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TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

A Step Forward of the Third Camp

The London Congress of the Colonial Peoples

The second Congress of the Peoples Against Imperialism took place in London, October 7 through October 10. It witnessed the greatest gathering yet of delegates of all colonial movements struggling for national independence, as well as of those socialist parties that are fully anti-imperialist.

The impressive rollcall showed delegates from the following African colonies: French-ruled Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Cameroons, Madagascar; British-ruled Sudan, Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, Gold Coast, Ashanti, Sierra Leone. In addition, there were delegates from organizations of African workers and students living in Great Britain.

Asiatic organizations included the Socialist Party of India, the two Trotskyist parties of Ceylon (Lanka Sama Samaj and Bolshevik Samaja parties), the Indian Peasants Union and organizations of VietNamese workers and students in France.

Socialist and democratic organizations from the imperialist nations represented at the conference were numerous, but unlike the delegates from the powerful movements for colonial liberation, they could only voice the sentiments of the small anti-imperialist vanguard among the European workers. Conspicuous by their absence were the treacherous Social Democratic Parties that participate or have participated in the imperialist governments of Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. From France, the Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire (RDR), the Parti Communiste Internationaliste and Garry Davis' Citoyens du Monde attended. From Great Britain came the Independent Labor Party, Commonwealth, Crusade for World Government, Peace Pledge Union and several local Labor Party branches. From the Netherlands came representatives of the left-wing socialist paper *De Vlam*. From its émigré office in France, the Spanish POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification) was represented. And finally, for the first time, an American organization was reported as present—the Independent Socialist League.

Unquestionably the dominant feature of the Congress was the unalterable determination of the colonial movements to fight *today* for complete liberation. All the old saws about education, "preparation for self-government," etc., are dead as a doornail. The reports of repression in the African colonies showed clearly enough the ferocity of the struggle and its deep-rooted character.

In Madagascar the French government itself admitted that 100,000 of the Malgasy people were killed in the suppression of the revolt last year. Not content with this, the French government demanded the lifting of the parliamentary immunity of the Malgasy deputy, Raseta, on minor charges of complicity in the revolt. Having obtained the lifting of immunity, the government changed the charge to treason and Raseta was sentenced to death. As a result of a campaign of protest, this sentence has since been commuted to life imprisonment, and from his cell Raseta wired to the Congress his best wishes and his full support.

The reports were everywhere the same. The delegate of the Uganda Farmers Union reported the suppression of his organization and the imprisonment of hundreds of its members for terms up to *fifteen years* for demonstrating in favor of cooperative marketing for the native farmers to eliminate the vicious profiteering of European middlemen.

The Algerian delegates reported the police repressions that made a mockery of the last elections there and which included practically the physical destruction of some villages and the forced exile from their home villages of hundreds of independence fighters.

The delegates of the Moroccan Istiqlal (Independence Party) were able to report the censorship of their press which results in their newspaper appearing usually more than half blank.

It is no wonder that these same colonial delegates had risen to a man at the first Congress, held last year at Puteaux, France, to reject the attempt made there by Social Democrats to obtain agreement on equivocal formulas short of complete self-determination for the colonial peoples. At that time the delegates had been rightly suspicious of the elaborate preparations made for them, reservations in fancy hotels and all the rest. They rejected the bribe that was in effect offered them, and refused to vitiate their struggle.

At this Congress, accordingly, the Social Democrats were absent, but the suspicions toward *all Europeans* fostered by their bitter experiences created a dangerous tendency this year among some of the delegates from British West African colonies. These suspicions came out clearly in the discussoin of the document, "The Colonies and War," presented to the Congress by its International Committee. The conclusions of this document can be summed up as follows:

1. Every colonial people is entitled *at once* to full independence.

2. No people which is not independent is bound by any decision to enter a war which may be taken by its oppressors.

3. The colonial peoples must be completely independent with regard to the two big power blocs in the world.

This document was attacked by some of the West Africans on the ground that the African colonial power were only to be found in *one* of the two blocs and they were absolutely against any mention of a struggle which did not concern them. What was behind this attitude? There was unquestionably some Stalinist influence at work here, since certain of these delegates stated that they believed Rus-

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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The Smith Act and the Stalinist Trial

A Threat to Democracy and the Labor Movement

When Roger Baldwin, director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said that "the conviction of the Communist leaders indicted to advocate political doctrines made criminal by the Smith Act was almost inevitable," he touched the heart of the problem involved in the long-drawn-out Foley Square trial in New York City.

The Smith Act, passed during the hysteria produced by the recent war, is a vicious piece of legislation purposely designed to curb the advocacy of, writing and speaking for, doctrines and ideas antagonistic to the existing capitalist social order and its ideology. It supersedes the Holmes-Brandeis doctrine of the necessity for a "clear and present danger" to exist before the fundamental right of free speech, free press and free assembly can be abridged.

This does not of course mean that American bourgeois society and its governmental agencies have always conducted themselves within the strict interpretation of this Supreme Court precedent. Quite the contrary. But to understand fully the legal implications of the Smith Act one has to bear in mind that it does cancel out the legal tradition of the Supreme Court, not only for wartime but peacetime as well. Under the Smith Act, *no movement, no organization, no group* and *no individual,* is free from prosecution if the government should so decide.

It was under the Smith Act that the leaders and members of the Socialist Workers Party were indicted and convicted during the declared war emergency. In that case, the Supreme Court, with studied cowardice, refused even to hear the case on appeal. With this new precedent established, it was a foregone conclusion that the Stalinist leaders would be found guilty, especially since the doctrine of a "clear and present danger" was specifically rejected by the Federal Court of Appeals in the Minneapolis case, on the ground that the Congress, having passed the Smith Act, was within its legal right to abridge the rights of free speech, free press and free assembly. The irony of the conviction of the Stalinists lies in their demand at the time for the conviction of the SWP leaders and their support of that conviction to this day.

But it would be a mistake to be indifferent to the verdict just because the defendants involved are Stalinists. Should the conviction of these agents of the Kremlin be upheld by the highest court in the land, the danger to all genuine movements for socialism, yes, and even for social reform, would be jeopardized.

The trial itself was unimaginably dull and drawn out. The Stalinist leaders, just because they were not revolutionary socialists of any description but cynical servants of Stalin's bloody regime, did not comport themselves in the manner of so many great leaders of socialism beginning with Marx. They acted like clever shysters, adapting themselves to the trickeries of the law. Their lawyers had planned to drag out and wear down the court, to create such bedlam as to make the proceedings completely confusing and without sense to the ordinary layman. Because they are Stalinists they could not use the court as a tribunal to espouse the cause of socialism.

To the degree that they did pose as the spokesmen of socialism, the responsibility for that lies with the authorities and the whole of the bourgeois world. Unable or unwilling to distinguish between socialism and Stalinism, they strengthened the folly of our times: "Stalinism is socialism." More important than that, the trial did make martyrs out of the Stalinist leaders and it gave them a weapon of immeasurable power, above all in Europe. More than one organ of bourgeois public opinion has called the trial and the verdict foolish and unrewarding. The liberal press has observed, with more sense than it usually shows, that the convictions reflect a hardening of the anti-democratic tendencies in American political and social life, and that this danger is far more acute than any possible dangers that can come from the Stalinist movement in the United States today.

It goes without saying that we are the most vigorous opponents of Stalinism and everything it stands for. We have never weakened or wavered in that opposition, even when the war produced an unholy and unprincipled alliance between the Kremlin and the White House. But we do know by an abundance of world experiences that Stalinism will never be defeated by such a trial as has just been concluded in Foley Square.

We are against the indictment, trial and conviction of the Stalinists under the Smith Act because the

Act itself is a piece of vicious anti-democratic legislation, thought up by a Southern bigot and passed by a jingoistic Congress during wartime.

It was used against the SWP in 1941, a couple of lunatic fascist groups later, and the Stalinists now. It can be employed against any non-conformist group of any description. It is not merely a question of the Act being unconstitutional. Even if it were constitutional, it would indicate the necessity for changing the Constitution, for it abridges elementary democratic rights.

The struggle for democratic rights in this period, when it becomes increasingly difficult to defend and maintain them, is infinitely more important than the rights or lack of them by the treacherous Stalinists. This is the real issue involved in the trial.

The U. E. Convention Fight

Is the CIO Heading Toward a Split?

The 14th convention of the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE-CIO) held in Cleveland on September 19-23, produced the answer to what Stalinist strategy in the CIO would be now that the Executive Board has issued its ultimatum to all officers and unions: submit to and carry out CIO policy or else suffer the consequences for failure to do so. The answer given was a direct one, as this article will show, and it points to the preparations made by the Stalinists to split over the issues which now divide them from their erstwhile allies in the CIO, endeavoring, of course, to place the onus for such a split upon the ruling officialdom.

All of this was certainly indicated after the May, 1949, meeting of the CIO Executive Board. Readers will recall that while the Portland convention last year issued a stern warning to the Stalinist-dominated unions to relinquish their support to Russian imperialism in favor of American imperialism, no actual disciplinary motions were adopted to enforce such a demand. Reuther and others asked for it, but Murray was far more cautious, hoping for something, he knew not what, that might end the schism and bring peace to the CIO. There is no doubt whatever that the prospect of a split in the CIO is extremely distasteful to him. Yet this ardent supporter of American imperialism could not forgive the Stalinists for the manner in which they broke up their wartime alliance with him in favor of exclusive support to the Kremlin. And that which caused his gorge to rise was the way in which the Stalinist-controlled unions backed the CP campaign for Wallace for president. Of these unions, none was more aggressive and truculent in its opposition to CIO policy than the UE.

Murray was particularly touchy on this subject because Albert J. Fitzgerald, president of the UE, was also a vice-president and executive board member of the CIO, and James Matles, organization director, was also a member of the board.

Since the Portland convention, the national CIO has been moving in on state and local CIO councils and reorganizing them. That is to say, they have been taking them out of the hands of the Stalinists, who have used the councils (which they usually dominated with a disciplined and organized minority) to champion CP policies against official policies of the CIO. Now, nearly all councils uniformly reflect national CIO policies. But that is not nearly enough to satisfy the solidifying bureaucracy in the CIO. Of what avail is it to win control of the councils if the Stalinists continue to dominate a number of international unions and to use these as sounding boards for Kremlin strategy? Therefore, the Executive Board made and carried the following motions at its May meeting:

> All members of the Board who are unwilling to enforce the constitution and carry out the instructions of the convention and, between conventions, of the decision of the Executive Board, are called upon to resign.
>
> All unions affiliated with CIO who are represented in the Board by members unwilling to [do the above] are called upon to insist upon the resignation of such representatives and to nominate successor representatives who are willing to and will comply.

There you have the background to the UE convention. The Emspak-Matles leadership, however, was faced with another problem. For the first time in the history of their control of the union, a formidable and organized opposition actually arose threatening to overthrow their leadership. This opposition was created in a matter of months and even though it had no time to challenge the Administration in all districts and locals, its strength was enormous.

The Emspak-Matles leadership hesitated in the organization of the convention only momentarily. At first, they were prepared to ram through its sessions with the typical bureaucratic brutality of a CP convention meeting an opposition. They were going to select the visitors, choose the representatives of the press, act sternly on challenged delegations and do everything within their power to prevent a majority going to the Opposition. But when they were absolutely certain of a majority of the 3800 odd votes, the reins were relaxed a little to give the convention an appearance of democracy. Only within limits, however, for they made certain that the chair of the convention would remain completely in their hands. No

presiding committee was elected. Instead, the three main officers of the union, President Fitzgerald, Organization Director Matles and Secretary-Treasurer Emspak, occupied the rostrum throughout the convention, and Fitzgerald was the permanent chairman who conducted the sessions with all the formal fairness of a kangaroo court.

A Miscalculation of Strength

If the Stalinist leadership had any fears about losing to the Opposition, they may have been induced by James B. Carey's confident pre-convention statements that the great majority of the delegates supported his group and its candidates for office, Fred Kelly, Michael Fitzpatrick and John Dillon. Carey's estimate of the relationship of forces was highly exaggerated. As the convention showed, it was certainly not a sober analysis of the real strength of the Opposition. His confidence in winning a majority at this convention was not reflected in the wider circles of the Opposition. Carey undoubtedly came by his opinion from the fact that the larger and more important locals opposed the Administration and because for the first time in the history of the UE an organized opposition actually made its appearance at a convention.

Majority or not, the opposition did represent the decisive sections of the union. It did not, however, command the support of the "doubtful" delegates who came from the lesser urban centers and whose primary contact with the union was through the great horde of International representatives and district functionaries, all of them Stalinists or fellow-travelers. In any case, the Administration realized that for the first time since it took complete charge of the union in 1941, its stranglehold was being loosened.

Given their record over the years, the Stalinists could not parade before the convention with a list of achievements. It was not very long ago, that these wreckers had instituted union-wide "incentive pay" systems and the speed-up to support the war. They had gone much further than any of the old-line unions. They had done what none of the conservative and reactionary unions even dreamed of doing: turned their union back a decade or two, reintroducing a murderous speed-up system against which the entire labor movement had fought for years. They failed miserably in the important negotiations with the giants of the electrical industry, Westinghouse and General Electric. The regime of Emspak-Matles (it is hard to talk about Fitzgerald seriously since he is merely the slow-moving, slow-thinking, not very competent captive of the real leaders of the union, the Stalinists) was brutal and dictatorial. Their effort to compare the gains of UE to those of the UAW and Steel was not very effective. On the whole, their fight would have been a defensive one had it not been for one event: the report of the fact-finding committee for the steel industry and the decision of Murray and his steel union leadership to forego the wage struggle and to accept the pension proposal of this government board.

It was a running fire against the conduct of the steel union that formed the basis for the Stalinist strategy in the convention. Almost before the convention was organized, Matles presented a "surprise" resolution on collective bargaining (not given beforehand to the resolutions committee) calling for a renewal of negotiations with the companies, rejecting a fact-finding commission and demanding a $500 Christmas package from industry to cover wages, pensions, etc. The resolution contained a running reference, ineffectively camouflaged to the acceptance by Murray of the fact-finding committee's recommendations, thus precluding any wage fight by the CIO. The design of the resolution was to put the opposition on the defensive, and by contrast to make the UE appear as a militant, progressive union. In a word, Murray's derelictions were used to cover up the crimes of the UE leadership. Putting the opposition on the defensive might have meant changing the whole character of the convention struggle and thus enhancing the position of the Administration.

The first day of the convention found the opposition, along with their floor leader Carey, biting this bait. In contrast to the vigorous floor work of the Administration and its hand-picked supporters, the opposition made a very weak fight. Outside of some rather empty boasting and a little red-baiting, it presented nothing. And this for one little reason. They fell into the Stalinist trap and forgot all about their own program. Fitzgerald showed the kind of stuff he was made of when, in the debate, he called upon one Administration spokesman after another. Thus the first debate on this resolution showed nine speakers for the Administration and three for the opposition.

The Opposition Line Changes

On the following day, a considerable change took place. The caucus of the opposition thrashed out the question of convention strategy and decided that its course up to that point had been wrong. They had permitted the Stalinists to take the play away from them. Their floor work had been poor. Their speakers were ineffective, merely giving personal testimonials to their hard work, loyalty and Americanism. They seldom knew what points to make, and when they made one, did not know how to clinch it. Since the caucus had decided not to organize its fight on the convention floor, there was a free-for-all around the microphones, and in these mêlées, Fitzgerald picked the speakers! Only delegate, Jennings of the New York Sperry local, saved the day for the opposition with a vigorous and militant dressing down of the Stalinist administration.

The second day saw a complete reversal of form by the opposition. This time it challenged the Admin-

istration not merely with speeches, but by its infinitely superior counter-resolution on the task of the UE. Indicating the Stalinist misleadership, the resolution ended with the following 9-point program:

(1) That UE stop discrediting those in our union who seek to restore the union to its proper place as a militant labor union;
(2) That UE devote all of its strength and activity to collective bargaining and stop diverting its energies into suicidal political adventures;
(3) That UE return home to its membership;
(4) That UE take its membership into its confidence and give direction and guidance to them in an effort to solve their immediate problems and improve their working conditions;
(5) That UE vigorously demand a pension of $100 per month on a non-contributory basis from the electrical industry exclusive of government social security benefits.
(6) That UE shall not rest until its membership is covered by a non-contributory plan of social insurance which will provide adequate life insurance, a weekly sickness and accident benefit of 75 per cent of weekly earnings, hospitalization costs, a schedule of surgical benefits which will cover costs and complete medical care;
(7) A general wage increase to equalize earnings with those prevailing in steel and auto;
(8) That UE restore to its members the right to fight for and hold union security;
(9) That UE return at once to bargaining with GE and Westinghouse to secure these vitally necessary improvements.

