their place to be in alliance with the workers.

I

Technocracy is the newest attempt of the big and petty bourgeoisie to solve the crisis of capitalism through the capitalist way out. Despite its new-fangled mannerisms, it is merely an extension of the capitalist efforts at planned economy and rationalization. The new phase is dictated by the bankruptcy of the sundry theories of "organized capital", ultra-imperialism, and state capitalism, hitherto advanced with such pompous assurance by international capitalism and the social democracy. The utter discredit into which these manoeuvres are falling brings upon capitalism the need for a new guise in which to deck its old "planning" philosophy—a new guise that shall be fashionable for such times as these, the fourth year of the crisis. In the face of the growing radicalization of the working class; of the farmers; of the steady disillusionment of the petty

bourgeoisie, the small traders, the professionals; of the marked success of the Five Year Plan for Socialist construction in the Soviet Union, the proposals to plan for capitalism can no longer be brought forward boldly, as heretofore. Capitalism is compelled to make increasing use of social demagoguery. Plannings for reaction reappear decked out in phrases of radicalism.

What are the main features of Technocracy as they have been presented by the "authentic" proponents?

The fundamental proposition of Technocracy, given by Howard Scott in the *Living Age* for December, 1932, is as follows:

"Technocracy makes one basic postulate: that the phenomena involved in the functional operation are metrical."

Proceeding from this postulate, Technocracy sets out to establish a constant unit of measurement that "can be extended to form a new and basic method for the quantitative analysis and determination of the next most probable state of any social mechanism."

What is that unit of measurement? Technocracy answers (with evident pride that its formulations have been declared more incomprehensible than Einstein's theory of relativity):

". . . as all organic and inorganic mechanisms involved in the operation of the social macrocosm are energy-consuming devices, therefore the basic metrical relationships are: the factor of energy conversion, or efficiency; and the rate of conversion of available energy of the mechanism as a functional whole in a given area per time unit."

To attempt to define this "definition" of the unit of measurement would certainly involve complicating the complex. We shall attempt the round-about method of explanation. We have reached now, the Technocrats tell us, a technical age of power-machinofacture as against the past epoch of the primitive method of production by means of the human engine. The era of man-power has given way to the era of mechanical power. Until a century and a half ago the vast range of human history was one long arid expanse—"seven thousand static years"—in which society had its physical basis in man-power, which being about 1/10 horse-power, was capable of doing work, in terms of energy units, of about 1500 kilogram calories per capita per day. Today, in North America, as a result of the high level of power-machinery technique, of the uniquely favorable geological set-up and of an exceptional personnel, the per capita rate for work has, through energy conversion, increased a hundred-fold. This energy conversion means, in effect, that the man-hours per unit of work have rapidly given way to kilowatt hours. In other words, the machine has displaced man. In

this analysis the Technocrats are led to certain specific conclusions, summed up in mathematical formulæ by Mr. Bassett Jones for the period between 1830 and 1920, as cited by Dr. Walter Rautenstrauch in his address at the convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, reported in the *New York Herald Tribune* of December 29, 1932: 1) The total man-hours manufacture decrease inversely with time. 2) Production per capita increases directly with time. 3) The ratio of debt to production is increasing directly as the time. The position of the Technocrats, in other words, amounts to this: that unemployment is chargeable directly to technological advance; that with the heightening of the technical level, there is a resultant diminution of manual labor leading to the ultimate elimination of human labor—"Technology has swept away the human worker." (Howard Scott, *Harper's Magazine*, January, 1933); that with the increased productivity of technique and the resultant decrease in man-power, the bulk of the industrialists' outlay is upon the means of production, which, in a state of mass unemployment, becomes unprofitable to the producer, incurring for him mountainous indebtedness to the bankers—an indebtedness from which he cannot extricate himself. Howard Scott states in *Harper's Magazine* for January, 1933:

"One sees the producers, fewer and fewer in number, engulfed in goods which they can neither sell nor use, bowed down with interest and dividend debts which they cannot pay. Beside them is the little concentrated band of owners, swamped in money for which there is no use."

And Mr. Scott exclaims: "Our old system is done for, and the nation has got to swallow the fact that the price system is completely played out!" This is the conclusion reached by Technocracy: Abolish the price system! The price system, according to the definition of Mr. Scott, is "any society using a commodity method of valuation".

To solve the dilemma, the Technocrats propose to substitute in place of the price system a system of social measurement based on the present-day method of production through the energy-consuming devices. From this they conclude broadly that all social-economic theories outside of Technocracy are things of the past:

"All philosophic approaches to social phenomena, from Plato to—and including—Marx, must functionally be avoided as intellectual expressions of dementia praecox." (Howard Scott, *Living Age*, December, 1932.)

Furthermore, since production has become automatic and "man-hours per unit of product and labor cost per unit have dropped in recent years the levels approaching zero", the social control must

pass over into the hands of that social group most directly linked with technics—the engineers. Ergo, Technocracy.

Finally, the era of Technocracy is proposed exclusively for the continent of North America.

