

# Fourth International

## **Lessons of the Strike Wave**

*—An Editorial—*



### **Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party**

*By Warren Creel*



### **European Perspectives and Policy**

1. A Letter by Felix Morrow
2. A Reply by the European Secretariat  
of the Fourth International



***Editorials on Atom Bomb—Plight of the Jews***

## Manager's Column

From readers abroad: "I received this very morning the December 15th MILITANT and the December issue of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL," writes L. B., from Paris. "Many thanks. Your editorial on the French Elections is quite good but for a minor mistake. You wrote on 'Elections are Contradictory,' page 356: 'The Radical-Socialist Party was the main force calling for a yes vote on the first question, that is, a return to the Third Republic.'

"That's quite wrong. The Radical-Socialist Party called for a *no* answer to the two questions of the referendum. But, as the quoted sentence is in contradiction with another where you stated, page 356: 'The first part of the referendum asked—Do you want the assembly to be a Constituent Assembly? That is, do you want a new constitution as against a return to the old Third Republic?', I hope your readers corrected by themselves.

"Your publications THE MILITANT and FOURTH INTERNATIONAL seem to be very well informed. Particularly your MILITANT with 8 pages is a rich source of information. Wonderful!

"Long live the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!"

An increase in newsstand sales is reported all over the country. Whenever an agent makes the initial effort of introducing the magazine to a new stand, FOURTH INTERNATIONAL is able to sell itself.

Louise Leslie, San Diego agent writes: "For several months we have noticed a growing interest in the F. I. Please increase our bundle order from 15 to 25 copies per month. Just think! Eight of the ten F. I.'s put on the newsstand for January sold out the first week! How's that?"

\* \* \*

Los Angeles reports record sales of the December issue. Ruth Daniels says "Newsstand sales of the F. I. improved this past month and I hope this encouraging trend keeps up. About 50 copies of the December issue were sold on the stands."

Now that FOURTH INTERNATIONAL goes to press on the 15th of the month, newsstands are assured of having it on display the first day of the month. This should encourage our agents to push the magazine, as the stands are undoubtedly the best way of increasing sales. How about starting with the March issue?

## FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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Managing Editor: E. R. FRANK

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In Pittsburgh, Eloise Gordon writes that a methodical effort is being made to place the F. I. in new places—libraries and book stores especially.

Maggie McGowan, Toledo agent always has some live-wire action to report. "The F. I. is now on three new newsstands in Toledo: Hirsch News, 319 St. Clair St., Orchard Drug Store, 3059 West Bancroft and

St. John's News Co., 408 Jefferson. The two newsstands are in downtown Toledo and both of them have a large volume of sales. The drug store is in the University district and the F. I. should attract the students. The December issue of the F. I. did very well on all three stands."

We would like to hear from other cities on what plan is used in plac-

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ing FOURTH INTERNATIONAL on the stands. New York has added about 10 stands recently and are collecting 15c from the dealer for each copy sold. Once the magazine is established and is selling, it would seem reasonable to collect the usual 20 cents from the dealer. However, the experience of our agents over a period of time would be most helpful in regularizing the newsstand price. Write in and tell us how you have resolved the problem in your city.

\* \* \*

Scott Nearing's review of T. Cliff's series of articles on the Jewish question has prompted many readers of his newsheet to order copies of the December, January and February FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. Several of these readers have become subscribers, through this sampling of our magazine. M. D. M., Boston, Mass., suggests that the articles should be published in pamphlet form, because of the wide interest in Zionism, the Arab question, etc.

\* \* \*

Letters from subscribers: from Madison, Wisconsin, S. T. writes: "Enclosed find \$2.00 for a year's subscription to FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. I find the F. I.'s high literary and theoretical standard an effective antidote to the confusion and outright untruth in the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois liberal press. *The Nation* and *New Republic* ought to fuse, and then negotiate with *The New Masses* for 'organic unity.' Increasingly it appears that so-called liberalism displays a miserable lack of 'intellectual integrity.'"

\* \* \*

P. K., Oakland, Cal.: "I am enclosing a check for \$4.00. Will you please send me FOURTH INTERNATIONAL for one year and also THE MILITANT.

"I happen to have an almost continuous file of *New International* and the F. I. from January 1938 to March 1943 in my possession. If you want it or part of it, I will send it to you."