Given this strong minimum program, the opposition delegates presented an entirely new face to the convention, and even though they did not carry their resolution, they did give the Stalinists a warm time of it. So aggressive was their fight that when Matles, in summary, made a scurrilous attack upon some of the outstanding opposition locals in the UE he was unable to complete his summary speech over the booing and left the speaker's podium.

The Stalinist Resolutions

It would be impossible in an article like this to report the entire convention in detail, nor would it be necessarily fruitful. Once the fight over the above-mentioned resolutions was completed, the way of the convention was fairly determined. There remained two decisive questions yet before it: the Administration's resolution on raiding and the opposition resolution on support to CIO policy; and the Administration's constitutional amendment to permit the General Executive Board to supersede locals in the trial and discipline of members. (The election of officers was a completely secondary matter in face of the real situation and struggle in the union.)

The Stalinist resolutions announced their strategy in the current struggle. In their resolution on raiding, a series of ultimatums was proposed to be placed before the coming convention of the CIO. These ultimatums, deploring the threat of a split initiated by the action of the May meeting of the Executive Board, demand of the Board the cessation of "hostility" to the UE and warn that if attacks and raiding on the UE continue, the UE would, in turn, cease to pay its per capita tax to the CIO. At this point, Stalinist cleverness seems to have gotten the better of them, provided . . . it was their real intention to remain in the CIO and not form a third trade-union center, as John Williamson has contended in his open letter to Murray.

The Threat of a Split

But obviously, the threat not to pay per capita tax, which means automatic exclusion from the CIO, is a threat to split, no matter what the provocations might be. Common sense alone dictates that, given the political programs of the CIO and the Stalinists, buttressed by the latter's undeviating loyalty to the Kremlin, there will be no end to the internal struggle until one side or the other prevails. The question then reduces itself simply to one of whether the Stalinists want to remain in the CIO as a defeated minority. The resolution of Emspak-Matles (read: CP) indicates their readiness to accept the full consequences of a refusal to pay per capita tax. Only the uninitiated would regard such a split a matter of a financial dereliction or as a technicality.

In order to emphasize this course, the Administration introduced a most astounding bureaucratic amendment to the constitution that would permit the GEB to bring charges against and try any member of the union directly, without bringing such charges to the member's local union and having him tried there. To emphasize its real aim, the Board calls on "the membership [!] (to) . . . drive the traitors out of their locals and the union."

The constitutional amendment gives the Board the means of side-stepping the opposition locals to expel their leaders, and if necessary whole locals, such as they have already done in Chicago and elsewhere. So, when the Stalinists cry bitterly that they want unity and want to remain in the CIO, they are merely deceiving the membership of the CIO. More important to these agents of the Kremlin than remaining in the CIO, is their freedom to act in behalf of the foreign policy of the Stalinist State. And if remaining in the CIO means a reduction in their effectiveness, they are going out of the CIO where they will be free to carry out "the line."

If a split does not occur immediately following the CIO Convention in Cleveland, the split situation is nevertheless already present. The next stage will see an intensification of the internal struggle with the Stalinist administration taking punitive actions against the opposition. The opposition, however, makes up the real backbone of the union and the Stalinists will not be able to take the UE with them. At best they will take, for the time being, the smaller and dispersed locals, as administrations usually do. That, however, would be only the beginning of the struggle and not its end.

ALBERT GATES

Devaluation and the Dollar Crisis

Behind the Fall of the British Pound

The devaluation of the pound sterling by some 30 per cent has set off a chain reaction. Virtually every currency in the world has been devalued against the American dollar. What has happened therefore in September, 1949, may be termed the *revaluation of the American dollar*—an event comparable in significance in the economic history of the world to the abandonment of the gold standard by the British in September, 1931.

It has taken but eighteen crowded years of depression and war for the permanent crisis of capitalism to destroy the supremacy of the British pound and to enthrone the American dollar as the monetary ruler of the world. This is the central fact that emerges as we examine the wreckage of the world's currencies. It is principally this *belated recognition* of the dominant position of the dollar, an inevitable concomitant of the growing hegemony of American imperialism in the capitalist world, that we propose to analyze in some of its theoretical and practical implications.

To speak solely of the reduction in the value of the pound sterling from $4.03 to $2.80, of the desperate efforts of the British government to increase exports to dollar countries, of the inevitable rise in the cost of living within Britain, or even of the pathetic bankruptcy of the British Labor Party's program of making gestures in the direction of socialism while preserving intact the foundations of capitalism, is to obscure the real meaning of the recent devaluation and to make impossible a real understanding of the historic significance of the *world's* dollar crisis.

It is true that British action precipitated the wave of devaluation; it may even be true, as Cripps asserts, that the British took this action on their own initiative without any pressure from Washington. But it was the economic pressure exerted by American imperialism, increasingly stronger as compared with a declining British imperialism, that forced a realignment of the world's currencies more or less in keeping with the higher exchange value that the dollar had attained in the recent postwar years.

The black markets and free markets, especially in New York, Zurich and Tangiers, have been saying for some time that the $4.03 exchange rate, to which the British pegged the pound in 1946, was too high. They have been selling pounds for less than $3.00 for a couple of years. While such markets are distorted reflections of erstwhile free and competitive markets, they do measure fairly accurately the true exchange values of most currencies and commodities. They are able to assess trends in foreign trade, changes in balances of payments and, above all, in productivity levels in various countries. While the British, and the sterling area as a whole, have been plagued with a dollar shortage and were forced to devalue their currencies to halt the complete depletion of gold and dollar reserves, America requires a lifting of currency and trade restrictions so as to promote capital investments and to increase imports. *The long-term interests of American imperialism coincided with the immediate need of British imperialism to increase exports and to obtain more dollars.* Thus, aside from the pique of the French at the *extent* of the British devaluation, there was complete agreement on the measure in all the major capitals of the capitalist world and *all* the devaluations have been duly approved by the International Monetary Fund.

Had the British and other currency devaluations been unwanted by American imperialism, Washington could simply have devalued the dollar by any desired amount and preserved the competitive advantage enjoyed by American exports in the world market. That no such action was taken supports the veracity of the rumors that the American government for some time had been urging devaluation upon the British. It also reinforces our major thesis that *the creditor position of American imperialism demands an increase in imports.*

One could speculate on why no attempt was made to achieve the same result by revaluing the American dollar directly through reducing the price of gold paid by the U. S. government and increasing the gold content of the dollar. This would have reversed the process of 1934 when the price of gold was increased from $20.67 to $35.00 an ounce and the dollar was devalued by slightly more than 40 per cent. Ultimately, had the British and the others balked at devaluation, Washington would have been forced to take such action.

Politically, however, it was far better, from the American point of view, to achieve the necessary revaluation of the dollar through the devaluation of rival currencies. Other governments can manipulate their currencies by executive decree; revaluation of the dollar by American action would require approval by the Congress, encouraging political division. Why should Washington run the risks of political debate and dissension when the British would have to take the onus of the entire action? Now, if American exporters, especially farmers, complain that it is more difficult for them to sell their products abroad, the answer will automatically be that "America is not responsible for the British devaluation."

Moreover, currency manipulation, to have any lasting effect, must be subject to mutual agreement. Otherwise, the result would be competitive devalua-

tion and increasing chaos. Once the British had been forced to reduce the exchange value of the pound against the dollar, it was simple enough, with American support, to obtain the needed general agreement, which certainly would not have been forthcoming if America had taken the reverse action herein discussed. In the absence of exchange controls—which do prevail in every other country to a greater or lesser extent—a reduction in the price of gold would be required in order to revalue the dollar by direct American action. This could hardly be popular in South Africa and other gold-producing countries. There was no other choice. The pound had to be devalued.

The British Dollar Crisis

The relative strength of any capitalist imperialist power can readily be seen from the position of its monetary unit. This is particularly evident in the case of England, which is now the classic example of the rise and decline of a capitalist power. During the entire nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, Britain was the dominant imperialist power in the world. She was the leading manufacturing and trading nation. Her investments exceeded by far those of any other nation, even in areas outside the far-flung British Empire. Her ships carried most of the world's commerce. The gold standard, adopted in 1816, made the pound sterling, as the British monetary unit, the most coveted currency in the world. Everything was measured in terms of the pound and the bankers of Lombard Street were the real rulers of the world.

While the challenges of French, Dutch and other minor imperialisms had been easily beaten back by the British, by the turn of the twentieth century American imperialism had become a factor on the world scene; above all, an aggressive German imperialism had arisen belatedly to challenge mighty Britain on the continent and to demand its share of the world market.

The cornerstones of British imperial policy were free trade, achieved in 1847 through the repeal of the Corn Laws (which abandoned British agriculture to its fate by the removal of protective tariffs), and the maintenance of the gold standard. British manufactures penetrated every nook and corner of the world. British investments soared to dizzy heights, reaching the colossal total of $20 billion in 1914. The rest of the world, by and large, paid off its obligations to Britain by exporting agricultural products and raw materials to England and by entertaining British tourists. London was the political, economic and cultural capital of the world. The dividends of empire were great. Wars were few and isolated affairs. This was the golden age of capitalist democracy.

But Britain's rate of industrial progress began to slow down, as she became soft and conservative in an economic sense. The British civil and foreign services alone, excellent though they were, could not defend British markets against increasing competition, especially from Germany, whose manufacturing productivity began to exceed that of England. While German imperialism was defeated in World War I, an unfortunate occurrence from the point of view of the historic interests of capitalism as a world system, British imperialism had passed its peak. Some investments were liquidated; debts increased; the obsolescence of British industry became more apparent; the October Revolution in Russia tore a huge chunk out of the capitalist world market and created a new stage in the evolution of the class struggle. The pound staggered under all these blows until it fell from its established par of $4.87 to $3.20 in January, 1920. British tenacity and American loans helped the British to cling to free trade and the gold standard, but the United States was rapidly becoming the leading manufacturing nation of the world as well as the major source of capital investment. The pound recovered, but the dollar was beginning to eclipse it. The world crisis that began in 1929 made this abundantly clear.

Empires, however, as a general rule do not passively allow themselves to disintegrate. The British reversed their traditional policy, went off the gold standard, abandoned free trade, and created a system of empire tariff preferences and the sterling bloc. Sixteen months later Hitler came to power in Germany and again the imperialist conflicts could only be decided by war. The devaluation of the American dollar in 1934 permitted a de facto stabilization of the pound-dollar exchange rate at almost $5.00 to the pound. At the outbreak of World War II the British stabilized at an effective rate of about $4.00 to the pound, but the once proud pound sterling emerged from the holocaust battered and weakened to an unbelievable extent.

The $4.03 rate was fictitious. Machinery, capital equipment and other purchases were being obtained in American markets. More than $14 billion worth of British net foreign investments were liquidated in the Second World War. England had to import large quantities of wheat and other agricultural products to feed her population. The bulk of these imports required dollars. The British Empire was losing one position after another, in India, in Palestine, in fact throughout the world.

The American loan of $4 billion in 1946 was quickly dissipated in less than two years. British austerity could not close the dollar gap or increase sufficiently the productivity of British industry. With an effective dollar deficit during the past year of almost $1 billion, time was running out. Not even the Marshall Plan could stay the tide.

The devalution of the pound was inevitable, but it reveals that British imperialism is today a second-rate power. It was perhaps an unwillingness to admit this historic fact publicly, as it were, that explains

the constant denials over the past several months that the pound would be devalued.

We have stressed, however, that the major significance of the devaluation in not so much the weakness of British imperialism, but the growing absolute and relative strength of American imperialism. Difficult as things were for world capitalism after the First World War, they are infinitely worse after the Second World War. Stalinist imperialism does not constitute the same kind of threat as did Russian Bolshevism, but it is none the less serious. It has already taken another huge bite out of the world market in Eastern Europe and in China, and it is questionable whether its voracious appetite can be satisfied even with such huge morsels to digest. Even more serious, however, is the extent of collapse in the capitalist sector. American imperialism has had no choice; to save itself it must try to shore up the entire capitalist world. Here we find the basic motivation for the Marshall Plan.

The World Dollar Crisis

It is one thing to give billions of dollars away. It is quite another thing, however, to try to organize the capitalist world so that it becomes a functioning organism and a real "defense against communism." Since not even American imperialism can afford indefinitely to give away billions of dollars, some type of equilibrium must be achieved. Perhaps the British dollar crisis was the most acute, but it was the world dollar crisis that perplexed Washington. Virtually every country in the world with which American capitalism does business has had difficulty in acquiring dollars. Some, like France and Italy, have been more fortunate (and perhaps smarter) in attracting American tourist dollars. Even they, however, have experienced a sizable dollar deficit.

If the dollar crisis had been limited to Britain, it would be a far simpler problem to solve. Another loan might have been in order. In any case, if it came to devaluation, it would be only the British pound whose exchange value would be lowered in relation to the dollar. Such events have occurred before, notably in the case of the French devaluations in 1936-38. *It is precisely the world-wide character of the present devaluation that gives it such historic significance.* While throughout the sterling bloc, whose currencies are linked to the British pound, the devaluation has been from 30 to 31 per cent, with the British devaluation actually 30½ per cent (thus preserving the relative status of the nations belonging to the sterling area), the French franc has (so far) been devalued by only 8 per cent, the Belgian franc by 13 per cent and the Portuguese escudo (one of the more stable currencies) also by 13 per cent. Even the Czechoslovak crown has been devalued against the dollar and it has been reported that the Russian ruble has been devalued against the pound. The Canadian dollar has been devalued by 10 per cent against the American dollar. And the devaluation of the Argentine peso is only the forerunner of others in Latin America. These differential depreciations of foreign currencies could not have been achieved had the American dollar been revalued as a consequence of American action, for in that case there would have been a *uniform* reduction in the exchange value of all foreign currencies against the American dollar.

In other words, virtually every country in the world has experienced difficulty in obtaining the necessary dollars to pay for its imports from the United States. The one exception has really been Switzerland, but the Swiss franc, in spite of its ranking with the American dollar as an equivalent hard currency, is already being buffeted about in the currency markets, and devaluation may well follow if Switzerland is to maintain its trade position with the sterling and on-sterling-non-dollar areas.

It was therefore the generalized character of the capitalist world's post-war crisis, reflected in low production levels, little capital accumulations, excessive currency controls, widespread black markets and clogged trade channels, that made the Marshall Plan an *economic* necessity for American imperialism. The Marshall Plan has unquestionably helped to bring about large-scale industrial recovery, with many countries already exceeding pre-war levels. It has also provided a convenient outlet for billions of dollars' worth of American commodities that have helped to sustain a high level of economic activity in this country.

With the experience of the past year, the full dimensions of the problem have become more discernible. The United States has been accumulating capital at a terrific rate. Profitable opportunities for investment at home are beginning to disappear. At the same time, the American favorable balance of trade has exceeded $5 billion annually, substantially more than the annual appropriations under the Marshall Plan. If these trends were to continue, by 1952, at the end of the Marshall Plan, there would be severe economic dislocation on a world scale which American imperialism simply cannot permit. So far as Washington is concerned, *the choice was either a permanent Marshall Plan or an attempt to stabilize the capitalist world in a traditional imperialist manner.* A revalued American dollar will have more opportunities for profitable investment abroad, for its competitive advantage against domestic or other foreign capital will be considerable. This, of course, implies a need for freer world trade, less currency restrictions, relative economic and political stability and, above all, furnishing opportunities for other countries to pay for American investments by increasing their exports.

A permanent Marshall Plan apparently is unattractive. It certainly would be very unpopular with the American bourgeoisie. Europe would hardly be

enthusiastic about the prospect of permanently being rationed by America. Moreover, it would be very expensive. In any case, however conscious the analysis may or may not have been, the fact of the matter is that the Administration has made its choice. There is to be no permanent Marshall Plan. Instead, American imperialism is to be encouraged to increase capital investments abroad and presumably the United States will adjust its entire economic position to conform to its status as the world's largest creditor nation. Whether Congress and the "public" will accept this perspective remains to be seen.

Requirements of American Imperialism

The decline of British imperialism has been accompanied by the rise of American imperialism. The fact, however, that American imperialism did not dominate the capitalist world until capitalism had visibly begun to decay, has posed certain problems which have not yet been solved and which may never be solved. The chief imperialist characteristic of a capitalist imperialist nation is that it exports capital. The United States first began to acquire this key characteristic during World War I. In 1917, American capitalism shifted its status from a debtor to a creditor nation; that is, on balance more American capital was invested abroad than foreign capital was invested in the United States. This trend continued with amazing rapidity following the end of World War I. By 1929, the net creditor position of American capitalism was estimated at some $17 billion. The interest and dividends on these investments alone ran to a sizable sum. At the same time, the United States continued to export more than it imported, thus making it impossible for foreign nations to pay for all of their imports of American capital or to remit the profits earned by these investments.

To have solved this contradiction would have required a low tariff policy and the virtual abandonment of American agriculture, for the rest of the world could pay largely in raw materials and agricultural products only. Instead, the Smoot-Hawley tariff was passed in 1930 which made it practically impossible for any foreign nation to export any commodity to the United States. The result was the worldwide abandonment of the gold standard and the rapid development of state intervention in all the economies of the world.