II

It requires no special powers of insight to perceive that the theory of technological displacement is but a subtle attempt on the part of the Technocrats to conceal the real cause of crises and unemployment, namely, the basic contradictions of capitalism—the social character of production and private appropriation; that it is an attempt to place the blame at the door of technological advance. This and similar attempts to clear the capitalist system itself of responsibility for economic crises are not new with Technocracy. They are as old as capitalism itself, in defense of whose contradictions there have never been lacking professional apologists and whitewashers. At one moment the cause of social misery, of unemployment, hunger, war, is lodged with the Malthusian “law of population”, according to which, the workers, on account of their “thoughtless habits,” increase alarmingly, as against the relative diminution of the world’s food supply—the formula being: the food supply increases in arithmetic progression, while population increases in geometric progression. Designed to justify the prevalence of low wages and the further beating down of the workers’ living conditions, this theory was caught up by capitalism in the vain hope of making it its permanently operative philosophy. At another moment an astronomical “theory” is brought forward, attempting to demonstrate that certain adverse natural conditions periodically affect the crops with catastrophic results, which in turn affect industry. This time the blame for economic crises is charged to sun-spots or to the devious course of Venus. To these “explanations” must be added the various eugenic, psychological, and racial theories of social and economic inequality, all having for their purpose the inculcation of the belief that the working class, either as a whole or in part, is physiologically or racially inferior and therefore doomed to exploitation and degradation. In the U. S. this master-class propaganda has constantly been directed against the Negro and foreign-born masses. All these theories have as their purpose consciously to ascribe to the crises of capitalism a cause residing outside of the contradictory system of capitalism. With this purpose of saving the face of capitalism in its present crisis, Technocracy has now brought forward its theory of technological displacement as the cause of crises.

Such a view, were the motive not be questioned, can come only from a total disregard for the specific use to which technique is put

in the capitalist system—namely, the use of extracting larger and larger profits from the workers through chaotic, relatively excessive production necessitating a feverish development of competitive industrial machinery.

We quote from Comrade Stalin's report to the Sixteenth Party Congress of the U.S.S.R. in which, in the light of the Marxian theory of crises, he analyzed the basic features of the present worldwide crisis of capitalism:

"In order to win in the game of competition and squeeze out more profits, the capitalists are forced to develop technique, to apply rationalization, intensify the exploitation of the workers, and raise the productive capacity of their undertakings to the extreme limit. In order not to fall behind one another all the capitalists are obliged, in one way or another, to enter the path of furious development of productive capacities. But the home and foreign market, the purchasing power of millions of workers and peasants, who in the last analysis are the basic purchasers, remain at a low level. Hence the crisis of over-production. Hence the well-known results, repeated more or less periodically, of commodities remaining unsold, production reduced, unemployment increased, wages lowered and thereby the contradiction between the level of production and the level of purchasing demand still further intensified. The crisis of over-production is the expression of this contradiction in unbridled and destructive forms."

Shall we say, however, that technological advance does not tend to displace labor? To hold such a view is to deny the historic role of technology in the social process, which is, to facilitate man's conquest over nature, by means of tools developed from nature to act upon it, and the attainment of his maximum liberation from the tasks of the production of his material needs. Under capitalism, however, due to the private appropriation of the means of production for the extraction of profit, the technological displacement of labor results in mass unemployment and misery. For the working class, *the potential benefit is turned into an actual evil*. But technology is merely the accelerating instrumentality, *not the cause*, of this unemployment. The cause lies *not in the means of production*, but in the relation in which the workers stand to the means of production. In the Soviet Union, where the proletariat stands as owner in relation to the means of production, where therefore, economy can be planned, there is no unemployment. Technology there has been liberated to act in its capacity of progressively lightening the tasks of society, of facilitating the social acquisition of economic and cultural fullness. The full fruition of the benefits technology holds in store for humanity will come about in the classless society. There not only the agency of technics as an accelerator of unemployment will have disappeared, but unemployment itself. For unemployment, representing the rejection of labor power offered for sale as a commodity,

is an impossibility in a system of production in which labor power ceases to be a commodity. In the capitalist society, however, technology is chained to serve the interests of a small social minority that is in monopolistic ownership of the means of production. Advance in technology under capitalism is an instrumentality for the constantly greater exploitation of the working class, for the steady decline of its share in the national revenue. But this very rise in the rate of exploitation, lessening the purchasing power of the masses in relation to the vastly increased output of commodities, reacts against capitalism in the form of recurrent and ever intensified crises. In the words of Karl Marx:

“The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces in such a way that only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit.” (Capital, Vol. III, p. 568.)

It is essential at this point to refute the contention of those bourgeois opponents of Technocracy who seek to invest technology, within the present mode of production, with omnipotence for overcoming capitalism's contradictions. According to these economists, technological advance under capitalism does not lead to unemployment, but, on the contrary, develops ever greater employment as a result, on the one hand, of by-product industries, and, on the other, through the absorption of the displaced workers into the ramified distribution that is a direct consequence of the developed technique in production. This theory has for its purpose the denial of the inherency of capitalist contradictions—this time through the instrumentality of the all-powerful machine.

As long ago as 1848, in an address on Free Trade before the Democratic Association of Brussels, Karl Marx attacked this contention of the bourgeois economists for the blindness it shows to the fact that the greater the growth of productive capital, the greater must the anarchy of production become, and the greater the frequency and the intensity of crises.

We find this theory maintained in defense of capitalism today. In the *Nation* for February 1, the philistine driveller, Henry Hazlitt, booster of Norman Thomas in the recent elections, repeats this apology for capitalism by attacking the theory of technological displacement with the counter-theory of the capacity of capitalism to overcome its crises through the reabsorption of the unemployed into new industries. Essentially both theory and counter-theory aim at the same thing—to exonerate the capitalist system from the crises it produces. Essentially both theory and counter-theory are unscientific, making technique primary, and productive forces and

production relations, secondary. One calls technique the cause of crises; the other gives technique the power to overcome crises.

III

Assuming to have traced the crisis and unemployment purely to technological advance, what do the Technocrats offer as a solution? They offer a new system of measurement, namely, an evaluation of goods in terms of mechanical energy units consumed in their production. They offer the abolition of the "price system", which Technocracy defines as "a commodity method of valuation". From the mere appearance of this radical-sounding phrase one might imagine that what is meant here is the abolition of capitalist commodity production. But such an interpretation can be given the phrase only when the word "commodity" is taken in the Marxian sense—a product involving, in capitalist production, the extraction of surplus value from the working class. For the Technocrats, commodity can have no such meaning, in view of their implicit negation of the existence of an exploited class. For them commodity as a phenomenon rises in the sphere of exchange, and their critique of the price system is a critique of the capitalist method of exchange. It constitutes an attack, not on the capitalist mode of production, but upon the method of distribution only.