We certainly do want back issues of the N. I. and F. I. We have so many demands for issues published during the war years that often we cannot fill them. Any readers who, like P. K., wish to contribute their extra copies can be assured that very good use will be made of them. Often we need odd magazines to fill out a set for binding, and as this is the time of year that we arrange for binding, we would appreciate receiving them as soon as possible.

# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 7

MARCH 1946

NUMBER 3

## REVIEW OF THE MONTH

### *Current Strike Wave and the Political Crisis of American Labor—Atomic Bomb Scientists Sound Alarm—Plight of European Jews*

#### **Lessons of the Strike Wave and the Politicalization of the Workers**

Fifteen years ago Leon Trotsky, analyzing the 1929 economic crisis in the United States, predicted that it would usher in a *new epoch* "in the life of the American proletariat and the American people as a whole." In his opinion it would unfailingly lead, among other things, to the radicalization and politicalization of the American workers. In 1931, he wrote:

The grandiose economic crisis, acquiring the character of a social crisis, will inevitably become transformed into the crisis of the political consciousness of the American working class. (*Germany, the Key to the International Situation.*)

These two theoretical predictions, reached through the application of the scientific method of Marxism—dialectical materialism—have been corroborated by events. As a matter of fact, the current strike wave denotes a breaking point in the long maturing political crisis of the American labor movement. This becomes clear if we place in its historical context the present gigantic struggle of the advanced detachments of organized labor—1,700,000 workers in steel, auto, oil, packing, electrical equipment and other industries who have manned the picket lines from one end of the country to the other.

The new epoch, foreseen by Trotsky a decade and a half ago, has thus far passed through three distinct stages, each marked by a profound crisis: (1) the pre-war economic crisis and depression of 1929-39; (2) the war crisis from Pearl Harbor to V-J Day; and lastly, (3) the current crisis of "reconversion."

In each of these three stages the aggravation of social contradictions has been accompanied by a strike wave (among the wartime strikes, for example, were the struggles of the coal miners, sporadic strikes in other industries)—an infallible sign of the sharpening of the class struggle.

Let us briefly review this new epoch in terms of its strike statistics.

The outbreak of the 1929 crisis acted to temporarily stun the workers and the population as a whole. With more and more millions thrown into the streets, with plant after plant shutting down, the numbers of strikes naturally dwindled. The number of workers involved in strikes dropped to a record low of 183,000 in 1930. It rose to 342,000 in 1931 and remained at

the same level until the 1932 trough of the depression was passed.

The turning point came in 1933. In that year the upswing began and continued through the following years. Here are the official U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (to the nearest thousand.)

Year	Number of Strikes	Workers Involved	Man-Days Stoppage
1933	1,695	1,168,000	16,872,000
1934	1,856	1,467,000	19,592,000
1935	2,014	1,117,000	15,456,000
1936	2,172	789,000	13,902,000
1937	4,740	1,860,000	28,425,000

While the figures fluctuate from one year to the next, the general trend of the strike curve is upwards. The principal product of this rising curve of strike struggles was the birth of the CIO. Powerful unions, on an industrial basis, rose for the first time in rubber, auto, steel, maritime, canneries, textiles, etc., etc. No sooner were these new millions organized on the economic field, especially in the basic industries, than the need made itself felt for organized action on the political arena. But these first stirrings in labor's ranks toward political life were thwarted and diverted by the organization in 1936 of the Labor's Non-Partisan League under John L. Lewis and Sidney Hillman, which was designed to keep the workers harnessed to Roosevelt and the Democratic party machine.

#### **SECOND PHASE OF LABOR'S EVOLUTION**

The second phase of labor's evolution took place under wartime conditions. Having sold out the workers politically, the official union leadership found it all the easier to extend their betrayal to the economic field. It was the era of the no-strike pledge, government arbitration run-arounds, wage freeze, job-freeze and skyrocketing prices. The political needs and the aspirations of the workers were once again smothered—this time through the organization of the PAC, which aimed to repeat on a larger scale the 1936 experience with the Non-Partisan League.