An era had passed, an era in which the British pound presided over automatic adjustments in rates of exchange and balances of payments. The dollar came to power, as it were, in a period of capitalist decline on a world scale, which was manifested in ever-increasing governmental manipulation of exchange rates and growing currency restrictions. The Roosevelt New Deal managed to evade this central contradiction of American imperialism by attracting and burying under Fort Knox the bulk of the world's gold supply. To some extent, also, the reciprocal trade policy and the policy of agricultural price supports helped to mitigate the situation and softened the opposition of the politically powerful farm bloc.

In more ways than one, however, the advent of World War II was a fortunate *economic* event. It meant the *postponement* of the world's dollar crisis. No longer did American capitalists have to worry about obtaining gold or commodities in payment for their investments. The war economy provided bigger and better profits. Moreover, British imperialism, the chief competitor of American imperialism, was forced to liquidate most of its investments to pay for necessary war supplies. Lend-lease was instituted only *after* the British had disgorged a large portion of their investments. There was, in addition, a phenomenal increase in the productivity of American capitalism simultaneous with large-scale destruction of the capital plant of *all* of America's major imperialist rivals. Even the American merchant marine supplanted the British and actually carried more tonnage during the war than all the rest of the world together.

American imperialism consequently emerged from World War II as the colossus of the capitalist world. The rest of the capitalist world was torn and shaken to its foundations and could not survive, much less recover, without large-scale aid from American imperialism. The relative superiority of American imperialism over all its capitalist competitors was now far greater than had ever been achieved by British imperialism in its heyday. Only Stalinist imperialism presented a formidable obstacle to the achievement of true world hegemony by American imperialism. By the same token, of course, only American imperialism presented a real barrier to the fulfillment of the Kremlin's dream of world conquest, a subject outside the scope of this article except in so far as this mortal conflict provides justification and impetus for the development of the permanent war economy, and therefore alters the requirements of American imperialism in attempting to solve the growing contradiction of a creditor nation with a large favorable balance of trade.

The case of the American farmer illustrates the *new* contradiction that has developed, making it impossible to solve the old contradiction. Under a "normal" capitalist imperialist solution, price supports and tariffs on agricultural products would be abolished. American financial and industrial capital investments abroad and exports would be paid for by American imports of agricultural products. The American farmer would find it impossible to meet this competition and, while not being reduced to the status of the vanishing Indian, would lose virtually all his exports and eventually be restricted to providing for only a small portion of the domestic market for food and allied commodities. This, it will be remembered, was the classic method used by the British in the middle of the nineteenth century to solve a com-

parable problem. The possibility, however, of the conflict with Stalinist imperialism resulting in a "hot" war requires, at a minimum, that the American farmer be able to take care of the entire domestic need for foodstuffs and agricultural products. Certainly, no reliance can be placed on any area outside of the western hemisphere to supply necessary minerals, raw materials or agricultural products for, in the event of war, Europe, Asia and most of Africa might very well be cut off within weeks after the outbreak of hostilities. In a very real sense, therefore, the American farmer today owes his continued existence not only to his disproportionate political power but also to the development of Stalinist imperialism as a major world power.

Two trends will now become evident. On the one hand, American imperialism will resort to a number of traditional methods. Capital investment abroad will be pushed. Point Four is only an indication of the gestures that will be made in this direction. American exports of agricultural products will decline. American imports of raw materials, minerals and light manufactures will increase. There will be some decline in the American merchant marine. There will be further efforts to reduce tariff barriers and to promote freer and multilateral trade. Above all, there will be a conscious effort at currency stabilization and the re-establishment of currency convertibility.

Hand in hand with these trends, which, by themselves and only by themselves, signify less state intervention, there will be an attempt to organize the largest possible portion of the capitalist world as outposts of American imperialism in anticipation of World War III. There will be increasing efforts toward the stockpiling of strategic materials. War research will be accelerated. There will be increasing exports of armaments. The trend toward a permanent war economy will become more pronounced. Direct and indirect war outlays will consume an increasing portion of the national product. All of these developments point in the direction of increasing state intervention. To some extent, particularly in the initial period, these divergent trends will not appear to be in contradiction. Basically, however, they are, and at each crisis the growing power of state monopoly capitalism in the United States will become apparent.

Impact of Devaluation

In the long run devaluation solves nothing, although without it existing problems would simply become more acute. Devalution, like any monetary manipulation, is merely a symptom of a disordered and sick world. Its immediate effects, however, are to impose a capitalist solution on the problems of world trade and finance. This is not to say that any other government in England could have avoided devaluation. On the contrary, we agree that devaluation was inevitable, but because it takes place in a capitalist framework and as a capitalist measure it becomes a prop for a dying capitalist order. Socialists do not have to vote against devaluation, but neither do they have to take responsibility for administering a capitalist state. The British Labor Party will certainly not find its popularity increasing as a result of devaluation. The knowledge that devaluation would be unpopular, especially with its own ranks, undoubtedly contributed to the procrastination and double-talk of Cripps & Co.

And well might the Labor Party bureaucracy have hesitated for, while British exports will increase to some extent, the cost of British imports will increase substantially. If, for example, prices remain the same in the United States, it will require 44 per cent more pounds to buy the same quantities of wheat, cotton, machinery, etc., that are essential to the maintenance of life in England. It is also clear that part of the competitive advantage secured by the act of devaluation will be lost through rising domestic price levels in Britain. In prospect is a 15 per cent increase in the cost of manufacturing, with perhaps a 10 per cent decline in the standard of living of the British workers—hardly a pleasant prospect to face on the eve of an election.

Neither the British, nor the rest of the capitalist world, can begin to narrow their dollar trade gap without a genuine lowering of production costs. This, however, is impossible without either a lowering of real wages or an increase in the productivity of labor. Efforts, of course, will be made in both directions—with, at best, dubious chances of success.

On the other hand, prices will certainly tend to fall in the United States. This will be especially true in such highly competitive items as men's clothing. American exports will tend to decline and imports will increase. In other words, the immediate effects of devaluation are precisely opposite in the countries whose currencies have been devalued compared with the United States, whose currency has been revalued. In countries of devaluation, the immediate effect will be inflationary. In the United States the immediate effect will be deflationary.

To be sure, in a complex commodity civilization such as ours the revaluation of the dollar on a world scale will have disproportionate effects from industry to industry and from country to country. It may temporarily ease the British situation. It may promote greater American exports of capital. It will probably result in a net increase in the volume of world trade. It will certainly encourage an even larger number of American tourists to spend dollars abroad in 1950 than was the case in 1949. These are perhaps important but essentially surface phenomena. But then devaluation does not cure any of the fundamental ills of capitalism.

We shall undoubtedly hear further from bankers and others that "the time has now come for the restoration of the gold standard." Such talk is slightly premature, to say the least. It was precisely the abandon-

ment of the gold standard that revealed how sick the capitalist world had become. State-managed currencies, the very antithesis of the gold standard, were required to prevent complete collapse. The trend toward statism has not been reversed, or even halted, by the revaluation of the dollar. A restoration of the international gold standard is precluded by the nature and depth of the capitalist crisis. The more interesting question, as we have indicated, is how far, and to what extent, will American imperialism be able to go in functioning as a typical creditor nation? If these adjustments could not be effectuated in 1929, how much less likely are they as realistic *political* possibilities in 1949?

At any rate, *the conflicts between the attempts of American imperialism to function in a traditional manner and its attempts to meet the requirements of a permanent war economy will provide the setting for the major economic, and therefore the key political, problems of the next period.* DUNCAN FARLEY

A Left Wing of the Labor Movement?

Two Concepts of the Nature and Role of Stalinism

The labor and socialist movements have had a good quarter century of experience with Stalinism. The experience is not yet at an end, but there is now enough of it to warrant the dogmatic statement that the working-class movement cannot and will not make real progress, let alone achieve its basic aim, until it has succeeded in destroying the incubus of Stalinism.

In 1858, Fredrick Engels, disgusted with the direction taken by the British labor movement under the leadership of former Chartists like Ernest Jones, wrote to Marx that "one is really almost driven to believe that the English proletarian movement in its old traditional Chartist form must perish completely before it can develop itself in a new viable form. And yet one cannot foresee what this new form will look like." Almost a century later, the same thing must be said about the proletarian movement in its Stalinist form—that part of the labor movement which is under Stalinist inspiration and control—only more emphatically, more urgently, and with a hundred times greater justification.

If nothing more were required than agreement with this simple proposition, Stalinism would long ago have been driven out of the labor movement without any prospect of regaining its power and influence. The adversaries of Stalinism are numerous, not only outside the labor movement but inside it as well. If Stalinism nevertheless remains a considerable force in the working class of all countries—even the decisive force in countries like France and Italy—that is due primarily to the lack of a full understanding of its significance.

This lack is widely prevalent, but nowhere is it so clearly marked—paradoxical as this may seem at first—as among the revolutionary adversaries of Stalinism. It is in the ranks of the latter, who are called upon to give the most clear-headed, consistent and progressive leadership in the fight against Stalinism, that the most confused, ambiguous and out-and-out reactionary conceptions are to be found. These conceptions paralyze the fight, or else they cancel out in advance whatever it is able to accomplish. Intellectual conservatism prevents many militants from seeing the true social role and meaning of Stalinism which lies underneath its misleading appearance.

Everyone can see the fact that Stalinism came out of a socialist revolution (the Russian October), the fact that it came out of a revolutionary proletarian movement (the early Comintern), the fact that it seeks to base itself primarily upon the working classes and is in so many places actually at the head of their organizations, the fact that it conducts such aggressive struggles against the capitalist classes and is fundamentally irreconcilable in its hostility toward them, the fact that these classes are no less fundamentally irreconcilable in their hostility toward Stalinism, the fact that there is such a continuous mutual hostility between Stalinism and the traditional reformist leadership of the labor movement.

We emphasize that we do not simply admit but insist that they are facts. But they are given such a weight and meaning as to mislead the most radical opponents of Stalinism and prevent them from grasping its real nature, its essential characteristics *from the standpoint of the proletariat and of socialism.*

In all countries and movements, amid the most critical and even fierce attacks upon Stalinism, you can still read or hear: "Nevertheless, it represents a working-class party or movement." "Nevertheless, it represents a wing—a deformed, grossly burueaucratized wing—of socialism." "Nevertheless, it is the 'left' or 'part of the left' of the working class." "For all our opposition to Stalinism, we have of course just as little, or even less, in common with the right wing of the labor movement."

These observations contain misconceptions that have already contributed to more than one disaster in the working-class movement. To rid this movement of Stalinism before it is destroyed by Stalinism or any other reactionary force, requires that the revolutionary movement, the Marxists in the first place, rid

1. This article was written for publication in the new review, **Confrontation Internationale.**

themselves completely of all misconceptions about Stalinism.

The problem can perhaps be approached best by dealing with the "left" character of Stalinism. You can hardly read a single American or British newspaper account of a dispute between the Stalinists and any of their opponents in a trade union without seeing the former referred to as the "left wing." In France, to take another common example, the Stalinists are always referred to as *"la gauche,"* not only by their bourgeois opponents by even by their most radical critics. In both cases, the designation is simply taken for granted; it is considered natural, obvious, established beyond controversy, like the name hydrogen for the chemical element with the atomic number of 1. If all that were involved here was a question of terminology, then even in the interest of scientific exactitude it would be of decidedly minor importance. Its real importance, however, far transcends any pedantic consideration.

Characteristics of Left Wings

On what ground can the Stalinist movement be characterized, and therefore treated, as "left"? That should not be too difficult to determine. The history of the working-class movement is chock full of examples of right wings and left wings and of all sorts of intermediate tendencies. Of left wing and ultra-left wing tendencies in particular, there has been a tremendous variety: anarchists, syndicalists, Guesdists, De Leonists, Luxemburgists, Bolsheviks, Bordigists, KAPDists, Trotskyists—the list could be extended almost indefinitely.

Some of these tendencies were characterized as left wing because of opposition in principle to participation in parliamentary elections and parliamentary activity in general. Such opposition is nowhere to be found in the Stalinist movement, which participates uninhibitedly in all parliamentary activities, not only under its own name but under the name of any other political organizations with which it is maneuvering or which it is trying to infiltrate.

Others of these tendencies were considered left wing because, while favoring parliamentary activity by the workers and the socialist movement, they were opposed in principle to participating in coalition governments with bourgeois parties. The Stalinist parties cannot be considered left wing on this ground, either. Wherever they are unable to make a direct drive for exclusive state power, they work continuously to create, or to exploit the already existing, opportunities to enter coalition governments with bourgeois parties, either as the barely concealed representatives of the Russian government or as sappers of the coalition for their own benefit or as both. Their practical attitude toward the question of coalition governments is unmistakably more opportunistic than anything ever practised by the Millerands or preached by the Kautskys of the old socialist movement. They are not only ready to enter but have already entered coalition governments with parties of the "progressive bourgeoisie." They even combine with parties of the most extreme bourgeois conservatism. Even out-and-out reactionary governments, which not even a hardened old reformist would think of supporting, have been supported and defended by the Stalinists with unashamed cynicism whenever it suited the foreign policy of Moscow.

Still others of the incontestably left-wing tendencies were marked out by their rejection of work in the conservative trade unions and collaboration with them; by their policy of organizing or supporting only those unions which adopted a revolutionary program from the very beginning. The Stalinists not only work in the most conservative unions, but are known for their repeated advocacy of the most conservative policies, in some cases policies so completely anti-proletarian as to arouse the opposition of the most reformist of labor leaders. And they not only work for their policies in conservative and reformist trade unions, but in conservative and even reactionary bourgeois organizations. In this respect, they draw the line nowhere.

Still others of the old left-wing tendencies were distinguished by their opposition to putting forth or supporting "immediate demands," "a reform program," "the minimum program," or else by their insistence that the purely parliamentary or purely peaceful road to socialism is an illusion. The Stalinists are not distinguished by such views, either. If they put anything in the background, it is the program of socialism itself, not a "minimum program." They have not hesitated to adopt as their own outright bourgeois demands of outright bourgeois parties, and the coolness with which they have often taken over grossly chauvinist and reactionary planks from the program of Italian and German fascism is widely known.

The "Internationalism" of the Stalinists

Without exception, all the traditional left-wing tendencies were outstanding for their internationalism, in some of which it manifested itself to deplorable extremes. Their internationalism was always counterposed to the nationalist and pro-imperialist tendencies of the right wing of the socialist and labor movements. The Stalinist movement is world-wide; but it is internationalist in no sense that has ever been accepted in the working-class movement. In no country is it national in the entirely proper sense that the class struggle is national in form, in the sense that it seeks to serve as an instrument of the working class of the given country. It is nationalistic in the worse sense of the term, in that it serves as the universal instrument of the ruling bureaucracy of Russia, which is in turn a notorious oppressor of nations and peoples. It is "internationalistic" only in the sense that it demands the surrender of legitimate national aspirations of all peoples in the name of sub-

servience to the Russian state (the case of Yugoslavia is only the most spectacular of dozens of other examples that could be cited). It is "internationalistic" in the same sense as Mr. Churchill who used to denounce the Indians for the narrow-minded and selfish nationalism they displayed in their demand for self-government.

The Left Wings and Democracy

Any number of other characteristics of the left wing (or ultra-leftist) movements will occur to everyone slightly familiar with their history. But one more, of outstanding and decisive importance, must be cited here. Without exception, every one of them, in its fight against tendencies to the right of it, was characterized by its emphasis on democracy as against bureaucracy, on the rights and self-activity of the masses as against the disfranchisement and bridling of the masses. That the emphasis was extreme in some cases, is beside the point and need not be treated here. That practice did not always correspond to this emphasis or was not always effective in proving the correctness of this emphasis, is likewise beside the point. The characteristic itself remains decisive.

The 19th century social democracy was the left wing in politics by virtue of its fight for universal suffrage as against restricted suffrage, and its work for socialism as the realization of the fullest political and economic democracy—social democracy. Anarchists and syndicalists were distinguished as a left wing by their emphasis upon the mass action of the workers as against the bureaucratic maneuvers and procedures of the reformist officialdom in parliament or in negotiations with employers. Luxemburg was distinguished as a representative of the left by virtue of her emphasis on the spontaneous action of the masses breaking through the institutionalized conservatism of the reformist bureaucracy. The Bolsheviks counterposed the democratic Constituent Assembly to Czarist despotism, and then counterposed the Soviets to the Constituent Assembly because the Soviets were a "hundred thousand times more democratic" than the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments. The Trotskyist opposition was regarded as the left wing because, among other things, it demanded party democracy as against the party bureaucracy. As for some of the ultra-left groupings, it is well enough known that they almost made a fetish of their fight against bureaucratism in the labor and revolutionary movements. In this most important respect, the Stalinist movement, which is the veritable apotheosis of bureaucratism, does not have even a semblance of similarity with the left-wing tendencies known to the labor movement.