This position is based on a totally false conception of the relation of distribution to production. To the Technocrats, not only are these two spheres independent of each other, but distribution is given primacy. Production is regarded as the constant; distribution as the variable. Technocracy asserts that the "price system" is an interference control with the production process. In other words, the capitalist mode of production is to be left intact; only distribution—the "price system"—is to be reorganized. But what determines the form of distribution, if not the mode of production in a given society? Marx warns against the conception that limits distribution to the distribution of products. The distribution of products is *preceded* by the distribution of the means of production and of the production relations, in the given society. In his criticism of Ricardo's thesis that distribution and not production is the proper subject of political economy, Marx declares:

"Distribution is itself a product of production, not only in so far as the material goods are concerned, since only the results of production can be distributed, but also as regards its form, since the definite manner of participation in production determines the particular form of distribution, the form under which participation and distribution takes place." (*Critique of Political Economy*, p. 284.)

The "critique" of capitalism that makes distribution the center of gravity, is basic to every type of capitalist planning theory, bourgeois or petty bourgeois. It is at bottom the attempt to evaluate commodities without relation to the labor that has produced their value. It is the attempt to rule out, what Marx termed, crystallized social labor as the substance of value. For, since distribution is the product of the system of production, distribution under capitalism cannot be thought of except in relation to the mode of production involving the sale of their labor power by the proletarians who stand as non-owners to the productive means. To speak, therefore, of abolishing the "price system" without expressly postulating the abolition of capitalist production relations, is to speak of abolishing a myth. There is no such thing as a price system. Price is merely the idealized form which the unperceived inherent measure of value of necessity takes on. Value depends for its expression on price. The very fluctuating element in exchange which the Technocrats deplore, and which they seek to abolish as the source of crises, is conditioned by the existence of value. Exchange value is the only form in which the value of a commodity is expressed. Now value is a social relation containing surplus value, that is, the entire booty extracted from the surplus labor of the working class that goes to the capitalists in the form of rent, interest, and profit. But it is only through the price-form that surplus value can be actually realized. Hence, not price, but value, must be abolished in order for price to be abolished. Marx, it would seem, must have anticipated the coming of the Technocrats when he wrote:

" . . . the Utopians, who want to have commodities but not money, who want a system of production based on private exchange without the necessary conditions underlying such a system, are consistent when they 'destroy' money not in its tangible form but in its nebulous illusory form of a measure of value. Under the invisible measure of value there lurks the hard cash." (*Critique of Political Economy*, p. 82.)

Clearly, value, price, and profit are inseparably bound up with the capitalist mode of production, and can be abolished only through the destruction of the capitalist mode of production. Whoever means this, says this. Marxism-Leninism means this, and says this. Technocracy does not say this, because it does not mean this.

IV

Technocracy's idealist conception of distribution and price is of a piece with its general idealist conception of history. The division of the social process into two eras—the "seven thousand static years" of man-hours, and the one-hundred and fifty years of

kilowatt-hours, is an arbitrary metaphysical division of history into collateral, not into fundamental phases. Technocracy tells us:

“Social change, on the other hand, may be defined as the change in the per capita rate of energy conversion, or the change from one order of magnitude to another in the social conversion of the available energy.”

We have here an attempt to reduce the categories of society to the categories of physical science, to apply to the social process, the laws of thermo-dynamics. It is the position of mechanistic-materialism.

All phenomena, natural and social, according to this view, reduce themselves ultimately to the basic, undifferentiated units of matter. All social as well as natural phenomena are thus seen solely as complex quantitative arrangements of atoms, or electrons, or neutrons. These quantitative complications of the material units into the various phenomena involve, accordingly, no real qualitative transformation. What motion there has entered into the multiple atom-arrangements is, according to mechanistic materialism, solely motion in transposition. The categories of history are thus exhausted in the categories of physics.

Marxism-Leninism puts forward against mechanistic materialism a materialism that is dialectical, that conceives all the universal laws of motion as involving the interpenetration of the opposites, quantity and quality, and the transition of the one into the other. Marxian dialectics, being materialist dialectics, postulates laws of motion that are fundamental to all phenomena, in nature and society, in the objective world and in thought. “The ideal is the material translated and refashioned in the minds of men,” Marx teaches us. But these basically common laws of motion do not exclude the unique laws of nature and society respectively. In each of these separate forms of existence there are present such laws of motion, which in relation to the specific phenomena, are autonomous. The fundamental law of identity in nature and society does not exclude autonomous laws in each of these spheres, but on the contrary, is connected in a dialectic unity of opposites, with those laws. Man, in so far as he is material, is governed, as nature is, by the fundamental laws of motion of material phenomena; but in so far as he is a social type, the physico-chemical laws become secondary; primarily he is governed by the laws of motion of the phenomena in the sphere of the social process. And the fundamental law of the social process is the law of the development of the productive forces and production relations (the materialistic conception of history).

The failure of Technocracy to see society in process accounts for the metaphysical outcomes in the technocratic philosophy of his-

tory. We have in this philosophy no social dynamics; only social statics. Seven thousand years are cast aside as crude, uncontributing, wasted; all past history is seen as one long barren stretch of undifferentiated centuries. Then suddenly out of nowhere, a new epoch—the age of kilowatt hours! How shall we account for this new power-machine epoch? Technocracy makes no attempt to explain the emergence of mechanical energy. It contents itself with the statement: “Technocracy, as the executor of physical sciences, is the instrument for effecting social change.” (Howard Scott—*Living Age*, December, 1932). As presented by Technocrats, technology is an independent idea-movement unconditioned by the objective laws operating in society:

“The foundation on which our present-day world stands is built of three things: discovery, natural energy, and, for want of a better term, watchfulness. Discovery happens from time to time, no man can say when. It is personified in James Watt, Michael Faraday, Thomas Edison, men who gave the world new methods and processes for developing and using energy. These discoveries cannot be predicted, but we do know how completely they can alter the course of history.” (Howard Scott: *Harper's*, January, 1933.)

