
March 1944

Fourth International

The Dog Days of the Left Opposition

By James P. Cannon

Japan Faces The Abyss II

By Li Fu-Jen

Stalin's Constitutional 'Reforms'

By The Editors

From the Arsenal of Marxism

Military Doctrine or Pseudo-Military Doctrinairism II

By Leon Trotsky

Twenty Cents

Manager's Column

Aside from the purely business letters from our agents, we receive a minimum of material in regard to FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. Occasionally a thoughtful reader takes time to send us his reaction to a specific article or the magazine in general. For instance, a reader in Detroit wrote:

"Everyone has remarked about the 'new' F.I., its interest and choice of material."

* * *

A reader in Akron took the time to write us as follows:

"I dropped a note to G. suggesting an article for the F.I. on recent developments in rubber . . . I thought the February issue was excellent, and note not only a good quality of subject matter but a real improvement in appearance."

* * *

A reader in Virginia wrote:

"As for the magazine, it too is up to and beyond snuff. What especially interested me were the two military articles by Leon Trotsky in the December and January issues.

"It so happened that in a course on army organization given us at clerical school, we were given certain 'Principles of War' taken from Clausewitz and the first article or parts of it at any rate seemed like almost direct remarks on what we were being taught. Perhaps I wouldn't have appreciated these articles so greatly if I had read them a few months ago, but I now feel impelled to shout: 'Where have you been keeping these? And if there are any more, for God's sake, print them at the earliest possible time!'"

* * *

A few days ago a stranger walked into our office, asking if he could buy some copies of the February FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. He wanted 15 copies of that issue. In answer to our inquiry as to why he was interested in this particular issue he said: "I'm interested in the article on nationalist thought . . . I'm a member of the International Workers Order . . . we are having a convention soon and I want to mail out this article so that they can read it."

(The article referred to is "New Trends in Nationalist Thought on the European Problems" by J. B. Stuart.)

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Editor: FELIX MORROW

CONTENTS

The Month in Review

The Meaning of Stalin's Constitutional Reforms 67
The Dog Days of the Left Opposition

By James P. Cannon 71

British Women in IndustryBy A. Keen 76
Japan Faces the Abyss

II. Conditions in Large-Scale Industry
and AgricultureBy Li Fu-Jen 78
Germany's Prison Camps (Book Review)

By J. B. Stuart 88

From the Arsenal of Marxism

Military Doctrine or Pseudo-Military
Doctrinairism IIBy Leon Trotsky 90
Is Marshal 'Tito'—Brezovich? 95

214

The Civil Rights Defense Committee has informed us that they have received good response to the ad carried on the back page of the February FOURTH INTERNATIONAL, asking for aid to the eighteen class-war prisoners and their families. We wish to thank those readers of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL who have already responded to this plea and urge that all of our readers help by contributing to the Minneapolis Prisoners Pardon & Relief Fund, c/o Civil Rights Defense Committee, 160

Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

* * *

Letters received during the month from our readers abroad are a source of inspiration. We quote from some of them:

England: "As a very interested reader of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL and *The Militant*, is it possible for you to send me these two journals? If so I will obtain a permit to pay you for them.

"Am just reading the October issue of the F.I. which gives

some very good surveys of the situation. I was very interested and enlightened in the two articles by Leon Trotsky on the report of the Comintern in the August and September issues. He certainly had a marvelous understanding of international affairs and how each knitted in, one with the other. You are doing a great service to the advanced workers in printing this kind of material.

"Would be very grateful indeed if you could let me have some of the literature you advertise on the back of the October issue. We are very short of these most essential works over here."

* * *

Scotland: "I have not yet received the July issue of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL nor the September issue. The latter may yet be on the way but the former has apparently been held up by the censor or something. One copy only appears to have reached our Glasgow comrades.

"At the moment here, it is like living on top of a volcano. Nothing of any magnitude is happening on the class war front but any moment violent eruptions can and will take place."

* * *

England: "In conclusion, please convey our sincerest thanks to the SWP for the wonderful files of material which they sent us. At the moment they are away for binding purposes—the younger comrades are very eager to get down to study . . ."

* * *

For sometime now we have been wondering how we can liven up the Manager's Column, how we can make this column of more interest to our readers. The most persistent thought concerning this problem is to turn the column over to our readers. But immediately on the heels of this thought comes the question, *how!* How to encourage our readers to utilize the column for suggestions, criticisms, ideas for improving the contents or circulation of the magazine? Perhaps there are times you would like to contest a point made in an article or add supplemental material. Why not submit these thoughts! Letters of such nature would be highly valuable as well as extremely interesting, not only to our readers but to the Business Management of the magazine as well.

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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 5

MARCH 1944

NUMBER 3

The Month in Review

The Meaning of Stalin's Constitutional 'Reforms'

STALIN AMENDS HIS OWN 'CONSTITUTION' Toward the end of January, less than two months after the Teheran conference, the Kremlin suddenly issued orders to convene the Tenth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The very fact of convening the Supreme Soviet is noteworthy inasmuch as this "highest organ of state power in the USSR" has been virtually defunct since Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941. One of the first actions of the Kremlin at that time was to suspend the "Stalinist Constitution" (promulgated in 1936); all power was arrogated by the Defense Council, a war cabinet of five individuals: Stalin and his four puppets, Molotov, Berya, Voroshilov and Malenkov. During the entire intervening period, the Supreme Soviet, supposed by law to meet twice a year, was convened only once, and that was in the summer of 1942 in order to ratify Stalin's pact with England.

But the reason for convening the second wartime session of the Supreme Soviet is even more noteworthy. It was summoned in order to amend the suspended Constitution, or more correctly in order to adopt two amendments which ostensibly grant greater autonomy to each of the 16 Soviet republics. According to these amendments each Soviet republic is henceforth free to conduct its own foreign affairs and to dispose of its own independent military formations. Each is to have its own commissariat of defense and its own commissariat of foreign affairs; each is now empowered to enter into agreements and make treaties with foreign powers. Is this perhaps decentralization?

Centralization does not become transformed into decentralization by virtue of simple numerical changes. On the contrary, such changes can very well serve to disguise centralization effectively. As a matter of fact, it is a trick commonly employed by capitalists who, for example, set up a number of corporations in order thereby the better to disguise a monopoly.

Without any previous public discussion the foregoing two proposals were submitted to the delegates by Molotov, in the name of the Council of People's Commissars. They were adopted unanimously on February 1 at a four-hour session of the Supreme Soviet.

MR. LIPPMANN HAILS 'AUSPICIOUS' REFORMS This latest Moscow move has aroused considerable speculation, especially in the columns of the "democratic" capitalist press.

Among the opinions advanced is one to the effect that this is a maneuver of Stalin designed to assure dominance at the peace negotiations: instead of casting one vote, the Kremlin can now cast 16! The more sober commentators have discounted this explanation on the ground that the Kremlin must surely be aware that matters relating to peace negotiations never were and never will be settled by counting noses. As against those

who fear some wily ruse, there are others who incline to accept the Stalinist "reforms" at their face value. Thus, Mr. Walter Lippmann hails as "auspicious" the "decentralizing reform in the Soviet Union"; and goes on to speculate that this tendency toward decentralization will as a matter of fact become worldwide. Says Mr. Lippmann:

"The centralized state is a monster even at its most benevolent, and just because it is indispensable in war, peace will bring a reaction against it. If that reaction goes too far, it will produce anarchy. But it must go a very considerable distance or there will be popular explosions. It is not unlikely, then, that Stalin, who knows his Russia, has been reading correctly the signs of the times." (*New York Herald Tribune*, February 3.)

If, as Mr. Lippmann correctly contends, it is "amateurish" to reduce to simple arithmetic questions relating to a peace conference, then it is no less false to conclude that far-reaching changes in the Kremlin's domestic and foreign policy are involved in a mere increase in the number of commissariats. Sixteen handpicked sets of puppets in place of a single set cannot alter anything fundamentally either in the character of Stalin's regime or in his policies. His totalitarian control is not weakened an iota thereby.

MOLOTOV'S CRYSTAL CLEAR EXPLANATION The only explanation that the Kremlin itself has offered for the changes is contained in Molotov's speech. As usual this official explanation explains nothing at all. It is a web of brazen lies. The keynote of Molotov's speech is contained in the following passage:

"The meaning of the proposed transformation is perfectly clear. This transformation signifies great expansion of the activities of the Union republics which has become possible as a result of their political, economic and cultural growth, or, in other words, as a result of their national development." (*New York Times*, February 2.)

What "political, economic and cultural growth" is Molotov speaking about? What kind of "national development" have the Union republics actually experienced during the almost three years of the life-and-death struggle against the Nazis?

The territories of not less than seven of the 16 republics have been the arena of the greatest and most destructive battles in world history. Their industry and agriculture, their cities plants and fields first suffered from the scorched-earth policy when the Red Army was in retreat along the 2,000 mile front; whatever remained intact was subsequently subjected to the fury of the retreating Nazis. Among these seven republics is that of the Ukraine, with a population of almost 40 million, the biggest and most important next to the Great Russian Republic. There is the Byelorussian republic, the third largest, with more than 10 million inhabitants. The richest and the most industrialized regions of central Russia have felt the impact of the war and key cities were left in shambles like Stalingrad or subjected to prolonged siege and battered like Leningrad.

STALINIST CONCEPTION OF NATIONAL PROGRESS

What kind of "political, economic and cultural growth" could there have been for the scores of millions who have remained for the greater part of the war under Nazi rule? Five of the Union republics remain even today under Nazi occupation and the Red Armies are still fighting to recapture these areas. Vast stretches of Soviet territory over which the tide of battle has swept have been turned into gigantic wastelands. It will take years of reconstruction to bring them back again to the pre-war levels, which were none too high to begin with. Economically, the Soviet Union as a whole has been set back. The Kremlin bureaucracy itself estimates that it would need 10 million German slaves to labor for ten years in order to rebuild the devastated territories.

It is no less a mockery to talk about "political, economic and cultural growth" in the republics which have escaped the direct impact of the war but which have remained under the rule of Stalin. The entire productive machinery of the country, beyond the range of Nazi guns, has been strained to the breaking point in order to produce the implements for the war. The living bearers of culture, the flower of Soviet manhood, millions of its youth have given their lives freely on the far-flung battle fronts. Economically, there could have been no genuine growth under these conditions.

The political rights of the Soviet people have long ago been usurped by the bureaucracy. They have not regained a single one of their political rights. Nor has the bureaucracy the slightest intention of allowing any breach in its totalitarian rule.

So far as culture is concerned, the bureaucracy has seized the wartime conditions as a pretext for depriving the masses of the last remaining cultural conquests of the October revolution. The right of free, universal education has been abrogated through the introduction of paid higher education. Co-education has been abolished. Nothing remains of the protective legislation for women.

This comes on top of the terrible burden that the war has placed on the youth who are either at the front or in the factories and fields. The bulk of the agricultural force now consists of adolescents. Similar conditions exist in industry. The director of the largest munitions plant in Moscow told a Soviet press correspondent:

"The war has caused special difficulties with regard to personnel; I need only say that our entire personnel is practically new. Most of our workers today are young people of 14 to 16—adolescents. These young people have had no special training; we had to teach them in our stride."

The correspondent then visited one of the shops:

"With few exceptions, all those tending the machines were girls of 14 to 16 years. Most were standing on low stools, as the lathes were too high for them." (*Information Bulletin*, Embassy of the USSR, Washington, D.C. Vol. IV, No. 3. January 8.)

Nothing could be more reactionary than the ideology which the Kremlin is now straining all its resources to instill among the Soviet masses. The most barbaric traditions of "Holy Russia" have been revived. Stalin is dealing terrible blows to further cultural development by propagating the poison of Slavic chauvinism. He has cleared the road for other poison, too. The Greek Orthodox Church has been restored and the Holy Synod reorganized with the blessings of the Kremlin. All this serves reaction, not progress.

WHAT POLICY DO THE 'REFORMS' CONTINUE?

Stalin's latest "reforms" can be correctly understood only in the light of his entire previous policy. If approached from this standpoint it will be seen that they represent not a sharp turn but a continuation of a whole series of past and recent measures which have completely disclosed the counter-revolutionary essence of Stalinism.

Stalin's rule rests on naked force. He knows of only one solution to political problems, and that is the application of police measures with ruthless cruelty. Deceit, falsehood and treachery provide the supplementary weapons in the Stalinist arsenal. Leon Trotsky long ago pointed out that it was Stalin's conviction that force solves any and all problems; that ruling classes have been deposed only because they failed to use force sufficiently and brutally enough. Stalin's personal traits qualified him for the role of the leader of the reactionary bureaucracy which rose to power in the Soviet Union owing to a combination of exceptional historical circumstances: the isolation of the proletarian revolution in one of the most backward countries of Europe.

THE STATUS QUO AND THE KREMLIN

In general it can be said that the primary task of the Soviet bureaucracy has been from the very outset to perpetuate those exceptional historical conditions to which it owes its rise and under which alone it can continue to maintain its power and privileges, i.e., the conditions which resulted in isolating the conquests of the October revolution within the territories of the former Czarist empire. In the beginning this was not a conscious policy, but a chase after a reactionary utopia which expressed itself in the promulgation by Stalin of the theory of "building Socialism in one country." In other words, once it arose on the basis of the New Economic Policy after the termination of the civil war in the Soviet Union in 1921, the bureaucracy proceeded to rationalize the basic weakness of the USSR—its isolation in a capitalist encirclement—into a source of alleged strength, and assigned to itself a fraudulent historic mission which was presently proclaimed as accomplished. Years ago the Stalinists announced the "irrevocable triumph" of socialism in the country.

As a matter of fact, however, the bureaucracy found itself weakest precisely in the period of the first Five Year Plan (1929-1932) when for the sake of self-preservation it began applying the program of industrialization originally sponsored by the Trotskyist Left Opposition. Bereft of an independent social base, the Kremlin tried to create one artificially through an intensive fostering of a labor and *kolkhoz* (collective farm) aristocracy. But instead of achieving stability the bureaucracy found itself plunged into a series of internal and international crises. In the end Stalin discovered that the cadres he had so carefully handpicked over the years were unreliable. He decimated the ranks of his own bureaucracy in the mass blood purges during the period of the Moscow frameup trials.

As the arena for the maneuvers of the bureaucracy both on the domestic and foreign fields became more and more restricted, the reactionary content of the Stalinist policies became more and more pronounced. The policy of keeping the Soviet Union isolated became a deliberate one.

Internationally the world working class paid for this by a series of catastrophic defeats culminating in the betrayal of the German proletariat to Hitler and the subsequent outbreak of the Second World War. In the meantime the bureaucracy succeeded

in completely expropriating the Soviet masses politically and in imposing a totalitarian regime on the country.

STALIN IN SEARCH OF A STABLE BASE

The conditions arising from the war have made it more urgent than ever before for the bureaucracy to broaden its social base. How has the Kremlin done this? By utilizing the successes of the Red Army in order to create a monstrous military caste as its main internal prop. The Kremlin has done everything in its power to invest this military caste with social weight. The most reactionary feudal and Czarist military traditions have been revived. Prerogatives and privileges for the officers beyond even the Prussian standards have been legalized in an attempt to separate the officers by an impassable gulf from the mass of the soldiers and of the population and thus assure their dependence upon the Kremlin. Promotion of soldiers from the ranks to commissioned officers has been prohibited. Special military schools have been set up and only those enrolled in these institutions can qualify for commanding posts in the Army. At the same time military discipline has been introduced into all school-rooms. The diplomatic corps has likewise been militarized.

Is there a direct connection between the latest "reforms" and this intensive fostering of the military caste? The Kremlin has unquestionably reinforced its new military hierarchy by setting up 16 new commissariats of defense. In commenting on the results expected from this "reform" Molotov made the following significant remark:

"It is to be expected that this will also increase the attention paid by the republics to the organization of military training in schools and institutions of higher education, of which we stand in need." (*New York Times*, February 2.)

EVERYTHING PREPARED BEHIND THE SCENES

The Kremlin never improvises in such matters but prepares everything calculatingly and carefully in advance. In the same speech

Molotov announced:

"Now, too, we have national army formations in the Red Army. Our army has Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Georgian, Azerbaijanian, Armenian, Kazakh and certain other army formations. Some of these army units were created during the patriotic war." (*Idem.*)

The corresponding national military hierarchies have already been handpicked. Molotov hinted as much in his speech. This is confirmed in an article on the *National Military Formations in the Red Army* by one M. Volkov who flatly states:

"Unlike the situation in previous years, every Union Republic now has not only cadres of rank and file soldiers, but certain cadres of commanding personnel capable of directing the corresponding military units. The Red Army has more than 10 Lettish generals developed and steered in battle, and large numbers of Lettish officers trained in the Stalin school of fighting. Among the tested commanders of the Red Army are 108 Byelorussian generals. There are experienced masters of victory such as the sons of the Georgian people, General Chanchibadze and others, and more than 10 Armenian generals, among whom is General Bagramyan, Commander of the First Baltic Front." (*Information Bulletin*, Embassy of the USSR, Washington, D.C. Vol. IV, No. 22, February 23. Our emphasis.)

* * *

The fostering and strengthening of the military caste is one of the most damaging blows to the remaining conquests of October. Only dupes and scoundrels would try to palm it off as a concession to the popular masses of the USSR. The Kremlin is now revealing more graphically than ever before

that it has not and will not voluntarily make a single genuine concession to the Soviet masses. For it stands in mortal fear of the masses and of all developments that might make concessions necessary. The usurping and parasitic bureaucracy can continue to maintain itself only in the same way as it has done in the past, namely, by suppressing all initiative on the part of the masses, by crushing every sign of critical thought and of political opposition, by arrogating more and more power and privileges to the ruling stratum.

* * *

WHAT THEY ALL FEAR THE MOST

Foreign policy is the continuation of domestic policy. The reactionary content of Stalin's domestic measures has a direct bearing on the coming European revolution. The Soviet military hierarchy is aimed not only at the masses at home, but abroad. The Kremlin intends to apply the same police measures on the continent of Europe as it employs at home. Like the world bourgeoisie, the Kremlin fears most that the second World War will inevitably give birth to the proletarian revolution.

The Kremlin has been quite outspoken in its discussion of this crucial development. Here, for example, is what the leading editorial in *War and the Working Class*, the mouthpiece of Stalin's foreign policy, had to say on this subject on the eve of the Hull-Eden-Molotov conference in Moscow:

"Among the many consequences which arise in our time as a result of a prolonged war it is necessary to pay serious attention to the fact that with the prolongation of war an inevitable change occurs in the reciprocal relations between the military and political factors which determine the course and outcome of the war. The longer the war lasts the less weightier becomes the purely military factor, i.e., the operations of military forces under the complete control of the respective governments, as against factors of political character arising from the complex and contradictory processes which are far less subject to the control and regulating influence of the belligerent powers. This is a wholly lawful axiom; it has been confirmed by the experiences of war history.

"Let us recall the historical experience of the first World War. It lasted more than four years. At that time, what did the prolongation of the war lead to? One of the most important consequences of the first World War and of the political crisis connected with the latter was the complete collapse of the Czarist empire in Russia which occurred as early as the third year of the war and which produced enormous changes in the system of international relations existing at that time. Eight months after the overthrow of Czarism, in the midst of the continuing war and the greatly aggravated political crisis, the October revolution gave birth to a state of an entirely new type . . . As is well-known, the world-historic events in Russia were by no means the only consequences of the political crisis produced by the war. Other countries likewise lived through colossal convulsions, first and foremost, those countries which suffered defeat in the war. The Germany of the Kaiser, under the impact of a prolonged war and in the face of the obvious inability of the German army to resist any longer, suffered an internal collapse before the armies of the victorious countries were able to enter her territories. Whatever may be one's standpoint in evaluating the events which took place in Germany, Italy, Hungary, throughout the whole of Central Europe at the termination of the first World War and during the transition from war to peace, one thing is incontestable: these events proved to be pregnant with the gravest consequences in the sphere of both the international political relations and economic relations." (*War and the Working Class*, No. 9, October 1, 1942.)