In not a single one of its important characteristics does the Stalinist movement resemble the left-wing tendencies. It does not measure up to a single one of the criteria which would place it in the category of the left wing. Whoever continues to believe that Stalinism falls into that category only shows that he stopped thinking many years ago.

Does this mean that there is no ground at all for the characterization of the Stalinists which is to be found on the pages of the bourgeois press and the lips of bourgeois politicians? The reader may recall that earlier in this article is emphasized the need of grasping the real nature of Stalinism *from the standpoint of the proletariat and of socialism.* From that standpoint, Stalinism can in no sense be considered a left wing of the working class. Is it, then, a right wing of the working class? In our opinion, the answer is likewise and just as emphatically, No. This aspect of the problem can be best approached from another standpoint, which is not that of the proletariat and of socialism. For there is also the standpoint of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism.

From *that* standpoint, Stalinism is not only *a* left wing but *the* left wing; it is even the most "authentic" and "legitimate" left wing, as it were. From *that* standpoint, Stalinism is Bolshevism, it is the socialist revolution, it is socialism. Class instincts are valuable to the proletariat; but class consciousness is indispensable for its victory and rule. Class consciousness is valuable but not indispensable to the bourgeoisie; its class instinct is sufficient for its rule. This instinct has a powerful stimulating material base—the ownership of the means of production and exchange, capitalist private property. The bourgeoisie recognizes as its own, as its loyal kin and vassals, those who help preserve its private property and therewith its social power. The bourgeoisie can and has obtained the services of the Stalinists, in one country after another. It can and has arranged to have the Stalinist party defend its property and its régime from dangers represented by the working class. This has led some superficial observers to conclude that Stalinism, at bottom, is nothing but a variety of that reformist social democracy which has so often served, sometimes with machine guns at its hand, to maintain the rule of capital against the assaults of the proletariat. But now that even the most dullwitted bourgeois is learning that this is not at all the case, it is surely high time that revolutionists, especially those who consider themselves Marxists, should revise their own superficial and erroneous opinions.

For Hire but Not for Sale

Class instinct plus experience have taught every bourgeois that the support of the Stalinist parties can be *hired but not bought outright.* The Stalinist parties in the capitalist countries are for lease, but not for sale. So long as a given capitalist régime is the ally of Russia, the Stalinists are leased for service to that régime. They then appear to act as arch-patriots. They vie with the bourgeois parties in nationalism and chauvinism. They catch up with and outstrip the reactionary labor leaders in urging workers to accept the most onerous conditions of

labor with docility. In general, they act in that abominable manner that distinguished them from ordinary scoundrels in the U.S.A. and Britain during the period of the "Grand Alliance." But this lend-leased servant is unreliable in two respects from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie. In the first place, in the very course of pretending to serve, he infiltrates and undermines the institutions of the bourgeoisie. And in the second place, the terms of the lease are not under the control of the bourgeoisie and can be altered or destroyed unilaterally by the Russian state, that is, by the real employer and owner of the Stalinist parties—a fact which requires no further proof than that which is (or ought to be) known to every political person. After the rich and instructive experience throughout the world in the last ten years, there is hardly a bourgeois left who places any reliance in the "services" of "his" Stalinists. He regards their pledge of loyalty to the bourgeois régime with the same contemptuous distrust—and quite rightly—as the revolutionist regarded Hitler's pledge of loyalty to socialism.

The Standpoint of the Bourgeoisie

From the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, Stalinism represents a revolutionary left wing and Russia represents a "socialist state" in two respects. From the inception of the socialist movement, the bourgeoisie has taught (and many have undoubtedly believed) that socialism means the "servile state"—the bureaucratic monster-state that deprives all the people of property, of liberty, of prosperity, and subjugates all to its despotic whim. Stalinist Russia is the unexpectedly full materialization of this hoary calumny against socialism—or so the bourgeoisie teaches. Regardless of how much or little it believes this, it is obviously in its class interest to teach it. "There, in Russia today, is your socialism! That is what socialism looks like, not in the books of Marx, but in reality! That is the only thing socialism will ever look like in reality! Russia is a horror—shun it! Socialism is a horror—shun it!" (To which should be added that anyone who, with the best intentions and the best "theory" in the world, continues to call Stalinist Russia a socialist or a workers' state of *any* kind, is giving both the Stalinist and bourgeois enemies of socialism a free weapon.)

Secondly, there is hardly a bourgeois alive today who still retains the utterly vain hope that Stalinism represents the restoration of capitalism in Russia, that it facilitates this restoration, or is in any way the unconscious instrument of forces working for this restoration. In addition, especially since the end of the war, the international bourgeoisie has begun to see what Stalinism represents outside of Russia, too, and to see it with a clarity and political intelligence that would be a credit to more than one self-styled Marxist. Wherever it was politically possible (as it was in Poland, for example, but not in France; as it is in China, but not in Japan), the Stalinists have taken complete state power into their hands. Whether or not the Stalinists have established socialism in these countries, is far from the first concern of the bourgeoisie. Their first concern is that the Stalinists have disestablished the bourgeoisie and capitalism. Wherever the Stalinists come to power, the bourgeoisie is deprived of all political, economic, military and social power and in many cases even deprived of its capacity to breathe.

To soothe the bourgeois by pointing out that where Stalinism takes power it reduces the workers to slaves, exploits them more mercilessly than anywhere else in modern times, destroys every working-class organization without exception, destroys every democratic right of the people—is of no use. The bourgeois is, unfortunately, very little concerned with the fate of the working class. He is, unfortunately, entirely preoccupied with the fact that under Stalinist rule it is his class property, his class power and his class that are destroyed.

To soothe the bourgeois by telling him that Stalinism believes only in socialism in one country, or in very few countries, and that it will not move beyond the Bug or the Elbe or the Spree or the Rhine or the Yangtse—is of no use. If he answers such a soothsayer at all, he will tell him that that will not be decided by a theory but by fists—and atom bombs.

To soothe the bourgeois with the assurance that Stalinism represents nothing more than state capitalism—is of no use, and it is to be feared that it will be of less use tomorrow than it was yesterday. He knows that state capitalism, in its fascist or Rooseveltian form, intervenes in the economy wisely or unwisely (from his standpoint) in order to try to bring some order out of the increasing chaos of capitalism; that although it adds heavily to the overhead of capitalism it nevertheless seeks to, and does, preserve whatever can be preserved of that social system in its deepening decay; that it may try to play off this group of capitalists against the other but nevertheless ends every time with the strengthening of the biggest capitalist powers. He knows also that Stalinism, on the contrary, simply wipes out all significant capitalist property and all the significant capitalists themselves. To him, that makes a difference, a profound difference, a decisive difference. Which is why, without the benefit of having studied Marx, he refuses to look upon Stalinism as a capitalist phenomenon of any kind.

The Standpoint of Socialism

To the revolutionary socialist, the Marxist, the triumph of Stalinism means primarily and above all the crushing of the working class, the crushing of all proletarian and revolutionary movements, the triumph of a new totalitarian despotism. To us, accordingly, every increase in the strength of the Stalinists in the working-class movement means another step

toward that triumph which is a catastrophe for the movement. There is *our* standpoint!

The standpoint of the bourgeois is necessarily different. The triumph of Stalinism means primarily and above all the crushing of the bourgeoisie and all its social power. That is *his* standpoint! That is why he can and does, with genuine concern and sincerity, regard Stalinism as the same thing, at bottom, as Bolshevism, as the proletarian revolution, as socialism. From *his* standpoint, it makes no difference whatsoever whether he is expropriated by the authentic socialist revolution in Russia under Bolshevik leadership, which brought the working class to power —or he is expropriated by the reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia which has brought the working class into a totalitarian prison. *To the working class,* there is all the difference in the world between the two; *to the bourgeoisie,* there is none. That is why the bourgeoisie expresses a deep and honest class feeling when it characterizes Stalinism as "left" in substantially the same way that it once characterized the Bolshevik Revolution and its partisans. From its class standpoint, the designation is understandable, it makes good sense. Likewise understandable is the political attitude which corresponds to this designation.

Stalinism Is Not a Left Wing

But that designation (and what is far more important, the political attitude that corresponds to it) *does not* make good sense from the class standpoint of the proletariat. It is totally false from the standpoint of the fight for its immediate and its historical interests—the fight for socialism. In this fight, Stalinism is no less the enemy of the working class than capitalism and the bourgeoisie. *Indeed, inside the working class and its movement, Stalinism is the greater and more dangerous of the two.*

The Stalinists very cleverly exploit the attacks made upon them by the bourgeoisie to enlist the support of those workers and revolutionists who, while opposed in general to Stalinism, are not less hostile toward the bourgeoisie. But it is an absurdity, where it is not suicidal, to react to every bourgeois attack or criticism of the Stalinists by rallying automatically to their support. Trotsky writes somewhere that any imbecile could become a revolutionary genius if proletarian policy required nothing more than learning what the bourgeoisie wants or does, and then simply doing the opposite. This very well applies, in the matter of the policy to follow toward Stalinism, to more than one anti-bourgeois imbecile (just as it applies, in the matter of the policy to follow toward the bourgeoisie, to more than one anti-Stalinist imbecile).

The first task, then, of all militants in the proletarian movement who understand the end of combatting Stalinism, is to rid themselves of all traces of the conception that Stalinism, in some way, in some degree, represents a left wing. It is not a proletarian or socialist conception, despite the respectable (and fatal) status it enjoys in the proletarian and socialist movement. It is a bourgeois conception, well-suited to the bourgeoisie, its standpoint and its interests, but utterly disorienting to the working class.

We will not have advanced far enough, however, if, in abandoning the notion that Stalinism is in any sense an authentic part of the left wing of the working class, we adopt the notion that it belongs in the right wing. The right wing of the labor movement, classically and contemporaneously, is its conservative wing, its reformist wing. It is that section of the working-class movement that stands closest to bourgeois democracy, that practises economic and political collaboration with the bourgeoisie, that confines itself to modest (increasingly modest) reforms of capitalism. That being the *fundamental* feature of the right wing, it should be clear that Stalinism is *fundamentally* different from any of the reformist currents and bureaucracies we know of in the labor movement.

None of the old designations—"right," "left," "centrist"—applies to Stalinism. Stalinism is a phenomenon *sui generis,* unique and without precedent in the working class. The fact that it is supported by tens of thousands of workers who are passionately devoted to the cause of socialism, who are ready to fight for it to their dying breath, is besides the point entirely. This fact is of importance *only* with regard to the forms of the agitation and propaganda work to be conducted among them. It does not decide the character of Stalinism itself. That is determined by the real program and the real leadership of the Stalinist movement, and not by the sentiments of those it dupes.

What, then, is Stalinism? Our formula is not very compact, but it will have to stand until a more elegant one can be found:

A Formula for Stalinism

Stalinism is a reactionary, totalitarian, anti-bourgeois and anti-proletarian current IN *the labor movement but not* OF *the labor movement.* It is the unforeseen but nonetheless real product of that advanced stage of the decay of capitalism in which the socialist proletariat itself has as yet failed to carry out the reconstruction of society on rational foundations. It is the social punishment inflicted on the bourgeoisie for living beyond its historical time and on the proletariat for not living up to its historical task. It is the new barbarism which the great Marxist teachers saw as the only possible alternative to socialism.

Stalinism is a current *in* but not *of* the working class and its movement, we repeat. The importance of the distinction is far-reaching. It demands emphasis not in spite of the prejudices and dogmas about Stalinism that exist in the revolutionary movement,

but precisely because they exist. It underlines the unbridgability of the gulf between Stalinism and *all* sections of the labor movement. And by "*all* sections" is simply meant, without diplomacy or equivocation, all of them—from the left wing to the right wing.

Two Bureaucracies

How violently such an idea shocks the revolutionary sentiments of many militants, not only in the U.S.A. but in Europe—especially in Europe—the writer has had more than one occasion to see personally in recent visits abroad. All the more reason for insisting on it, patiently but bluntly. Until it is accepted, Stalinism will continue to be able to rely on one of its strongest props: the reluctant support it receives in the labor movement from those anti-Stalinist militants who are so justifiably imbued with a long-standing antagonism to traditional reformism. "The Stalinists? Yes, of course they are unmitigated rascals, agents of the Kremlin, and God knows what else. But to fight them by supporting Reuther (or Green, or Lewis, or Jouhaux, or Bevin)? That—never! They are bureaucrats and reformists, they are agents of the bourgeoisie and the Devil knows what else!" That is a not unfair statement of the reaction of many genuine militants in the labor movement. As a spontaneous reaction, it is not altogether bad; as a political line, it is a first-rate calamity. It ignores the basic distinction between the two bureaucracies, the reformist and the Stalinist.

The reformist bureaucracy (trade-union or political) strives everywhere to raise itself to a privileged position in capitalist society. That is its social aim, and its actions correspond to it. It cannot even exist, let alone hold a privileged position, under fascism; hence, its genuine opposition (not necessarily successful, but genuine) to fascism. Neither can it exist under Stalinism; hence, its genuine opposition (again, not necessarily successful, but still genuine) to Stalinism. (It goes without saying that it is doomed in a workers' democracy, where special privileges for any such social group would be undermined, which is why it shuns the revolutionary struggle for socialism.) It can achieve its aim only under conditions of bourgeois democracy. Which means, concretely, only on the condition that it bases itself on and represents the trade unions. It is this consideration that dictates to the reformist officialdom the preservation of the labor movement (as it is, to be sure, and not as it ought to be from the socialist standpoint). Without the trade unions, the reformist bureaucracy is, socially and politically, of no importance. In its own bureaucratic interests, it is compelled to maintain the labor movement. It does it badly, it does it at the expense of the best interests of the working class, but it does it and must do it.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, on the contrary, cannot achieve its social aim without destroying the labor movement root and branch and in every one of its forms. No matter where Stalinism has triumphed ("achieved its social aim") it has completely wiped out every branch of the revolutionary movement and put its representatives in prisons, slave camps or graves, and wiped out the trade-union movement as well. What passes under the name of "trade-union" in the Stalinist countries is far less of a workers' organization than the notorious "company unions" that existed in the U.S.A. years ago; in any case, it is not a trade union in any sense of the term. The advance of Stalinism is incompatible with the advance of the labor movement; the victory of Stalinism is incompatible with the existence of any labor movement, be it revolutionary or reformist. A revolutionist who has not learned this from the wealth of recent experiences in Europe will be fortunate if he does not eventually have to pay for his "mistake" with his head.

It should go without saying among genuine militants that in any struggle for leadership and control of the labor movement, or any section of it, they will always seek to counterpose a policy of class independence and class struggle against *both* the Stalinist and reformist bureaucracies. But where, as is the general rule nowadays, the militants are not yet strong enough to fight for leadership directly; where the fight for control of the labor movement is, in effect, between the reformists and the Stalinists, it would be absurd for the militants to proclaim their "neutrality" and fatal for them to support the Stalinists. Without any hesitation, they should follow the general line, inside the labor movement, of supporting the reformist officialdom against the Stalinist officialdom. In other words, where it is not yet possible to win the unions for the leadership of revolutionary militants, we forthrightly prefer the leadership of reformists who aim in their own way to maintain a labor movement, to the leadership of the Stalinist totalitarians who aim to exterminate it.

A Bloc with the Reformists

To support the reformists, or make a bloc with them, against the Stalinists, means nothing less than it says but also nothing more. To anticipate critics, both honest and malicious, it may be pointed out that a revolutionist does not at all need to become a social democrat when he supports the social democracy in a fight against the Austrian fascists. He does not at all need to become a bourgeois democrat when he supports bourgeois democracy against fascism in the Spanish civil war. He does not at all need to become a slaveholder when he supports Ethiopia against Italy. And he does not need to become a reformist when he supports the reformists in the fight to smash or prevent Stalinist control of the labor movement. In every case, he gives his support in his own way, with his own openly expressed views.

The reformist bureaucracy has more than once played into the hands of Stalinism and it continues to do so. One can even go further: in the long run, if the fight against Stalinism is conducted under the leadership of the reformists, with the policies that characterize them, with the detestable bureaucratic methods they love so much, it is not they but the Stalinists who are more likely to triumph. The policies of reformism are not ours; nor are its methods; nor are its aims. We cannot and will not take any responsibility for them, and this should be made abundantly and constantly clear to all who are within reach of voice or pen, even if that does not always meet with the enthusiastic approval of those with whom we unhesitatingly ally ourselves in the labor movement in the fight against Stalinist domination. But while the revolutionists are not the equal of the reformists and the reformists are not the equal of the revolutionists, the two are now necessary and proper allies against Stalinism. The scores that *have to be* settled with reformsim—those will be settled on a working-class basis and in a working-class way, and not under the leadership or in alliance with totalitarian reaction. Stalinism is the most virulent poison that has ever coursed through the veins of the working class and its movement. The work of eliminating it makes the first claim on the attention of every militant.