Not only does Technocracy take no account of the factors of the development of material productive forces and production relations in the various class societies, but it takes no cognizance of the historical succession in the evolution of technology itself. Not only does it expunge from history all records of Graeco-Roman economy, of feudalism, of merchant and industrial capitalism, of imperialism, of the Soviet system, but the various technological advances antecedent to the power-machine age are likewise obliterated from memory. The new phase is seen only as a sudden demarcation. Technology for the Technocrats did not develop in relation to specific historic technical problems arising in the course of the development of material productive forces and their struggle for corresponding production relations. To them, not the interests of the newly risen class of industrialists accounted for James Watt, but James Watt accounted for the industrial processes. It is the individual impulse, in other words, that in the technocratic philosophy of history creates the social system. The social process depends for its course on the “happy accident” of the birth of inventive genius. Why none of the inventors or scientists that “made” the industrial revolution appeared centuries before, at the rise of agricultural economy, can of course, not be asked, since it might be embarrassing to the capricious obstetrics of historic accidentalism.

With such an evaluation of the role of technology, what can be more in accord with the dictates of poetic justice than for the

technological talents at last to come into their own as the controllers of the history they have made?

In the following passage from *Eighteenth Brumaire* we shall find, in a most brilliant presentation, Marx' evaluation of the role of man in history:

“Man makes his own history, but he does not make it out of the whole cloth; he does not make it out of conditions chosen by himself, but out of such as he finds close at hand. The tradition of all past generations weighs like an Alp upon the brain of the living. At the very time when men appear engaged in revolutionizing things and themselves, in bringing about what was never before, at such very epochs of revolutionary crisis do they anxiously conjure up into their service the spirits of the past”

And the past for Marx represents the various forms through which the material forces of production developed and their struggle for the transformation of obsolete and enchaining property relations into relations corresponding to the newly risen productive forces. The past represents for Marx the various manifestations of the class struggle as the driving force of history.

One hesitates to call the technocratic scheme Utopian when one remembers the progressive role played by the great Socialist and Communist Utopians of France and England early in the history of the modern working class. If Saint Simon, Fourier, Owen, and Blanqui who, despite their definite contributions to the revolutionary theory and practice of the working class, were still metaphysical in their world outlook, they, it must be borne in mind, brought forward their theories of the future society before Marx and Engels had established the fundamentals of scientific Socialism. If their road to Socialism was the road of paternalism, example, and moral suasion, it was because the working class in that period of early industrial development, had not yet reached the degree of maturity for self-assertion.

Today, in the epoch of proletarian revolutions, and of the establishment of Socialist foundations in the Soviet Union, Utopianism can no longer function progressively. It has lost its historic role. It can be only a decadent Utopianism—a force of reaction. The paternalism of the Technocrats, this self-appointment to the role of benevolent oligarchy, is but an advance-move toward the bolder, open dictatorship of fascism. The theory, implicit in their philosophy, of leaving to the capitalist class the abolition of the “price system” (even if we were to construe “price system” to mean capitalism) is but a demagogic attempt to thwart the historic revolutionary role of the working class.

The delusion of eliminating the working class under capitalism did not originate with Technocracy. We can find this idea present

in the projects of various reformists. Eduard Berntheim, for instance, who asserted that there was a declining rate of exploitation along with a declining rate of profit, perceived, instead of the polarization of wealth, a democratization of capital in which the workers would lift themselves from the status of proletarians to the position of participants in capitalism. This theory is the basis of the opportunist profit-sharing and state-sharing policies of the reformist trade unions and the Second International. It constitutes a denial of Marxian dialectics, which postulates the existence of the capitalist class only upon the co-existence of its antithesis, the proletariat. To talk, therefore, of the elimination of the proletariat without the overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat represents an attempt to eliminate the revolutionary role of the proletariat. By propagandizing the workers with a theory that they are obsolete, that they have lost their role in production, that they are being absorbed by the capitalist class, Technocracy hopes that the workers will lose the ground from under their feet. "They desire," in the words of the *Communist Manifesto*, "the existing state of society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. They wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat." Marxism-Leninism works for the overthrow of the capitalist class; Technocracy, for the "overthrow" of the working class.

v

It is significant that the Socialist Party press and spokesmen set out by declaring themselves heartily in favor of Technocracy, as indeed they have of various other attempts to organize capitalism. Their endorsement of Technocracy proceeds from a theory of value and price that is fundamentally common to social fascism and Technocracy. We have seen that the Technocrats perceive only the quantitative measurement of commodity, omitting the qualitative content of individual labor that has been rendered socialized in the commodity. In other words, they omit from value the social substance of value—abstract, homogeneous labor. Since they see only the quantitative aspect of value, they see value only in the process of exchange, not at its source. They see the phenomenal expression of value, but are blind to its substance. Like the cynic in Oscar Wilde's aphorism, they see the price of all things and the value of nothing. It is this blindness to the substantial reality in commodities, this transference of the social relationship from the producers, who remain in the background, to the commodities, which alone are confronted with one another in the open market, that Marx calls "the fetishistic character of commodities." Instead of being a reflex, that is, the idealized *expression* of the existing reality in value, price, by this fetishistic conception, becomes *the point at which value is*

produced. This conception leads to the theory that the point of attack for overcoming the contradictions of capitalism is the sphere of distribution. The chaos in the market is made the cause, and not the effect, of the chaos in production. Hence all capitalist plannings, since they are not concerned with attacking the existing mode of production (for such an attack would mean class suicide), level their criticisms at the contradictions as they manifest themselves in the market. Marx, in the *Poverty of Philosophy*, attacked Proudhon precisely on this point—for criticizing the contradictions of capitalism at their point of expression, poverty, without directing his criticism basically at the existing property relations.