With the entire machinery of the state bearing down upon them, with their own leaders acting as policemen for Wall Street's war machine, with the Stalinists in the van as strike-breakers, the workers, nevertheless, engaged in a series of defensive struggles. Again we cite official Department of Labor statistics (to the nearest thousand):

Year	Number of Strikes	Workers Involved	Man-Days Stoppage
1942	2,968	840,000	4,183,000
1943	3,752	1,981,000	13,500,000
1944	4,956	2,116,000	8,721,000
1945	4,600	3,325,000	35,000,000



LEON TROTSKY

While narrowed in scope, the strike wave, during the second stage, shows the same upward trend as in the preceding period. The sharp decline in strikes in 1942 is explained by the initial impact of Wall Street's entry into the second imperialist war. But it took the workers only a few months to begin reorienting themselves in the new situation. The succeeding years show an uninterrupted increase, culminating in the abrupt leap of 1945, which came primarily in the latter part of the year following V-J Day. The figures for 1945 show it to be the greatest strike year in the last quarter of a century, being exceeded only by 1919, the peak year in the strike wave following the termination of World War I.

The great majority of wartime strikes were of a brief duration (averaging 5.3 days of stoppage for each worker). The strikes were quickly settled, i.e., the workers were herded back by the combined efforts of the corporations, the government and the union officials. With a few exceptions, particularly the three miners' strikes, they brought little or no material gains for the workers.

In the pre-war phase of the process under review, there were approximately 10,000,000 in the unions; after V-J Day, more than 14,000,000. The militancy and self-assurance of the rank and file were tempered and reinforced. The militants who played the leading role in the organization drives of the 'Thirties matured and gained in experience and knowledge. In the same period new leading elements came to the fore. All these important gains made themselves immediately felt with the opening of the present postwar phase.

### INCREASING INTENSITY OF STRIKE STRUGGLES

No official statistics are as yet available for the first two months of 1946. However, the essential features of the new stage into which we have entered are already clearly discernible. In scope and intensity, the strike struggles tend to surpass those in the past. By the latter part of 1945, the average duration of stoppages for each worker leaped to 16.3 as against the 5.3 days of stoppage in wartime. (In the organization drives of the 'Thirties the average was 20.6 days of stoppage for each worker.) In January and February this average doubled and even quadrupled.

The labor movement has demonstrated that it possesses more than ample resources and strength for these battles and the sharper ones ahead. From all indications, the magnificent and inspiring power of the workers on the economic field has come as somewhat of a shock to the bourgeoisie.

In most cases these strikes have been models of unity and solidarity among the workers. The former divisions between foreign-born and native workers have dissipated into thin air. The solidarity of Negro and white workers has been further cemented. The white-collar workers have been drawn much closer to the industrial vanguard. Layers of the middle class are gravitating to the side of the labor movement.

As a consequence, not only single plants but entire basic industries have been shut down with an effectiveness almost without parallel in trade union history. And they have remained shut down. In the face of this exemplary militancy, loyalty and discipline among the workers, all the tried and tested devices of strikebreaking have proved of no avail.

Perhaps the greatest single disappointment to the corporations has been their failure to pit the veterans against the strikers. After the First World War, they had considerable success with returning soldiers. This time, however, the veterans did indeed march to the picket lines but it was primarily in order to join them and not to help the employers smash them.

Many thousands of workers, especially in steel, have gained their first experience in successful strike action. Thousands of others had the opportunity to repeat, retest and extend methods of strike organization first applied in the 'Thirties. New leading cadres have come to the fore. The initiative and resourcefulness of the rank and file, especially in auto, augur well for the future.

But side by side with this tremendous working class strength on the economic plane there are glaring and serious weaknesses in the field which is, in the last analysis, decisive, namely: *politics*. The political crisis which has gripped the labor movement since 1929 not only remains unresolved but has grown in acuteness.

The decisive power in society is political power. By reason of their unchallenged monopoly of all the political levers and machinery, the corporations were able to arm themselves with the most effective weapons against the workers. They did so before and during the current strike struggles and they will continue doing it in preparation for the next phase.

### CONGRESS SUPPORTS UNION-BUSTING

For example, well in advance of the strikes, the corporations raided the treasury in order to finance their union-busting program: their congress voted them billions in tax rebates for this purpose. The protest of CIO President Philip Murray and others and their demands that these rebates be revoked are more than justified. But these belated protests and demands alter nothing in the situation, for there is not a single representative in Congress to take action in labor's behalf.

Furthermore, it is a foregone conclusion that extortionate price increases will be authorized all along the line, enabling the corporations again to pocket vaster profits while they cynically pin the blame for the higher prices on labor. Having promulgated new price ceilings, the White House and Congress will at the same time take action to set a new ceiling on wages. The workers will thus find themselves caught in the same vicious circle. The wage increases will be quickly nullified by soaring prices. Against this the only effective remedy is a rising scale of wages. Every union contract ought to contain a clause which automatically assures a wage increase to compensate for any and all hiking in prices of consumers goods. But wage freezing "outlaws" such clauses.