MAX SHACHTMAN

The Howe-Widick Book on the UAW and Reuther Gives a—

Portrait of a Militant Union

Here is the UAW, as it is and as it must become. *The UAW and Walter Reuther,* by Irving Howe and B. J. Widick,[1] offers the only account of the battles which transformed it from a union of a few thousand into the mighty organization of nearly one million that it is today. If that were all, the work would command our attention, for the magnetism of the UAW, attracting the whole American working class and infiltrating the international labor movement, will yet force its way into world politics. But this book is far more than a history of the UAW; it is a penetrating analysis of the role of the labor movement in the United States illustrated by the UAW.

In his *New Men of Power,* C. Wright Mills measured the capacities of the contemporary labor officialdom against the need to stop the "drift" of society toward war and totalitarianism; he found it inadequate and faced a chasm in leadership which he tried to bridge with "labor intellectuals" . . . unsuccessfully. Howe and Widick approach the same question from the vantage of a single union. A socialist understanding combined with an intimate knowledge of the real life of the UAW (Widick, a chief steward in one of the largest UAW locals, participated in the strikes of the '30s in Flint and Akron) permits them to fill in the gaps left by Mills. For in the UAW we meet the men and women of the labor movement who are being molded and hardened to grapple with the very tasks which Mills found unsolvable by the labor leadership. Their book is one of the few works on the labor movement that can be read with the same absorbed interest which the living story of the UAW itself provokes.

Into open-shop Detroit, overpowered by the assembly line; torn by racial, national and sectional antagonisms of Negroes, whites, Italians, Poles, Southerners breaking out into bloody riots; cursed with all kinds of fascist crackpot grouplets; dominated by three giant auto corporations which played with city affairs like the owners of any company town; poor in leisure, deprived of culture, lacking the most ordinary democratic and human rights . . . into this city the UAW enters as the main civilizing, organizing force for its two million inhabitants. "It alone," the authors emphasize, "has brought a sense of human warmth into an area dominated by robots, pistons and dollars —and that more than anything else is the measure of its triumph."

The UAW bears the birthmark of its origin. The authors trace its rise in the glorious days of the sit-in strikes when workers in the Flint Fisher Body plant, holding firm against injunctions and threats of eviction by state troops, wrote to Governor Murphy, "We have decided to stay in the plant. We have no illusions about the sacrifices this decisions will entail. We fully expect that if a violent effort is made to oust us, many of us will be killed. . . . If this result follows from the attempt to eject us, you are the one who must be held responsible for our deaths."

With a consciousness of power that came from victory in the fight against General Motors and Chrysler, the militants of the UAW fought off the first attempts to debase their union into a plaything for bureaucrats, ousting their first president, Homer Martin, and assigning him to oblivion.

The union went on to crack the most obdurate open shopper of all, Henry Ford, last of the Big Three to fall to the union. Then quickly into the war years with its debates on the "Equality of Sacrifice" program and bitter factional struggles over incentive, piecework pay. And finally, the momentary emergence of the "Rank and File Caucus," a faction without the support of a single well-known official which won 40 per cent of the votes at the 1944 convention against the

1. The Howe-Widick book is available to readers through Labor Action Book Service, 4 Court Square, Long Island City 1, N. Y.

no-strike pledge in the teeth of the united opposition of the top officialdom.

It was the same UAW which led the first post-war strike wave in the famous General Motors strike of 1945-46, inspiring the union movement with its radical demands for a look at the company books and a say-so on prices. Strike leader Walter P. Reuther, then director of the General Motors department, was hoisted into the presidency and the more conservative R. J. Thomas deposed. Internal struggles and conflicts between political groupings taught the union activists more than raw militancy. . . . They became wise to the ways of the Communist Party, which once boasted a strong UAW following. Its feeble efforts at cold-war super-militancy met with jeers and scorn. In a two-year faction fight, the auto workers reduced the CP to a shadow and eliminated its influence from leading circles. It is this history of united battle against the class enemy and internal conflict over tactics and strategy that created the cadre of the UAW, the union militants, jealous of democratic rights and loyal to a fighting union platform. In the words of Reuther, the UAW is "the vanguard in America."

The UAW as a Vanguard

The UAW can become the center of an authentic left wing of the American labor movement; in fact, in one way it is so already. In all unions, militants who are dissatisfied with rigid bureaucracy, who hope for a leadership more sensitive to the ranks, who are stirred by a vague disquietude with the policies of their own officials, look expectantly to it. If judged by socialist standards, it might appear conservative indeed; for its leadership and its membership are pro-capitalism in outlook. But we must measure by the standards of the United States where socialists make up a tiny section of the working class and socialism itself lives in tiny sects incapable of decisively affecting the course of the class struggle. The UAW is not distinguished by any special ideology nor by a formally worked-out program clearly different from the ordinary platform of the CIO. Nevertheless it plays a special role. At each stage of the development of the class struggle in this country, from the earliest days of the CIO, the UAW has been in the forefront of labor's battles, initiating tactics and slogans to show the way. Life, not doctrine, makes the UAW the vanguard of labor and its vanguard role flashes out most vividly when the union movement reaches an impasse and must alter its policy to break out.

We face just such a turning point today. Our giant labor movement, at the peak of its power, enjoying the loyalty of a solidly union-conscious working class, limps along like a crippled dwarf. It demands far-reaching reforms only to file them away for future reference. It lives and thrives only in the soil of democracy and this democracy is dug away as all sections of the bourgeois from right-wing Republicans to Fair-Deal Democrats move toward state controls over labor, injunctions and loyalty oaths. It begs for crumbs at the back door of the Democratic Party, hoping against hope that the icy winds of Taft-Hartleyism will blow warmer.

The authors argue cogently for the formation of a new political party based upon the labor movement "neither tainted by the Moscow touch nor crippled by the usual double-talk of what passes for liberalism," to fight for its independence from the government and avoid the dangers of the "corporate state," to take its stand for "butter, not guns," for social services, not armaments. Can the UAW provide the impulse? They reply: "The UAW is both the closest thing to the kind of union we have described as desirable and yet still far away from it; but in few other unions are there so many people who in one way or another would like to make it this kind of union."

Will the UAW once again show the way? Hopes seemed near fulfillment in March, 1948, when its International Executive Board voted for the formation of a "progressive political party" after the '48 elections. In a solemn pledge, Reuther vowed to devote his energies toward such an end. He did not intend, he said, to fritter his life away pecking about for pennyweight gains soon lost. But the '48 elections have come and gone. 1949 . . . 1950 looms. The UAW appears momentarily in full accord with the old program of supporting the Democratic Party. It proposes nothing, it watches, it waits, it trails along.

The UAW in a Suspended Position

The UAW has not surrendered its position in the labor movement; it has suspended it. A weight of general conservatism presses it back into diffidence, a gingerly, hesitating caution. For a moment in early 1948, the whole labor movement seemed about to spring forward; Murray, Green and others shook menacing fingers at the Democratic Party which had "betrayed" them. But Truman's elusive promise of a Fair Deal was enough to soothe their tempers. The curve of labor politics bends back toward the fair-weather "friends of labor," chasing the 1950 rainbow of a liberal majority in Congress.

In 1945, Philip Murray, president of the CIO, blasted Truman's fact-finding boards; in 1949 he greets them as heaven-sent. After more than six months of futile negotiations, the steel workers' union adjured its demands one by one until the fact-finders cut them to the bone. But they left the bone and Murray is grateful for little things. Before taking a step he calculates the mood of the "liberal" Democrats. Voluntary submission to fact-finding boards is a convenient device for limiting the workers' demands to what is acceptable to Truman. Murray is a typical representative of conservative CIO policy and it is he who sets the tone today.

How such conservative moods are transmitted to

the UAW is best understood in the person of Walter P. Reuther, who has always been on Murray's left and who rose to power in the UAW against Murray's wishes. Reuther is solidly entrenched in his own union; no conceivable opponent could displace him. The fundamental cause of his standstill policies today cannot be attributed to the pressure of conservative forces within the UAW. It comes from without.

A Portrait of Reuther

In their chapter, "Walter Reuther, a Portrait," Howe and Widick give us new insight into the personality of the man who is undoubtedly the outstanding figure in the American labor movement. We understand how his socialist past continues as a nagging vestigial remainder in his consciousness. We examine his new social outlook, pieced together in his experiences in the early days of the union and his evolution toward New Dealism. We follow his career to the top, see him walk a tight rope between the radical and conservative sections of the union during the war, watch him take undisputed leadership over the radical wing during the GM strike and then permit his far-reaching GM program to fade away on paper. We see how skillfully he synthesizes the most progressive sentiments of workers, the backward and the advanced, the passive and the active in a struggle to defeat Stalinism, a struggle which remains a model of the lines along which to combat the CP in the union movement. And, we might add, we see him shift over to the position of Murray and demand the bureaucratic expulsion of the CP-controlled unions from the CIO by authoritarian decree.

To union critics who ask why he does not speak out squarely for the formation of a Labor Party, Reuther is fond of replying: "We must not get too far ahead of the parade." The reply would have merit if one demanded that the UAW itself *form* a new national political party. Still, the UAW could take the initiative in *proposing* its formation, in arguing and crusading for it, in educating the widest numbers of workers in the UAW and in other unions to its necessity. In this respect, Reuther is not "ahead of the parade" at all but sinks back into line with Philip Murray.

The authors explain the paradox of a man who is by turns bold and timid, radical and orthodox, describing him as an "unfinished personality" torn between "vision and power." Nevertheless, we can detect a definite pattern in Reuther's seesaw course. At each point in the class struggle when the old policies appear outworn *and* when the rank and file grow increasingly restive and push in new directions, it is Reuther, sensitive to every developing leftward mood, who seizes the initiative, articulates these moods in new slogans and new proposals. And in every period of lull, he sinks back again into normality. Reuther understands the vanguard role of the UAW; he reacts most quickly to it; at times he puts it in words; but he does not create it.

The authors tell us that "Reuther is convinced that he *has* succeeded in reconciling power and vision." They are dubious. (The contrast between "vision" as something good and "power" as something evil is somewhat misleading. Any social program [vision] would remain only Utopian speculation without the power to put it into effect and every conception of "power" is linked to a corresponding "vision"). But if he has not reconciled the two, he has in a sense combined them into a common conception. Reuther is pushed back and forth between two "powers"—the explosive power of the rank and file, flaring up in leaping flashes then subsiding, and the power of the stolid citizen labor leaders which doggedly presses for short-term gains, oblivious of the future. His "vision" is a resultant of these two powers.

When Reuther abandoned the Socialist Party as an inconvenient obstacle to the full use of his talents in the labor movement and slowly groped his way toward the platform of liberalized New-Deal capitalism, Reuther moved away from the conception that the working class could reorganize society by taking power. In the years that followed, the socialist movement all over the world was beaten back while in the United States it remained more than ever isolated in small sects. Reuther remained tied to the working class. His union reminded him more than once of the latent powers of the rank and file but he now assigned it a more limited role in keeping with his new vision. The activity of the working class became a constant spur not to the transformation of society into socialism but a force for the preservation of a liberal free-enterprise economy and for the defense of democracy.

In the maneuverings among the various factions and caucuses in his own union, often carried on by tiny groups behind the backs of the membership, he saw how frequently even the active union veterans could be manipulated by small men for petty ends. If this was true in his own UAW, then how much more so in the rest of the labor movement? He learned to respect the power of labor officialdom in general. And if such power could be wielded for little things by shortsighted men, why not for noble purposes of social betterment? Only, curbing the role of the working class within the limits of capitalist politics gives rise to bureaucratic tendencies, even in the UAW, where they take on the most subtle forms.

Bureaucratism Seeps In

The UAW is unquestionably one of the most democratic unions in the United States. But there are disquieting signs of a slow seeping in of bureaucratism, the rise of a centralized officialdom which tends to raise itself above the rank and file and become independent of it. Its manifestations are analyzed by the writers and the counter-tendencies described, so that

the reader sees the complexity of the action and interaction between forces giving rise to bureaucratism and counterforces making for democracy.

As it unites for the first time in its history under the leadership of a single man who enjoys the support of 95 per cent of the union, the UAW provides a unique example of the continuation of all the forms of democracy combined with the sprouting of a bureaucratic apparatus. To fight effectively, any working-class organization needs a certain consistency in its leadership; it cannot follow one policy on Monday, another on Tuesday and a third on Wednesday; it will not overturn its leadership every day in search for one in which it has confidence. The story of the rise and decline of the various groupings and factions in the UAW culminates in the victory of Reuther and the hundreds of secondary leaders who follow him. The union now has a fairly stable upper leadership. But how is this leadership to be held together and consolidated? Will it remain a force for the protection and extension of the processes of internal democracy or will it itself degenerate into a bureaucratic machine endangering democracy?

One of the sources of the trend toward bureaucracy in the UAW is the failure of its leadership to base itself upon a clear, progressive political line. A basic aim of the *socialist* movement, for example, is to forge a democratic leadership for the working class and its institutions by educating a class-conscious cadre of workers assembled on the basis of intellectual convictions, of a social philosophy checked and rechecked in the course of democratic discussions. The socialist program, voluntarily embraced by the working class, would make possible a democratic leadership for the working class. Our criticism of Reuther in this connection, however, is not that he does not build a socialist cadre. He is not a socialist and no one expects him to do so. But he does not unite his own followers on the basis of any consistent platform clearly and recognizably distinct from that of the ordinary conservative and bureaucratic labor officialdom. He leaves himself free to swing back and forth between opposing slogans and policies with the winds of the class struggle. Here lies his chief weakness and from it come the dangers of bureaucratism at this stage in the life of the UAW.

That is why the leadership of the union becomes increasingly based upon the paid officialdom, the top officers, the appointed international representatives ("porkchoppers") who are required to speak to the membership with one united voice regardless of misgivings they may have with official policy. They tend to be a machine for jamming through the decisions of the higher officialdom and not a collectivity which itself participates in the give-and-take of democratic discussion. The Reuther group tends to become less and less a caucus of the active union members and more and more the meeting place of the officials.

Reuther synthesizes a leadership from two antagonistic elements. Its left wing comprehends the unique role of the UAW in the labor movement; it hopes for the formation of a new party; it understands, in a general way, that labor has a decisive part to play in shaping society; it includes many militants who sympathize with socialism. It is this wing of the Reuther group which spearheaded his rise to power. In the right wing are the bandwagon jumpers, the men who linked up with Reuther to get on the winning side, conservative in outlook, suspicious of new ventures, inclined toward a narrow "business unionism." The influence of this group within the Reuther caucus is not evidence of strong conservative leanings within the UAW (although of course there are many conservative workers in it) but a reflection of the power of the right wing in the labor movement *outside of the UAW,* in particular the power of Philip Murray, whose social outlook they share. Reuther yields to his own right wing, makes concessions to it and insists that his own radical followers refrain from antagonizing it because he fears to come into conflict with Murray.

The future of the UAW, its internal democracy, its inspiring vanguard role, its militant traditions depend upon the evolution of the left wing of the Reuther caucus. The task of the day is the formation of an independent labor party. If it is willing to press for such a program despite the pressures of Murray conservatism, the UAW will quickly assume its rightful place as leader of American labor.

"If the UAW succeeds in coping with, or even tries to cope with, the complex problems facing it in the coming years," write Howe and Widick, "if it succeeds in transforming union energies into drives toward political action and social change which alone can fulfill the larger purposes of an alert union—then it will arouse sufficient enthusiasm and interest among its members to preserve its admirable democratic tradition."

BEN HALL

Pages from the Diary of Victor Serge

Portraits and Scenes of the Revolutionary Movement

It is with great pleasure that we begin the first publication in English of the journals of Victor Serge (Kibalchich), with the permission of his family. His recent death deprived the revolutionary movement of one of its oldest militants. The sections of his journals which we are reprinting cover some of the most dramatic moments in the struggle of the Trotskyist Opposition against the Stalinist reaction, not only disclosing hitherto unpublicized details but bringing to life again personages of the times and the times themselves. The translation from the French original is the work of James Fenwick.—ED.

End of November, 1936, Paris. Battle for Madrid, suicide of Salengro, Jean Guéhenno at *Vigilance*[1] (what a demagogue!). Professor Maublanc, at the same meeting, worse than a demagogue, clever, with a bit of trickery in him. Feeling of hopelessness. Under discussion: how to save Spain. Henri Bouché, the main speaker, could not reveal that airplanes were being sent—and intellectuals who know that they are being sent but that the information cannot be revealed, are reproaching Léon Blum for his inaction, etc. On the way out I exchanged a few words with Guéhenno on the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev: he does not want to take a position and does not want to seem not to have taken a position.