“He wished,” says Marx, “to soar as man of science above the bourgeoisie and the proletarians; he is only the petty bourgeois, tossed about constantly between capital and labor, between political economy and Communism.” (p. 198.)

Similarly, Engels, in his preface to the *Poverty of Philosophy*, refutes Rodbertus, for whom value is not qualitatively postulated, but is primarily “the quantitative valuation of one thing relatively to others, this valuation being taken for measure.” (p. 17)

Today we find social fascism basing itself on this purely quantitative theory of value and price and *deepening it in accordance with the graver needs of decaying capitalism*. Hilferding, notably, declares in his *Finanzkapital*:

“It is the common action of commodities in exchange, which the private individual and the concrete labor time of the individual transform into general, socially necessary and abstract labor time, that forms value.”

Not the embodied general human labor, but the *action in exchange*, forms for Hilferding the value of a commodity!

Likewise Kautsky, as far back as 1886, in his *Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx*, stated:

“The theory of the fetishism [of commodities] represents the basis of the entire Marxian economic theory, and especially his theory of value.”

This emphasis on the quantitative, outer form of value, to the point of making it the very basis of value, evidences the definite misconception that Kautsky had even then of the Marxian theory of value. It represents an idealist revisionist denial of the labor substance in value. It reveals the early basis upon which Kautsky later built his entire structure of social fascist ideology, which defends as eternal the capitalist mode of production and contents itself with advocating correctives for the organization of distribution.

Hence we find the Second International parties everywhere

supporting and engineering every scheme for the salvation of capitalism through the regulation of the market from above. It is therefore quite consistent for the *Milwaukee Leader*, official organ of the American Socialist Party, to have carried the statement (December 12, 1932):

“For the Socialists Technocracy and the work of the Technocrats can become the modern source book from which we can preach the gospel of Socialism.”

It is equally consistent for Paul Blanshard, in his article in the *Technocracy Review* of February, 1933, to have declared:

“We Socialists have thus far been rather rudely dismissed by the leaders of Technocracy. We have been classed with bankers, fascists, economists, and soldiers as useless impedimenta in the march of the Technocrats toward a new elysium. But we are not deeply grieved or surprised by this rudeness. In America it is the thing to do for those who fear to call themselves Socialists to disguise their radical formulas with popular labels and to pretend that socialism is something narrow and dogmatic that they cannot accept. For a generation we Socialists have been accustomed to the stealing of our best ideas by Republicans, Democrats and Progressives—and the source of the ideas is rarely acknowledged. Today the movement called Technocracy, which is being discussed in excited whispers in Wall Street and in black headlines in the newspapers, owes many of its ideas to Socialist pioneers.”

There is something very revealing in the statement wherein a “Socialist” spokesman charges promoters of fascist ideas with having stolen their ideology from the Socialist Party! Ramsay MacDonald, it will be remembered, likewise charged Lloyd George with having robbed him of his program. Manifestly, Lloyd George and the Technocrats can prove that there is not a trace of Socialism in their pockets. Yet, if they have committed the robbery, then, clearly, that which they took from Ramsay MacDonald and the American Socialist Party could hardly have been socialism.

VI

The emergence of Technocracy at this juncture, and its origination in the American setting, find their explanation in the profound crisis in which the technology of American capitalism finds itself today. The level of the technique of large-scale industrial production attained in the United States has nowhere else been equalled. This high degree of industrial productivity necessitated, it stands to reason, a highly developed body of technicians, engineers, and scientists. There are in the United States, Technocracy tells us, over 300,000 trained technicians and four million men capable of operating the most varied productive equipment. Howard Scott states in the *Living Age* article:

“When one realizes that the technologist has succeeded to such an extent that he is today capable of building and operating engines of energy conversion that have nine million times the output capacity of the average single human being working an eight-hour day, one begins to understand the significance of this acceleration, beginning with man as the chief engine of energy conversion and culminating with these huge extensions of his original one-tenth of a horsepower. Then add the fact that of this 9,000,000-fold acceleration 8,766,000 has occurred since the year 1900.”

This strategic position accorded the leading American technicians, as a group, a rung quite high on the social ladder and gave rise in their petty-bourgeois minds to a consciousness of a superior caste. The impact of the crisis came on them with a terrific suddenness unequalled anywhere in the world. It brought upon them confusion, bewilderment, vain clutchings at their erstwhile prosperity. From their superior caste-consciousness they began to reason: since the captains of industry cannot make use of the technique, we the planners, the builders, those best qualified to operate technique, are logically designed to be its directors. We—or the workers.

Essentially, the aim of Technocracy is to preserve capitalism through the instrumentality of a section of the petty-bourgeoisie which, fearing to lose its base as part of the minor bourgeois class, should capitalism fail, comes forward to steer the ship of capitalism past the dangerous rocks of the crisis. It recognizes that in the face of the militant mood of the masses this manoeuvre must be presented in radical language.

Whether or not the Technocrats as individuals all consciously enter into this role, is not to the point. That technicians and scientists in capitalist countries are, as a group, uneducated in the matter of social philosophy is a commonplace. How pitiful, for instance, is the helplessness into which the genius of an Einstein sinks before the task of solving the crisis of capitalism. Being trained to serve capitalism in specialized technical fields, their whole rearing has been in a school whose portals bear the motto: “Theirs not to reason why.” It is not the personnel of Technocracy that is of moment, but Technocracy as a manifestation, as a movement dominated and directed consciously and purposively by the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois class forces that have prepared it and arranged for its dramatic emergence at this moment when American capitalism finds itself so very hard put to it. If there has now developed from certain capitalist forces a counter propaganda against Technocracy, it is not in opposition to the original purpose, but in panic as a result of certain basic questions relative to capitalist foundations that Technocracy through its radical phrases has quite unintentionally raised.