THE BRIDGE TO TEHERAN This is *not* addressed to the European working class in order to inspire them with the knowledge that great historical forces are operating in favor of the proletarian revolution. Nor is this said to instill in workers the supreme confidence that out of the second world slaughter the revolution must inescapably arise with far greater chances for victory than the Russian workers had in 1917. This is *not* a summons to the European working class to rise in revolt for the establishment of the Socialist United States of Europe. No, the Kremlin is addressing its remarks directly to Washington and London. In Moscow they apparently still remember shreds of Marxism only when it comes to warning the capitalist politicians that the military defeat of Germany is but a part of the problem raised by the war. They cite history not to demonstrate the historic mission of the working class but to plead for collaboration in bringing the war to the speediest possible conclusion lest "factors of a political character," i.e., the class struggle breaks out into the open. It ought to be noted that implicit in the Kremlin's presentation is the conviction that it is possible to cheat history—provided, of course, sufficient force is brought to bear in time. Moreover, the Kremlin is likewise expressing here its own mortal fear of the "gravest consequences" politically and economically that might flow from the war, i.e., the outbreak of the proletarian revolution.

This is precisely what provides the bridge for the agreement between Stalin and his allies—a bridge consisting not only of considerations of military expediency, the need of defeating a common enemy, Germany, but also of the common need to try to strangle the revolutionary uprisings on the European continent. This is the gist of the agreements arrived at in Moscow and Teheran.

GUARANTEES AND FAST SERVICE—AT A PRICE To prove his reliability and good faith Stalin has formally buried the stinking corpse of the Communist International. The revolutionary battle-song of the world proletariat, the *Internationale* has been outlawed as the national anthem of the USSR. The American Communist Party is now calling upon the workers to—scab for the preservation of Wall Street. The British Communist Party licks the boots of British imperialists with equal zeal but without discarding its old organizational form . . . Even the perfidious Social Democrats never sank as low as this.

All that the Kremlin asks in return for its many services are certain territorial concessions. Stalin's allies have been somewhat hesitant about granting these demands. Not that the demands are exorbitant in and of themselves. On the contrary. Stalin is not even asking what the Czarist diplomats obtained during the last war by secret treaties from their "democratic" allies. Stalin is not even demanding the return of all the territories that Czarist Russia used to possess in Eastern Europe. He is only asking for that which he had previously obtained from Hitler. This he believes will permanently reestablish the status quo between a capitalist Western Europe and the USSR with its sphere of influence in the East.

If Stalin's allies hesitate to grant these relatively modest demands it is because they would like to isolate the USSR hermetically in order the more easily to destroy it later on. The continued existence of the Soviet Union, even under Stalin, renders impossible any genuine stabilization of Europe on a capitalist basis. Unlike Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill know this, and proceed deliberately from this fundamental premise. In the last analysis this basic class conflict between capitalism

and the degenerated workers' state cannot be eliminated by any diplomatic maneuvers. When they consider the time and conditions propitious, the "democrats" will break with the Kremlin. Meanwhile, they find it expedient to continue the collaboration.

At first sight it may appear that the latest maneuver of the Kremlin can act only to aggravate the relations with the "democracies." For, after all, it is quite obvious that thereby Stalin has not only repeated his territorial demands (the Baltic States, the Curzon line for Poland, Bessarabia, etc.) but has already set up a flexible framework for the absorption of new territories. Isn't this tantamount to a bold challenge?

STALINISM HAS NOT ALTERED ITS COURSE To answer this question in the affirmative is to maintain that the Kremlin has made a sharp turn in its foreign policy. For every one of Stalin's moves in the recent period has been designed not to impede or blow up but rather facilitate and forge his alliance with Roosevelt and Churchill. He is anxious to help London and Washington crush the German revolution. (As Browder has publicly boasted, Stalin pledged to do this at Teheran.) He is no less anxious to have the backing of Churchill and Roosevelt in obtaining reparations from Germany and in preventing a "strong Germany" from ever rising again. He needs—and expects to receive—the economic aid of the United States for the rebuilding of the USSR.

No, there has been no turn in Stalin's policy. In reality, even if Stalin had decided not to pose the issue publicly, it would have been nonetheless posed just as sharply, owing to the successes of the Red Army which is now beginning to tower as the dominant military force in Europe. In the period immediately ahead the defeated and retreating German armies represent the only force that can prevent the Red Army from overrunning Eastern Europe, and even penetrating far more deeply. The "democracies" are thus confronted with the alternative of accepting what they are powerless to prevent at this time or of breaking openly with the Kremlin, which they are hardly in position to do. Stalin's "reforms" provide a face-saving formula for the sponsors of the Atlantic Charter. Far from being a challenge it is a bid to pay Stalin his asking price and then proceed to seal the bargain struck at Teheran with the blood of the German revolution. Churchill at any rate is apparently inclined to accept. In his speech to the House of Commons on February 22, His Majesty's Prime Minister declared:

"I feel fully entitled to reassure the House . . . None of the ground made good at Moscow and Teheran has been lost."

He then went on to add:

"But I also have sympathy for the Russian standpoint . . . Russia has the right of reassurance against future attacks from the west, and we are going all the way with her to see that she gets it, not only by the might of her arms but by the approval and assent of the United Nations." (*New York Times*, February 23.)

In terms of Stalin's foreign policy, his latest "reforms" constitute the third move in the series which began at Moscow and Teheran and which is aimed at the heart of the coming European revolution. Other moves must of necessity follow.

THE ISSUE WILL BE DECIDED IN STRUGGLE But the chief actors in the impending catastrophic events have not yet spoken their final word, which is theirs alone to say. For one thing, we Trotskyists are deeply convinced that the Soviet masses will have a great deal to say before this war and the social crisis bound up with it are over. Entire generations of

Soviet workers and youth have not passed for nothing through the terrible school of war. They have tested themselves in struggle. They have become tempered. They have gained new confidence in themselves. These are not the moods that have prevailed in recent years in the USSR. These are the moods much more akin to October, whose traditions are far from forgotten by the masses. Only bureaucrats drunk with power can cherish the illusion that these fighters will submit docilely to the continuation of political oppression.

Amid the privations and havoc of war the usurped prestige of military victories will weigh little as against the glaring discrepancy between the greedy, privileged, bespangled, well-fed bureaucrats and the hungry, ill-clad, barracks-packed workers and peasants. Stalin will find force of little avail when the victorious Soviet soldiers, workers and peasants rise to present their final accounting to the parasitic bureaucracy which sought, first and foremost, to maintain and extend its privileges while the millions worked, sacrificed, fought and died.

Within the ranks of the bureaucracy itself there is a new stratum of men who do not owe their positions of leadership to Stalin, but who proved their merit in struggle. They are leaders who have become accustomed to fight in the face of

seemingly insuperable odds. They have no illusions about the "genius" of Stalin. They constitute a grave danger to Stalin's personal dictatorship.

If during the period of the greatest economic successes, Stalin was unable to stabilize his regime on the basis of hand-picked and docile flunkies, then just how will he achieve stability in the period of the most profound economic and political dislocation through which not only the Soviet Union but the whole of Europe must pass?

Fatal for Stalin—and for his allies—is the fact that the skies over Europe are already streaked with deepest red. The fires of the revolution continue to blaze in Italy under the bayonets of both the AMG in the south and the Nazis in the north. The Balkans are seething. The hour of Hitler's doom is approaching. What will happen then? The developments in Italy are but a pale anticipation of what lies ahead.

Once the great, thrice-betrayed, thrice-martyred proletariat of Germany rises again to its feet, Europe and the whole world will be shaken to its foundations; and the second chapter of the world revolution shall begin where the Russian workers under Lenin and Trotsky left off at the termination of the first World War.

The Dog Days of the Left Opposition

By JAMES P. CANNON

Editor's Note: We reprint herewith another chapter of "The History of American Trotskyism," by James P. Cannon scheduled for publication this Spring.

Our last lecture brought us up to the first National Conference of the Left Opposition in May 1929. We had survived the difficult first six months of our struggle, kept our forces intact and gained some new recruits. At the first conference we consolidated our forces into a national organization, set up an elected leadership and defined our program more precisely. Our ranks were firm, determined. We were poor in resources and very few in numbers, but we were sure that we had laid hold of the truth and that with the truth we would conquer in the end. We came back to New York to begin the second stage of the struggle for the regeneration of American Communism.

The fate of every political group—whether it is to live and grow or degenerate and die—is decided in its first experiences by the way in which it answers two decisive questions.

The first is the adoption of a correct political program. But that alone does not guarantee victory. The second is that the group decide correctly what shall be the nature of its activities, and what tasks it shall set itself, given the size and capacity of the group, the period of the development of the class struggle, the relation of forces in the political movement, and so on.

If the program of a political group, especially a small political group, is false, nothing can save it in the end. It is just as impossible to bluff in the political movement as in war. The only difference is that in wartime things are brought to such a pitch that every weakness becomes exposed almost immediately, as is shown in one stage after another in the current imperialist war. The law operates just as ruthlessly in the political struggle. Bluffs do not work. At most they deceive people for a time, but the main victims of the deception, in the end, are the bluffers themselves. You must have the goods. That is, you must have a correct program in order

to survive and serve the cause of the workers.

An example of the fatal result of a light-minded bluffing attitude toward program is the notorious Lovestone group. Some of you who are new to the revolutionary movement may never have heard of this faction which once played such a prominent role, inasmuch as it has disappeared completely from the scene. But in those days the people who constituted the Lovestone group were the leaders of the American Communist Party. It was they who carried through our expulsion, and when about six months later, they themselves were expelled, they began with far more numerous forces and resources than we did. They made a much more imposing appearance in the first days. But they didn't have a correct program and didn't try to develop one. They thought they could cheat history a little bit; that they could cut corners with principle and keep larger forces together by compromises on the program question. And they did for a time. But in the end this group, rich in energies and abilities, and containing some very talented people, was utterly destroyed in the political fight, ignominiously dissolved. Today, most of its leaders, all of them as far as I know, are on the bandwagon of the imperialist war, serving ends absolutely opposite to those which they set out to serve at the beginning of their political work. The program is decisive.

On the other hand, if the group misunderstands the tasks set for it by the conditions of the day, if it does not know how to answer the most important of all questions in politics—that is, the question of what to do next—then the group, no matter what its merits may otherwise be, can wear itself out in misdirected efforts and futile activities and come to grief.

So, as I said in my opening remarks, our fate was determined in those early days by the answer we gave to the question of the program and by the way we analyzed the tasks of the day. Our merit, as a newly created political force in the American labor movement—the merit which assured the prog-

ness, stability and further development of our group—consisted in this, that we gave correct answers to both those questions.

The conference didn't take up every question posed by the political conditions of the time. It took up only the most important questions, that is, those which had to be answered first. And the first of these was the Russian question, the question of the revolution in existence. As I remarked in the previous lecture, ever since 1917 it has been demonstrated over and over again that the Russian question is the touchstone for every political current in the labor movement. Those who take an incorrect position on the Russian question leave the revolutionary path sooner or later.

First Trotskyist Conference

The Russian question has been elucidated innumerable times in articles, pamphlets and books. But at every important turn of events it arises again. As late as 1939 and 1940 we had to fight the Russian question over again with a petty-bourgeois current in our own movement. Those who want to study the Russian question in all its profundity, all its acuteness and all its urgency can find abundant material in the literature of the Fourth International. Therefore I do not need to elucidate it in detail tonight. I simply reduce it to its barest essentials and say that the question confronting us at our first convention was whether we should continue to support the Soviet state, the Soviet Union, despite the fact that the direction of it had fallen into the hands of a conservative, bureaucratic caste. There were people in those days, calling themselves and considering themselves revolutionary, who had broken with the Communist Party, or had been expelled from it, and who wanted to turn their backs entirely on the Soviet Union and what remained of the Russian revolution and start over, with a "clean slate" as an anti-Soviet party. We rejected that program and all those who urged it on us. We could have had many members in those days if we compromised on that issue. We took a firm stand in favor of supporting the Soviet Union; of not overturning it, but of trying to reform it through the instrumentality of the party and the Comintern.

In the course of development it was proved that all those who, whether from impatience, ignorance or subjectivity—whatever the cause might be—prematurely announced the death of the Russian revolution, were in reality announcing their own demise as revolutionists. Each and every one of these groups and tendencies degenerated, fell apart at the very base, withdrew to the side lines, and in many cases went over into the camp of the bourgeoisie. Our political health, our revolutionary vitality, were safeguarded, first of all, by the correct attitude we took toward the Soviet Union despite the crimes that had been committed, including those against us, by the individuals in control of the administration of the Soviet Union.

The trade union question had an extraordinary importance then as always. At that time it was particularly acute. The Communist International, and the Communist parties under its direction and control, after a long experiment with right-wing opportunist politics, had taken a big swing to the left, to ultra-leftism—a characteristic manifestation of the bureaucratic centrism of the faction of Stalin. Having lost the Marxist compass, they were distinguished by a tendency to jump from the extreme right to the left, and vice versa. They had gone through a long experience with right-wing politics in the Soviet Union, conciliating the kulaks and Nepmen, until

the Soviet Union, and the bureaucracy with it, came to the brink of disaster. On the international arena, similar policies brought similar results. In reacting to this, and under the relentless criticisms of the Left Opposition, they introduced an ultra-leftist over-correction in all fields. On the trade union question they swung around to the position of leaving the established unions, including the American Federation of Labor, and starting a new made-to-order trade union movement under the control of the Communist Party. The insane policy of building "Red Unions" became the order of the day.

Our first National Conference took a firm stand against that policy, and declared in favor of operating within the existing labor movement, confining independent unionism to the unorganized field. We mercilessly attacked the revived sectarianism contained in this theory of a new "Communist" trade union movement created by artificial means. By that stand, by the correctness of our trade union policy, we assured that when the time arrived for us to have some access to the mass movement we would know the shortest route to it. Later events confirmed the correctness of the trade union policy adopted at our first conference and consistently maintained thereafter.

Faction or Party?

The third big important question we had to answer was whether we should create a new independent party, or still consider ourselves a faction of the existing Communist Party and the Comintern. Here again we were besieged by people who thought they were radicals: ex-members of the Communist Party who had become completely soured and wanted to throw out the baby with the dirty bath water; syndicalists and ultra-leftist elements who, in their antagonism to the Communist Party, were willing to combine with anybody ready to create a party in opposition to it. Moreover, in our own ranks there were a few people who reacted subjectively to the bureaucratic expulsions, the slander and violence and ostracism employed against us. They also wanted to renounce the Communist Party and start a new party. This approach had a superficial attraction. But we resisted, we rejected that idea. People who over-simplified the question used to say to us: "How can you be a faction of a party when you are expelled from it?"

We explained: It is a question of correctly appraising the membership of the Communist Party, and finding the right tactical approach to it. If the Communist Party and its members have degenerated beyond reclamation, and if a more progressive group of workers exists either actually, or potentially by reason of the direction in which such a group is moving and out of which we can create a new and better party—then the argument for a new party is correct. But, we said, we don't see such a group anywhere. We don't see any real progressiveness, any militancy, any real political intelligence in all these diverse oppositions, individuals and tendencies. They are nearly all side-line critics and sectarians. The real vanguard of the proletariat consists of those tens of thousands of workers who have been awakened by the Russian revolution. They are still loyal to the Comintern and to the Communist Party. They haven't attentively followed the process of gradual degeneration. They haven't unraveled the theoretical questions which are at the bottom of this degeneration. It is impossible even to get a hearing from these people unless you place yourself on the ground of the party, and strive not to destroy but to reform it, demanding readmission to the party with democratic rights.

We solved that problem correctly by declaring ourselves a faction of the party and the Comintern. We named our organization *The Communist League of America (Opposition)*, in order to indicate that we were not a new party but simply an opposition faction to the old one. Experience has richly demonstrated the correctness of this decision. By remaining partisans of the Communist Party and the Communist International, by opposing the bureaucratic leaders at the top, but appraising correctly the rank and file as they were at that time, and seeking contact with them, we continued to gain new recruits from the ranks of the Communist workers. The overwhelming majority of our members in the first five years of our existence came from the CP. Thus we built the foundations of a regenerated Communist movement. As for the anti-Soviet and anti-party people, they never produced anything but confusion.

The Propaganda Task

Out of this decision to form, at that time, a faction and not a new party, flowed another important and troublesome question which was debated and fought out at great length in our movement for five years—from 1928 until 1933. That question was: What concrete task shall we set for this group of 100 people scattered over the broad expanse of this vast country? If we constitute ourselves as an independent party, then we must appeal directly to the working class, turn our backs on the degenerated Communist Party, and embark on a series of efforts and activities in the mass movement. On the other hand, if we are to be not an independent party but a faction, then it follows that we must direct our main efforts, appeals and activities, not to the mass of 40 million American workers, but to the vanguard of the class organized in and around the Communist Party. You can see how these two questions dovetailed. In politics—and not only in politics—once you say “A” you must say “B.” We had to either turn our face towards the Communist Party, or away from the Communist Party in the direction of the undeveloped, unorganized and uneducated masses. You cannot eat your cake and have it too.

The problem was to understand the actual situation, the stage of development at the moment. Of course, you have to find a road to the masses in order to create a party that can lead a revolution. But the road to the masses leads through the vanguard and not over its head. That was not understood by some people. They thought they could by-pass the Communist workers, jump right into the midst of the mass movement and find there the best candidates for the most advanced, the most theoretically developed group in the world, that is, the Left Opposition which was the vanguard of the vanguard. This conception was erroneous, the product of impatience and the failure to think things out. Instead of that, we set as our main task *propaganda*, not *agitation*.

We said: Our first task is to make the principles of the Left Opposition known to the vanguard. Let us not delude ourselves with the idea we can go to the great unschooled mass now. We must first get what is obtainable from this vanguard group, consisting of some tens of thousands of Communist Party members and sympathizers, and crystalize out of them a sufficient cadre either to reform the party, or, if after a serious effort that fails in the end—and only when the failure is conclusively demonstrated—to build a new one with the forces recruited in the endeavor. Only in this way is it possible for us to reconstitute the party in the real sense of the word.

At that time there appeared on the horizon a figure who

is also perhaps strange to many of you, but who in those days made an awful lot of noise. Albert Weisbord had been a member of the CP and got himself expelled along about 1929 for criticism, or for one reason or another—it was never quite clear. After his expulsion Weisbord decided to do some studying. It frequently happens, you know, that after people get a bad blow they begin to wonder about the cause of it. Weisbord soon emerged from his studies to announce himself as a Trotskyist; not 50 per cent Trotskyist as we were, but a real genuine 100 per cent Trotskyist whose mission in life was to set us straight.

A Noisy Interloper

His revelation was: The Trotskyists must not be a propaganda circle, but go directly into “mass work.” That conception had to lead him logically to the proposal of forming a new party, but he couldn’t do that very conveniently because he didn’t have any members. He had to apply the tactic of going first to the vanguard—on us. With a few of his personal friends and others he began an energetic campaign of “boring from within” and hammering from without this little group of 25 or 30 people whom we had by that time organized in New York City. While we were proclaiming the necessity of propagandizing the members and sympathizers of the Communist Party as a link to the mass movement, Weisbord, proclaiming a program of mass activity, directed 99 per cent of his mass activity not at the masses, and not even at the Communist Party, but at our little Trotskyist group. He disagreed with us on everything and denounced us as false representatives of Trotskyism. When we said, yes, he said, yes positively. When we said 75, he raised the bid. When we said, “Communist League of America,” he called his group the “Communist League of Struggle” to make it stronger. The heart and core of the fight with Weisbord was this question of the nature of our activities. He was impatient to jump into mass work over the head of the Communist Party. We rejected his program and he denounced us in one thick mimeographed bulletin after another.