Magdaleine Paz told me that my open letter to Gide impressed her greatly, but she believes I was wrong in publishing it, it seems like an ultimatum. I said that I didn't see anything wrong in it. Big intellectuals are too prone to avoid the real problems under the cover of noble phrases. I have too high a regard for Gide; I do not have the right to coddle him, he must understand that. "But that letter could have hindered his trip to Russia!" "Well?" "Right now he completely shares your point of view; you must see him, but very secretly—he does not want to give anybody the opportunity of thinking that you influenced him in working out his book." (AG, it seems, also has some distrust of me, coupled with a more general fear of Trotskyism, which he knows only through Pierre Naville: and his feelings for PN—who irritates him —are mutually shared.

MP arranged a confidential meeting for us. ("Try not to be followed. . . .")

Rue Vaneau, an untidy apartment, filled with books containing dedicatory inscriptions, *objets d'art* scattered all over. Drapes and everything else—all has aged, a person could live there without noticing very clearly what he possesses, but with a feeling for memories and ideas for which visible things have become only the tarnished tokens. He would live there under the attrition of life and of detachment. On the mantlepiece my pamphlet *Seize fusillés* turned over open in the midst being read. A soft step in the narrow hall of a man wearing slippers. Gide entered. Appearance still young, discreet and unobtrusive, with a sort of cape around his shoulders. A tanned complexion, it seemed to me, his skin old but soft and cared for, broad shoulders, his carriage masculine and supple, with youth in his movements. Remarkable hollows and planes of his face. A modeled face, large mouth, eyes deep-sunk behind horn-rimmed glasses, broad forehead. A sort of lingering sadness and occasionally, raillery upon his slightly parted lips. In expressing disgust he grimaces like a nauseated woman, very expressively, simian (when he speaks of Aragon and Ehrenburg).

Greeted me. He: "Well, I imagined you otherwise, then, bonier, I don't know, emaciated. . . ."

His trip to Russia:

"I thought á great deal about doing something to save your manuscripts. I was unable to do anything either in regard to you or in regard to other matters close to my heart. I saw immediately that absolutely nothing could be done."

Tone, expression of a limitless sadness. From the time of his arrival, discovered so much hardness, inhumanity that he felt there was nothing could be done.

"Stupid cruelty of the laws against homosexuals. I said that I would speak to Stalin about it in the course of the contemplated interview. I had a presentiment at that moment that I would be wasting that interview.

"Banquets. . . . We were stuffed with food and speeches. In Georgia, at Leningrad. I couldn't stand it any longer. I reached the point of refusing everything after the hors d'œuvres."

He spoke of a Georgian poet, big drinker, big eater, very patriotic, shrewd, knowing French well: Soviet and Montparnasse.

"Bukharin tried to join me twice—in vain. 'I'll see you again in an hour!' 'You'll see,' Herbart said to me, 'that he won't come back.' Obviously."

The new aristocracy. Escaping from the train and him and the interpreters, he went to see how the people lived. Contrasts, misery.

He showed me his manuscript, read a letter from Jef Last at the Spanish front. "Last[2] is very unhappy; he feels and thinks as I do, is distrusted by the party, perhaps is in danger." We corrected an expression

1. Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Anti-fasciste, formed after the February 6, 1934, events.

2. A Dutch writer, currently an editor of **De Vlam.**

which I found too pessimistic, a "there will never be." He spoke of the pressure which has been put on him to defer publication of his notes on the USSR, in the name of the salvation of the Spanish revolution. Militiamen have telegraphed him from the front. ("What could they have known about what I was writing?") Told me that the manuscript was sent confidentially to Gallimard and was set up by selected compositors in a safe shop: "Well! Ehrenburg read it just the same. That scum!"

I replied that E. has for a long time been a man who can adapt himself to anything, a secret agent or absolutely in the confidence of secret agents. A. G. fears the reactions which will follow publication of the book. Expects to be overwhelmed with insults. The author of *Corydon* feels that he offers a good target for the worst sort of defamation. His courage, his great courage, is that of a timid person. We spoke of Pierre Naville, whom he finds harsh and cold, but whom he is fond of. We talked about Léon Blum, whom he had just seen again. A bias in him against the sectarian spirit and the prestige of Blum. He seemed adrift, afraid of isolation. I tried to orient him toward socialist relationships.

"At Leningrad a young naval officer, very likable, came up to me during a reception and quietly, in French, spoke of you with emotion."

I do not know for what reason, but upon leaving his voice suddenly took on a vulgar accent, rather careless, rather "emancipated," revealing the man who knows Paris in all its dirty nooks and crannies.

He is uneasy. As if he were afraid of himself. Ravaged. The disaster of Communism. Spoke of the Moscow trial. Has no illusions on that vileness and that cruelty. I took away the impression of an extremely scrupulous man, troubled to the bottom of his soul, who wishes to serve a great cause—and no longer knows how.

André Gide. Arrests at Leningrad (Véra, Esther)

Brussels, January 11, 1937, morning. I saw him again at the Hotel Albert I, near the Gare du Nord. "You see, I have come to visit you." Something very friendly in his tone, as if since our discussion in Paris the fogs separating us had dissipated. His face has sunken, is sculptured in hollows. Asceticism—but accustomed to luxury. Asceticism at the bottom of his soul and luxury enveloping his body. Indolent walk, lively gesture. A tic-sniffling. Noticeable firmness.

I had seen him almost anxious, full of scruples and doubts, feeling that he had to cross a frontier and hardly dared to do it. Adrift. The fear of wronging the Spanish cause tormented him. And further, the sorrow of feeling so much young affection alienated from him, a warm and friendly popularity, arrived belatedly. . . . But to keep it on the basis of deception and lies, and of complicity in immense crimes. . . . It's over.

I found him strengthened, calm, readily smiling. Obviously willing to fight. The book has made a good start. Hundreds of odious, slandering, filthy clippings have come in. He spoke of them with detachment.

We talked about Malraux, whose attitude preoccupies him a little. He said something like this: "M. has an advantage over me: to be able to pick up the popularity which I have set aside. Extraordinarily intelligent. Clever. He knows perfectly well that I am right, but it doesn't concern him." Of Jef Last, who is on the Madrid front: an excellent alibi.

He believes my collaboration on the *NRF*[3] is quite impossible because of the *material* influence of Malraux and J. R. Bloch.

My *Crapouillot*,[4] *From Lenin to Stalin*, was on the table. He had found it good, but with a break in continuity at the end which confuses the reader. Hadn't I been dominated by party spirit in speaking of Stalin?

I replied that it was written in one fifteen-day stretch, and that I believe it to be objective.

He: "Your explanation of the Moscow trial is the only intelligible one."

He: "I'm labeled a Trotskyist—so what?"

His admiration for L. T.

His coldness toward the French Trotskyists. Pierre Naville brought up by his family for something great. To be Rubens or Beethoven—or Lenin! He does not like this deforming ambition—but Naville is honest.

The long, rambling conversation turns upon the relation between master and disciple. I cited the epigram of Zarathustra-Nietzsche: "If you wish to follow me, deny me!"

He: "Buddha says: 'If you meet me, kill me!' "

I: "You shouldn't repeat it too often. They might do it. They wouldn't miss up on it."

Relaxation and laughter.

Spoke of Spain, of the POUM which is being slandered (and which I defend). Munitions are lacking for Madrid.

Spoke of the death of Eugène Dabit, who was so talented. Very affected by his trip to Russia.

He: "At Lille, workers whom I knew, angry because of what had been said to them about my book, invited me to see their misery. We went through the narrow streets together, visited the rooms of an unemployed worker. 'Why,' I said to them, 'my friends! If Russian workers only had such homes!' "

He mentioned with disgust the name of E. I said: "A stoolpigeon."

He: "He came to me to ask if I believed that and spoke to me for a half hour without my replying. . . . Then he didn't insist any more."

Once more on Russia: the magnificent Russian youth—and the stifling atmosphere.

I remarked that I learned just two days ago of the

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3. Nouvelle Revue Française.
4. Serge refers to the issue of the magazine Crapouillot in which From Lenin to Stalin was originally published.

arrest at Leningrad of my sister Véra Vladimirovna Frolova, of my sister-in-law Esther Russakova, of one of my brothers-in-law, the musician Paul-Marcel or the seaman Joseph. They are apolitical, accustomed to living in fear. I believe that it is my writings, especially the open letters, which brought about their persecution. The arrests took place September 6, the day after the execution of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Ivan Smirnov; they are part of the wave of terror which is breaking. I explained that having killed some of them they can no longer look the others in the eye or endure their silence. All the old party understands, it must disappear, it will disappear.

Impotence of intellectuals. A person can free himself, however, from moral complicity.

Pierre Herbart came in during the conversation. Good-looking boy, well-dressed, a frank appearance. He worked at Moscow on *Littérature Internationale;* of it he retains a memory of hypocrisy and suffocation.

I am leaving shortly for Holland.

André Gide

May 8 and 18, 1937, Paris. Two walks with A. G.: one of the themes—what can be expected from Russia and from socialism. His confidence in the Russian youth is based on intuition, but a reasoned intuition. Mine is otherwise motivated. The Popular Front appears imposing to him, but less vigorous than it seems, and less healthy. (The rush for jobs, patronage, etc.)

All his work has basically been that of a moralist engaged in a struggle against oppressive conventional morality. Hence the *Immoraliste.* His real masters, Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky. The physiological conflict (homosexuality) which almost put him under the ban of society and whose extent he measured at the time of the tragedy of Oscar Wilde, made him both timorous and exaggeratedly scrupulous, with a tendency to escape toward the esthetic (which produced great satisfaction in him and confirmed his feeling of superiority; the preciosity of his style was the desired means to an indisputable superiority—which was, however disputed . . . ; he won them over because he flattered the taste of the literary). A pure style and delicate psychological problems treated with a reserved audacity, and sometimes violent flashes like the conception of the pure spontaneous[5] act—what more was needed to guarantee his success with a "select public"? But the sincerity of A. G. was to suffer precisely from the flattering welcome of this effete public. And the moral problem once posed, the social problem followed. *The moral is the social.* (The constant interest of A. G. in Zola the writer who apparently is the farthest from him, and whose public is the most different from his.) It was after the Russian Revolution that he decided upon his first great act of courage — in no way spontaneous — exacted by his conscience and suggested by the intellectual currents of the epoch: the justification of homosexuality in *Corydon.* The very scandal that he braved turned into a success. Nevertheless he did not support the Russian Revolution as long as it was unpopular among the literary. It troubled him, its cruelties offended his humanism. He did not really come to its publicly until '34, at a very bad period, well after the Soviet Thermidor; but that lag is general enough in France. G. followed the current of literary youth who embraced Marxism.

At this time there were actually only two schools of thought: *Action Française,* the doctrinaire banalities of Maurras, and Marxism. (One should consider the influence of Malraux on G. M. is composed of a mixture of would-be Marxist radicalism—very slightly Marxist, esthetics and adventurism, which very well suited the young for whom the revolution was an enticing adventure because they felt themselves blocked in a senile society. The same tendencies in the *Révolution Surréaliste.*)

For sentimental reasons they did not want to see that the Russian Revolution had changed; it was viewed as if it had remained faithful to itself. The CP propaganda nourishes these comfortable illusions and gives them a material consistency: money, publication of one's books, invitations to Moscow, Congresses. . . . A rather rich revolution which exercises power, distributes honors and advantages, easily seduces intellectuals because of the facility with which they can at the same time be revolutionists and conformists, quasi-heroic without danger, and heaped with privileges. Moreover, the CP assures them good publicity and puts them in contact with a popular public.

All that was to seduce G. a little and trouble him internally. He followed affairs in Russia fairly closely (through P. N.) but perhaps he did not wish to yield to the influence of this young man. The fear of being influenced is very strong in him: an influence is an attack against his personality. It was the Congress for the Defense of Culture in 1935 which initiated his change of course, when it became evident, à propos of "l'affaire Victor Serge," demonstratively brought on to the floor by Salvemini, Magdaleine Paz, Poulaille, Plisnier (and so elegantly skirted by André Breton), that the Congress was entirely controlled, with perfect dishonesty, by the agents of the CP. He felt maneuvered with, saw the moral ugliness of it. He had a conversation in regard to me with the Russian ambassador—and left full of doubts. The shootings at Leningrad, after the Kirov assassination, had already occurred and they had in practise divided the French intellectuals into two categories: those who consented to everything, like Aragon and J. R. Bloch, and those who weakly expressed moral reservations afterward, like R. Rolland. A. G. had passed the age of moral reservations, but he did not wish to pronounce judg-

5. A concept developed by Gide—an act based upon pure impulse, without a reasoned end in view.

ment categorically before seeing things with his own eyes—before going to Russia himself.

He was instinctively rather against the Opposition in Russia, attracted by the prestige of power, a transforming power fundamentally—even if harshly—equitable and humane. I think that he would readily accept the epigram of Goethe: "Injustice rather than disorder" (Goethe, exactly the contrary of Bakunin). In this sense, that order constitutes a justice superior to lesser injustices—and a harmony. (There is also the other simply conservative meaning of this word, but A. G. would probably not accept it. Goethe, I believe, employed it in both senses at the same time . . . fullness.)

The second great act of courage of his life was his startling break with the official USSR upon his return from Russia. I know what it cost him. But he felt his dignity, all his profound personality, called in question. What remained in him of the pure spontaneous act became an act of courage: not to sacrifice lucidity. It was painful because of the necessity of implicitly recognizing that he had deceived himself in lending his support to Communism, because of the friendships he had to break off, because of the vast sympathetic audience he had to lose.

G. had never known any popularity other than that of literary circles and the salons—which isn't much. But there is a popular side to him which he has never expressed in his books: he loves the underworld, the streets, the public squares of Paris for a host of profound reasons, one of which I see as a need for communion with the crowd. The radiance he suddenly acquired thanks to the CP, the atmosphere of public meetings, the friendship he picked up in the working-class neighborhoods, the influences he acquired over young proletarian writers—at sixty—immersed him in humanity.

That coincided with the rise of the Popular Front, which represented a renascence of collective enthusiasm in France. I had looked forward to the moment when France would emerge from the debility induced by the loss of 1,700,000 men during the war, to the advent of the new generation twenty years after the battles, between 1934 and 1938; my elementary calculation turned out to be correct. The admirable thing here is the vitality of the old intellectual, open to such a renovation, and capable of such a difficult break at that moment of his life. Therein lies his greatness.

Disappearance of Andres Nin

End of May, 1937. I knew immediately that Andres Nin, once arrested, was hopelessly lost (the psychosis of the Russians). The same day Colette Audry and I begged Magdaleine Paz to take a plane to Barcelona in an attempt to save him. She was unable to because of her work on *Populaire*.

But Magdaleine, Félicien Challaye, Georges Pioch, the cute Limbour girl, went as a delegation to the Spanish embassy. They were received by a friendly secretary who endeavored to reassure them, promised guarantees of justice, said that he would forward the demands of our committee. When Magdaleine insisted upon the danger which Nin was running, he betrayed himself:

"Oh! that fellow. . . ."

Which meant that it was already too late for Nin.

"What do you mean?"

He took hold of himself again, became silent, evasive.

I had learned months ago in Brussels that a decisive provocation was being prepared against the POUM, I had warned the national committee of the POUM and Gorkin and Nin, everything is developing according to the plan which chance had made me acquainted with.

Meeting of the defense committee. Edouard Serre of Air-France told us that he had taken it upon himself to speak to the Russian ambassador about Nin, emphasizing that a crime committed against Nin would have serious repercussions. "I have rendered enough services to the USSR to be listened to. The ambassador received me very well and got the point; he is uneasy. He advised me to address a secret memorandum to Stalin, and that he would forward it." We approved.

Nin was kidnapped from a Russian villa-prison near an airfield used by Russian planes at Alcala de Hénarès.

A Russian officer known as "Orlov" must be in the know and perhaps Antonov-Ovsayenko also.

Krivitsky

November 20, 1937. Made an appointment with Walter at Colette Audry's place, on the Square Port-Royal. We met in front of the entrance. Colette was not home. We strolled along obscure streets and finally along the wall of La Santé, Boulevard Arago. His remarks:

"There is a French family whom I like and who like me. When they learned of my 'betrayal' they refused to believe it. When I told them my motives they got pale and I understood that if they were not driving me out of the house immediately it was because they were resolved not to let me go, in order to act against me. They are admirably devoted people.

"I just had a meeting in a café with my agent, the man of the family. I saw that I was being watched, I was afraid of being killed on the spot. He had taken all the necessary steps. He actually liked me, as a teacher who had taught him devotion and developed his political consciousness.

"Your stand as an Oppositionist is morally correct, but politically untenable. You are condemned by history. I used to read your articles and your books with pleasure and I deplored your being misled.

"It is not the custom to execute political figures.

Look at the Mensheviks we could have liquidated long ago. With the military it is something else again. [He thinks that General Wrangel has been liquidated.] And the agents of the service can expect no mercy. They will get me."