Thus the New York *Times* of January 25, reports professor Irving Fisher, of Yale University, as having declared:

"Technocracy is a deliberate campaign of fear appearing just when the restoration of confidence was momentarily awaited as the final factor of recovery to supplement the efforts of President Hoover, his emergency groups and the Federal Reserve System."

Technocracy declares itself to be above politics. It assumes the position of being beyond classes, beyond class origin, class struggle, and class philosophy. Scott declares:

"No political method of arriving at social decisions is adequate in continental areas under technological control, for the scientific technique of decision arrivation has no political antecedents."

Although we would be the last to deny the abyss of ignorance that gapes through this technocratic wisdom, we are constrained from charging this cult of no politics in "social decisions" to ignorance alone. For in off-moments our Technocrats show themselves, for those who need clearer proof, as being quite political in their intent. An instance in point: Under a front-page caption "Leaders Put Faith in the Machine Age to End Depression," the *New York Times* of January 9, 1933, reports a statement made public by Alfred P. Sloan Jr., president of General Motors Corporation, bearing out the meaning of the caption. On the following day the *Times* carries the reply of Howard Scott:

"Mr. Sloan's position, as published yesterday, was that uninterrupted development of research, invention and labor-saving devices was essential to recovery. In these measures he saw the instruments for the creation of new needs and industries as means of overcoming the depression.

"Mr. Scott issued the following statement:

"The statement of Alfred Sloan and his associates—150 leaders of American life—is in thorough concurrence with the tenets of Technocracy . . ."

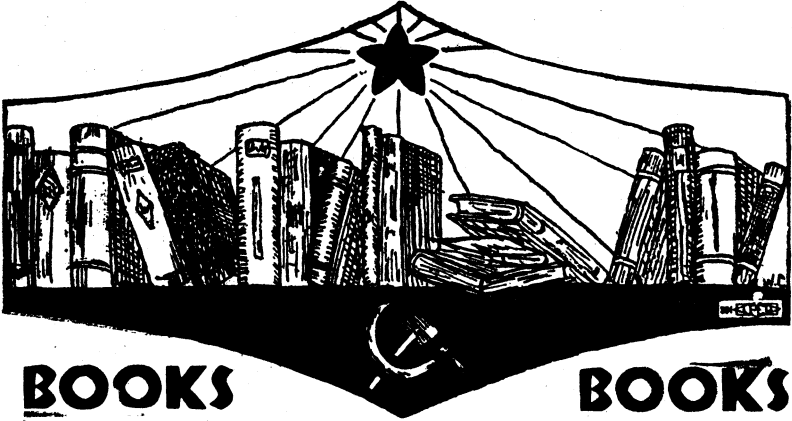
Perhaps the only true utterance Technocracy has made!

In the further interests of truth, it should be added, however, that this avowed concurrence of the Technocratic tenets with the tenets of big capitalism for the continued economic *and political* tyranny of the exploiting class, represents the *political* opposition of Technocracy to Marxism-Leninism, to the Soviet Union, to the working class everywhere. The contradictions of capitalism can be overcome only through the revolutionary political action of the working class, when, in the words of Engels, "The proletariat seizes political power and wins the means of production into State property." By its no-politics twaddle, Technocracy aims to numb the revolutionary political force of the working class while it beclouds its own political intent in behalf of reaction.

Technocracy is definitely a phase in the capitalist planning policy.

But the process of which it is a mere phase will not end with Technocracy. The hoax in Technocracy is too transparent for the hoodwinking to go on. The real engineer behind this planning manoeuvre, the big bourgeoisie which today makes the Howard Scotts, unmakes them tomorrow and flings them on the dung-heap of history. The plan-layer is impugned, villified, scrapped, that the plan, or rather the idea of planning, may be salvaged. Now the plan for overcoming unemployment may take the form of apple-vending, now of "Buy American", now of thinning the ranks of the unemployed through wholesale deportations of foreign-born workers, now of the slogan "Back to the Land," now of barter, now of Technocracy—but as each "plan" becomes in its turn discredited, the court magicians of capitalism bring forward a new salvation.

We must see Technocracy as a phase of capitalist planning and as such attack it. We must show up all such future attempts to screen the basic anarchy of capitalist production. We must uncover them as shams that seek to raise false hopes among the masses while unemployment and misery are daily growing. We must counter the plan of capitalism with the plan of the working class to solve the crisis through the revolutionary way out.



WHERE IS SCIENCE GOING, by MAX PLANCK. Prologue by ALBERT EINSTEIN. *Translated by JAMES MURPHY.*

W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1932.....\$2.75
 (The December selection of the Scientific Book Club)

Reviewed by W. PHELPS

To have one's own arguments come back at oneself, with added force, is the unenviable position of Marx Planck, author of the quantum theory, and, next to Einstein, probably the foremost scientist of the bourgeois world. To be torn between the progressive reality of science and the assuring harmonies of religion; to flounder amidst the social sciences with the methods of mechanical materialism, inadequate even for the physical sciences; to be lost in a welter of contradictions, through being always a little astray of the proper approach, that of dialectical materialism, is the price Planck pays for his loyalties to the pervasive philosophical outlook of the bourgeoisie. His errors are not merely errors in reasoning; they consistently reflect the limitations of his philosophical approach. In so far as any one thinker can be said to represent the contradictions of his class, Planck typifies the present critical situation in bourgeois science, which is unable to carry through its experimental study of the objective world because of the philosophical trap-pings it must carry. Bourgeois scientists are continually confronted by problems and contradictions, some genuine, and some of their own making, which they cannot solve without the method of dialectical materialism. As a result they are forced to the position of idealism or fideism, to retain consistency with their original premises. And, methodologically, scientific theory takes refuge in all kinds of fetishes of purity and abstraction, removing itself still further from its objective sources in technological practice.