It is impossible to mistake the role of Congress and of President Truman. To put it mildly, they give the corporations everything the latter ask for; they cooperate in the anti-labor offensive of Big Business.

When the GM auto workers struck, President Truman's first action was to order them to resume work, while in the same breath he requested Congress to enact legislation hamstringing the unions. His "fact-finding" boards have pared the workers' just demands by one-third and more. At this writing, Truman is preparing to authorize higher prices along with a peacetime wage freeze. Meanwhile he has engaged in government strike-breaking through plant seizures (the strikes of CIO Oil workers, Packinghouse workers and New York Tugboat workers).

As for Congress, it would take us too far afield to list even the most recent anti-labor proposals and actions of this august body. Suffice it to mention that the House of Representatives has just outdone itself in jamming through the Case Bill, a vicious piece of legislation hardly distinguishable from similar enactments in the Nazi labor code. If this bill fails to pass the Senate, it will not be because labor has "friends" there, but simply because such action is deemed to be inexpedient at this time.

More and more workers are beginning to wake up to the

fact that by a relatively simple expedient of passing a law or a set of laws, the capitalists can either block further gains by the unions or wipe out gains won on the picket lines. In this connection the role played by the courts is instructive. Friedrich Engels long ago pointed out that courts are an integral part of the capitalist state. Strikebreaking through injunctions has been a favorite practice of the corporations. During the war it was laid on the shelf. They are now refurbishing this potent weapon, presumably "outlawed" by the Norris-LaGuardia anti-injunction bill. Utilizing one legal loophole or another, the courts throughout the country are once again plastering injunctions upon the strikers.

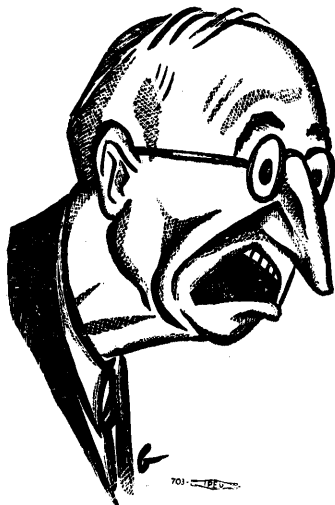
Why is labor so helpless politically? What has prevented the workers from forging their own political weapons which alone can challenge and break the political monopoly of Big Business? The answer to these questions is to be found not so much in the backwardness of the rank and file as in the character of the incumbent trade union leadership and its policies.

These official leaders refuse to break with capitalist politics and parties. They have deliberately blocked the instinctive urge of the workers to strike out independently on the political arena. As we have already stated, the CIO union leaders achieved this before the war by means of Labor's Non-Partisan League and during the war through the PAC. Today they bank on short memory. They hope that workers have forgotten the PAC supported Truman as Roosevelt's successor, and that many a PAC-endorsed candidate studs the halls of Congress which are resounding with anti-labor baiting, ranting and legislating.

To be sure, when Truman incautiously unmasked himself, Philip Murray issued a public denunciation, and threatened to mobilize "all labor's political strength," while William Green, likewise mumbled something about moving to the "left" if goaded beyond endurance. But as subsequent developments have amply demonstrated this was sheer bluster.

Aiding and abetting this political disorientating of labor are the Stalinists whose politics are invariably adapted to suit the needs of the Kremlin's policy. Conforming with Moscow's latest shift, these super-patriots of yesterday have donned a mask of militancy. But whereas they went the whole hog as Wall Street's recruiting sergeants and strikebreakers in wartime, their present suddenly-acquired militancy is a fake through and through. To cite only one instance: for eight weeks the Stalinist UE leaders stalled before calling out the 30,000 workers in GM's electrical department. While the auto workers are holding out for a 19½ cent increase, these same Stalinist leaders stab them in the back by settling with GM for 18½ cents. They play the game of the employers in many other ways as well, in particular by engaging in a rabid red-baiting campaign against the Trotskyists in the auto centers of Detroit and Flint.

In New York, even after proclaiming their tactical "left" turn, they threw their support to Tammany's O'Dwyer in the recent mayoralty campaign. This "labor's candidate" has been issuing orders to the police to protect scabs and to club and ride down pickets.