Some of you may perhaps have the ambition to become historians of the movement, or at least students of the history of the movement. If so, these informal lectures of mine can serve as guide posts for a further study of the most important questions and turning points. There is no lack of literature. If you dig for it, you will find literally bales of mimeographed bulletins devoted to criticism and denunciation of our movement—and especially of me, for some reason. That sort of thing has happened so often that I long ago learned to accept it as matter of course. Whenever anybody goes crazy in our movement he begins to denounce me at the top of his voice, entirely aside from provocation of any sort on my part. So Weisbord denounced us, particularly me, but we fought it out. We stuck to our course.

There were impatient people in our ranks who thought that Weisbord’s prescription might be worth trying, a way for a poor little group to get rich quick. It is very easy for isolated people, gathered together in a small room, to talk themselves into the most radical proposals unless they retain a sense of proportion, of sanity and realism. Some of our comrades, disappointed at our slow growth, were lured by this idea that we needed only a program of mass work in order to go out and get the masses. This sentiment grew to such an extent that Weisbord created a little faction inside our organization. We were obliged to declare an open meeting for discussion. We admitted Weisbord, who wasn’t a formal

member, and gave him the right to the floor. We debated the question hammer and tongs. Eventually we isolated Weisbord. He never enrolled more than 13 members in his group in New York. This little group went through a series of expulsions and splits and eventually disappeared from the scene.

We consumed an enormous amount of time and energy debating and fighting out this question. And not only with Weisbord. In those days we were continually pestered by impatient people in our ranks. The difficulties of the time pressed heavily upon us. Week after week and month after month, we appeared to be gaining hardly an inch. Discouragement set in, and with it the demand for some scheme to grow faster, some magic formula. We fought it down, talked it down, and held our group on the right line, kept its face turned to the one possible source of healthy growth: the ranks of the Communist workers who still remained under the influence of the Communist Party.

"Third Period" Policies

The Stalinist "left turn" piled up new difficulties for us. This turn was in part designed by Stalin to cut the ground from under the feet of the Left Opposition; it made the Stalinists appear more radical even than the Left Opposition of Trotsky. They threw the Lovestoneites out of the party as "right wingers," turned the party leadership over to Foster and Company and proclaimed a left policy. By this maneuver they dealt us a devastating blow. The disgruntled elements in the party, who had been inclined toward us and who had opposed the opportunism of the Lovestone group, became reconciled to the party. They used to say to us: "You see, you were wrong. Stalin is correcting everything. He is taking a radical position all along the line in Russia, America and everywhere else." In Russia the Stalin bureaucracy declared war on the kulaks. All over the world the ground was being cut from under the feet of the Left Opposition. A whole series of capitulations took place in Russia. Radek and others gave up the fight on the excuse that Stalin had adopted the policy of the Opposition. There were, I would say, perhaps hundreds of Communist Party members, who had been leaning towards us, who gained the same impression and returned to Stalinism in the period of the ultra-left swing.

Those were the real dog days of the Left Opposition. We had gone through the first six months with rather steady progress and formed our national organization at the conference with high hopes. Then recruitment from the party membership suddenly stopped. After the expulsion of the Lovestoneites, a wave of illusion swept through the Communist Party. Reconciliation with Stalinism became the order of the day. We were stymied. And then began the big noise of the first Five Year Plan. The Communist Party members were fired with enthusiasm by the Five Year Plan which the Left Opposition had originated and demanded. The panic in the United States, the "depression," caused a great wave of disillusionment with capitalism. The Communist Party in that situation appeared to be the most radical and revolutionary force in the country. The party began to grow and swell its ranks and to attract sympathizers in droves.

We, with our criticisms and theoretical explanations, appeared in the eyes of all as a group of impossibilists, hairsplitters, naggers. We were going around trying to make people understand that the theory of socialism in one country is fatal for a revolutionary movement in the end; that we must clear up this question of theory at all costs. Enamored with the first successes of the Five Year Plan, they used to

look at us and say, "These people are crazy, they don't live in this world." At a time when tens and hundreds of thousands of new elements were beginning to look toward the Soviet Union going forward with the Five Year Plan, while capitalism appeared to be going up the spout; here were these Trotskyists, with their documents under their arms, demanding that you read books, study, discuss, and so on. Nobody wanted to listen to us.

In those dog days of the movement we were shut off from all contact. We had no friends, no sympathizers, no periphery around our movement. We had no chance whatever to participate in the mass movement. Whenever we tried to get into a workers organization we would be expelled as counter-revolutionary Trotskyists. We tried to send delegations to the unemployed meetings. Our credentials would be rejected on the ground that we were enemies of the working class. We were utterly isolated, forced in upon ourselves. Our recruitment dropped to almost nothing. The Communist Party and its vast periphery seemed to be hermetically sealed against us.

Then, as is always the case with new political movements, we began to recruit from sources none too healthy. If you are ever reduced again to a small handful, as well the Marxists may be in the mutations of the class struggle; if things go badly once more and you have to begin over again, then I can tell you in advance some of the headaches you are going to have. Every new movement attracts certain elements which might properly be called the lunatic fringe. Freaks always looking for the most extreme expression of radicalism, misfits, windbags, chronic oppositionists who had been thrown out of half a dozen organizations—such people began to come to us in our isolation, shouting, "Hello, Comrades." I was always against admitting such people, but the tide was too strong. I waged a bitter fight in the New York branch of the Communist League against admitting a man to membership on the sole ground of his appearance and dress.

The Lunatic Fringe

They asked, "What have you against him?"

I said, "He wears a corduroy suit up and down Greenwich Village, with a trick mustache and long hair. There is something wrong with this guy."

I wasn't making a joke, either. I said, people of this type are not going to be suitable for approaching the ordinary American worker. They are going to mark our organization as something freakish, abnormal, exotic; something that has nothing to do with the normal life of the American worker. I was dead right in general, and in this mentioned case in particular. Our corduroy-suit lad, after making all kinds of trouble in the organization, eventually became an Oehlerite.

Many people came to us who had revolted against the Communist Party not for its bad sides but for its good sides; that is, the discipline of the party, the subordination of the individual to the decisions of the party in current work. A lot of dilettantish petty-bourgeois minded people who couldn't stand any kind of discipline, who had either left the CP or been expelled from it, wanted, or rather thought they wanted to become Trotskyists. Some of them joined the New York branch and brought with them that same prejudice against discipline in our organization. Many of the newcomers made a fetish of democracy. They were repelled so much by the bureaucratism of the Communist Party that they desired an organization without any authority or discipline or centralization whatever.

All the people of this type have one common characteristic: they like to discuss things without limit or end. The New

York branch of the Trotskyist movement in those days was just one continuous stew of discussion. I have never seen one of these elements who isn't articulate. I have looked for one but I have never found him. They can all talk; and not only can, but *will*; and everlastingly, on every question. They were iconoclasts who would accept nothing as authoritative, nothing as decided in the history of the movement. Everything and everybody had to be proved over again from scratch.

Walled off from the vanguard represented by the Communist movement and without contact with the living mass movement of the workers, we were thrown in upon ourselves and subjected to this invasion. There was no way out of it. We had to go through that long drawn-out period of stewing and discussing. I had to listen, and that is one reason my gray hairs are so numerous. I was never a sectarian or screwball. I never had patience with people who mistake mere garrulousness for the qualities of political leadership. But one could not walk away from this sorely beset group. This little fragile nucleus of the future revolutionary party had to be held together. It had to go through this experience. It had to survive somehow. One had to be patient for the sake of the future; that is why we listened to the windbags. It was not easy. I have thought many times that, if despite my unbelief, there is anything in what they say about the hereafter, I am going to be well rewarded—not for what I have done, but for what I have had to listen to.

Hard Times

That was the hardest time. And then, naturally, the movement slid into its inevitable period of internal difficulties, frictions and conflicts. We had fierce quarrels and squabbles, very often over little things. There were reasons for it. No small isolated movement has ever been able to escape it. A small isolated group thrown in upon itself, with the weight of the whole world pressing down upon it, having no contact with the workers mass movement and getting no sobering corrective from it, is bound in the best case to have a hard time. Our difficulties were increased by the fact that many recruits were not first class material. Many of the people who joined the New York branch weren't really there by justice. They weren't the type who, in the long run, could build a revolutionary movement—dilettantes, petty-bourgeois undisciplined elements.

And then, the everlasting poverty of the movement. We were trying to publish a newspaper, we were trying to publish a whole list of pamphlets, without the necessary resources. Every penny we obtained was immediately devoured by the expenses of the newspaper. We didn't have a nickel to turn around with. Those were the days of real pressure, the hard days of isolation, of poverty, of disheartening internal difficulties. This lasted not for weeks or months, but for years. And under those harsh conditions, which persisted for years, everything weak in any individual was squeezed to the surface; everything petty, selfish and disloyal. I had been acquainted with some of the individuals before in the days when the weather was fairer. Now I came to know them in their blood and bones. And then in those terrible days, I learned also to know Ben Webster and the men of Minneapolis. They always supported me, they never failed me, they held up my hands.

The greatest movement, with its magnificent program of the liberation of all humanity, with the most grandiose historic perspectives, was inundated in those days by a sea of petty troubles, jealousies, clique formations and internal fights. Worst of all, these faction fights weren't fully comprehensible to the membership because the great political issues which were

implicit in them had not yet broken through. However, they were not mere personal quarrels, as they so often appeared to be, but, as is now quite clear to all, the premature rehearsal of the great, definitive struggle of 1939-40 between the proletarian and petty-bourgeois tendencies within our movement.

Those were the hardest days of all in the thirty years that I have been active in the movement—those days from the conference of 1929 in Chicago until 1933, the years of the terrible hermetically sealed isolation, with all the attendant difficulties. Isolation is the natural habitat of the sectarian, but for one who has an instinct for the mass movement it is the most cruel punishment.

The Old Print Shop

Those were the hard days, but in spite of everything we carried out our propaganda tasks, and on the whole we did it very well. At the conference in Chicago we had decided that at all costs we were going to publish the whole message of the Russian. Opposition. All the accumulated documents, which had been suppressed, and the current writings of Trotsky were then available to us. We decided that the most revolutionary thing we could do was not to go out to proclaim the revolution in Union Square, not try to put ourselves at the head of tens of thousands of workers who did not yet know us, not to jump over our own heads.

Our task, our revolutionary duty, was to print the word, to carry on *propaganda* in the narrowest and most concentrated sense, that is, the publication and distribution of theoretical literature. To that end we drained our members for money to buy a second-hand linotype machine and set up our own print shop. Of all the business enterprises that have been contrived in the history of capitalism, I think this was the best, considering the means available. If we weren't interested in the revolution, I think that we could easily qualify, just on the basis of this enterprise, as very good business experts. We certainly did a lot of corner cutting to keep that business going. We assigned a young comrade, who had just finished linotype school, to operate the machine. He wasn't a first-class mechanic then; now he is not only a good mechanic but also a party leader and a lecturer on the staff of the New York School of Social Science. In those days the whole weight of the propaganda of the party rested on this single comrade who ran the linotype machine. There was a story about him—I don't know whether it is true or not—that he didn't know much about the machine. It was an old broken-down, second-hand job that had been palmed off on us. Every once in a while it would stop working, like a tired mule. Charlie would adjust a few gadgets and, if that didn't help, take a hammer and give the linotype a crack or two and knock some sense into it. Then it would begin to work properly again and another issue of *The Militant* would come out.

Later on, we had amateur printers. About half of the New York branch used to work in the print shop at one time or another—painters, bricklayers, garment workers, bookkeepers—all of them served a term as amateur typesetters. With a very inefficient and over-staffed shop we ground out certain results through unpaid labor. That was the whole secret of the Trotskyist printing plant. It wasn't efficient from any other standpoint, but it was kept going by the secret that all slave masters since Pharaoh have known: If you have slaves you don't need much money. We didn't have slaves but we did have ardent and devoted comrades who worked night and day for next to nothing on the mechanical as well as the editorial side of the paper. We were short of funds. All bills were always over-

due, with the creditors pressing for immediate payment. No sooner would the paper bill be met than we had to pay rent on the building under threat of eviction. The gas bill then had to be paid in a hurry because without the gas the linotype wouldn't work. The electric bill had to be paid because the shop could not operate without power and light. All the bills had to be paid whether we had the money or not. The most we could ever hope to do was to cover the rent, the paper cost, installment payments and repairs on the linotype and the gas and light bills. There was seldom anything left over for the "hired help"—not only for the comrades who worked in the shop, but also those in the office, the leaders of our movement.

Great sacrifices were made by the rank and file of our comrades all the time, but they were never greater than the sacrifices made by the leaders. That is why the leaders of the movement always had strong moral authority. The leaders of our party were always in a position to demand sacrifices of the rank and file—because they set the the example and everybody knew it.

Somehow or other the paper came out. Pamphlets were printed one after another. Different groups of comrades would each sponsor a new pamphlet by Trotsky, putting up the money to pay for the paper. In that antiquated print shop of ours a whole book was printed on the problems of the Chinese revolution. Every comrade who wants to know the problems of the Orient has to read the book which was published under those adverse conditions—at 84 East 10 Street, New York City.

And in spite of everything—I have cited many of the negative sides and difficulties—in spite of everything, we gained a few inches. We instructed the movement in the great principles of Bolshevism on a plane never known in this country before. We educated a cadre that is destined to play a great role in the American labor movement. We sifted out some of the misfits and recruited some good people one by one; we gained a member here and there; we began to establish new contacts.

We tried to hold public meetings. It was very difficult because in those days nobody wanted to listen to us. I remember the grand efforts we made one time to mobilize the whole organization to distribute leaflets, to have a mass meeting in this very room. We got 59 people, including our own members, and the whole organization was uplifted with enthusiasm. We went around saying to each other: "We had 59 people present at the lecture the other night. We are beginning to grow."

We received help from outside New York. From Minneapolis, for example. Our comrades who later gained great fame as labor leaders weren't always famous labor leaders. In those days they were coal heavers, working ten and twelve hours a day in the coal yards, heaving coal, the hardest kind of physical labor. Out of their wages they used to dig up as high as five

or ten dollars a week and shoot it in to New York to make sure *The Militant* came out. Many times we had no money for the paper. We would send a wire to Minneapolis and get back a telegraphic money order for \$25 or something like that. Comrades in Chicago and other places did the same things. It was by a combination of all these efforts and all those sacrifices throughout the country that we survived and kept the paper going.

There was an occasional windfall. Once or twice a sympathizer would give us \$25. Those were real holidays in our office. We had a "revolving rent fund" which was the last resource of our desperate financial finagling. A comrade with rent to pay, say \$30 or \$40 due on the fifteenth of the month, would lend it to us on the tenth to pay some pressing bill or other. Then in five days we would get another comrade to lend his rent money to enable us to pay the other comrade back in time to satisfy his landlord. The second comrade would then stall off his landlord while we swung another deal, borrowed somebody else's rent to repay him. That went on all the time. It gave us some floating capital to cut the corner.

Those were cruel and heavy times. We survived them because we had faith in our program and because we had the help of Comrade Trotsky. Comrade Trotsky began his great work in exile for the third time. His writings and his correspondence inspired us and opened up for us a window on a whole new world of theory and political understanding. This gave us the strength to persevere and to survive, to hold the organization together and to be ready when our opportunity came.

In my next lecture I will show you that we were ready when the opportunity did come. When the first crack in this wall of isolation and stagnation appeared, we were able to leap through it, out of our sectarian circle. We began to play a role in the political and labor movement. The condition for that was to keep our program clear and our courage strong in those days when capitulations were taking place in Russia and discouragement was overcoming the workers everywhere. One defeat after another descended upon the heads of the vanguard of the vanguard. Many began to question. What to do? Is it possible to do anything? Isn't it better to let things slide a little? Trotsky wrote an article, "Tenacity! Tenacity! Tenacity!" That was his answer to the wave of discouragement that followed the capitulation of Radek and others. Hold on and fight it out—that is what the revolutionists must learn, no matter how small their numbers, no matter how isolated they may be. Hold on and fight it out until the break comes, then take advantage of every opportunity. We held out until 1933, and then we began to see daylight. Then the Trotskyists started to get on the political map of this country. In the next lecture I shall tell you about that.

British Women In Industry

By A. KEEN

Before the outbreak of World War II three-quarters of the female population of Great Britain were dependent or semi-dependent on male breadwinners. Women were engaged in the production of textiles and woolens, food, drink and tobacco; in the laundry and distributive trades, and as clerical workers. A small number of the transport workers were women, mainly employed as bus and tram conductresses. "Trades Barriers" debarred them from the metal, engineering and shipbuilding

industries. In these three heavy industries only men were traditionally employed.

An example of the men's feelings against the entry of female workers into their trade, can be gathered from a small strike which took place in Crewe on April 4, 1939. The management had put some women to work on small capstan lathes. Immediately, the men came out on strike, demanding that women be removed from this work which they insisted was only "trades-

man's" work. The strike lasted two weeks, and the management was compelled to agree to the men's demands.

Shortly after the outbreak of war hundreds and thousands of women were drawn into munitions, shell filling, etc. On May 22, 1940, the Executive Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union agreed to admit women "temporarily" into the engineering industry to replace men, and to do work previously done only by skilled craftsmen. Today women are employed in practically every trade in all branches of industry. In the transport industry women have taken over almost completely all the conductors jobs on buses and trams. The railways are employing an increasing number of women porters and clerks. There are women welders, riveters, painters and crandrivers; women are even being employed in blacksmiths and boilerships and as building laborers. The extent to which women have replaced men can be appreciated in the light of a report in the periodical *Economist* of June 12, 1943:

"In one firm making tank landing craft in Scotland, two-thirds of the labour force are women."

Wartime Changes

In the early days of the war the powerful craft union, the AEU refused to admit women into its ranks, with the result that they were organized into the General and Municipal Workers Union and the Transport and General Workers Union. It was not until several hundreds of thousands had been organised into these unions that the AEU (partly as a result of the militant pressure from the rank and file members) agreed to accept women into their union. This decision was made in January, 1943 and by June of the same year the AEU had recruited no fewer than 64,000 women members. This was a big step forward; the pace at which women moved into this union, is an indication of the degree of class consciousness which is being shown by the women workers in their struggle for better conditions.

During World War I, the membership of women in trade unions rose from 437,000 in 1914 to 1,342,000 in 1920 the peak year in the history of British trade unionism. During the present war two women are being employed for every one during the last war, and the trade unions have grown proportionately. The following table compiled from statistics published by the Ministry of Labor, gives some idea of the tremendous impulse given to the membership of the trades unions during World War II.

Year	Men Organized in thousands	Percentage Increase over previous year	Women organized in thousands	Percentage Increase over previous year
1937	4,949		895	
1938	5,128	3.6	926	3.4
1939	5,258	2.5	976	5.4
1940	5,460	3.8	1,082	10.9
1941	5,718	4.7	1,372	26.8
1942*	6,010	5.2	1,840	33.9

*Estimated

Although the membership of the unions has increased to such a tremendous degree, the disparity between the wages of men and women continues. Always the most exploited section of the working class, women continue to be more viciously exploited during war. Women textile workers' average earnings in January 1942 was 43/3.

The British capitalists boast that the output per head in Britain is the highest in the world, higher even than America, where the proportion of men to women in industry far exceeds

that in Britain today, but the wages paid to women workers as compared with men is still maintained at the pre-war levels when men's wages were double those of women. The following table gives a picture of the degree of exploitation of the women workers in Britain:

Industries	Average Earnings			
	20th July, 1940		Jan. 1942	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Metal, engineering and shipbuilding	100/3	43/11	118/4	53/3
Clothing	72/10	36/5	86/5	41/9
Food, drink, tobacco	76/8	35/10	88/6	41/8
Paper, printing, etc.	83/10	35/4	101/2	42/-
Chemical, paint, oil	86/9	35/4	88/9	40/1
Government industrial establishments			115/8	53/10
Average			103/5	48/-

When in May 1940, the AEU agreed to admit women into the engineering industry, the agreement included the rates at which women workers were to be employed.