The very title *Where Is Science Going* reflects the bewilderment of bourgeois scientists in the face of their problems. They may well be bewildered, for, as we shall see in the case of Planck, their only stabilizer is *faith* in the empiric character of science and in the ultimate effectiveness of the law of causality. The *major* crisis in physics, today, is directly traceable to the very theory which has made Planck famous, the *Quantum Theory*. In 1900 Planck stated the theory in this form: "Radiant heat is not a continuous flow and definitely divisible. It must be defined as a discontinuous mass made up of units all of which are similar to one another." The principle of discontinuity involved in this theory was soon introduced into other fields of

theory by such physicists as de Broglie, Schoedinger, Dirac, Einstein, etc. In 1927 Heisenberg proclaimed what is now known as the Principle of Indeterminacy, which stated that it is impossible to measure simultaneously both the velocity and the position in space-time of a particle. This principle was almost immediately interpreted by many leading physicists and philosophers as an overthrow of the causation principle in science, that is, the principle that all physical phenomena have their material causes, and that effects may be predicted if causes are known. For example, Sir James Jeans, commenting on the Quantum Theory and the Principle of Indeterminacy, in *The Mysterious Universe* says, "Yet the fact that 'loose jointedness,' of any type whatever, pervades the whole universe destroys the case for absolutely strict causation, this latter being the characteristic of perfectly fitting machinery."¹ And, Eddington also subscribed to this new agnosticism. In *The Nature of the Physical World*, he says, "Thus far we have shown that modern physics is drifting away from the postulate that the future is predetermined, ignoring it rather than deliberately rejecting it. With the discovery of the Principle of Indeterminacy its attitude has become more definitely hostile." (p. 306) Aware of the importance of these questions, Planck has devoted himself principally to a discussion of causation in the physical sciences, and the parallel question of causation and free will in history.

In the prologue to the book, Einstein puts a little salt on the wound of bourgeois science. With the assumed modesty of a man aware of his importance, he introduces Planck as some angelic hero, spinning great theories out of thin air, and proceeds to some idealist absurdities about the meaning of science, such as: "One of the strongest motives that lead people to give their lives to art and science is the urge to flee from every day life, with its drab and deadly dullness"; and "there is no way to the discovery of the elementary laws of physics. There is only the way of intuition, which is helped by a feeling for the order lying behind the appearance and this *Enfuehlung* is developed by experience." (p. 8) These views seem to represent the literary aspirations of Einstein. But it is significant that precisely these reactionary ideas should be presented by Einstein in his non-scientific role. Einstein has shown himself to be "social minded," and has recently undertaken to spread pacifism among intellectuals in an attempt to prevent war. His idealist premises have led him to an anomalous position: on one hand, his activity contradicts his belief that science is an escape from life, and on the other, his pacifist methods are inadequate to prevent war because they are not founded on the only scientific theory of the causes of war, Marxism. Einstein's views, objectively considered, reflect the refuge of the bourgeoisie in mysticism and intuitionism in the attempt to hold back the progress of history toward proletarian revolutions and the establishment of a classless society. To preserve the status quo, the bourgeoisie seeks to not only discredit the scientific philosophy of Marxism, but also the very objectivity of the physical sciences. Therefore, they encourage and popularize all forms of idealism (mysticism, intuitionism, etc.)

Like many other scientific realists Planck is too close to the practical methods of science to entertain all of the idealist vagaries to which some of his co-workers have succumbed. Consequently he performs a useful, progressive function in demolishing some of these theories. For instance, under the chapter heading of "Is the Eternal World Real" Planck refutes the positivist theory that our sensory experiences form the only certain knowledge we can have, that the function of science is to classify these experiences, and that, consequently, any inferences or philosophical theories are illegiti-

¹ *The Mysterious Universe*, p. 24.

mate constructions on science. He points out that this emphasis on sensory experience ends in *solipsism*, that is, in the position that only one's own sensory experience is real. He also shows that positivism admits of no way of deciding which of several sets of scientific data (based on direct sensory experience) is more accurate and more useful. Incidentally Planck demonstrates that experiment and theory are interdependent, and that the scientist would not know what to look for without these theoretical attitudes. Planck correctly asserts that "A science that starts off by predicting the denial of objectivity has already passed sentence on itself." (p. 80)

Nevertheless, even on this question, Planck's mechanistic materialism leads ultimately to some idealist positions. By failing to observe that our theories of physics are representations of objective reality, which arise in the course of our active transformation of the external world,² he is led to an over emphasis of the subjective end of theory, to a "fetishizing" of the logical organization of theory. As Engels pointed out, "thought can, without error, only bring those elements of consciousness into a unity in which or in the actual prototype of which this unity already existed beforehand."³ And Marx in his Second Thesis on Feuerbach stated that the very question is really an historical and a practical one, not one merely for speculation. Thus Planck is led to the conclusion that the goal of science is truth, which is "something that is essentially metaphysical . . . and is unattainable" (p. 82), and that the end of science is "the success which attends the seeking of it [truth,] that enriches the seeker and brings happiness to him." (p. 83.)