TRUMAN

These venal, unprincipled servants of the Stalinist bureaucracy have in the recent period come out in tentative support of a "Third Party" movement. At the same time they froth at the mouth at the very mention of the Labor Party, villifying the proponents of this slogan as "agents of fascism." The pre-condition for labor's progress in the political field is a complete break with capitalist and Stalinist politics.

The first signs of political awakening have already appeared. By raising the issue of prices and the demand that the corporations open their books, the GM workers are in effect touching very closely the most burning question of all: who shall be the master in the country, the big corporations or the people? This question can be decisively answered only through political struggle.

The growing awakening of the workers to the political problems and tasks is manifested in such resolutions as the one recently passed by the Greater Flint CIO Council favoring the formation of the Labor Party. In the Detroit mayoralty election last year, the workers rolled up a huge vote for Frankenstein, CIO-endorsed candidate.

We Trotskyists are proud of the fact that as far back as 1938 our movement adopted the Transitional Program which advanced slogans in relation to prices and wages and the opening of corporation books, slogans which are becoming increasingly popular among ever-broader circles of workers. At that time we likewise advanced the slogan of building an independent labor party. We are confident that the long-maturing crisis of labor's political consciousness will be resolved in the third stage of America's new epoch by the creation of this indispensable and effective instrument for action in the field of politics.

## The Scientists and the Atom Bomb

According to an eye-witness report, there was unrestrained jubilation among the groups of scientists who witnessed the first experimental demonstration of an atomic bomb explosion at Los Alamos, N. M. These scientists spontaneously broke into a dance, "the dance of the primitive man," shouting and applauding, "shaking hands," slapping each other on the back, "all laughing like happy children." (*New York Times*, September 26, 1945.) Shortly thereafter Hiroshima and Nagasaki were erased from the earth's surface in the space of a few seconds. Many of these scientists are hardly in a mood for dancing or laughing nowadays.

The discovery and application of the explosive power of nuclear energy have placed a big question mark over the immediate future of mankind. To be sure, technological developments and especially their application to armaments led in the past to similar predictions of impending physical annihilation of civilization. But such forecasts originated primarily among laymen, journalists, novelists and the like, and received little credence in scientific circles. Today, on the other hand, the alarm is being sounded by technicians and scientists, who are in the best position to know the actual state of affairs as well as the trend of future developments in this field. Moreover, the most alarmist and pessimistic declarations come from the world's leading physicists, chemists, radiologists, meteorologists, mathematicians, etc.

These scientists have formed special organizations dedicated, among other things, to arousing the public to the "grave danger for our nation and for the world" in atomic warfare. In the words of Harold C. Urey, atom-bomb scientist: "We need, first of all, to be thoroughly frightened."

So great already is the destructive power of atomic explo-

sives that man-made disasters produced by their use will henceforth make pale by comparison the havoc of all known natural catastrophes (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, tidal waves, famines, plagues, etc.).

Thus, J. R. Oppenheimer, one of the leading men in the development of the atom bomb, estimates that in the next war, 40 million Americans might be killed in one night. Another scientist, Dr. A. H. Compton, calculates that one-tenth of any country's population would be destroyed during the first night of atomic bombing and that no city of more than 100,000 would remain as an effective operating center after the first hour of the war.

A memorandum issued by a group of scientists states:

By using more bombs, larger bombs and more efficient bombs, it will be possible in the near future completely to destroy the bulk of the population, industry and military strength of any nation within a few days. Moreover, aviation and rocket developments might enable this to be accomplished within a few hours, without possibility of effective retaliation.

Professor Einstein, who is the most optimistic, denies that all the people would be killed in the next war. He believes that "only two-thirds" will die, and bases his optimism on the assumption that the remaining one-third will pull itself up amid the universal shambles and carry on from there.

All the scientists are agreed that it is impossible either to keep atomic power a "secret" or to invent an effective defense against its use. They fear the consequences of an atomic armaments race, which, as a matter of fact, is already in progress.

## POTENTIALITIES OF THE ATOM BOMB

The cost of such bombs is no deterrent. Professor J. R. Oppenheimer has declared that future bombs can be produced very cheaply and that "they may be made by the thousands and tens of thousands."