"At the end of 20 weeks and for a further period of 12 weeks the women shall be paid at a basic rate equal to 75 percent of the basic rate of the men replaced, and a national bonus equal to 75 percent of a national bonus appropriate to the men replaced; thereafter (1) In respect of women who are unable to carry out their work without additional supervision or assistance the rate and bonus shall be negotiable and arranged according to the nature of the work and the ability displayed. (2) Women who carry out the work without additional supervision shall receive the basic rate and national bonus appropriate to the men they replace."

AEU Agreement

But the bosses interpret this agreement to suit their interests. In one Tyneside factory, the management was making a practice of removing a man from a machine and putting on a boy. After a few weeks the boy was removed and a woman put on the machine. The employer then contended that the woman had not replaced a man, but only a boy, and therefore she did not qualify for the man's rate. Another familiar way is for the employer to remove a woman to another machine after she has completed the thirty-two weeks qualifying period and make her requalify. The result of these practices is that women's wages have not risen to the 75 per cent minimum guaranteed in the agreement. Official government statistics prove that the average earnings of women are less than half the average earnings of men.

When intimidation and maneuvering to avoid the application of the 75 per cent clause have failed, when the union bureaucrats can no longer sabotage the women workers' struggles, the power to transfer labour granted under the Essential Works Order to Government appointed National Service Officers, is used to smash down organization, militancy and established standards. Working in close harmony with the NSO's the employers arrange transfers to suit their interests, by transferring women to factories where rates are lowest.

Unmarried women are classed as "mobile" and are sent by the government far from their homes to live in cold and cheerless hostels, or to boarding houses with inadequate food and bedding. Not a single case amongst hundreds of girls questioned revealed a transfer to a better paid job; usually they are paid at the lowest rate of 47/- per week, and bonus "if" they can make it.

This freezing of women's wages at starvation levels is fast increasing dissatisfaction in all spheres of industry. Thou-

sands of women fresh to organization and factory life are beginning to realize the harsh inequalities that exist for them. They are fast finding out the treacherous role of their union leadership, and are demanding that the union should fight for the implementation of the agreements. Strikes which are the workers' only way of forcing the hand of the boss are of course illegal. In their place the workers are offered endless and interminable arbitration talks.

Precisely because women are coming in fresh to industrial life they enter the trades unions in an entirely different manner to the men. When they go into the unions they have tremendous faith in them as fighting organs and are prepared to put a large amount of work into building and strengthening them. When, however, as so often happens, their militancy and enthusiasm is dampened by the failure of their shop stewards to carry a struggle for them, they identify the rotten reformist and Stalinist leadership with the unions themselves, and turn away from the unions in disgust. They can quickly be won back into union activity under the guidance of a militant leadership, as is evidenced by the influx of 64,000 women into the AEU. Here we see expressed the keen desire of women to get into a fighting union. Because of this constant changing from one union to another in the hopes of finding a good one, the trade union bureaucracy has found it necessary to introduce rules forbidding a woman to enter a new union until she has given 13 weeks notice of her intention to change.

Past experience has taught the women workers valuable lessons. Today, they are electing militant stewards. The old reformist and Communist Party stewards who were elected only because women lacked experience in union affairs, are being removed, and fresh militants, for the most part women, are being elected. Unlike their male predecessors these women stewards are more susceptible to pressure from the workers they represent. Failure of a woman steward to conduct a militant struggle invariably leaves her open to outspoken criticism.

A new period of struggle lies ahead in which women's demands will be fought for by a young and vigorous leadership.

This new period was ushered in by a recent strike of 25,000 workers in an aircraft factory in Scotland to demand the implementing of the Relaxation Agreement. 85 percent of the girls were graded in the lower section doing work which was specified as specially women's work, and thus forced to accept some of the lowest wages throughout the country. Their struggle was sabotaged both by the union leadership and by the majority of their shop stewards who were CP members, and, after 10 days the workers were forced to return to work, their demands unsatisfied. The reactionary stewards have exposed their true role, and there is every reason to look forward to a resurgence of the women workers' struggle under a new militant leadership, a nucleus of which exists in the Clyde Workers' Committee.

That women are reacting to rotten conditions and are becoming impatient of all this talk about equality, when in reality they are so grossly underpaid, and have to suffer such rotten conditions was clearly demonstrated at the Womens' AEU Conference, held during May 1943, which marks a milestone in their progress. The women demanded amongst other things: more nurseries, time off for shopping, better canteens, improved transport and billeting arrangements. The most discussed question of course was wages. Resolutions calling for "the rate for the job" and "equal pay for equal work" were made. Strong denials were made to the stories circulated by the capitalists and their stooges, that women munition workers are making fabulous wages. The Relaxation Agreement came under discussion, and delegates from all over the country gave evidence of the widespread evasion of the clauses dealing with equal pay for equal work.

Freed once and for all from the narrow circle of the home and all its drudgeries, women workers are destined to play a leading role in the struggles that lie ahead; already women have participated with men in the preliminary clashes; already they have found true comradeship in the class solidarity that exists among workers throughout the factories and the shipyards. Tomorrow they will march side by side with other workers to establish a Workers Government in Britain.

Japan Faces the Abyss

II. Conditions in Large-Scale Industry and Agriculture

By LI FU-JEN

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second in the series of articles analyzing Japan's social and economic life. The first article, *The Distinguishing Features of Japan's Economic Life* appeared in the February issue of *Fourth International*. The author of this thorough study spent many years in the Far East and visited Japan several times, the last occasion being in 1940. The third article in this important series will appear in the April issue of *Fourth International*.

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We have seen how small industry and handicraft production outweigh modern, large-scale industry as regards employment, and how disproportionate is the amount of capital invested in merchandising as compared with industry. Now we come to a consideration of the character of Japan's modern, large-scale industry and the place heavy industry occupies therein.

Cotton textiles represent Japan's leading industry both in volume of production and labor force employed—or they did at

any rate up to the time of Pearl Harbor. Japan achieved supremacy in the world's textile markets about ten years ago, ousting Britain from a position which that country had held for a century and a half. Second to cotton textiles comes rayon, of which Japan became the world's second producer. In the latter industry, almost the entire production comes from large factories. Not so in the case of cotton textiles. In cotton spinning there is a high degree of capital concentration and centralization. The whole production comes from modern factories owned by a few big firms united in an effective cartel: The Japan Cotton Spinners' Association. In weaving, however, the very small factory of 10 looms or less still predominates. There are also many medium-sized factories individually owned. Only about half of the woven cotton products—including even those for export—are made by the big companies which combine spinning and weaving operations. Their cartel controls only 45 per cent of the wide power looms (used for making export fabrics) and only 28 per cent if all power looms are included.

Cloth for *kimonos*, the traditional Japanese costume still widely in use, is woven only 12 to 14 inches wide on very narrow looms.

According to figures of the Japanese Department of Commerce and Industry in 1928, some 93 per cent of the cotton weaving factories actually had less than 10 looms, nor has this situation changed appreciably since. If one takes silk and cotton weaving together, an even more amazing situation is revealed, for half the operatives are employed in establishments having fewer than five workers, i.e., non-factory industry. These figures all refer to power looms. There are in addition still a considerable number of handlooms, not only in silk but also in cotton weaving.

This, then, is the position of Japan's foremost industry. This industry is really an abnormal growth which has created a lack of balance in the national economy, causing it to be both lopsided and top-heavy. It developed to huge proportions while other industries remained atrophied. The rapid growth of textiles and, later, the emergence of industries producing a mass of consumption goods such as rubber tires and shoes, electric bulbs, cutlery, hardware, soap, bicycles, pencils, fountain pens and clocks, has never been balanced by any corresponding growth of heavy industry. Moreover, such heavy industry as exists is almost wholly designed for the production of armaments (including shipbuilding) and has survived only with the aid of subsidies, exemption from taxation and high tariff protection. The manufacture of machinery and machine-tools, particularly primary machines for the making of machinery, is very poorly developed. How disproportionate is the industrial structure can best be seen from a few comparative figures.

Japan's Light Industry

Bearing in mind all the time that only 18 per cent of the occupied population is supported by industry, and that the total number of factory workers is only 7 per cent of the occupied population, we shall see from the following table, compiled from figures of Japan's Department of Commerce and Industry, what proportion of this 7 per cent are engaged in heavy industry:

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL FACTORY WORKERS EMPLOYED IN VARIOUS BRANCHES OF INDUSTRY IN 1933

Textiles	47.8
Metal industry	6.6
Manufacture of machines, tools, implements, etc.	13.1
Chemicals	8.6
Ceramics	3.8
Foodstuffs	7.5
Timber & wood manufactures	3.5
Printing & bookbinding	2.8
Gas and electricity	0.4
Miscellaneous	5.9

The preponderance of light industry is all too obvious from these ten-year-old figures. There may have been some change in the proportions since then, but at least until the end of 1940 there was no evidence of a tendency toward any substantial, much less decisive, change such as could have altered the structure of Japanese economy. Textiles, as we see, employ nearly half of the country's factory workers as compared with less than one-fifth in metallurgy and engineering. If the textile and food industries are taken together, they account for 55 per cent as against only 28 per cent for metallurgy, engineering and chemicals combined. Yet the latter three, in a highly industrialized country, would greatly outweigh the former. In England before the present war, there were 2.7 million persons employed in the heavy industry trio as against 1.3 millions in textiles.

In the United States the preponderance of heavy industry is even greater.

Japan's heavy industry consists mainly of plants for armament production and shipbuilding. Take these away and there is little left, except the industries producing electrical goods, locomotives and rolling stock. In the manufacture of metal-working machines, Japan was unable, as late as 1938, to supply even 50 per cent of her requirements. The production of machine-tools, requiring both skill and a quality of steel hardly made in Japan and having to be imported, had progressed very little. The total number of workers engaged in building engines barely rose above 10,000 even in pre-Pearl Harbor days, although engine construction is one of the most important branches of machine-building in Japan.

Engineering Plants

It is true, of course, that light industry, textiles in particular, employs a proportionately larger number of workers than metallurgy or engineering and this is further accentuated in Japan by the existence of so many small factories with little machinery. This fact, however, does not banish the discrepancy in the importance of light and heavy industry in Japan. For if we examine figures of the total annual value of the output of Japan's various industries, we find textiles and other light industries swamping the rest—this despite the additional fact that the prices of Japanese iron and steel and machinery are abnormally high monopoly prices.

In a land where Lilliputian-scale industry occupies so large a place in the national economy, it is natural that it should play a role even in engineering. This fact constitutes a particularly grave weakness, inasmuch as Japan's small workshops possess no high precision tools or machinery, which are too costly for their very meager capital resources. This defect was the subject of comment by Lt.-Gen. Katsura Hayashi, one of Japan's top-flight militarists, who, in cooperation with the Chief of Supplies of the War Industry, wrote a pamphlet entitled *How Will Our Industries Operate in the Event of War?* The Tokyo militarists were long aware of, and perturbed by, the serious weakness in Japan's military position as represented by her puny and partly archaic heavy industry, but were totally incapable of finding a remedy, since fundamental social and economic problems are involved.

Organizationally the small engineering workshops have been linked up with the big enterprises which farm out to them part of their contracts for machine construction. Parts are fabricated in the small plants and completed or assembled in the big factory. The newer branches of engineering—aircraft and automobiles—which have grown up out of the shipbuilding industry and the ordnance and tank departments of the arsenals, are obliged to have a considerable number of their parts manufactured in small enterprises. This system, whilst calculated to utilize to the utmost the whole productive capacity of the country, is a dangerous and wasteful one when it comes to machines or armaments in which standardization and exactitude according to specification are of primary importance, and which cannot be obtained without precision instruments and machinery, almost totally lacking in the smallest factories of Japan.

Back in 1933 a Japanese newspaper, the *Nichiro Tausen*, revealed that a firm which obtains an army or navy contract for airplanes actually has to secure the cooperation of about 450 small "factories." Nor is this all, for each of these tiny enterprises in turn subdivides its work among a few other workshops or even households. In fact, the organization of this essential war industry resembles that of bicycle manufacture. Produc-

tion of bicycles, of which a huge number is used in Japan because of the lack of good roads and mechanical road transport, is regarded mainly as artisan's work suitable for home and small workshop industry. There are, or were, some 770 bicycle "factories," of which 367 employed fewer than five workers. These numerous small establishments make bicycle parts and only the assembly takes place in fairly large plants. The 770 factories occupied the role of domestic production in certain other industries as well, being directed and financed by the big enterprises which give out the material and collect the finished parts. This is the system which, at least until fairly recently, was used in Japan's airplane industry, and there can be little doubt that it has accounted in large part for the comparative inefficiency of the Japanese air force and for the low level of civilian flying in Japan, because planes made under such conditions can scarcely be very reliable.

Capital Goods Production

In the production of capital goods, Japan is far behind both her imperialist allies and rivals. Even in shipping, her foremost branch of heavy industry, the prewar tonnage launched was only 11 per cent of Britain's, and the British shipbuilding industry was working at the time far below its capacity. In machinery production as a whole, Japan appears as a veritable pigmy compared with either England or the United States.

In 1929, with the *yen* at par, the Japanese machinery and engineering industry produced goods to a gross value of £68,000,000. The corresponding figure for England was £472,000,000. True, Japan greatly increased her production after the invasion of Manchuria in response to military demands. In this she was assisted by the depreciation of the *yen*, the boom in her export industries, and the newly begun exploitation of Manchuria. Nevertheless, the figure reached in 1934 was only one billion *yen*, which, although it represented a 47 per cent increase on 1929 in *yen* values, was largely a reflection of inflated prices. That there was some real increase (and that there has been more since) is not to be doubted, but Japan was then still far from approaching independence in machinery production, since imports also rose. Japan was obliged to export machinery to Manchuria and, being unable to make good the deficiency by correspondingly increasing her own production, was obliged to increase her imports. If we add to machinery imports Japan's large iron and steel imports—which amounted to 145,000,000 *yen* in 1934—it is clear that she had no surplus of capital goods to develop her newly conquered territory. Indeed, far from being able to export capital goods, she was obliged to import them both for herself and her colonies.

The undeveloped state of heavy machinery production (engineering equipment and equipment for the armament industries, steam turbines and mining machinery) was felt by the Japanese ruling class as one of its greatest weaknesses, since it is precisely such enterprises which are needed for the rapid transition to production of war materials on a large scale. The largest items on Japan's import list before the present war were internal combustion engines, metal working machinery, parts of automobiles and firearms. Japan does not even make enough sewing machines to meet her requirements and has had to import a large part of her spinning machinery, although she produces her own looms. The largest of the spinning and weaving machinery makers in Japan could only turn out about 60,000 spindles a year.

Automobiles and trucks in large numbers are one of the attributes of a well rounded economy. Before the present war,

both Ford and General Motors had large assembly plants in Japan and the great majority of the cars and trucks sold were their products. Native automobile production was practically nonexistent prior to 1933. When it did belatedly appear on the scene, it was only in response to War Office orders—and subsidies. But there were only a few firms and since they could not supply anything but a small quantity—and that of poor quality—the bulk of the army orders had still to be handed over to Ford and General Motors. In 1933, a total of 17,790 cars was sold in Japan, of which only 10 per cent were made in the country. The bulk of the remainder came from the foreign assembly plants. And this despite the fact that since 1928 subsidies had been given for the manufacture of automobiles, and even to the owners of cars fit for military use, and in spite of a 42 per cent duty on imported cars, a 35 per cent duty on imported engines, and an even higher duty on completed cars.

There was in 1936 only one car per 800 persons in Japan, as compared with one per 22.4 persons in England and 4.79 in the United States. Moreover, horse-drawn transportation is almost nonexistent and the loads which are not carried by automobile or railway—or by handcart, wheelbarrow or other primitive vehicles—are carried by human beings. The absence of a sizable automobile traffic goes hand in hand with poor roads or an absence of roads, which in turn reflects the general economic backwardness of the country and the poverty of the mass of its citizenry.

Raw Material Deficiencies

Japanese big business, alive to its own interests—which lie in profit making—resisted government wheedling to induce investment in automobile manufacture. The hard-headed Mitsui and Mitsubishi realized that a profitable automobile industry must be a mass production industry. Mass production presupposes mass consumption, perhaps even an export market. And there must be a network of suitable roads. But how many in poverty-stricken Japan could ever hope to possess an automobile? Who among the myriads of small producers, unable even to afford to install power machinery in their factories, could think of buying a truck with which to deliver their products? And where are the roads to come from if more than 80 per cent of the budget goes to the military and there are not even sufficient funds for education or any kind of social services? In the miserable backwardness of the Japanese automobile industry and of mechanical road transport, we can discern the immediate causes of the country's general economic backwardness. Large-scale capitalist industry on modern lines cannot develop in all branches of production because of the extreme narrowness of the internal market, which grows narrower from year to year; and because of lack of capital. It has remained confined to the production of those consumers goods which can be exported and which require comparatively little capital to initiate.

The weaknesses in Japan's industrial economy which we have discussed above do not by any means exhaust the question. Added to and in part underlying the country's productive weaknesses are tremendous deficiencies of industrial raw materials. No other capitalist power except Italy is so poor as Japan in the primary sources of wealth: agriculture (including livestock and timber) and mining. She has little iron, coal or oil, and no nickel or many of the other alloys used in steel manufacture. In the sphere of non-ferrous metals, indispensable for a modern war industry, Japan is as deficient as in coal and iron. She has fair supplies only of copper, and even in this she was

never completely self-sufficient, having to import about 20 per cent of her requirements. Her production of lead, zinc, tin, manganese and tungsten ranges from 10 to 50 per cent of her needs. With regard to nickel, antimony and bauxite (the latter being the raw material for aluminum) she is entirely dependent upon imports.

In her main industry—cotton textiles—she is totally lacking in raw material, all her cotton having to be imported. She imported most of the wood pulp from which rayon is produced, the bulk of this raw material coming from Canada and Scandinavia. Nearly all the wool for her woolen industry came from Australia. Of the 1,000,000 tons of salt used annually for industrial purposes, Japan has been importing 65 per cent. Nearly all her wheat came from Australia.

Japan has practically no home supplies of oil. Her oil refining industry, working on imported crude, had reached a point of development five years ago where it was able to supply 36 per cent of the whole consumption of petroleum products for fuel. But she was producing only 20 per cent of her requirements of lubricating oil, the most important derivative of petroleum for industrial purposes. To some extent, Japan has made up for her lack of coal and oil by the use of hydro-electric power. But it was evident several years ago that this development of water-power resources had about reached its limits and was beginning to endanger the adequate irrigation of the rice fields. Although Japan is well advanced in the matter of hydro-electric power, this does not compensate for lack of coal and oil. Ships cannot be run on such power, nor automobiles nor planes.

Iron and Steel

The combined iron ore production of Japan, Manchuria and Korea amounts to only 14 per cent of Britain's production, which in turn is far below that of the United States. Japan's home deposits are scattered in various parts of the country in small quantities and cost of transportation to centers of production adds substantially to pig iron cost. Manchurian ores are mostly low grade, with an extraction content of only 35 per cent—so low grade, in fact, that millions of tons of similar ore in the Lake Superior region of the United States are not even counted in reserves because the preliminary extraction process would be too costly. Extraction of the Manchurian ores has been made possible only by government subvention. Japan's poverty in iron ore is further illustrated by the fact that in 1934 her consumption amounted to only 3.1 million tons as compared to the 1929 figures of 17.3 for Britain and 21.3 each for Belgium and Luxembourg. Pig-iron production in Japan five years ago amounted to only 3.8 per cent of the world's total, or 5 per cent if the Japanese Empire is taken to include Manchuria. This compares with 22.2 per cent for the USA and 15.5 per cent for the Soviet Union (1932 figures) at a time when American production had fallen way down due to the economic crisis. The extreme smallness of Japan's pig iron production is further shown in the fact that her per capita consumption was only 30 lbs. as compared with 700 lbs. in the USA.

By 1937, Japan claimed to have achieved 89 per cent self-sufficiency in steel, having doubled her output since 1929. Yet in 1934 her total steel output represented only 4.2 per cent of the world total. In 1935, she produced 4.46 million long tons, which was less than half of Britain's 9.84 million long tons in the same year. How far Japan is behind the USA is illustrated by the fact that in the peak prewar year of 1929 American steel output reached 56.43 million long tons. And Japan,

to achieve even a small fraction of that figure, was obliged to import large quantities of both pig iron and scrap.