In asserting that the enrichment of the seeker rather than an understanding and control of our natural environment is the end of science, Planck has arrived at idealism. Furthermore, Planck is much concerned with the mental equipment and habits of the individual scientist, attributing to him a free imagination beyond the drab borders of logic, though he concludes that his ultimate aim is to construct coherent systems of thought, which become monuments to the genius of the human mind. But he is forced to relate this somehow to the external world; hence he admits that "the chief quality to be looked for in the physicist's world picture must be the closest possible accord between the real world and the world of sensory experience." (p. 83) What a lop-sided version of the problem of knowledge! It implies that nature and our scientific theories have to be fitted together like parts of a jig-saw puzzle. Bucharin characterized what may be called Planck's "fetishism" of form very aptly as a "confusion of the *subjective passions* of the professional scientist, working in a system of profound division of labor, in conditions of a disjointed society, in which individual social functions are crystalized in a diversity of types, psychologies, passions, with the objective social role of this kind of activity as an activity of vast practical importance."⁴

When Planck comes to discuss causation he puts his head into a guillotine. However valiantly he strives to keep science free from the tendency to revert to God as the first cause, implicit in the denials of causation by indeterminists like Jeans, his mechanical idea of causation leaves him for support only a faith in the ultimate proof of causation. Heisenberg's principle and subsequent interpretation showed that not all physical phenomena are subject to laws of dynamical, that is, direct, exact, causation. Phenomena like radiation of heat (as in quantum mechanics) are governed by laws of *statistical causation*, that is, the laws operate only for aggregate results of smaller phenomena.

² See Bucharin's essay in *Science at the Crossroads*, p. 6.

³ *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism*, p. 64.

⁴ Bucharin, p. 10.

According to statistical laws therefore, many single phenomena are unpredictable. Hence the attack on complete causation in nature. Planck attempts to resolve the contradiction by reducing statistical laws to dynamical laws and, in those cases where he is unable to make this reduction, by suggesting that this inability is due to lack of sufficient knowledge, which the future may provide. Ultimately, then, we must have faith in the future to resolve this contradiction, according to Planck. But since he recognizes that the practice of science requires and corroborates the laws of causation, he attempts to do justice to this aspect of the question by asserting that causality is a category, in the Kantian sense, necessary to the successful progress of science. It is, he says, "entirely independent of sense perception," How true is Engel's remark that "'Back to Kant' appears to be the hope of reactionary politicians as well as of reactionary philosophers"! ⁵

But the major difficulty arises from Planck's inability to see that both *dynamical* and *statistical* laws are valid, and are polar aspects of dialectical unity. With reference to the general nature of this problem Engels said, "Our course lies not in maintaining the old conception of necessity," and "forcing upon nature, in the form of a law, a logical construction contradicting both itself and reality," as Planck does, nor in "declaring the chaotic realm of accident to be the sole law of living nature" as Heisenberg and others do. ⁶ In the specific questions of physics this problem also takes the form of an inability to relate the general to the particular. As Colman has tersely put it in his superb essay in *Science at the Cross Roads*, "The dialectical materialist will conduct his investigations not with the object of replacing statistical law by dynamical laws, but in order to comprehend the object in the internally contradictory unity of its content and its form, of the particular and the general, of the accidental and the necessary, of the discrete and the continuous." ⁷ By his mechanistic approach Planck ends, as we have seen, in fatalism (a form of idealism). Colman describes the process as "Thus absolute necessity falls into line with absolute chance." ⁸

After having asserted the necessity of preserving our belief in dynamical causation, Planck carries the same type of reasoning into history, or "human-relations" as he puts it. In his hands the problem becomes essentially a psychological and ethical one. In lieu of any discussion of political and economic history, he asks whether all the acts of an individual have objective causes, and, if so, what is free will. His answer is that since man cannot know all the causes of all his actions, facts which only God and the angels may know, man appears, for all practical purposes, to have a considerable degree of free will. ⁹ The absurdity of the attempt to discuss history in terms of individual psychology is clear. The most effective reply to this juggling of ideas is Engel's description of freedom: "Freedom does not consist in an imaginary independence of natural laws but in a knowledge of these laws and in the possibility of applying them intelligently to given ends." ¹⁰ Ac-

⁵ *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism*, p. 22.

⁶ *Naturdialektik*

⁷ Colman: "Dynamical and Statistical Regularity in Physics and Biology." p. 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹ It is interesting to compare this with the similar idealist theories of he says only the angels know history.

Laplace and Maritain. See especially Maritain's *Three Reformers*, in which

¹⁰ *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism*, p. 147.

ording to Planck's reasoning the workers in capitalist countries would be free, since the theory of democracy contains illusions of freedom for all. Some of the motivation for this theory of free will by Planck are revealed by his concern that people would shirk their moral responsibilities on the grounds that their actions are caused by forces beyond their control. These moral responsibilities turn out to be based, by his own admission, on the "Categorical Imperative" of Kant (the principle that people's acts are to be guided by supernatural moral compulsions which are true for all people and all time). Under capitalism these pretentious phrases are but a justification for the class morality based on the economic interests of the bourgeoisie.

As might be expected Planck's philosophical approach finds its fruition in a tribute to religion. "Religion," he says, "belongs to that realm that is inviolable before the law of causation and therefore closed to science." (p. 167) Recognizing that religion is essentially a denial of human values in life, he justifies his attitude by insisting that he means religious belief "in its fundamental sense," whatever that may be. Marx, Engles and Lenin have repeatedly pointed out that religion, in any sense whatsoever, is a philosophy of consolation and quietism, which the ruling class spreads throughout the exploited class, and in its institutional forms, is an instrument of further exploitation and oppression.

Though Planck sets out to demolish the essentially anti-scientific idealism of many scientists and philosophers, he is forced to basically similar positions himself. There are really two aspects to this compulsion. On one hand, his mechanical, anti-historical materialism brings him to a kind of fatalism and a faith that science in the future will fit into this fatalism. On the other hand, the idealist attitudes which he has taken from the bourgeois outlook produce such reactionary theories as those on religion and free will. Despit the fact that his own scientific investigations, especially the Quantum Theory, are excellent examples of dialectics, his philosophical approach amounts politically to a justification of the capitalist *status quo* whose decay it unconsciously represents.

In the Soviet Union, where science has been released from its ideological and material fetters, it is taking on a new vitality. Industrial expansion and the consequent growth of technology are producing a corresponding expansion of scientific theory and practice. And the application of the methods of dialectical materialism is enabling Soviet scientists to rescue scientific theory from many of its contradictions and to direct its development into channels more closely related to technological practice.

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