"I once decided to go back to Moscow; I don't know yet if it might not have been the best thing. It's not death which frightens me, it's the waiting, it's the preliminaries, a useless and revolting torture. My profoundest feeling is regret over the fine comrades, the flower of the revolution, who have been unjustly shot.

"No, Stalin isn't crazy. He has something big in mind and he is loving his head a little. It's frightful.

"I'll not make revelations. I'll do nothing which can harm the USSR. There is, in spite of all, only the cause of the USSR."

He noticed that when he put his hand in his pocket for his cigarettes I watched him carefully.

"It's natural you're afraid of me. And yet we would both be happy to die for the same cause."

I: "Not quite the same."

I talked about socialism. He replied that the power of the Soviet state is a point through which all the roads to socialism must pass.

"I'm exhausted. I can be killed anywhere and I will be, finally. All that is a nameless absurdity.

"Yagoda was stable. Yezhov is unstable. Trilisser was a great Bolshevik, honest and fine."

Soviets and the Constituent Assembly

Contribution to a Key Question of the Russian Revolution

The attitude of the Bolsheviks toward the Constituent Assembly in the Russian Revolution is a question that has not only been considerably agitated by opponents of Marxism in recent years but has also agitated many who are seriously interested in a reëvaluation of the Revolution from the Marxian standpoint. The following is printed as our contribution to the question. It is an excerpt from a longer essay written earlier this year by Max Shachtman, entitled "Under the Banner of Marxism," which was occasioned by the resignation from the Workers Party of E. Erber in a statement setting forth his abandonment of Marxism. Both documents, in mimeographed form, are available through THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.—ED.

Let us jump from Marx in Germany in 1850 to Lenin in Russia in 1917. The Wise One [Erber] writes:

> The Kerensky regime had done its utmost to block its further advance by frustrating the efforts of the masses to end the war and divide the land. The regime sought to stretch out its undemocratic authority as long as possible by repeatedly postponing the election of a Constituent Assembly. If the revolution was to advance, Kerensky had to go. Only the Bolshevik Party was able to show the way to the teeming, creative, democratic Soviets of 1917. The revolution broke through the impasse and opened a road toward a resolution of the land and peace questions. Far from carrying out a coup d'état, as their opponents charged, the Bolsheviks rode to power on the crest of an upsurge that sought to realize the long-promised objectives of land and peace.

We are beginning to get an idea of what the Marxist policy should have been, and it's not bad as a starter. "If the revolution was to advance, Kerensky had to go." Right is right. But Kerensky alone? Really, now, would that have been fair? Should Kerensky have been made the scapegoat for the "Kerensky *regime*," that is for the Kerensky *government?* What about the "socialist opponents"—the Mensheviks and SRs—who made the existence of the regime possible, who were part and parcel of it, who were fully co-responsible with Kerensky in trying to "stretch out" the "undemocratic authority" of the regime "as long as possible," in doing "its utmost to block" the advance of the revolution "by frustrating the efforts of the masses to end the war and divide the land"? What gives them immunity and not Kerensky? Whatever our opinion may be, we know the opinion of the Russian workers and peasants: the whole kit and caboodle had to go! Their place had to be taken by—write it down again!—"the teeming, creative, democratic Soviets of 1917." Led by whom? By Lenin and Trotsky, because—write this down, too!—"only the Bolshevik Party was able to show the way" to the Soviets. *Only* the Bolsheviks.

That way was the seizure of power by the workers' and peasants' Soviets, which proceeded to give the land to the peasants, control of the factories to the workers, peace to the whole country, and to usher in the greatest victory for the socialist working class in all its history.

The Dispersal of the Constituent Assembly

But what about the Constituent Assembly—didn't the Bolsheviks demand that it be convened and then, after tricking the workers into giving them power on the basis of this democratic slogan, didn't these same Bolsheviks disperse the Assembly when it did convene? This brings us to Erber's second pontifical bull against the Bolsheviks, the second error which brought about the subsequent 30 years' horror. And for a second time, Erber is counting on the possibility that his reader's ignorance is greater than his own.

The Bolsheviks, along with the Left Social-Revolutionists, did indeed disperse the Constituent Assembly. *But this means that they refused to disperse or dissolve the revolutionary workers' and peasants' Soviet government in favor of a counter-revolutionary*

and unrepresentative parliament. That's the first point and the main point!

What was the revolutionary Soviet power? It was "far from . . . a coup d'état," it was the triumphant revolution of the "teeming, creative, democratic Soviets" which "broke through the impasse and opened a road toward a solution of the land and peace questions." This impasse was broken through against the opposition and resistance not only of Kornilov and Kerensky, but above all of the Mensheviks and SRs. The workers *and* the peasants, in their democratic Soviets, repudiated the two old parties and their leadership. They turned to the leadership of the left wing of the SRs and above all the leadership of Lenin's party, because—we are still quoting from the Wise One—"only the Bolshevik Party was able to show the way." That way was lined with the slogan, was it not, of *"All Power to the Soviets!"*

What was the Constituent Assembly that finally convened in 1918, after the Soviet revolution? It was a faint and belated echo of an outlived and irrevocable political situation. It was *less* representative and *less* democratic than the Kerensky regime had been during most of its short life. During most of its existence, the Kerensky regime was supported by the bulk of the workers, soldiers and peasants who were democratically organized in their soviets. It was supported by the Menshevik and SR parties and party leaderships which, at that time, dominated the soviets, had their confidence and support and represented (more or less) the actual stage of political development and thinking of the masses at the time. Given the change in the political development and thinking of the masses, this regime had to go, says the Wise and Stern One.

But what did the Constituent Assembly represent when it finally came together, despite the months of Kerenskyite, Menshevik and SR sabotage? It was elected on the basis of *outlived* party lists. It was elected by a working class and peasantry that — politically speaking — no longer existed. The SR Party, which held about half the seats, had already split in two. But while the official party, controlled by the right wing, held most of these seats, the new left-wing SR Party which was collaborating with the Bolsheviks in the Soviet power and which already had or was rapidly gaining the support of the great majority of the peasants, held very few of the SR seats. The official SR list had been voted by the peasants before the tremendous revolutionary shift had taken place in their ranks. The official SR peasant supporters no longer existed in anything like the same number that had, earlier, cast their vote for the party list. Substantially the same thing held true for the Menshevik group in the Assembly, which represented the votes of workers who had since turned completely against the Mensheviks and given their allegiance to the parties of the Soviet power, the Bolsheviks or the Left SRs. The composition of the Assembly, on the day it met, no longer corresponded even approximately to the political division in the country. The sentiments and aspirations of the masses had changed radically since the party lists for the Assembly were first drawn up and after the voting had taken place. By its composition, we repeat, the Assembly was less representative than the Kerensky government in its heyday.

The Demand for the Dispersal of the Soviet Power

It is not surprising, then, that the Constituent Assembly turned out to be a counter-revolutionary parliament. The Bolsheviks and the Left SRs called upon the parties of the Assembly to recognize the Soviet power. The Mensheviks and right-wing SRs, to say nothing of the bourgeois Kadets, refused. Understandably! They had opposed the democratic slogans which brought about the revolution. They had brought the revolution against the monarchy to an impasse. They resisted tooth and nail the attempts to "open a road toward a solution of the land and peace questions." They had opposed the slogan of "All Power to the Soviets!" Their leadership had been repudiated and overturned by the "teeming, creative, democratic Soviets" which turned to the Bolsheviks as the "only" ones able to show the way. They had "subordinated the aims of the Revolution to the imperialist program of the bourgeoisie." They capped this not very glorious, not very socialist, not very democratic record by presenting a little amendment to the Soviet power, namely, that it give up power and all claim to power, and take its orders henceforward from them! They asked the Revolution to renounce itself, dig its own grave, jump into it and cover itself with earth hallowed by bourgeois democracy. From its very beginning, the Constituent Assembly declared war upon the Soviet power.

Erber, the democrat, is merciless in his criticism of the Bolsheviks for dispersing the counter-revolutionary Assembly. But nowhere does he even indicate that what was involved was the demand by the Assembly to disperse and dissolve the revolutionary Soviet government installed by the "teeming, creative, democratic Soviets of 1917"! Erber is for the Soviets so long as they confine themselves to teeming, but not if they exercise their democratic rights and mission to create a proletarian, socialist power. What is the difference between the Russian Assembly, which he accepts, and the German Scheidemann whom, he says, he rejects? Only this: Scheidemann succeeded in crushing the German Soviets and the Assembly failed to crush the Russian Soviets—that's all.

It may be asked: "Even if it is granted that this Assembly was unrepresentative, why didn't the Bolsheviks call for new elections which would have made possible the convocation of a parliament corresponding democratically to the political division in the country?"

The Bolsheviks preferred the Soviet (Commune-type) form of government to the parliamentary form from the standpoint of the working class and of democracy and as the only state form under which the transition to socialism could be achieved. The Bolsheviks did not invent the Soviets, they did not create them. The Soviets developed spontaneously among the masses and, without asking anybody's approval, became organs for the defense of the demands of the masses *and organs of power*. The wisdom and superiority of the Bolsheviks consisted in understanding the full meaning and social potentiality of these democratic organs which they themselves did not fabricate artificially but which they found at hand as a natural product of the revolution. Among the Bolsheviks, it was Lenin who understood them best. His views were not concealed, hidden in his pocket to be brought out only after the masses had been tricked into giving the Bolsheviks state power. Immediately upon his return to Russia, Lenin saw that the Soviets were already a state power, a unique power, *dual to the official state power and in immanent conflict with it.* Almost the first words he wrote on the subject (*Pravda,* April 22, 1917) were these:

Lenin on Soviets and Parliament

It is a power entirely different from that generally to be found in the parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republics of the usual type still prevailing in the advanced countries of Europe and America. This circumstance is often forgotten, power is of exactly *the same type* as the Paris Commune of 1871. The fundamental characteristics of this type are: (1) the source of power is not a law previously discussed and enacted by parliament, but the direct initiative of the masses from below, in their localities—outright "usurpation," to use a current expression; (2) the direct arming of the whole people in place of the police and the army, which are institutions separated from the people and opposed to the people; order in the state under such a power is maintained by the armed workers and peasants *themselves,* by the armed people *itself;* (3) officials and bureaucrats are either replaced by the direct rule of the people itself or at least placed under special control; they not only become elected officials, but are also *subject to recall* at the first demand of the people; they are reduced to the position of simple agents; from a privileged stratum occupying "posts" remunerated on a high-bourgeois scale, they become workers of a special "branch," remunerated at a salary not *exceeding* the ordinary pay of a competent worker.

This, and this alone, constitutes the *essence* of the Paris Commune as a specific type of state.

Lenin prized the Soviet type of state, from the very beginning of the revolution, for its superiority from the standpoint of the workers and of genuine democracy. His view on the Constituent Assembly, furthermore, is most concisely and clearly set forth in the first two of his theses on the subject:

1. The demand for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly was a perfectly legitimate part of the program of revolutionary Social-Democracy, because in a bourgeois republic a Constituent Assembly represents the highest form of democracy and because, in setting up a parliament, the imperialist republic which was headed by Kerensky was preparing to fake the elections and violate democracy in a number of ways.

2. While demanding the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social Democracy has ever since the beginning of the revolution of 1917 repeatedly emphasized that a republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the usual bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly.

Lenin wrote his views about the Soviets, and repeatedly stated that "Humanity has not yet evolved and we do not as yet know of a type of government superior to and better than the Soviets of workers', agricultural laborers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies," *not* after the Soviets had rallied to the support of his party, but from the very start, in April, when the Soviets were overwhelmingly under the leadership and control of the Mensheviks and SRs, with the Bolsheviks as a small minority among them. Lenin wrote his views on the Soviets and the Constituent Assembly, on the commune type of state and the parliamentary type of state, for the entire political public to see and read. Anyone able to understand anything in politics was able to understand Lenin.

Once the Soviet power had been established with the decisive support of the masses of workers and peasants, the Constituent Assembly could not represent anything *more* than a throwback to bourgeois democracy, a throwback in the course of which the new Soviet power would have to be crushed, as it was crushed later on in Germany, Bavaria, Austria and Hungary. To have tried to bring into life a "good" bourgeois parliament when life had already made a reality of a *far more democratic form of government* established by the masses themselves and enjoying their support and confidence, would have meant a victory for reaction. That in the first place.

The Disputed Question—in the Abstract

In the second place, we do not hesitate to say that, *abstractly,* a second and a third or fourth attempt to establish a more democratic parliament, could not be ruled out as impossible, or unnecessary, or contrary to the interests of the working class—*abstractly.* Similarly, you cannot rule out a decision by the revolutionists themselves, under certain circumstances, to dissolve Soviets that came into existence under different circumstances. The Soviets may be too weak to take supreme power in a country but strong enough to prevent the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois parties from consolidating their power on a reactionary basis; the bourgeoisie may be too weak to crush the Soviets but strong enough to hold on to its rule. The revolutionists or the Soviets may not enjoy sufficient popular support; the bourgeoisie may hesitate before a civil war in which everything is at stake.

Decisive sections of the people may believe insistently in the possibility of finding a solution in a more democratic parliamentary system and at the same time refuse to allow the new proletarian democracy to be destroyed. History knows all sort of combinations of circumstances and is very fertile in creating new combinations. How long it would be possible for revo-

lutionary Soviets (a semi-state) to exist side by side with an uncertain bourgeois parliament (another semi-state) under any and all conceivable circumstances, cannot be answered categorically or in advance. All we need to say is this: there are historical laws of revolution, we know these laws, and we also know that there have been and will probably continue to be *exceptions* to these laws.

However, it is not this abstract question that is being discussed, important though it is in its own right. We are not saying that in *every* socialist revolution, *regardless* of the country, the period, the economic and political conditions in which it develops, Soviets will arise; or if they do that they will develop just the way they did in Russia, that the workers' organs will come into existence in head-on conflict with the bourgeois parliamentary system, that these workers' organs will have to disperse or dissolve the parliament in the same way that we saw in Russia, that the bourgeoisie will have to be overturned by violence, that the ousted bourgeoisie is absolutely certain to resist with armed force, that a civil war is absolutely inevitable.

It is *conceivable* that the rise of the socialist proletariat is so swift, mighty and irresistible; that the economy is in such a state of disorder and the bourgeoisie in such a demoralized, depressed and hopeless state, that it decides to throw in its hand without a real fight. It is *conceivable* that under such or similar circumstances the classical bourgeois parliament can be so drastically revised from within its own organs that it becomes transformed into something radically different. All laws, including historical laws, have their exceptions. But again, that is not what we are discussing here. We are discussing what actually happened in the Russian Revolution.

And what *actually* happened, that is, the way the social and political forces actually meshed and drew apart and clashed in Russia during the revolution, shows that the Bolsheviks acted as revolutionary socialists in the struggle around the Constituent Assembly and not like political science professors drawing diagrams on a high school blackboard.

The Disputed Question—in Political Reality

Which brings us to the third place—the political reality. Once the Soviets took power, the counter-revolution instantly adopted the slogan of the Constituent Assembly even before the Constituent actually convened. The true representatives of the *classes* regarded neither the Soviets nor the Constituent Assembly as abstractions. For the reaction as well as for the petty-bourgeois democracy (each from its own standpoint), the Constituent Assembly became the rallying cry, the banner, the instrument for the struggle to overthrow the Soviet Power of the workers' and peasants, which also meant to overthrow all the achievements obtained by this power and expected from it. The conflict between "Soviet" and "Assembly" on the blackboard is one thing. In the Russia of 1917-1918, it was *a violent and irreconcilable conflict between the classes.* In Erber's document, it need hardly be added, the class struggle does not exist. Or if it does, why, it can easily be straightened out by men of good will. The Assembly demanded the capitulation of the Soviets; it could not exist without such a capitulation. Men of good will were of little use in this conflict. A civil war broke out, and as the German phrase has it, the weapon of criticism gave way to the criticism of weapons.

The civil war that followed is clearly the fault of the Bolsheviks. Of that, there is no doubt in Erber's mind. It's notoriously true, too! If the Bolsheviks had not taken power, there would have been no need for a civil war to crush them! Even before the Bolsheviks took power, as a matter of fact, if the Soviets (we mean, of course, the teeming, democratic Soviets) had not existed at all, there might not even have been a Kornilovist-monarchist plot to drown them in a bloodbath. Indeed, we may even state it more generally: If workers were not so insistent and militant in trying to impose their modest demands on obstinate and reactionary employers, the latter would find no need of subsidizing thugs and fascists to beat and shoot workers. You can hear that philosophy expounded in any highschool (third term), from a thousand pulpits and ten thousand newspaper pages: If labor gets unreasonable in its demands and doesn't know its proper place, well then, we don't like it, you know, but if that happens, Fascism just is inevitable. Yessirree! It's notoriously true. It is also true that if you stop breathing altogether, not even your worst enemy will dream of strangling you.