In coal it is essentially the same story, although here Japan compares much better than in iron with other leading countries. Six years ago, Japan Proper produced annually at the rate of 36 million metric tons of coal, compared with Britain's 262, Germany's 163, France's 53, Poland's 46, USA's 552. Manchuria produced 9 million tons of which something less than half was exported. Japan has claimed a 91 per cent self-sufficiency in coal (which simply means that consumption has been trimmed to the small production) but is extremely poor in coking coal for iron and steel production. Her total per capita consumption is very low and the cost of her coal very high. Practically all the country's coal is used for industrial purposes, since heating of homes by coal fires or stoves or central heating is practically unknown. Whereas England, with a population of 44 millions, consumes about 40 million tons of coal yearly for domestic heating and cooking, Japan with a population of 70 millions consumes only 5½ million tons for non-industrial purposes.

High Productive Costs

High costs of production are another item in the catalogue of Japan's economic weaknesses. The cost of raw material per ton of pig iron produced in Japan amounts to the equivalent of \$18.00 as compared with \$11.00 in Manchuria, \$14.50 in the USA; \$14.00 in Belgium; \$11.70 in Britain; \$13.70 in Germany; \$12.40 in France (prewar figures). Low productivity, which pervades nearly all the branches of Japanese economy, is an important element in cost. As an example may be cited the fact that in Japan, despite the longer working day, coal production per shift is only 69 per cent of England's. In 1929, the yearly output per person employed in bituminous coal mining in the USA was 949.7 tons as compared with Japan's 106 in that year and 203 in 1933.

Although an iron and steel industry can be built up on imported ores provided good coking coal is available, when a country has neither one nor the other the cost of production becomes prohibitive and production can be carried on only with the aid of government subvention, which is the case in Japan. The high cost of coal, more than the lack of iron ore, is the immediate cause of the backwardness of Japan's iron and steel industry and the poor development of her engineering. It is also one of the immediate causes of the general retardedness of Japan's industrialization as a whole, since it makes the use of power very expensive. But lack of iron ore is nevertheless a factor. Japan is obliged to import iron ore, but to keep the home producers in business and assured of a profit, the government is also obliged to impose a quite heavy duty on imported pig iron (1.66 yen per ton) in addition to exempting the home producers from taxation. This all adds to cost and excessively costly pig iron makes for excessively costly machinery beyond the means of the small factory owner. Handicraft production is consequently kept alive.

High costs of production, due to the wasteful and inefficient use of labor and the high initial cost of raw material, always made it difficult for Japan to compete on the world market. Yet she was obliged to compete if her industries were to secure the imported raw materials upon which they depend. A solution of sorts was found to this problem in the time-honored capitalist practice of driving down the living standards of the masses. The peasants were so squeezed by taxation and the exactions of their landlord-capitalist tormentors that they succumbed to official blandishments which induced

them to take up sericulture as a side-line. This side-line, a great added work burden on the peasant households (feeding silkworms is extremely laborious), furnished a large silk crop which was exported to America in exchange for raw cotton to feed Japan's textile mills. And then the textile workers were driven and sweated at pitifully low wages so that Japan might flood the markets of the East with low priced cotton goods, thus providing her with an export balance with which to import oil, scrap iron, pig iron, machinery and other basic needs. So it was, also, with woolens, artificial silk, electric bulbs, rubber footwear, soap, beer, buttons and jewelry, glassware and pottery, and cheap bicycles which found a similar outlet.

One writer has described this Japanese export trade as a "hunger trade," a desperate effort to make ends meet and keep afloat the almost bankrupt national economy. Japan exported at "bargain sale" prices the products of the toil of her fearfully exploited workers. It was done at the cost of currency inflation, reduced wages, a shrunken home market and acute agrarian distress. In 1934, for example, while her own people could scarcely find the wherewithal to purchase the cheapest cotton garments, Japan exported 2,577 million square yards of cotton cloth against Britain's 1,993 million square yards. But Japan received only £28.7 millions for her goods, while Britain, for the considerably smaller quantity, received £39.8 millions. The difference was directly reflected in the tightened domestic economy of the bulk of the Japanese people.

Conditions in Agriculture

The agrarian setting of the atomized, lopsided and top-heavy Japanese industrial structure completes the picture of an economically backward country. This setting represents the most important factor explaining the immediate causes of her generally disproportionate development, her grave structural economic weakness—and, last but by no means least, her imperialist policies. In the case of industry, as we have seen, pre-capitalist survivals, though tremendous in their scope, are but the background to a modern, fairly large-scale industry. But in agriculture, feudal survivals are in the foreground of the picture. Such is their specific weight that they operate to prevent any modernization of farming and render impossible the further industrial development of the country, since they are a barrier to the accumulation of capital and at the same time keep the home market within a strait jacket.

Japan's unsolved agrarian problem poisons her national life as would a canker and drives her ruling class to hazardous military adventures in a vain effort to escape the nemesis which awaits them at home. The terrible position of Japan's peasantry is at one and the same time the source of Japan's marvelous textile industries—which owe their success above all to an abundance of cheap female labor from the villages—and of the stunted growth of her heavy industry and the survival on a great scale of handicraft production. The agrarian problem is at the root of both the fearfully low wages paid in industry and the high cost of food. It explains why Japan is at the bottom of the scale as regards the amount of non-human power expended in production and it accounts for the low total value of her national wealth and income.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater anachronism: Here is a leading capitalist power, with a mighty army and navy and a not inconsiderable air force, aspiring to dominate at least all of eastern Asia, whose peasants live and till the soil in practically the same way and with the same primitive implements as their ancestors centuries ago, and who are ex-

ploited and oppressed by a host of landowners and usurers to the same or even greater extent and in much the same manner as before the "revolution" of 1868 which was supposed to have freed them. For the most part, Japan's peasants still have to surrender half or more of the harvests from their tiny farms as rent in kind to a landowner. They are still for the most part unable to eat the rice they bring forth from the land by hard, distasteful and unremitting toil, but even in the best of times must subsist on barley, millet, sweet potatoes and some imported rice of inferior quality. They are forced to sell their daughters into what is practically slavery in the brothels of the towns, or to indenture them as laborers in factories, and otherwise to supplement their insufficient incomes from agriculture by silk cultivation or some other domestic industry in which their women and children work unlimited hours undisturbed by any factory legislation.

Feudal Vestiges

Due to the mountainous nature of the country, only 18.9 per cent of Japan's total area is arable land, and only 15.5 per cent is actually cultivated. On her 5.9 million hectares* of cultivated land live 5.6 million peasant households. This is a little less than half of the total number of households in Japan and somewhat more than half of the total population of the country, since the average size of the farm family is larger than that of the urban family. Although the percentage of households engaged in agriculture has gradually diminished from year to year, the absolute rural population figure has consistently risen at the rate of tens of thousands each year, so that the land is required to support an ever greater number of human beings. This means that industrial development has not at any period kept pace with the increase in population and pressure upon the land has accordingly grown. The greater part of the cultivable land in Japan's main islands is already intensively cultivated, but there are considerable areas which could be brought into cultivation if capital were available. But as in all else pertaining to Japanese agriculture, capital never is available.

The total of 5,642,509 families (1930 figures) cultivating the land is divided as follows:

	PROPRIETORS	TENANTS	PART TENANTS AND PART PROPRIETORS
Total	1,754,537	1,498,596	2,389,376
Percentage of total	30.6	26.7	42.7

Considering the amount of cultivated land, it can readily be seen that most of the Japanese peasants must cultivate farms so small that in America and most parts of Europe they would be regarded as nothing more than gardens. The total cultivated area would, if divided equally, give less than 2-1/2 acres per family. Unequally divided as it is, 34.5 per cent work an area of 1-1/5 acres, another 34.3 per cent an area between 1-1/5 and 2-1/2 acres, and 22 per cent an area of just under 5 acres. Only 1.4 per cent have more than 12-1/2 acres. This means that 69 per cent work plots of 2-1/2 acres or less. If we exclude tenants and consider only land owned, the proportion of tiny holdings is even higher, namely, 49.7 per cent with less than 1-1/5 acres and another 25 per cent with between 1-1/2 and 2-1/2 acres.

Small as these plots are, they could support their cultivators more or less adequately if only the cultivators could retain possession of the crops they produce, or if they could

* Hectare equals 2.471 acres.

market them for their own profit. This would require them to be free of the great burdens of rent, taxation and usurious interest and to be able to buy fertilizers at less than the prevailing monopoly prices. As the foregoing table indicates, close to 70 per cent of the farm households are tenants for all or part of the land they cultivate, and they pay 50 to 60 per cent of their harvests to the landlords. Of the remainder of their harvests, about half goes for the purchase of fertilizers. In the case of the "pure" peasant proprietors, some 30 per cent of the total peasant households, taxation, monopoly prices for fertilizers and other industrial goods, and the necessity of borrowing at usurious rates in poor crop years, long ago reduced them to such a state of indebtedness that their condition is little better than that of the tenants.

Landlord Parasitism

What is the extent of "pure" landlord parasitism in Japan? Official Japanese statistics obscure the distinction between landowner and peasant proprietor, but it is possible nevertheless to calculate the number of landowners who rent out their land. In 1932 there were 975,838 landowners. The peculiar nature of Japanese farming leads the richer peasants who own more land than they themselves can cultivate to rent it out to a tenant or several tenants, rather than to cultivate it with hired labor. And it leads landowners who do not farm at all to rent out their lands to a multitude of tenants instead of to one or two large farmers as in Western Europe. With some rare exceptions, no Japanese landowners have undertaken large-scale farming with machinery, or even with animals harnessed to plows. The landowner has a surer and easier profit by renting out his land in small parcels and receiving half or more of the produce as rent. He invests no capital and runs no risks. Such landlords are wholly parasitical and there are nearly a million of them in Japan.

If at the Meiji Restoration of 1868 the peasants had really been freed from their feudal burdens and left to develop as free peasant proprietors; even had fixed cash rents been substituted for rents in kind, the consequent rise in prices would gradually have eliminated the old type of purely parasitic landowner and the peasants would have had more chance of controlling the rice market. At the same time, there would have been a gradual differentiation of wealth among the peasantry, some becoming richer and others losing their lands altogether and becoming laborers. Capital would have been accumulated in the hands of the more successful peasants, and large-scale, modern methods of cultivation would in time have been introduced. Japan today would not be a country where the real costs of production in agriculture are excessively high, and the output per man, as distinct from the output per acre, excessively low. Continuation of rent payments in kind, combined with heavy taxation by the state for an artificial fostering of urban industry and for armaments, has prevented a capitalist organization of agriculture and the introduction of modern technique. The possibility of capital accumulation in the hands of the peasantry, and so of the ownership of the land passing into the hands of richer farmers—which means out of the hands of both parasitic landowners and the poorer peasantry—has been precluded by feudal survivals.

How is one to reconcile the present-day position of the peasantry with their supposed liberation in the Restoration of 1868, which Trotsky described as a "bureaucratic attempt to buy off a revolution"? The new national state which emerged from the Meiji Restoration bought out the feudal aristocracy by giving them state bonds in exchange for their rice reve-

nues, but the peasants had already been subjected to a new and growing class of exacting masters which had grown up during the last period of feudalism, namely, the merchant-usurers, forerunners of the class of big capitalists.

Under the Tokugawa shogunate, last of the feudal regimes, the peasants did not usually give up half their harvest directly to the *Samurai* (warrior retainers of the nobility), but paid it as a tax to the *Daimyo* (corresponding to a count or baron in Europe), who in turn paid yearly stipends to the *Samurai* from the proceeds. Both the peasants, and the *Samurai* and the *Daimyo*, were in debt to the merchant class. Many of the peasants had mortgaged their lands to the merchants precisely in order to pay their taxes to the *Samurai* and *Daimyo*—who similarly were indebted to the merchants. Although under feudal law a peasant could not alienate his land, evasion of the law became so prevalent under the pressure of dire necessity that there occurred what amounted to actual sale, and by the early 19th century the merchant-usurers already owned a considerable amount of land in fact if not in juridical theory. The Restoration government recognized the fact of this alienation and many formerly secret tenures were subsequently proclaimed and possession recognized. Thus, when the peasants in 1871 were liberated from the payment of exactions to their feudal lords and made to pay a cash tax to the state instead, most of them, or a very large part of them, were already being exploited by new landlords or by usurers. Those who in actual fact became free, because they had not previously mortgaged their lands, were soon compelled to do so by the need for money with which to pay the new taxes. The exaction of heavy taxes in cash in a country of undeveloped transport and poor markets naturally very soon delivered these peasants into the clutches of trading-usurer capital and either converted them into tenants or burdened them with such high interest payments (20 per cent was common) that they became actually landless.

In a word, productive relationships in the land did not really change. New forms of exploitation were substituted for the old. There was no revolution, but merely a "bureaucratic attempt to buy off a revolution" which left the peasants as badly off as they were before. The old class of rural exploiters, the feudal nobility and their retainers, merged with the newer class of merchant-usurers, forerunners of big capital. Here we see that peculiar process by which two distinct eras and two distinct social classes became merged in a new era and in a new dominant class, the bourgeoisie, which in the Japan of today has implanted a system of capitalist relations while perpetuating all forms of feudal backwardness which could find any place at all in the national scheme of things.

The capitalist mode of production has never penetrated into Japan's agriculture. The number of big farm estates is small and even where ownership of land is concentrated, the land is almost always left subdivided into small lots among tenants. The big estates are found mainly in the Hokkaido, northernmost island of Japan, which was colonized after the Restoration and where there is some fairly large-scale modern farming carried on with hired labor and animal power. But even in the cold Hokkaido, where the type of agriculture called for is along American lines with large fields, machinery and some cattle and dairy farming, the failure to invest capital in agriculture and the transference of the old parasitic type of landholding from the main islands to this virgin soil, have prevented full utilization of the land and large stretches still lie waste.

The parasitic extraction of rent in kind, instead of capital investment in agrarian development, is at the root of Japan's agrarian problem. To understand why this form of parasitism

has survived and why, too, land continues to be cultivated in tiny plots by a multitude of households, it is necessary, apart from historical factors, to consider the nature of farming on irrigated land. The yield from such land, as compared to non-irrigated tracts which are subject to all the vagaries of weather, is fairly constant. There are good years and bad years, but the land always yields something and the fluctuations are not great. Accordingly, the landowner who receives rent in kind has an assured income, since the amount he receives per acre is fixed. Nor is it the case that the produce of the fields is divided between landlord and tenant in unvarying proportion. The landlord receives a fixed number of bushels per acre irrespective of the yield and the tenant suffers all the losses in a year of bad harvest. Moreover, since the terms of the tenant's lease can be varied at the landlord's will, he benefits without risk from every ounce of sweat and from every extra measure of fertilizer which the tenant puts into the soil. Furthermore, the Japanese landowner of today is also quite frequently a petty industrialist, a corporation shareholder or a money-lender, or a trader and speculator at the same time, so that the profit he makes from squeezing the peasants is in reality greater than the rents he receives. He may own a small silk-reeling establishment or weaving shed, or a *sake* brewing factory, or a rice mill. He may be the only buyer, or one of two or three buyers of produce in the village, and since the peasants are nearly all in debt to him, he often gets a grip, at a very low price, on that part of the peasants' crop not delivered to him as rent. He can then hold it to the end of the year when the government artificially raises prices by buying up crops. This, ironically enough, is done under the benevolent title of "relief to the farmers," but is always timed sufficiently long after the harvest for the actual cultivators to have already delivered it up, at the lower price, to landlord or usurer or trader in payment of interest on debts.

Technical backwardness goes hand in hand with this archaic system of economic relationships. Machinery could be applied to rice cultivation. Yet the peasants are to be seen breaking the sod with hoes or spades instead of plows, irrigating their fields with a treadwheel pump, winnowing the rice by hand. The failure to apply machinery, which means also the failure to establish large plantations, is a consequence of historical as well as purely economic circumstances, insofar as it is explained by the political power wielded since the Restoration by the landowners, and by the desire of the ruling class generally to preserve the peasantry as a great reservoir of manpower for war. At the same time, the diversion of so much of a relatively small national income for war purposes, ever since Japan's foundations as a modern state, has, by hindering industrialization, kept the peasants on the land; whilst the possibility of continually rendering the land more productive by sweating the peasants more removes any incentive to expropriate them and introduce capitalist farming methods.

Backward methods of cultivation, like backward industrial methods, mean high *real* costs of production, especially when this backwardness is combined with a high degree of parasitism. Secondly, the very large number of landlords means that a large part of the rice produced and delivered as rent is consumed by the landlords and not brought to market at all. This fact explains to a considerable extent the greater cheapness of rice grown in other countries with a similarly low level of technique and a much lower production per acre. Hence arises the paradox that Japan's imperialists, who have repeatedly complained that their country is overpopulated and cannot feed the people, impose a duty on foreign rice and have even dumped rice on markets abroad at one-third the Japanese market price.

The backwardness of Japan's farming is well-illustrated by the following statistical facts: There is only one motor for every 60 peasant families and the majority of these do not exceed five horsepower and are employed mainly in the manufacture of food products or in driving the water pumps owned by well-to-do peasants. There is only one rice-polishing machine for every 60 farmers and only one rice or barley hulling machine for every 120 farms. Of threshing machines and pumps there is but one each per hundred farms. For the majority of peasants, the use of chemical fertilizers is the only benefit they have derived from modern science, and since the advantage from the increased yield goes to the landowner, and the money to buy fertilizers has to come from some subsidiary work (sericulture or home industry), the labor of the peasantry has not been lightened nor their material condition improved. As a matter of fact, the very increase in the productivity of the land since feudal times has been due as much or more to the greater number of people working on it as to the use of chemical fertilizers. The high productivity per acre tends to hide the low productivity per man.

Lack of Capital

There is an erroneous impression that the Japanese are the world's masters in the matter of rice production, that the quantity they can produce from an acre of land is higher than anywhere else in the world, and that they have reached the limits of intensive scientific cultivation. Actually this is far from being the case. Although compared with the rest of Asia the Japanese yield per acre is very high, it has been surpassed in Spain and Italy. Japan's production is 31.0 quintals per acre as compared with Spain's 58.2 and Italy's 45.5 (pre-war figures). Moreover, there has for a number of years been a tendency in Japan for the yield of the land to decline rather than increase. Main factors in the decline are the decreasing sums which the peasant is able to spend for fertilizers, general neglect of irrigation and drainage works, and hydro-electric development which has made inroads into water supplies used in farming.

The decline of agriculture, which must support more than half of Japan's population, renders a fundamental change imperative. There is no doubt that all the level valley lands—which form the largest part of the country's rice fields—could be cultivated by tractors, or at least with horse-drawn plows, if they were nationally owned or even under the ownership of large landowners ready and able to invest the necessary capital. Such changes would enormously increase the yield per man and set free a large part of the population for other work. But the reactionary rulers of Japan, with a pretended concern for the welfare of the millions which does not square with their policies and deeds, declare that the mechanization of agriculture would deprive millions of their livelihood, that Japan is too overpopulated for any such change to be made, etc. This at once raises the question of Japan's stunted industrial development, for which these rulers are as responsible as they are for the miserable condition of agriculture.

Apart from this question, however, it should be noted that a large part of Japan's waste and forest lands could be utilized if capital were available for their development. Only 6,000,000 hectares of the 7,500,000 considered as arable are actually cultivated. And even as regards land already under cultivation, one-fifth is insufficiently irrigated and another fifth too swampy. This has been admitted by the Japanese Department of Agriculture, but they failed repeatedly to get the necessary budget allocations for the large expenditures necessary on irrigation and drainage works. As a matter of fact, the govern-

ment, with the greater part of the revenues earmarked for the armed services and for debt services, will not or cannot provide even the smaller sums needed for vital repairs and other work to prevent disastrous floods and droughts which have been occurring in various parts of the country with increasing frequency.