Moreover, the explosive force of the initial bombs of World War II is merely a harbinger of the unlimited death and devastation which improved forms of such explosives can spread. For the bombs that burst over Hiroshima and Nagasaki used up only one-tenth of one percent of the available energy. Even doubling or tripling their "efficiency" will still leave more than ample room for further developments. In addition, the uranium-plutonium base thus far utilized by no means constitutes the most explosive source of nuclear power. Far more powerful sources are already known (conversion of hydrogen into helium). It is only a question of time before this and other nuclear processes are "harnessed."

How much time is there actually left before atomic war breaks out? Speaking last August, Winston Churchill hazarded a guess that mankind had perhaps three years to put its house in order. The scientists agree that the perspective is short-term. "Future history, in fact, may not last very long" (H. C. Urey). "If we manage to get through the next 15 years alive, we shall probably emerge immune to atomic bombs" (L. Szillard).

Evidently, the solution must be provided within the life-span of our generation; the greater the delay, all the graver will be the consequences.

The most sober spokesmen of the ruling class do not deny the danger. Thus, *The Economist*, one of the most serious and authoritative organs of the English bourgeoisie, wrote editorially, November 10, 1945:

... The atom bomb is quite capable of destroying the human race within the lifetime of the present generation—or, if not of destroying the human race, at least so shattering all social and economic organization that *homo sapiens* would be thrust back nearly to his biologic

origins. The mind resists this conclusion, partly because of its horrible import, partly because of the many prophecies of doom that this generation has seen disproved. But this time there does not seem to be any very great degree of exaggeration.

How do the scientists propose to resolve this crisis? It is precisely here that they reveal their utter prostration and impotence. They adjure one another not to fall into a panic; propose campaigns of education; suggest that the U.S. nationalize nuclear energy; mumble about the need to "control this weapon on international lines."

## CAPITALISM CANNOT ABOLISH WAR

All these are pitiful evasions. It is not at all a question of "controlling" this or that weapon (including atomic explosives) but of preventing the outbreak of the Third World War. How can war be abolished on the basis of a decaying social system that has twice in the span of a single generation plunged mankind into slaughter? The answer is: it can't.

Spokesmen of the ruling class acknowledge this quite cynically. Here, for example, is what the English *Economist* had to say in this connection, on November 24, 1945, following the Washington conference on the atomic bomb (Truman-Attlee-King):

The atomic bomb is immensely destructive; there is no defense; no nation can hope to keep a monopoly; it will certainly be used in another war; therefore, the only way to prevent certain destruction is to abolish war. But there is not a hint of a suggestion of a new idea for abolishing war.

To abolish war it is first necessary to abolish the economic system that breeds it, replacing it with a higher and far more progressive system. To be sure, this idea is not a new one. It is almost one hundred years old. It was first advanced by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, who warned that failure to overthrow capitalism could only lead mankind to disaster.

The socialist solution—and there is no other—requires anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist ideas and action. But the frightened scientists who are so advanced in their technical discoveries are reactionaries in their political and social thinking. By rejecting the proletarian struggle for the abolition of capitalist rule, they are actually serving as either voluntary or unconscious flunkies of imperialism. Thereby they help bring about the very catastrophe which they hope to avert.

## The Plight of the European Jews

So ghastly is the plight of the Jews in Europe that the suffering of this persecuted minority stands out even amid the welter of horror, devastation and universal misery on that agonized continent. In a report to the United Nations Organization, the American Jewish Committee stated: "Today the majority of the prewar Jewish population is dead." All available information indicates that such is indeed the case.

Apart from the territories of the USSR, the Jewish population at the outbreak of World War II in 1939 numbered approximately seven million, with about 300,000 of this number living in Great Britain. Today, less than one million are alive in continental Europe. If we add the Jewish population of Britain, the total comes to less than 1,250,000 souls.

The fate of the European Jew is succinctly summed up in a table, compiled by us from the best available sources. This table covers 15 European countries in which the overwhelming majority of the prewar Jewish population lived. In each case,



we have chosen the most conservative estimates. Far from exaggerating the situation, the figures are in all likelihood an understatement. The breakdown by countries is as follows:

Country	No. of Jews 1939	Percent of Population	Estimated Survivors 1945
Poland	3,150,000	10.0	80,000
Rumania	1,050,000	5.3	350,000
Hungary	450,000	5.0	150,000
Czechoslovakia	380,000	2.2	50,000
France	230,000	0.6	100,000
Germany	221,000	0.3	94,000
Austria	195,000	3.0	6,000
Lithuania	177,000	7.0	exterminated
Netherlands	150,000	2.0	15,000
Greece	125,000	1.7	20,000
Latvia	97,000	5.0	exterminated
Yugoslavia	70,000	0.5	6,000
Belgium	63,000	0.8	25,000
Italy	50,000	0.1	35,000
Bulgaria	47,000	0.8	35,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,455,000</b>		<b>966,000</b>