Oh, wait a minute! Erber is not defending the bourgeoisie and the reaction! He's really radical, and he doesn't care much about what is done to the bourgeoisie. What upsets him is that the Bolsheviks took power and dispersed the Assembly in opposition to the *workers.* Do you see now? Listen to this little sneer, lifted right out of the literature of the professional anti-Bolshevik (and the professional anti-unionist, we might add):

> As for the masses who constituted the Soviets, Lenin held that they would be won to the idea in time. It was for the vanguard to act and explain later. Those of the workers who refused to accept this concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat had to be handled firmly, for their own good.

Our little animal is a vicious one, isn't he? Lenin was for imposing his dictatorship upon the masses and explaining to them later. And if they didn't go along, why, shoot the rabble down—for their own good! He turned out pretty bad, this Lenin. Fights for months with democratic slogans; fools everybody, including the democratic Soviets which brought him to power on the crest of their upsurge and without a *coup d'Etat* on his part, and then, a very few weeks later, the mask is off! He acts for their own good; he

shoots them for their own good. There's an authentic portrait of Lenin for you, an unretouched photograph of him!

A "Proof" Against the Bolsheviks

What is the proof for this insolent charge? One proof is the famous "demonstration" of January 18, 1918, organized by the reactionary City Duma of Petrograd against the Soviet Power and for the Constituent Assembly. The "demonstration" was dispersed by Red Guards. To show the magnitude of this Bolshevik atrocity, Erber quotes an article by Maxim Gorky, "whose honesty as a reporter of the events can be accepted." We hear Gorky burning with indignation at the charge that this was a bourgeois demonstration and denouncing the Bolsheviks for encouraging "the soldiers and Red Guards [to] snatch the revolutionary banners from the hands of the workers."

Gorky's honesty, guaranteed by Erber personally, makes him a good reporter of events! Gorky was, to be sure, an honest man and a socialist. But on revolutionary problems, he had no more qualification than the next man, except perhaps that he was warmly sentimental, almost always confused in the political conflicts of the Marxian movement, and a bitter enemy of the Bolshevik Revolution for a long time, above all, at the time it occurred. If Erber picks him out as his reporter of events, it is a clear case of like calling unto like. Erber is attracted by Gorky's impressionism and by his confusion, which he likes to think is no greater than his own muddleheadness.

You read Erber's lurid quotation from Gorky, and your mind's eye conjures up the image of Scheidemann, Noske and Ebert mowing down the German workers with machine guns. Erber has his countries, parties and men mixed up a little. Who was involved in this huge demonstration which, if you follow Erber, you might think was terminated with workers dead and dying by the thousands? Three days before Gorky's anguished article, his own paper, *Novaia Zhizn,* reported the demonstration as follows: "About 11:30 some two hundred men bearing a flag with the words, 'All Power to the Constituent Assembly,' came across the Liteiny Bridge." There is the imposing number of the Petrograd population that followed the clarion call of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the S.R.s to proclaim the sovereign rights of the Constituent Assembly which they had so successfully sabotaged for six months. One hundred plus one hundred, making a grand total of two hundred, all good men and true!

The other proof is this:

> Gorky is quite correct in asking what the bourgeoisie had to cheer about in the convocation of a Constituent Assembly in which the bourgeois party, the Kadets, held only fifteen seats out of 520, and in which the extreme right Social Revolutionaries, who had been identified with Kerensky, were thoroughly discredited.

We will even try to explain to this innocent what only 15 Kadets out of 520 seats and a majority for the bourgeoisie had to cheer about. A Constituent with the S.R.s, even right-wing S.R.s, would give the bourgeoisie very little to cheer about, *if* this Constituent were proclaiming its sovereignty against the Czarist Duma. The same Constituent, however, in proclaiming its sovereignty against the revolutionary power of the democratic Soviets of the workers and peasants, would give the bourgeoisie, *inside Russia and all over the world,* plenty to cheer about. *And it did cheer about it!!* How explain that mystery? And how explain a few other mysteries?

Between them, the right-wing S.R.s and the Mensheviks had the majority of the seats in the Constituent. Since it was an ever-so-democratic Constituent, this must have meant that the two parties were supported by the majority of the population. The Constituent is dispersed by the Bolsheviks, who do not have the masses but who act for them and explain later, and who shoot them down for their own good. So far, so good. The outraged S.R.s and Mensheviks return to the outraged masses, with the declaration, as one of them put it, that "The Constituent Assembly alone is capable of uniting all parts of Russia to put an end to the civil war which is speeding up the economic ruin of the country, and to solve all essential questions raised by the revolution." The masses want democracy and the solution of all these essential questions. The Mensheviks and S.R.s promise to solve them. In fact, Erber tells us, they are now really for peace and for land to the peasants. What is more, the rôles are reversed on the matter of democracy. The Bolsheviks are for the despotic dictatorship over the masses and "democratic slogans became a weapon of their socialist opponents."

We are in 1918. The Bolshevik power is established in only a very tiny part of Russia and consolidated in none. The anti-Bolsheviks have political control in a multitude of localities—the great majority—and they even have considerable armed forces at their disposal. The Bolsheviks do not have what Stalin, for example, has today: a huge, tightly-knit political machine, hordes of privileged bureaucrats, a tremendous army, an all-pervading and terrifying G.P.U., and the like. They cannot simply dispose of their opponents by force or terror, as Stalin does. It is still a fair and square political fight, with the big odds still apparently in favor of the "socialist opponents," who now have democratic slogans as their weapons and the democratic Constituent Assembly, in the flesh, as their banner.

The unexplained mystery, hidden to Erber behind seven of his own fogs, is this: How account for the fact that the "socialist opponents" get nowhere with their "democratic slogans" and their Constituent Assembly? Aren't they the parties of the workers and peasants, as proved by the majority they registered at the opening of the Constituent? Aren't they now

armed to the toes with "democratic slogans" which, only a day ago, were so vastly popular with the masses that the cunning Bolsheviks won power with their aid? Thorny questions, aren't they? But Erber is not going to get any thorns in his fingers if he can help it. Solution? He leaves the questions strictly alone.

That's a solution for him, but it does not answer the questions. The answer gives us the second key to the mystifications: The bourgeoisie had everything to cheer about in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly—*everything*. It could not expect to restore its power in its own name in the Russia of 1917-1918. But it could hope to restore it behind the stalking horse of bourgeois democracy, the Constituent Assembly and its Mensheviks-S.R. champions. Shall we look into this point for a minute?

An American Testimonial

Here, for example, we have the report of the U. S. Consul Dewitt Poole to the American Ambassador in Russia, written in Petrograd exactly one week after the final session of the Constituent. He is reporting on his visit five weeks earlier, to Rostov-on-Don "to investigate the question of the establishment of an American Consulate in that city." During his visit, Mr. Poole meets with notorious monarchist and Cossack counterrevolutionists like General Kaledin, General Alexeyev and others connected with General Kornilov. The anti-Bolshevik united front is being formed into a "Council" in the Southeast of Russia immediately after the Soviet Power is established and before the Constituent even assembles. Let us read, and with profit, every one of the lines that we have room to quote from Mr. Poole's report:

> Negotiations are in progress for the admission to the Council of three representative Social Democrats, namely, Chaikowsky, Kuskova and Plekhanov; and two Social Revolutionaries, namely, Argunov and Potresov.
>
> On the conservative side the Council, as now constituted, includes, besides the three generals (Alexeyev, Kornilov and Kaledin), Mr. Milyukov; Prince Gregory Trubetskoy; Professor Struve; Mr. Fedorov, representing the banking and other large commercial interests of Moscow; two other Kadets or nationalist patriots yet to be chosen; Mr. Bogayevsky, the vice-ataman of the Don Cossacks; and Mr. Paramonov, a rich Cossack. The Council will undoubtedly undergo changes in personnel, but a framework of an equal number of conservatives and radicals, not counting the three generals, appears to have been adopted.
>
> In pursuance of the agreement with Mr. Savinkov, a proclamation to the Russian people has been drafted. . . . It refers to the suppression of the Constituent Assembly and asks for the support of the people in defending that institution. It is sound on the subject of the continuance of the war. The proclamation will be issued in the name of the league, unsigned, because it is frankly admitted that it has not yet been possible to obtain the names of persons who, it is thought, would be thoroughly acceptable to the people at large.

Isn't every line of our wonderful Mr. Poole covered with mother-of-pearl, even though he never, we suppose, read Engels' letter to Conrad Schmidt? What did the bourgeois have to cheer about in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly? Gorky didn't know. Erber doesn't know yet. False modesty prevents us from saying we know. But Generals Alexeyev, Kornilov and Kaledin—they know. Prince Trubetskoy—he knows. Gospadin Fedorov, "representing the banking and other commercial interests of Moscow"—he knows. Gospadin Paramonov, a Cossack who happens also to be rich—he knows. Alas, every one of them has passed from our midst to enjoy the reward of the pious; not one of them is alive today to tell Erber what he knows. And that's a double pity, because the proclamation of the Council was so "sound on the subject of the continuance of the war"—which is another subject that is of interest to Erber.

Testimonial of Three Czarist Generals

General Denikin issued a proclamation on January 9, 1918, before the hideous Bolsheviks dispersed the Assembly, proclaiming the aims of his "Volunteer Army."

> The new army will defend the civil liberties in order to enable the master of the Russian land—the Russian people—to express through their elected Constituent Assembly their sovereign will. All classes, parties and groups of the population must accept that will. The army and those taking part in its formation will absolutely submit to the legal power appointed by the Constituent Assembly.

This czarist general did not have much luck either. He was ready to "absolutely submit" to the Constituent, but he couldn't find anyone else who panted to follow his inspiring democratic lead. "The volunteer movement," he wrote later in his souvenirs, "did not become a national movement. . . . At its very inception . . . the army acquired a distinct class character." Erber should be compelled by law—democratically enforced—to read this. There are classes in society and their interests are irreconcilable. Above all in revolutionary times, all groups, movements and institutions "*acquire a distinct class character.*" So distinct that a czarist general finally sees it. But not Erber.

Here is another czarist general, Kornilov, and here are five instructive points from his program of February, 1918:

> (3) To reëstablish freedom of industry and commerce and to abolish nationalization of private financial enterprises.
>
> (4) To reëstablish private property.
>
> (5) To reëstablish the Russian Army on the basis of strict military discipline. The army should be formed on a volunteer basis . . . without committees, commissars, or elective officers . . .
>
> (8) The Constituent Assembly dissolved by the Bolsheviks should be restored . . .
>
> (9) The government established by General Kornilov is responsible only to the Constituent Assembly. . . ... The Constituent Assembly, as the only sovereign of the Russian land, will determine the fundamental laws of the Russian constitution and will give final form to the organization of the state.

It's a double pity that Kornilov joined his ancestors in the unsuccessful attack on Yekaterinodar a few weeks later, so that *he* can't explain what the bourgeoisie had to cheer about, either.

Maybe we can find a hint from the other paladin of the Constituent, General Alexeyev, who is also

armed to the teeth with "democratic slogans" (*after* the Bolsheviks take power but not, we regret to note, before), plus 100,000,000 rubles appropriated for his democratic efforts by the no less democratic government of France. In a perplexed and gloomy letter to the chief of the French mission in Kiev, the general writes in February, 1918:

> The Cossack regiments coming from the front are in a state of complete moral dissolution. Bolshevik ideas have found a great many followers among the Cossacks, with the result that they refuse to fight even in defense of their own territory. [Alexeyev means, of course, that these stupid Cossack regiments refuse to fight for the French banks.] They are firmly convinced that Bolshevism is directed solely against the wealthy classes . . . and not against the region as a whole, where there is order, bread, coal, iron and oil.

We have found the hint! In the eyes of the masses, even of the politically backward and privileged Cossacks, the Constituent Assembly, the fight for it, the men and groups leading that fight, represent not democracy but the wealthy classes, the restorationists, the reaction, and at best, the compromisers and confusionists. In the eyes of the masses, the Bolsheviks and the Soviets represent the fight for freedom and the assurance that it can be won. They represent the movement "directed solely against the wealthy classes."

That is why the Mensheviks and SRs, with all their votes and with all their "democratic slogans" and their Constituent Assembly, never and nowhere inspired the masses, never and nowhere recruited them to the banner of struggle to overturn the Soviet power and succeeded only in bringing the most shameful discredit upon themselves. That is why the "anti-democratic" Bolsheviks consolidated the Soviet power among the democratic masses in spite of odds almost without historical parallel. The "theoretical dispute" was decided *freely* by the masses, decided in struggle.

The London Congress of the Colonial Peoples

(Continued from page 194)

sia to be a socialist state, but what was more common was the fear that any mention of the Russian problem represented a maneuver similar to those of the Social Democrats at Puteaux last year, and also the notion, hinted at more than expressed, that "the enemies of our enemies are our friends."

This latter dangerous notion could have been answered to some extent by extricating the Russian question from the status merely of quarrels among the big powers, and by pointing out that it involves as well the struggle for *national liberation* by the Ukrainians and the other peoples directly under Russian rule, by the peoples of Eastern Europe under the rule of Russian puppets, and by the peoples of Germany, Austria and Trieste, subjected to Four-Power occupation.

No such presentation was made in concrete terms during the discussion of the committee's document, but excellent speeches in general support of the committee's Third Camp position were made by Jef Last of *De Vlam* and Leon Szur of the South African Socialist Group. Lahia, international secretary of the Socialist Party of India, made an exceptionally powerful speech for the same position, criticizing it only from the standpoint of possible ambiguity. What he wanted was not passive neutrality à la Sweden or Switzerland, but an "active neutrality" uniting colonial peoples and the workers of the imperialist countries in revolutionary struggle to end war. He stated that this must be adopted not only as a pre-war but as a mid-war policy!

It remained for the "orthodox" Trotskyists to muddy the waters by presenting their stand on the Russian question in its crassest form. The SWP and *The Militant* may have directly shoved unconditional defense of the USSR into the background, but this was far from the case with the Trotskyist delegates at London. Their ignoble document, presented by the delegates of the two Ceylon parties, needs no comment here. But what cannot be emphasized too much is its effect in vitiating any attempt to clarify the Nigerian delegation. One after another, the Trotskyist delegates presented their position in such a fashion as to appeal demagogically to the Nigerians, placing all their emphasis on attacking American imperialism and slurring quickly over their differences with the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In any case, as the Moroccan and Algerian delegates pointed out, even though they themselves were absolutely opposed to both power blocs, it was apparent that the Congress could not achieve unity on the committee's document. Since they felt that the main purpose of the Congress was not to adopt comprehensive theses but to mobilize maximum support behind the struggles of the national organizations, a declaration should be drafted that could achieve unanimity. The Congress agreed unanimously to such a procedure; and such a declaration, dealing specifically with the struggle for full independence in the African and Asiatic colonies, was adopted the following day.

During the last day of the Congress, the many resolutions dealing with the struggles of each colony were adopted with few modifications. However, the declaration of the European delegation on the tasks of the European workers in the fight against imperialism, reported out by Healy, British "orthodox" Trotskyist, gave rise to considerable discussion. Jef Last, followed by Saul Berg of the Independent Socialist League, argued for the inclusion in the declaration of a paragraph that would deal with the national independence in the Ukraine, in Eastern Europe, and in Germany.

The discussion was of purely educational value, since the declaration of the European Commission was merely up for acceptance into the Congress minutes and was not subject to adoption, amendment or rejection. Its value was demonstrated by the hysterical, abusive attack then launched at Last and Berg by Healy. Berg had deliberately limited himself to formulas with which the Trotskyists are supposed t oagree—the notion of an independent Ukraine, advanced by Trotsky as early as 1938, the notion of withdrawal of all occupation troops from Germany, etc. There was no mention of "Russian imperialism." Only the question of national independence was raised.

Healy's summation, in which he "answered" the criticisms, began with an oration on the history of the Russian Revolution that managed to be dull, vicious and semi-Stalinist simultaneously, thus accurately reflecting both the personality and the politics of the speaker. The delegates began to mutter, then to object, and finally to start yelling at Healy to stop—to the point where Chairman Fenner Brockway finally put a stop to Healy's presentation on this subject. The reaction of the French-speaking delegation, when they heard the translation, was more sophisticated. They actually burst into laughter.

In any case, the lucubrations of Healy and Co. were not the main theme of the Congress. Despite the acrimonious and suspicious tone of many of the debates, the Congress emerged with a new International Committee that unites far stronger colonial forces than the preceding one. The new committee has fourteen representatives from Africa, five from Asia, six from Europe, one from the United States. In the case of Africa and Asia, every affiliated organization that is nationwide in scope is represented. The new committee will have the task of organizing activities that will bring to the attention of world opinion the principles of the Congress and the struggles of its national organizations.

SAUL BERG

London.