Concentration in Japan upon intensive exploitation of fertile valleys is clearly not accidental. The development of cattle farming for instance, would involve capital expenditure, experimentation and risk. Why should any holder of capital undertake such expenditures and risk so long as the peasantry and the irrigated land can be squeezed more and more? And how can capital be accumulated by the peasants themselves for experimentation and investment in new ways of farming, so long as their small surplus is all drained away by landowners and usurers and the government, for investment in trade and industry and for armaments? The most desirable parts of the Hokkaido, which could easily support double its present population, have been allocated to big capitalists who rent out to tenants and are themselves usually absentees. They devote no capital to the development of their estates, but merely receive their rents like the smaller landowners of the rice fields in the main and southern islands. Some of them merely strip their lands of timber, leaving it bare and uncultivated. Thus the old feudal forms of exploitation have been transferred to this new territory which is so eminently suitable for large-scale farming and stockbreeding. The government continually turned down development schemes for roads, railroad lines and credits in the Hokkaido, in spite of Japan's much-advertised population problem. All available state resources have always gone for armaments and for subsidies to big capitalist industries, and there has never been any money for developing agriculture either in the Hokkaido or the rest of Japan. Money was quickly found for road-building in Manchuria, because these roads were of a military character, but nothing was ever made available for a similar purpose in Hokkaido and half the land available there remains waste.

The Periodic Crisis

The incredible burden of landlord-usurer parasitism on Japan's rural economy is not the only burden which the peasantry has to sustain. We have already mentioned taxation. At the beginning of Japan's modern history, which dates from the Meiji Restoration, the country had virtually no industry. The new national government which superseded the feudal principalities adopted a policy of taxing agriculture in order to create an industry—or, rather, in order to subsidize the budding capitalists in new industrial enterprises. In spite of the exceedingly low productivity of the land, the government has continued to tax it. Today it is taxed more heavily than ever before. The heavier burden of taxes on agriculture is one of the methods of subsidizing industry. And, of course, the incidence of taxation among the peasant proprietors falls most heavily on the smallest holders. It has been conservatively estimated that the combined burdens of rents, accumulated indebtedness and interest, state, prefectural and village taxation amount to at least 89 per cent and possibly even more of the country's net agricultural produce. There is nothing, or practically nothing, left for the 5½ million peasant families.

Japan's agrarian problem reached a stage of acute crisis in 1918, when rice riots broke out in rural areas throughout the country at the height of the industrial boom which marked the first World War. Again in 1930, and extending through 1932, there was another serious crisis when the full impact of the crisis in America, following the stock market crash of 1929,

was felt by Japan's silk industry. Almost all of Japan's silk, product of toilsome home industry, was exported to America, the one country in the world with a market capable of absorbing the expensive finished products. Japan's sericultural industry was thrown into chaos and the precarious economic balance of the numerous peasant households was upset. Japan's textile industry was also dislocated because it depended largely on the silk export to secure raw cotton from America. And the dislocation of the textile industry, in turn, affected the heavy industry which depended upon the export surplus created by the sale of cotton textiles abroad for imports of its own essential requirements. For the peasants the upset was catastrophic. Landlords and taxgatherers put on the squeeze as more and more defaults occurred, but were powerless to stem the tide. Peasants, openly rebellious, rioted in the villages and attacked hydro-electric stations (immediate source of their irrigation troubles) as their desperate poverty became still more desperate and their very survival became at stake. The agrarian crisis made its effects felt in all branches of the economy. Big capital was interested in both land and sericulture. Through the banks they held mortgages on which neither interest nor principal could be collected. As merchants they were vitally concerned in silk exports, and as industrialists they gained enormous profits from their monopoly control of the fertilizer market now threatening to go down in ruin with the peasantry. The country seethed on the verge of revolution. A bourgeois commentator, Dr. Washio, described the agrarian situation thus:

Rural distress is very acute and in the opinion of most sincere observers is past hope of salvation within the existing economic system. Some who sincerely look for rural salvation suggest land nationalization to be effected by the issue of Government bonds at a special low rate of interest, so low that the peasants can bear it and feel comparative relief from the present burden of rent. Land nationalization at the price landowners ask would be manifestly ruinous to the state, but owing to the prevailing rural distress and rebellious attitude of tenants the position of landowners has become hopeless. (*Trans-Pacific*, September 1, 1932.)

Japanese agriculture under the present system is doomed to further decline and destruction. The burden of parasitism is too great to permit of anything more than the slenderest margin to the real producer who does the backbreaking toil—and even then he must go head over heels in debt to live at all. Agriculture is the rock-bottom foundation of the country's economy, interlocked with it, inseparable from it, in no sense independent. Crisis in agriculture means crisis in the economy as a whole. And it is, in reality, an unending crisis—not just a "problem" to be solved at leisure. The events of 1918 and 1930-1932 were merely high points in the crisis. The "solution" of Japan's ruling class to the sharp expression of the crisis in the early 'thirties was a series of piddling makeshifts, an ample measure of police repression directed against the desperate people and—the invasion of Manchuria. At this point we can recall, and regard as fully demonstrated, Trotsky's assertion that the invasion of Manchuria was an expression, not of Japan's strength, but of its weakness—more precisely, its incurable decay. It is indeed instructive, as Trotsky said, to "consider the analogy between the Manchurian adventure of Czarism which led to the war of 1904-5, and this adventure of the Mikado's government." In the one case as in the other, the military adventure was a desperate attempt to stave off revolution. Czarism survived for another 12 years after 1905. Imperialist Japan has likewise survived 12 years since she hurled her armies into Manchuria in 1931. But Japan, unlike Czarist Russia, now faces her "October" and not her 1905. Her ruling class succeeded in temporarily shelving the fundamental agrarian problem after

1932 by means of war, subsidized exports and inflation. These stimulated but did not cure and the day of reckoning must come.

Thus far we have touched only in passing on the social consequences of Japan's economic backwardness and decay. It is necessary to go into more detail. In the case of the workers, the normal standard of life is little above that of English workers at the dawn of the factory system, while the general condition of the large peasant class is no better than that of the rural communities in China or India. When the economic crisis becomes acute, as in the years 1930-32, conditions in the Japanese village reach a condition of stark horror resembling India or China in time of famine. Here is a report from among scores that could be quoted which appeared in the *Japan Times* for June 7, 1932:

The Social Consequences

With starvation staring them in the face the impoverished communities of Nagano, Iwate and Niigata are selling their young girls into prostitution, eating *warabe* (bracken) where such a "delicacy" is still obtainable, cooking bean-cake ordinarily used as fertilizer with various kinds of grass as their regular food. . . . In Nagano prefecture those who can afford to eat barley are very well off. Every tree in the hills is bare, its fruit, however bad it may taste, having been picked by hungry children. . . . In one village the investigator found that last year the total income of a certain peasant was 130 *yen* whilst his losses were 366 *yen*. In order to make up for such losses peasants and poor farmers are selling off their children. The most unfortunate are girls who are being taken away on payment of 3 to 10 *yen* on the promise that they will soon be brought home, and sold to unlicensed brothels. The same conditions prevail in Niigata prefecture. Young women of marriageable age are scarce as most of them have been sold off and there is a growing tendency to sell even primary school children. The prices for children are about 100 *yen* for third-grade pupils and about 400 for those who have finished school.

This, be it emphasized, is a description not of backward China or colonial India, but of imperialist Japan which aspires to draw all the peoples of East Asia into her "sphere of mutual co-prosperity." The starvation and distress which the *Japan Times* reported was occurring at a time when government granaries were filled with rice for which there were no buyers. The harvest of 1931 had been poor, but it is not natural calamities which reduce the Japanese village to starvation. Good or bad harvests are equally disastrous for the tiller of the soil. The Ministry of Education appropriated a small sum to feed thousands of starving school children. But the government, rather than injure the rice merchants and landlords by distributing its own rice stocks to the hungry, dumped some of them abroad at a selling price about one-third of the then current selling price in Japan. This was done in spite of the flood of petitions and the riots which broke out when the government failed to relieve the desperate, suffering people. Disease followed on the heels of starvation and this was particularly terrible in Japan since there is no public health service and many villages have no doctor. So pitifully poor are the rural communities that when an epidemic of diphtheria broke out in Aomori there was no money to buy a bottle of serum (price two *yen*) for inoculation and the child victims died off like flies for lack of medical attention. Although there is, or was, a surplus of qualified doctors in the towns, they are reluctant to set up practices in the villages for the simple reason that hardly any of the peasants can pay even the smallest sum for their services.

In the midst of desperate famine, the employers in the silk-

reeling industry, hit by the collapse of the silk market, defaulted on payment of wages to their miserably underpaid employees. According to the *Japan Times* of May 5, 1932:

The financial difficulties of the silk reeling industry have continued to get worse and this year the authorities concerned estimate that about 80 per cent of the silk reeling factories throughout the country are now in arrears in the payment of wages, affecting 400,000 operatives to the amount of *yen* 5,000,000 and 10,000,000.

The ruined and starving peasants defaulted on their tax payments, so that school teachers went unpaid and were added to the lists of the starving. Hunger demonstrations occurred far and wide. The government answered them with brutal repression. From the villages the crisis spread to envelop the cities. But while the people hungered, the capitalists lived well and got richer. Taking advantage of the unusually abundant supply of labor made available by the hunger in the villages, the big cotton mills cut wages again and again in 1931 and 1932 and so reduced their costs as to be able to embark on the tremendous expansion of their exports which ended in Japan becoming the leading exporter of cotton textiles.

Conditions in Cities

The crisis appeared to have "hit bottom" in 1932. In 1933 there was a brief breathing space due to a temporary revival of the American demand for silk, the fall in the exchange value of the *yen*, and to such a bumper harvest as had never previously been seen in Japan. For the first time in the history of modern Japan rice prices did not fall as usual, because of large government buying under a new system of rice control. But in 1934 there was drought and flood and frost and the disastrous Osaka typhoon, bringing another poor crop year. And, of course, distress nearly as bad as that described above descended on the land once more. It is not the vagaries of nature, however, which are responsible for Japan's repeated economic disasters. Man has largely conquered nature. Responsible is Japan's archaic system of production and lack of capital for development, combined with the great load of parasitism which denies to the working people of both town and country all possibility of putting by any surplus whatever for bad times. Between what the peasant realizes for his crop, and the amount he must pay out for rent, taxes, interest and fertilizer, there is only the faintest margin. Just as between the wages of the industrial worker, whether in a small shop or a large factory, and his cost of bare subsistence, there is likewise practically no margin. The utter inability of the Japanese ruling class to mitigate, much less prevent these crises, which have been occurring with more and more frequency, is clear enough testimony to the complete bankruptcy of the entire economic and social system. It explains, also, the unbridled imperialist ambitions of the Tokyo rulers. Like the Czar's government, they are powerless to solve the country's most pressing problems precisely because they have a vested interest in maintaining the social scheme of things of which those problems are the inevitable product. Instead they seek "solutions" in military adventures abroad which serve only to accentuate the decay of Japanese society and bring its rulers closer to the abyss of social revolution.

If the facts reveal an appalling state of things in the countryside of Japan, which contains more than half the country's working population, matters are little better where it concerns the industrial workers in the cities or villages. In the years when Japan occupied a "respectable" place in the imperialist family, notably during the 20-year-period of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which lasted until the Washington Conference of 1921;

and even more notably during the period when, as "the gendarme of the East," her present-day antagonists regarded her as an extremely valuable buffer against the spread of Bolshevism to the countries of East Asia, interested propagandists depicted Japanese life in general as a sort of Oriental rhapsody. Endless were the descriptions, and the photographs in picture magazines of Japanese maidens strolling through glorious parks in their colorful *kimonos*, of delightfully artistic wood and paper houses, miniature gardens, smiling women officiating at the "tea ceremony" or arranging flowers. These superficial aspects of a part of Japanese life served to hide the ugly realities behind and underneath. The large-scale Japanese factories with their dormitories for women workers were depicted as something in the nature of high-class boarding schools, rather than as places of arduous toil. The Japanese ruling class encouraged and assisted this type of propaganda. In this they were in turn helped by the naturally artistic appearance of Japanese houses (except, of course, the ugly and squalid huts of the workers and poor peasants). They refrained from pointing out, however, that they themselves preferred and lived in homes of brick or stone. And when it came to the factory dormitories, the pictures always showed them empty—not crowded with girls sleeping elbow to elbow on the floor.

If life were in reality so gay and pleasant as these propagandists would have had the world believe, how is one to account for the extraordinarily high mortality rate, both adult and infant, the high incidence of such characteristic diseases of poverty as tuberculosis and beri-beri, the widespread use of child labor in industry, the existence of real slavery in everything but name, prostitution on a scale found in no other country except China, the inferior status of women, the absence of social services, and the incredibly low wages paid to industrial workers?

Malnutrition and Disease

One of Tokyo's leading newspapers published an article in 1932 showing that while the annual number of births in Japan is about 2,100,000, some 460,000 children between the ages of 1 and 14 die each year, largely because of undernourishment. And the *Statistical Year Book* of the League of Nations for 1935 gave Japan's infant mortality rate as 121 per thousand, as compared with 76 for Germany, 66 for England, 100 for Italy, 48 for Switzerland. Only colonial India had a higher infant mortality rate, the figure being 171.

The incidence of sickness is very high amongst workers on account of poor food and lodging and excessive hours of labor. The government occasionally publishes sickness statistics of factories in all parts of Japan where not less than 500 workers are employed. High as they are, these figures are not representative, for they do not cover domestic or artisan industry or agriculture. However, they show a sickness rate of 33.8 per cent amongst women and 18.3 per cent amongst men. In textile factories the combined rate for women and men was 31.4 per 1,000 workers. Of these, 60 per 1,000 were cases of stomach and intestinal diseases which are attributable to coarse or bad food or to malnutrition; 23.9 per 1,000 were cases of bronchitis and 9.85 were cases of pleurisy, which must be mainly due to the change from the hot air of the workrooms to the unheated dormitories. Pulmonary tuberculosis is very prevalent in Japan and it is probable that many of the pleurisy cases amongst factory workers lead to, or turn out to be, cases of tuberculosis, which may be largely ascribed to the absence of fats in the diet and lack of air in the unventilated and unheated dormitories in winter.

Beri-beri, a disease of vitamin deficiency, is one of the most common in all industries, except in the gas, electricity and smelting industries where wages are somewhat higher. The prevalence of tuberculosis is shown more in the figures of death than of sickness, indicating that workers afflicted with this disease often go on working until they are near death, not reporting sick or not being considered as sick. Official statistics show that there are 88 deaths out of every 1,000 cases of tuberculosis, the highest death rate for any of the diseases, and that out of every 1,000 cases 211.8 are discharged from treatment before recovery or were on long sick leave. The highest sickness rate of all is found in the coal mines, where women work alongside men. The terrible effects of heavy mine labor on women is clearly seen from the fact that about 20 per cent of them suffer from diseases of the uro-genital organs—mainly diseases of the womb.

The Baroness Ishimoto, Japan's leading feminist and would-be social reformer, has described the conditions in Japan's coal mines: how the miners descend the pits by a platform without walls or rails; how girls are often crushed while carrying coal in baskets from pit to wagons when big trucks overturn, or through being caught under the wagons because of the excessive speed of the latter and the narrowness of the way. She states that prisoners in uniform with heavy chains on their hips are sent down to the mines to forced labor and that this competition, together with that of women and even children, brings down the wage level. She tells how the wives and daughters of miners, half naked, follow the men and carry out the coal as the men loosen it with picks; how sometimes pregnant women give birth to children in the pits, and how they go down to work in the mines with their infants tied on their backs. These are conditions in the mines of the Mitsui company, Japan's wealthiest and most powerful trust. The Baroness comments with gentle irony on Japan's alleged "beautiful family system which made men and women work harmoniously and pleasantly at their tasks" by describing "the crowded nests of ignorance, poverty and misery, the children born without love and reared without care or affection." She says that when she hears the well-known boast that Japan is a paradise for children, she recalls the little children haunting her garbage box, the frequent sight of mothers beating their children, and the babies dying of illness without any medical attention or any nursing because their mothers are at work.

Japan's ruling oligarchy always loves to boast of the country's system of universal, compulsory education. Yet 47 per cent of the country's mineworkers have either never been to school or have not finished the grades. Percentages are smaller for other industries. The yearly accident rate in the mines is extraordinarily high. Between 1920 and 1929, it varied from 60 per cent to 45 per cent of the numbers employed. Today it certainly is much higher because of the increased pressure of work combined with outmoded and unsafe methods. The loss of life has been estimated as 30 persons for every million tons of coal mined. Some 4,000,000 workers of various kinds, including miners, have in late years been entitled by law to some compensation when injured, but the scale of payments is very low. A worker hopelessly maimed for life receives 540 days' wages, and one disabled for work for life 360 days' wages. If disabled only for resumption of his former occupation, the amount is 180 days' pay. It must be remembered, however, that the large numbers of men, women and children employed in artisan industry, in household industry, and in small factories outside the factory laws, are entitled to no compensation whatever for injury,

either from their employer, from the merchant-manufacturer who pays them piece-rate wages, or from the State.

There is an almost complete absence of social services in Japan: no public hospitals, no unemployment insurance, no poor relief (except occasional charity from individuals distributed by the police). So that, except for the small proportion of workers in large factories which maintain their own hospitals, or those entitled to some compensation from their employers for occupational diseases, the poor, the widows, the orphans and the sick are left to what assistance they can get from relatives, or to die. Even lepers are not provided for, but are left to their families to take care of.

Germany's Prison Camps

THEY WHO WAIT—By Robert Guerlain. New York, 1943. Published by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

* * *

The publisher's blurb informs us:

"The man who calls himself Robert Guerlain fought in the French Army, was captured in the Battle of the Somme, was released under the Vichy Armistice terms. He made his way to Africa, then somehow to South Africa and at last to this country. He is fighting the Nazis once more—this time with the Fighting French."

The author is a French patriot and this book is an account of his experiences and impressions in German prison camps. Despite, or rather, because of his avowed convictions, this account is all the more significant for internationalists, for class conscious workers.

There is, to be sure, the usual account of Gestapo atrocities that we find elsewhere. But here the false note of propagandistic blare is missing. The atrocity stories have the same authentic ring as the stories of confused but good-natured German medical officers, for instance, and precisely because the two types are linked in an effort to tell the many-sided truth. Guerlain has an ax to grind. Make no mistake about that. He propagates French patriotism. But he has not just sat in a newspaper or government office all his life. He has gone through the bitter, indelible fate of a rank and file prisoner of war. Something compels him to tell the truth.

Here is the record of the efficient utilization of millions of war prisoners and "volunteers" from the occupied countries by the Nazi regime into a gigantic slave army. But here also is the record of an inter-bureaucratic struggle in the vaunted "modern slave state" that is not only reminiscent of the much-attacked New Deal chaos, but even makes the latter look picayune.

Just one sample:

"Herr Oberregieremgsrat Braun of the *Landes arbeitsamt* may have needed five hundred men for an urgent piece of work, so urgent that he collected them from the barracks without notifying the *Kommandantur*." (Page 105.)

Or another:

"The S.S. Standartenfuehrer Mueller...coming across a Kommando party doing a job which he considers superfluous, takes it upon himself to transfer these men to another location, where more important work was to be done—for instance, to his own farm..." (Page 106.)

Or, there is the story of the Nazi official who, for 5,000 almost worthless francs, "transformed a prisoner of Jewish origin into an Aryan," or a white officer into a colored private to be repatriated to Morocco.

Many of them become beggars (there are more than 25,000 vagabond lepers in Japan) and infect more persons with this dread disease. Similarly, there are some 200,000 lunatics for whom nothing is done. Only when the Emperor is to pass by in state are the lepers and lunatics in the neighborhood rounded up by the police and kept out of the way for the occasion. Another indication of the indifference of Japan's rulers to the plight of the poor, who are the creation of the system, is furnished by a police report in 1935 which stated that there are some 250 cases a year of destitute mothers with young children who, after losing their husbands, kill their children and then commit suicide.