These cold and impersonal figures speak for themselves. They denote a mountain of corpses, a systematic physical annihilation of 5½ million adults and children who were either tortured and killed or left to die slowly of cold, starvation and disease. Such a wholesale butchery of a persecuted minority is unequalled in the bloodiest annals of savagery or barbarism. It remained for the Twentieth Century and the regime of capitalism to set this "record."

But the table is incomplete, for it does not show the "peacetime" sequel to the wartime handiwork of the Nazi executioners. It is a fact that the lot of the wretched survivors remained virtually unaltered by the "liberation" of Europe. In the British, French and American zones of Austria and Germany, the majority of the 100,000 surviving Jews remain in Nazi concentration camps, including such vicious ones as Berger Belsen. They wear the old prison garb, eat much the same hunger rations and live in the same crowded, unsanitary conditions. Some among them have been incarcerated for as long as 12 years. The death rate is high. For example, out of 23,000 burials since

"liberation" at Berger Belsen concentration camp, 90 per cent were Jews.

All this is confirmed by an official report to President Truman. The author of this report is Commissioner Earl G. Harrison who was sent to Europe in order to investigate conditions among the "displaced persons," especially the Jews (*New York Times*, September 30, 1945).

**"LIBERATION"  
FOR THE JEWS**

According to Commissioner Harrison these unfortunates cannot help but draw "comparisons between their treatment 'under the Germans' and 'in liberation'."

This comparison, continues the Commissioner, leads them to "wonder and frequently ask what 'liberation' means?" A perfectly legitimate question.

In the same Austrian and German areas, Jews outside the concentration camps likewise face death through malnutrition or disease. A February 4 Vienna dispatch reports the spread of tuberculosis among one-fourth of 127 Jewish children who "have survived here out of the prewar population of 185,000."

Elsewhere in Europe, anti-Semitism remains strong. Reports of reprisals against Jewish repatriates have come from France, Holland, Yugoslavia.

Poland and Slovakia likewise continue to witness pogroms. Everywhere the same familiar pattern unfolds: bodily attacks, stores and homes pillaged. Among the sufferers are many recently released from Nazi concentration camps.

Prospects of amelioration are rendered all the dimmer by the fact that general living conditions in this first "peace" winter in Europe are likely to prove the worst in history. The situation is especially grave in Southeastern Europe and the Balkans, where there has been an unprecedented drouth. Perhaps, worst of all is Poland. Europe, which is now virtually a death trap for millions, can hardly offer any avenues of escape for pitiful handfuls of Jewish survivors.

The road of emigration remains barred. On this entire planet no room can be found for a few hundred thousand human beings. The richest country in the world—U. S. imperialism—cannot afford to grant the right of asylum to a hounded minority. Instead, the President of the United States mouths pious phrases and passes the buck to Great Britain. The latter in turn, ruling over the world's greatest colonial empire, pleads inability to do more than open a narrow crack for immigration to Palestine, permitting a dribble of 1,500 a month. The frontiers of the USSR, where Stalin is once again boasting of the marvels of "socialism in one country," remain hermetically sealed.

From a practical standpoint, one of the most feasible immediate solutions to the Jewish problem in Europe would be to offer all those who wanted to come a haven in this country. We Trotskyists raised this slogan long ago, demanding before the war that the bars be let down to admit all victims of fascist persecution. Our appeal met with little response. Among the reasons for this were (1) the domestic unemployment problem of Wall Street and (2) the existence of a strong undercurrent of native anti-Semitism.

**ANTI-SEMITISM NOT A  
NATIONAL CHARACTERISTIC**

And here we touch the nub of the problem. Nothing is falser than the idea that anti-Semitism

is rooted in national characteristics. Anti-Semitism is not peculiar to the German people or Europe generally. Like all race-hatreds, anti-Semitism really stems from the ruling class, or more accurately, a ruling class that has exhausted its progressive mission in society and is able to maintain its rule only



DEATH AND THE WOMAN by Kaethe Kollwitz

through the most ferocious methods. Race hatreds are as old as minority class rule. Reactionary ruling classes have always sought convenient scapegoats on whom to unload the evils of their own misrule.