Everything is meticulously indexed and cross-indexed but "never reflects the true state of things." The military blames the Gestapo; the latter the Labor ministry, etc. "But there is nothing they can do about it. Things are not so enormously different in this model of slave efficiency from what they were in the Habsburg regime of the Good Soldier Schweik's day.

The author has a characteristic "French" explanation. The system works well with the Germans, who react with some mystic rigidity to perform orders given and refrain from what is *verboten*. It breaks down when it is applied to the spirited Frenchmen and to non-Germans in general. But the internal evidence of Guerlain's own narrative shows how hollow this "explanation" is. For he recounts innumerable instances that contradict it. On the one hand, there are the quite numerous French "slavers" as he calls them, prisoners like himself who work themselves into the Nazi machine with great proficiency and who are more rigid about orders and "verbodens" than their German prototypes. Guerlain devotes a whole chapter to them (pages 22-31). On the other, there are types also not negligible in number, like Herr Unteroffizier Weberstadt, who act on the fundamental axiom "of his belief: In a choice between my own officers and the enemy, I'm more afraid of the officers." He winked at regulations, rarely appeared in the barracks which he "largely abandoned to the administration of the French non-coms."

No, the explanation is much more simple. The system works in "normal" times, when the masters have complete sway over the "slaves." The vicissitudes of war loosen their control more and more and give the "slaves" untold opportunities to contravene it.

Perhaps the most interesting and pertinent account in the book deals with the prisoners' experiences in the factories, where they are sent as *Arbeitskommandos* because of the extreme labor shortage. It is worth quoting at length.

"In many factories, a real 'collaboration' has grown up between the German workers and the French prisoners, a collaboration, however, which is far removed in spirit from that which exists between Berlin and Vichy. *Tacit or open agreements have been entered into not to exceed a certain speed of work.* This is a fact which prisoners returning from German factories have been *unanimous* in emphasizing, that on the part of older German workers particularly in the metallurgical plants there is a *very* manifest tendency to *slow up* the rhythm of production. It is only *secondarily* caused by the frank opposition to the regime, *its principal aim is a fight against the lowering of wages, against the decrease in rates for piece work.* And this lack of zeal is not only obvious but involves a real drop in production; every prisoner familiar with the trade can easily see that the output of this type of German

worker is vastly below that which had been the general rule during peacetime in similar factories of French industry." (Page 86. Our emphasis.)

Shades of the struggle against the "Little Steel" formula! Shades of the myriad unauthorized strikes of the British workers!

No wonder (as the Office of War Information in Washington has established) that Hitler's radio keeps completely mum on American strikes! No wonder that the General Marshalls, in their broadsides against American labor, keep mum about these German class struggles!

In a very real sense, the "collaboration" established between German workers and French prisoners extends much further than Guerlain realizes. It extends to the pits in Newcastle and to the plants in Detroit.

The author has many more heartening messages. The discussions among the French prisoners themselves, which he reports, reveal the class cleavages. Souhard, the little shoe manufacturer from Limoges "understands" the "plight" of Petain. Vandamme, the worker from Maubeuge, in his deepest despair doesn't give a damn whether his country is ravaged by German masters directly or through French lackeys. He can't "understand." And so on. But to the revolutionists it is the author's preoccupation with the state of mind of the German workers that is most absorbing.

"The majority of German workers who remain in the factories belong to a very special category: they are older men, men too old either to have been contaminated by Nazi ideology or to bear arms. Moreover, their special technical qualities, by making them indispensable to the war economy, also allow them a measure of free expression, and give them a kind of nonchalance, further augmented by the fact that they feel secure among themselves in their workshops, among men, with whom, in general, they have been working for years, sometimes for decades. Most of these workers knew each other at a time when they were still unionized, when they still belonged to the leftist parties. They are fully aware of those among them who have become suspect, those who must be watched—but why bother to hide their thoughts from others, and especially from the prisoners?" (Pages 85-86.)

These are the men who organize the "slow ups." Let the faint hearts who see only the power of the "modern slave state" and the "atomization" of the working class in Germany and Europe stew in their moods. For revolutionists, this is just another confirmation of their confidence in the inexhaustible and irrepressible strength of the class struggle.

In addition to the 1,600,000 Frenchmen, the author states "are millions of other prisoners—Poles, Yugoslavs, Belgians, Dutch and Russians—and more millions of voluntary civilian workers coming from all parts of subjugated Europe. These men often work beside Germans who have little enthusiasm for the regime, and even beside German political prisoners." (Page 88.)

Can there be any doubt as to what this experience will mean for the European working class? Can there be any doubt as to which will be the victor in the struggle between chauvinism and proletarian solidarity? Against this powerful trend toward an all-European workers' revolution, is it any wonder that the Kremlin bureaucracy twists and tosses like a man in a fever?

There is another incident reported which is very quotable. It is from a conversation between Weberstadt, the German steel worker in a non-com's uniform, and Vandamme, the French proletarian, who is his prison charge.

"D'you think I'm any better off than you? We're all prisoners; You, your friends, I and all the others," says Weberstadt: He goes on to relate the "fruits" of the last war in which he

served: lifelong scars and injuries; unemployment for five years after 1918; no job again between 1931 and 1934; a wife who had to toil to feed him and the kids in those times; and now—three sons and himself again soldiers in a war. He then says:

"It's like in 1914-18, only worse. I can't tell you everything: There are spies everywhere even among the Frenchmen, men who not only denounce their own comrades but also the German soldiers . . . War! It's always the same and it's always the same people who profit. Why don't they fight each other and let us alone? Let Hitler fight Churchill by himself, if he wants, or Roosevelt; the others—you and I and the rest of the world—will just look on and when it's over we'll go home and hang the ones that are left!" (Page 138.)

Weberstadt is an old Social Democrat. Obviously he doesn't share the enthusiasm of his exiled "representatives" for the fathers of the Atlantic Charter. But, to go on. Vandamme answers:

"Germans who think like you should understand that an Allied victory against Hitler will help them too. For if England wins you'll be rid of the Nazi regime." (Page 139.)

The French worker who, the author tells us, in 1939 and 1940 could not summon up any enthusiasm himself for "his war" has obviously lost his class bearing somewhat in the years of his suffering as a Nazi prisoner.

"Well, yes," the German answers, "that's what I thought in the beginning. But it often seems to me that *they're not fighting the war against Hitler at all*. D'you think Hitler could have become what he is without foreign assistance? And are the same foreigners who financed him, who supported him both before and after 1933, going to rid us of him today?" (Page 139. Our emphasis.)

The author reports no reply from Vandamme, who had been flogged by a Nazi swine previous to this conversation. He doesn't attempt an answer of his own. He merely reports that Weberstadt proffers a bag of sweets to his French friends. "Eat the drops; they're from my wife," he says. Vandamme says nothing. "With an abrupt movement, the latter stuffed Weberstadt's ridiculous present into his pocket."

The gestures seem to be symbolic. If the gift seems "ridiculous," we can be sure that the accompanying arguments are not so at all. For the German's unanswerable thoughts and the Frenchman's understandable silence profoundly reflect the European present and indicate its certain future.

Guerlain writes of the period ending just before the attack on the Soviet Union. The stormier unfolding of the situation since then must be left to our imagination for the time being. But his testimony, because it comes from one who is remote from any association with our ideas, is for all that an even more invaluable weapon for the Marxist program.

Reviewed by J. B. STUART.

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From the Arsenal of Marxism

Military Doctrine or Pseudo-Military Doctrinairism

By LEON TROTSKY

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second installment of Trotsky's pamphlet originally issued in the Soviet Union in 1921 by the Supreme Military Council of the USSR, and later reprinted by this same highest military body in its three volume edition of Leon Trotsky's *How the Revolution Armed Itself* (Moscow, 1925. Vol. III, Book II, pp. 210-240).

* * *

4. COMMONPLACES AND IDLE CHATTER

It might seem that the struggle against Soviet Russia ought to be rather a stable element of the "military doctrine" of all capitalist states in the present epoch. But even this is not the case. The complexity of the world situation, the monstrous crisscrossing of contradictory interests and, primarily, the unstable social foundations of bourgeois governments exclude the possibility of consistently carrying out even a single military "doctrine"—the struggle against Soviet Russia. Or, to put it more precisely, the struggle against Soviet Russia changes its form so frequently and unfolds along such zigzags that the mortal danger for us lies in lulling our vigilance with petty doctrinaire words and "formulas" involving international relations. The sole correct "doctrine" for us is: *Be on guard and keep both eyes open!* It is impossible to give an unconditional answer even when the question is posed in its crudest form, namely: Will our chief arena of military activity in the next few years be in the West or in the East? The world situation is far too complex. The general course of historical development is quite clear, but events do not follow an order fixed in advance, neither do they mature according to a set schedule. In practice one must react not to the "course of development" but to facts, to events. It is not difficult to conjure up historical variants which would compel us to engage our forces primarily in the East, or, conversely, in the West, coming to the aid of revolutions; conducting a defensive war, or on the other hand, finding ourselves compelled to pass over to the offensive. Only the Marxist method of international orientation, of calculating the class forces in all their combinations and shifts can enable us to find a proper solution in each given concrete case. It is impossible to invent a general formula that would express the "essence" of our military tasks in the next period.

One can, however—and this is not infrequently done—endow the concept of military doctrine with a far more concrete and narrow content, by restricting its meaning to those elementary principles of purely military affairs which regulate all the aspects of military organization, tactics and strategy. In this sense it may be said that the content of military statutes is determined directly by military doctrine. But what kind of

principles are these? Certain doctrinaires depict the matter as follows: It is first necessary to establish the essence and purpose of the army and the task before it; from this definition one then derives the army's organization, its strategy and tactics; and incorporates these deductions in statutes. In reality, such an approach to the question is scholastic and lifeless.

An inkling of the assortment of banalities and idle chatter that are subsumed under the elementary principles of military art may be gleaned from the solemnly quoted statement of Foch to the effect that the essence of modern war consists in "once the hostile armies are located in destroying them, employing to this end the direction and tactics which lead most quickly and surely to the desired goal." How profound! What boundless horizons this opens before us! To amplify this one need only add that the essence of modern methods of nutrition consists in locating the aperture of the mouth, introducing food therein, and, after it has been masticated with the least possible expenditure of energy—in swallowing it. Why shouldn't one try to deduce from this principle—which is in no way inferior to that of Foch—precisely what the food is and how it must be prepared and just when and just who should swallow it; and, above all, how this food is to be procured.

Military affairs are very empirical, very practical affairs. It is a very risky exercise to attempt to erect them into a system from whose fundamental principles are to be deduced field statutes and the structure of squadrons and the cut of the uniform. This was very well understood by old Clausewitz who said:

"It is not impossible, perhaps, to write a systematic theory of war, both logical and wide in scope. But our theory, up to the present, is far from being either. Not to mention their unscientific spirit, in the attempt to make their systems consistent and complete, many such works are stuffed with commonplaces and idle chatter of every kind."

5. HAVE WE A "MILITARY DOCTRINE"?

Do we need a "military doctrine" or don't we? I have been accused by some of "evading" an answer to this question. But after all in order to give an answer one must know what is being asked, that is, just what is meant by military doctrine. So long as the question is not posed clearly and thoroughly, one cannot help "evading" an answer. In order to come closer to the correct formulation of the question let us, after everything that has been said, separate the question itself into its component parts. From this point of view, "military doctrine" may be said to consist of the following elements:

1. The fundamental (class) orientation of our country followed by the government in the questions of economy, culture, etc., that is, in domestic policy.

2. The international orientation of the workers' state. The most important lines of our world policy and, tied up with the latter, the possible theatres of our military activities.

3. The personnel and construction of the Red Army in correspondence with the nature of the workers'-peasants' state and the task of its armed forces.

4. The strategical and tactical schooling of the Red Army.

The tenets relating to the organization of the army (point 3) together with those relating to the strategic schooling (point 4) must constitute, as is self-evident, the military doctrine in the proper (or narrow) sense of the term.

One could proceed to subdivide still further. For example it is possible to separate out from the enumerated points the question pertaining to the technology of the Red Army, or the manner in which propaganda work is carried on, and so forth and so on.

Must the government, the leading party, the military department have definite views on all the questions? Why, of course they must. How is it possible to build the Red Army without having definite views on its social composition, on the personnel of the officer-commissar corps, on the training and education of the various branches, etc.? Conversely, it is impossible to obtain answers to these questions without probing into the fundamental domestic and international tasks of the workers' state. In other words the military department must be equipped with certain guiding principles on which the army is built, trained and reorganized.

Is it necessary (and should one) designate the sum-total of these principles as military doctrine?

To this my answer has been and remains: If anyone wants to label the sum-total of the principles and the practical methods of the Red Army as military doctrine, then, although I do not share this passion for the withered adornments of ancient officialdom, I will not fight over it (my inclination is to evade such fights). But if anyone is so bold as to assert that we do not possess these elementary principles and practical methods*, and that we have not worked and are not working collectively on this, then my answer is: You are not speaking the truth; you are befuddling yourselves and others with idle chatter. Instead of screaming about military doctrine you should present us with it, demonstrate it, show us at least a particle of that military doctrine which the Red Army is presumably lacking. But the whole trouble is that as soon as our military "doctrinaires" pass from lamentations about the usefulness of doctrine to actual attempts to present us with one, or even with its most general outline they either repeat, not very adequately, what has long ago been said, what has already been assimilated by us, what has already been incorporated in resolutions of the party and of the Soviet congresses, in decrees, regulations, statutes and instructions, far better and much more precisely than is done by our alleged innovators; or they confuse things, commit blunders and indulge in absolutely impermissible "independent thinking."

We shall now proceed to prove this with regard to each one of the component elements of the so-called military doctrine.

*Comrade Solomin accuses us (See, the military-scientific journal, *Military Science and the Revolution*) of having failed as yet to give an answer to the question: What kind of army are we preparing and for what tasks?—L. T.

6. "WHAT KIND OF ARMY ARE WE PREPARING AND FOR WHAT TASKS"?

"The old army served as the instrument for the class oppression of the toilers by the bourgeoisie. With the transfer of power to the toiling and exploited classes, the necessity has arisen of creating a new army which would at present serve as the bulwark of Soviet power and which would in the near future provide the basis for replacing the regular army by the armed people, and give support to the impending socialist revolution in Europe."

So reads the decree on the formation of the Red Army issued by the Council of Peoples Commissars on January 12, 1918. I am very sorry that it is impossible to adduce here everything that was said concerning the Red Army in our party program and in the resolutions of our congresses. Let me urge the reader to reread them. They are both useful and instructive. In them it is very clearly stated "what kind of army we are preparing and for what tasks." What are the newly-baked military doctrinaires preparing to add in this connection? Instead of wracking their brain in order to rehash precise and clear formulations, they would do much better to devote themselves to clarifying these formulas through propaganda work among young Red Army soldiers. This work is far more fruitful.

But it may be said—and it is said—that the resolutions and decrees do not sufficiently underscore the *international* role of the Red Army, and, especially, the need of preparing for offensive revolutionary wars. Solomin is very emphatic on this point... On page 22 of his article, Solomin writes:

"We are preparing the class army of the proletariat, a worker-peasant army, not only for the defense against the bourgeois-landlord counter-revolution but also for revolutionary wars (both defensive and offensive) against the imperialist powers, and for wars of semi-civil(?) type in which, offensive strategy can play a major role."

Such is the revelation, almost the revolutionary gospel of Solomin! But,—alas!—as is often the case with apostles, our author is cruelly mistaken in thinking that he has discovered something new. He is only formulating poorly something quite old. Precisely because war is a continuation of politics with rifles in hand there was not and could not be in our party any principled controversy over the place which revolutionary wars can and must occupy in the development of the world proletarian revolution. This question has been posed and solved in the Russian Marxist press quite a while ago. I could adduce dozens of leading articles from the party press, especially following the outbreak of the imperialist war, which treat of the revolutionary war of the workers state as something to be taken for granted. But I will go back even further and cite lines which I had the occasion to write in 1905-06.

"From the very beginning, this (development of the Russian revolution) will invest the unfolding events with an international character and will open up the most grandiose perspective: The political emancipation under the leadership of the working class of Russia will raise this leading class to unheard of heights in history, transfer into its hands colossal forces and resources, and make it the initiator of the world liquidation of capitalism for which history has already provided all the necessary objective premises.

"Should the Russian proletariat, temporarily taking power into its hands, fail of its own initiative to spread the revolution to the soil of Europe, it will be *compelled* to do so by the European feudal-bourgeois reaction.

"Of course, it would be an idle thing to speculate at the present time about the paths through which the Russian revolution will be transmitted to old capitalist Europe: These

paths may prove to be completely unexpected. *For the sake of illustrating our thought rather than as a forecast let us take Poland as the connecting link between the revolutionary East and the revolutionary West.*

"The triumph of the revolution in Russia would inevitably signify the victory of the revolution in Poland. It is not difficult to imagine that the establishment of the revolutionary regime in the nine Polish provinces held by Russia will inevitably raise Galicia and Poznan to their feet.* The governments of the Hohenzollerns and of the Habsburgs will reply to this by deploying their military forces at the Polish border in order then to cross it and to crush the enemy in the center—at Warsaw. Clearly, the Russian revolution will not be able to leave its Western vanguard in the hands of the Prusso-Austrian troops. In these conditions, war against the governments of Wilhelm II and Franz-Joseph will be dictated to the revolutionary government of Russia by the law of self-preservation. What position will the German and Austrian proletariat then take? Clearly, they will not be able to remain calm observers of this counter-revolutionary crusade of their national armies. The war of feudal-bourgeois Germany against revolutionary Russia will inevitably signify the proletarian revolution in Germany. To those to whom such an assertion may seem too categorical we propose that they try to conceive of another historical event more likely to impel the German workers and the German reaction onto the road of measuring their forces openly." (See, *Our Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky, p. 280.)

Naturally, the events have not unfolded in the historical order indicated tentatively for the purpose of illustration in these lines written sixteen years ago. But the main course of development has confirmed and continues to confirm the prognosis to the effect that the epoch of proletarian revolution must inescapably become the epoch of revolutionary wars; and that the conquest of power by the young Russian proletariat will inevitably propel it into war with the forces of world reaction. Thus, more than a decade and a half ago we already clearly understood in essence "what kind of army, and for what tasks" we had to prepare.

7. REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS AND METHODISM

For us, no *principled* question is involved with regard to offensive revolutionary warfare. But so far as this "doctrine" is concerned, the proletarian state must say what has been said by the last World Congress of the CI concerning the revolutionary offensive (the doctrine of the offensive) of the working masses in bourgeois states: Only a traitor can renounce the offensive; only a simpleton will reduce our entire strategy to the offensive.

Unfortunately, there are not a few *simpletons of the offensive* among our new-fashioned doctrinaires who, under the banner of a military doctrine, are seeking to introduce into our military circulation the same unilateral "leftist" tendencies which at the Third World Congress of the Comintern attained their fruition in the guise of the theory of the offensive: *Inasmuch as* (!) we are living in a revolutionary epoch, *therefore* (!) the Communist Party must carry out the policy of the offensive. To translate "leftism" into the language of military doctrine, is to multiply the error manifold. While safeguarding the principled ground of waging an irreconcilable class struggle, Marxist tactics are at the same time distinguished by utmost flexibility, mobility, or, to speak in military language, maneuverability. To this principled firmness, flexible in methods and forms, there is counterposed a rigid methodism, which transforms into

an absolute method such questions as our participation or non-participation in parliamentary work, our acceptance or rejection of agreements with non-communist parties and organizations—an absolute method presumably applicable to any and all circumstances.

The word "methodism" is most frequently employed in military-strategic literature. Characteristic of epigones, of mediocre army leaders and routinists is the attempt to erect into a stable system a certain combination of actions, corresponding to a specific set of conditions. Inasmuch as war is not waged by men constantly, but only after considerable interruptions, it is a common phenomenon to find the methods and usages of the last war holding sway over the consciousness of military workers during the periods of peace. That is why methodism is revealed more graphically in the military sphere. The false tendencies of methodism unquestionably find their expression in attempts to construct the doctrine of "offensive revolutionary war."

This doctrine contains two elements: International-political and the operative-strategic. For it is a question, in the first place, of unfolding through the language of war an offensive international policy for the sake of hastening the revolutionary culmination; and, secondly, of investing the strategy of the Red Army itself, with an offensive character. It is necessary to separate these two questions even though they are mutually connected in certain relations.

That we do not renounce revolutionary wars is attested not only by articles and resolutions but by major historical facts. After the Polish bourgeoisie imposed upon us a defensive war in the Spring of 1920, we made the attempt to develop our defense into a revolutionary offensive. True, our attempt was not crowned with success. But hence flows the not unimportant supplementary conclusion that revolutionary war, the incontestable instrument of our policy under certain conditions, can—under other conditions—lead to results opposite to those intended.

In the Brest-Litovsk period we were constrained for the first time to apply on a broad scale the policy of political-strategic retreat. It seemed to many at the time that this would prove fatal to us. But within a few months it was demonstrated that time had worked excellently in our favor. In February 1918 German militarism, while already undermined, nevertheless still remained strong enough at the time to crush us and our insignificant military forces. In November German militarism fell apart. Our international-political Brest retreat was our salvation.

After Brest we were compelled to wage uninterrupted war against the White Guard armies and the foreign interventionist detachments. This small-scale war was defensive and offensive both politically and militarily. On the whole, however, the foreign policy of our government during that period was primarily the policy of defense and of retreat (no sovietization of the Baltic states, our frequent offers to enter into peace negotiations along with our readiness to make the biggest concessions, the "new" economic policy, recognition of Czarist debts, etc.). In particular, we were most conciliatory in our relations with Poland offering her better conditions than those projected by the Allies. Our efforts were not crowned with success. Pilsudski attacked us. The war clearly assumed a defensive character on our side. This fact aided in the extreme to rally the public opinion not only of workers and peasants but also of many bourgeois-intellectual elements. Successful defense naturally developed into a victorious offensive. But we over-estimated the internal revolutionary potentialities of Poland at that time. This over-estimation found its expression in the excessive

*Let me recall that this was written in 1905.—L. T.

aggressiveness of our operations, that is, an aggressiveness beyond our resources. We advanced too far and the result is well known: we were thrown back.

Almost simultaneously with this, the mighty revolutionary wave in Italy was broken not so much by the resistance of the bourgeoisie as by the perfidious passivity of the leading workers' organizations. The failure of our August offensive against Warsaw and the crushing of the September movement in Italy altered the relationship of forces in favor of the bourgeoisie of entire Europe. From that time on there is to be observed a greater stability in the political position of the bourgeoisie and a greater assurance in its conduct. The attempt of the German Communist Party to hasten the revolutionary culmination through an artificial general offensive did not produce and could not have produced the desired results. The revolutionary movement has proceeded at a far slower tempo than we expected in 1918-1919. The social soil, however, remains mined. The commercial-industrial crisis assumes ever more monstrous proportions. Abrupt shifts in the political development in the form of revolutionary explosions, are wholly possible in the immediate future. But, on the whole, the development has become more sluggish. The Third World Congress of the International has summoned the communist parties to make careful and stubborn preparations. In many countries the Communists have been obliged to carry out major strategic retreats, and to renounce the immediate solution of combat tasks they had recently set themselves. The initiative of the offensive has passed temporarily into the hands of the bourgeoisie. The work of the communist parties is now primarily defensive and preparatory-organizational in character. Our revolutionary defense remains as always elastic and firm, that is, capable of becoming transformed, with a corresponding change in conditions, into a counter-offensive which in its turn can lead to the decisive battle.

The failure of the offensive against Warsaw, the victory of the bourgeoisie in Italy, and the temporary ebb in Germany have compelled us to execute a sharp retreat, beginning with the Riga Treaty and terminating in a conditional recognition of Czarist debts.

During this same period we executed a retreat of no lesser proportions in the sphere of economic construction: the authorization of concessions, the abolition of grain monopoly, the leasing of many industrial enterprises, etc. The basic reason for these successive retreats is to be found in the maintenance of the capitalist encirclement, that is, the relative stability of the bourgeois regime.

Just what is it that the proponents of military doctrine want (for the sake of brevity we call them doctrinaires—a designation they have earned), who demand that we orient the Red Army from the standpoint of offensive revolutionary war? Do they simply want the bare recognition of the principle? In that case they are breaking into open doors. Or do they consider that in the international situation or in our domestic situation such conditions have arisen as place an offensive revolutionary war on the agenda? But in that case our doctrinaires should aim their blows not at the military department but at our party and the Communist International, for it was none other than the World Congress of the CI that rejected in the summer of this year the offensive revolutionary strategy as untimely, summoned all parties to undertake careful preparatory work and approved the defensive-maneuverist policy of Soviet Russia, as a policy imposed by the objective conditions.

Or do some of our doctrinaires perhaps consider that while the "weak" communist parties in bourgeois countries must carry on preparatory work, the "all-powerful" Red Army ought to

undertake an offensive revolutionary war? Are there perhaps some impatient strategists who really want to transfer onto the shoulders of the Red Army the burden of the "final and decisive conflict" in the world or in Europe alone? Whoever seriously propagates such a policy had better hang a millstone about his neck and proceed in accordance with the subsequent Biblical instruction.

8. EDUCATION "IN THE SPIRIT" OF THE OFFENSIVE

Seeking to extricate himself from contradictions involved in a doctrine of the offensive during an era of defensive retreat, Comrade Solomin invests the "doctrine" of revolutionary war with—an educational meaning. At the present time, he concedes, we are very much interested in peace and will do everything in order to preserve it. But revolutionary wars, despite our defensive policy, are inevitable. We must prepare for them, and consequently must instill—through education—an offensive "spirit" for future use. The offensive is, therefore, to be understood by us not in a material but spiritual sense. In other words, along with a reserve supply of army biscuits, Comrade Solomin wants to have a reserve supply of offensive enthusiasm. Things get worse and worse from one hour to the next. If, as we have seen from the foregoing, our severe critic lacks an understanding of revolutionary strategy, then he demonstrates here a lack of understanding of the laws of revolutionary psychology.

We need peace not because of doctrinal considerations but because the toilers have been exhausted by war and privations. We are striving to safeguard as long a period of peace as possible for the workers and the peasants. We explain to the Army that if we do not demobilize it is only because new attacks threaten us. From these conditions Solomin draws the conclusion that the Red Army must be "educated" in the ideology of offensive revolutionary war. What an idealistic approach to "education"! "We have not the strength to wage war," Comrade Solomin reasons mournfully, "nor do we intend to wage war, but we must be prepared, and therefore we must prepare for the offensive—such is the contradictory formula which we arrive at." This formula is indeed contradictory. But Solomin is very much mistaken if he thinks that this is a "good", a dialectic contradiction; this is pure and simple muddling.

One of the most important tasks of our domestic policy in the last period has been to draw closer to the peasant. The peasant question confronts us with special sharpness in the Army. Does Solomin seriously believe that today after the immediate danger of landlordism has been eliminated and while the European revolution still remains a potentiality, we can weld together an army of more than one million, nine-tenths peasants, under the banner of offensive war to bring the proletarian revolution to its culmination? Propaganda of this kind would be stillborn.

We do not of course intend to hide for a moment from the toilers, including the Red Army, that we shall always remain in principle in favor of offensive revolutionary war, under conditions when such a war can aid to emancipate the toilers of other countries. But to believe that on the basis of this principled declaration it is possible to create an actual ideology or to "educate" the Red Army under the existing conditions is to understand neither the Red Army nor the existing conditions. As a matter of fact, every sensible Red soldier is convinced that if we are not attacked during winter or spring, we shall not, in any case, disturb the peace, but exert all our efforts in order to heal our wounds, in order to utilize the breathing spell.

In our exhausted country we are learning the military art, arming ourselves, building a large army in order to defend ourselves against attack. Here is a "doctrine"—clear, simple, corresponding to reality.

It was precisely because in the spring of 1920 we posed the question in this manner that every Red soldier became firmly convinced that bourgeois Poland imposed upon us a war which we did not want and against which we tried to safeguard the people by our readiness to make the greatest concessions. This conviction gave birth to the greatest indignation and hatred against the enemy. It was precisely owing to this that the war, beginning as one of defense, was later able to unfold as an offensive war.

The contradiction between defensive propaganda and the offensive character of war—offensive, in the last analysis—is a "good," viable, dialectic contradiction. We have no grounds whatever for changing the character and direction of our military educational work in order to please muddleheads, even if they speak in the name of military doctrine.

Those who talk about revolutionary wars most frequently gather their inspiration from recollections of the wars of the Great French Revolution. In France they also began with defense; created an army on the basis of defense and later passed to the offensive. To the tune of the *Marseillaise* the armed sansculottes swept over Europe like a revolutionary tornado.

Historical analogies are very tempting. But it is necessary to be careful in employing them. Otherwise, misled by the formal traits of resemblance, one may overlook the material traits of difference. At the end of the eighteenth century France was the richest and most civilized country on the European continent. In the twentieth century Russia is one of the poorest and most backward countries in Europe. Compared with the revolutionary tasks which now confront us, the revolutionary task of the French Army was much more superficial in character: At the time it was a question of overthrowing "tyrants"; it was a question of abolishing or mitigating feudal servitude. Nowadays it is a question of completely destroying exploitation and class oppression.

But the role of French arms, that is of an advanced country in relation to backward Europe, proved to be very limited and transitory even in relation to bourgeois-revolutionary tasks. With the downfall of Bonapartism which had grown out of the revolutionary war, Europe returned to its kings and feudal lords.

In the gigantic class struggle unfolding today, the role of military intervention from the outside can acquire only a supplementary, contributory, auxiliary significance. Military intervention can hasten the culmination and facilitate the victory. But this cannot occur unless the revolution is mature not only with regard to social relations—and this condition is already fulfilled—but also with regard to political consciousness. Military intervention may be likened to the forceps of an obstetrician, which if applied in time can reduce the birth pangs, but if brought into play prematurely can produce only a miscarriage.

What we have said up to now applies not so much to the Red Army, its construction and methods of operation as to the political tasks set for the Red Army by the workers' state.

Let us now approach military doctrine in the more narrow sense of the term. We have heard from Comrade Solomin that so long as we fail to adopt the doctrine of offensive revolutionary war, we shall continue to muddle and to commit blunders in organizational, military-pedagogical, strategical and other questions. However, such a commonplace gets us nowhere. Instead of repeating that good practical conclusions

must necessarily flow from a good doctrine, the thing to do is to present us with these conclusions. Alas! No sooner do our doctrinaires attempt to reach conclusions than they offer us either a pathetic rehash of elementary truisms or the most pernicious products of "independent thinking."

9. THE STRATEGICAL AND TECHNICAL CONTENT OF "MILITARY DOCTRINE" (MANEUVERABILITY)

Our innovators devote their greatest energies to an attempt to anchor military doctrine in the sphere of operational questions. According to them, strategically the Red Army differs *in principle* from all other armies inasmuch as in our epoch of positional immobility the basic features of the Red Army's operations are: *maneuverability and aggressiveness*.

The operations of the civil war are unquestionably distinguished by extraordinary maneuverability. But here it is first necessary to give the most precise answer to the following question: Does the maneuverability of the Red Army flow from its inner qualities, its class nature, its revolutionary spirit, its fighting zeal or does it, on the contrary, flow from the objective conditions, the vastness of the military theaters and the relatively small number of troops employed? This question is of no small importance, especially if we grant that revolutionary wars will be waged not only on the Don and the Volga but also on the Seine, the Scheldt and the Thames.

But let us meanwhile return to our native rivers. Was the Red Army alone distinguished by maneuverability? No. The strategy of the Whites was without exception maneuverist. In most instances their troops were inferior to ours in numbers and in point of morale, but they were superior in military skill. Hence the need of maneuverist strategy was felt most urgently by the Whites. During the initial stages we learned about maneuverability from them. In the final stage of the civil war we invariably witnessed maneuver against maneuver. Finally, the operations of Ungern's and Makhno's detachments—these degenerate, bandit outgrowths of the civil war—were distinguished by the greatest maneuverability. What conclusion follows from this? It follows that maneuverability is not peculiar to a revolutionary army but to civil war as such.

In national wars, a fear of distances accompanies the operations. By removing itself from its base, from its own people, from the sphere of its own language, an army or a detachment falls into a completely alien environment where neither support, cover nor assistance is available. In a civil war each side finds sympathy and support to a greater or lesser degree in the opponent's rear. National wars are waged (at all events, they used to be waged) by huge masses with all the national-state resources on both sides being brought into play. Civil war signifies that the forces and resources of the country that is convulsed by revolution are divided in two parts; that warfare, especially in the first stage, is waged by an initiatory minority on each side, and consequently by masses of far lesser bulk and greater mobility; and for this reason improvisation and accident play a much more decisive part.

Civil war is characterized by maneuverability in both camps. It is consequently impermissible to consider maneuverability as the peculiar expression of the revolutionary character of the Red Army.

We conquered in the civil war. There are no grounds whatever for doubting that the superiority of the strategic leadership was on our side. In the final analysis, however, victory was assured by the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice of the proletarian

vanguard and the support of the peasant masses. But these conditions are not created by the Red Army but represent the historical preconditions for its rise, its development and its successes.

Comrade Varin remarks in the magazine *Military Science and the Revolution* that the mobility of our troops surpasses all historical precedents. This is a very interesting assertion. It ought to be carefully verified. It is unquestionable that the extraordinary speed of operational movements, demanding endurance and self-sacrifice, was conditioned by the revolutionary spirit of the Army, by the zeal the Communists introduced. For the students of our Military Academy it would be a most interesting assignment to compare the marches of the Red Army from the standpoint of distances covered with other historical examples, particularly the campaigns of the armies of the Great French Revolution. On the other hand, a comparison should be made of the very same elements as they relate both to the Reds and Whites in our civil war. When we attacked, they retreated, and vice versa. Did we actually show, on the average, greater endurance during campaigns; and to what extent was this a factor in our victory? It is incontestable that the Communist leaven could produce a superhuman exertion of forces in individual cases. But it would take a special investigation to deter-

mine whether the same result would hold for an entire campaign in the course of which the limits of physiological capacity could not fail to manifest themselves. Such an investigation does not of course promise to turn all strategy topsy-turvy. But it would undoubtedly enrich with certain valuable factual data our knowledge of the nature of civil war and of the revolutionary army.

Attempts to fix as laws or to erect into a dogma those features of the Red Army's strategy and tactics which have characterized it in the last period can prove most harmful and even fatal. It is possible to say in advance that the operations of the Red Army on the Asiatic mainland—if they are destined to unfold there—would of necessity be profoundly maneuverist in character. The cavalry would have to play the most important role, and in certain cases, the one and only role. But, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that military activities on the Western theater would be far more restricted in character. Operations conducted on territories with a different national composition and more thickly populated—with greater masses of troops per given area—would undoubtedly bring the war close to a positional one, and in any case would impose far narrower limits on the freedom of maneuver.

(To be concluded in the next issue.—Ed.)

Is Marshal 'Tito'--Brezovich?

In 1936, A. Ciliga, former member of the Political Bureau of the Yugoslav Communist Party, most intimately acquainted with the figures in this movement, wrote that in 1928 the Comintern had "recruited some sort of a crew that had never had anything in common with the Yugoslav movement, some adventurists from all the five continents, and sent them as fully empowered 'mandatories' (plenipotentiaries) into the country."

Then according to Ciliga here is what happened:

"In order to complete this mockery of the Yugoslav party, this gang was entitled a 'workers' leadership' . . . To facilitate the conquest of the Yugoslav flock by these Magi from the East none of the party activists in Moscow was permitted to leave for Yugoslavia. They did more than that. Anybody who was in the least 'suspect' in Yugoslavia itself was shipped to Moscow under various pretexts.

"In short, the 'mandatories' functioned. They already envisaged themselves as complete victors and—what is more important—within a month or so, or a half-year, or a year they, who were people without any standing in any sort of movement, would be in possession of a record so necessary for underground activity. And a career, a world career in the Comintern would be open to them. Everything would have gone smoothly had their fate depended upon Moscow alone. But, sad to relate, Belgrade also has a word or two to say in Yugoslavia.

"And in Belgrade a military-fascist overturn took place on January 6, 1929, and there ensued a bloody Balkan extirpation

of every type of opposition. A genuine underground activity now became indispensable and the need was for men capable of going to their doom without the flicker of an eye. The 'mandatories' were panic-stricken, terrified. Like all adventurers, they had estimated much too lightly their chances of success and of a career. Now what was in question was not their careers but their heads.

"And then there occurred an unheard-of, infamous catastrophe. At this critical moment the 'best section' of the 'mandatories' left the party, the YCL and the workers' movement in general to their fate and fled as fast as legs, railways and airplanes could carry them from Yugoslavia to Moscow . . . That is the way the 'best of them' behaved. Those who were a little worse remained in Yugoslavia and passed into the service of the police. And the worst ones, it turned out, had been provocateurs all the time; they had insured themselves from both sides at the very outset.

"Among them was the chief 'mandatory'—one Brezovich. It is worthwhile to dwell a little on him because Brezovich is not an accidental figure in the present day Comintern. Brezovich as is well known had also been a member of the Political Bureau of the Chinese, Japanese, French, and many other parties. At a given moment, the bureaucratic degeneration facilitates the passage to provocateurs. The spirit of bureaucratic Byzantism reigning throughout the entire Comintern makes it easy for the provocateurs to worm their way to the top. Brezovich never took part in the Yugoslav workers' movement. During the world

war he was captured by the Russian troops. During the NEP he turned up in the Communist party, and after the annihilation of the Zinoviev opposition he made a career in Leningrad, becoming a district agitprop (in charge of agitation and propaganda). From there Gorkich-Bukharin-Manuilsky [the then leadership of the Comintern—Ed.] shipped him to Yugoslavia, placing in his hands the entire organizational and technical apparatus of the party. And in 1928 at the Sixth World Congress he was promoted to the *Senioren Convent* (the ranking members) of the Congress despite the fact that in accordance with the decision of the plenum of the Central Executive Committee of the Yugoslav C.P. an old worker had been slated for the post . . . Gorkich-Bukharin-Manuilsky organized the matter in such a way as to delay the arrival of this worker to the Congress (he spent days waiting in one of the border cities for permission to depart) while the scoundrel Brezovich appeared in Moscow even prior to the Congress, and in this way, as if of necessity, he was elected. As we see, Brezovich's progress indicates a very characteristic lawfulness . . ."

The above account appeared in the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*, No. 48, February 1936; it was also published in *THE MILITANT*, February 8, 1936.

The biography of Brezovich as outlined by Ciliga parallels in so many respects data released in the press concerning the mysterious "Tito"—Brozh—Brozovich that the question naturally arises: Is "Tito" perhaps—Brezovich?

Aid the Eighteen Class-War Prisoners And Their Families

Fourth International,
116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.

Dear Editors:

You have written editorials in your magazine upon the unjust imprisonment of the 18 leaders and members of the Socialist Workers Party and of Local 544-CIO Truckdrivers Union, who are now behind bars in three Federal penitentiaries.

These 18 Minneapolis Case prisoners were tried and convicted under the Smith "Gag" Act, not for anything they did, but for their socialist ideas and opinions. Three times the U. S. Supreme Court refused to review the case which would have tested for the first time the constitutionality of this viciously anti-labor act. Thus by these imprisonments, people can now be deprived of their freedom to think and speak—in defiance of our guarantees under the Bill of Rights.

You can help our Committee, which is the authorized representative of the 18. We need funds to carry on our national campaign to secure pardon for the 18 and to fight for the repeal of the Smith "Gag" Law. We also need funds to provide relief for the wives and children of the 18 prisoners while they are incarcerated. In some of the families there are babies and children of school age who need food, clothing, medical care.

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(Signed)

JAMES T. FARRELL, Chairman

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