Owing to the peculiarities of their historical development, the Jews, primarily urban dwellers, have for centuries supplied a most suitable target for reaction. They were integrated without any great difficulties in flourishing slave and feudal societies. But when the latter decayed, they were subjected to harshest persecution. Capitalism is reproducing the same pattern on a higher historical stage.

In its period of ascent, the most favorably situated sections of the bourgeoisie found it possible to assimilate the Jew, embellishing its "democracy" by granting Jews all civic rights, up to and including naturalization. Capitalist Germany, even under the rule of the Hohenzollerns and the Junkers, was no exception. On the European continent Germany was once among the

countries according the most liberal treatment to the Jews. With the decline of capitalism, not only in Germany but throughout the world, the "civilized" bourgeoisie reveals its true bestial physiognomy. When the American bourgeoisie completely unmasks itself, it, too, will confront the Jewish people as a mortal enemy.

The secret of the age-long survival of the Jews as a persecuted minority lay in their ability to make alliances with or serve as camp-followers of the progressive classes in society. What made this possible was their character of city-dwellers. Only in the cities could they have come in contact with these progressive forces.

Today this is the only road open to them. In modern cities, in the era of capitalist death-agony, there is only one genuinely progressive force, the working class. Failing an alliance with the workers and their struggle for socialism, there is no salvation for the Jews.

# The Character of the European Revolution

## *A Reply to Some Comrades of the IKD*

By E. GRANT

We are publishing Comrade E. Grant's article as a contribution to the discussion on the national question in Europe which was opened in our magazine in 1942. We reprint this article from the October 1945 issue of *Workers International News*, theoretical organ of the Revolutionary Communist Party of England. Among the discussion articles on this question that have previously appeared are the following: "Three Theses on the European Situation and The Political Tasks" (December 1942); "The National Question in Europe," by Marc Loris (September 1942); "Revolutionary Tasks under the Nazi Boot" by Marc Loris (November 1942); "Our Differences with the 'Three Theses'" by Felix Morrow (December 1942); "The Central Slogan for Occupied Europe" by M. Morrison (January 1943).

The official position of the Socialist Workers Party on this question, adopted unanimously at the Tenth Convention in October 1942, appeared in our November 1942 issue under the heading "The National Question in Europe." (See also "European Revolution and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Party," Resolution of Eleventh Convention, November 1944, which was published in our December 1944 issue).

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The contribution of our German comrades ("Problems of the European Revolution" published in July-August *Workers International News*) is an indication of "retrogression" from the fundamental doctrines of Marxism. Abandoning the Leninist criterion, the *class* criterion, of all processes taking place in society, they have adopted a pre-Leninist, even pre-Menshevik theory of "democratic" revolution in Europe. A "national democratic" revolution which, after the collapse of Hitler, will now be directed throughout Europe, against the Allies!

It would seem incredible that, after the tremendous struggle that Trotsky waged for the conception of the permanent revolution against the revisionists of Stalinism, a petty bourgeois democratic, revisionist tendency would develop within the ranks of the Fourth International. It is explained, of course, by the uninterrupted series of defeats which have been suffered by the

proletariat and the isolation to which the comrades have been doomed by the emigration. They have succumbed to the pressure of the petty bourgeois reaction.

These comrades pride themselves on their understanding of dialectics, but fail even to attempt to examine the problem they are facing from a genuine historical point of view. From what to what is society today evolving? The coming to power of Hitler, the war and its aftermath are a reflection of the blind alley of capitalism, its disintegration and decay, *its incapacity to solve a single one of the problems confronting it*. It is a result of the failure of the proletariat through the treachery of its leadership (Stalinist and Reformist) to overthrow capitalism and institute the rule of the working class. To these elementary propositions, not even the confused comrades of the IKD would dare to object, but, not stating the problem clearly, they draw the most fantastic conclusions from the gangrenous and rotting collapse of capitalism. They draw the conclusion that the bourgeoisie through a "democratic" revolution, can still play a progressive role! It is true that they put this forward under the guise of a "peoples" movement, *the class character* of which they do not define. But never in modern times has the "people" or the "nation" as such played an independent role. The petty bourgeois masses, in all their layers, can support either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. There cannot be, in modern society, any other state but that of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. Lenin clearly developed this idea when he wrote:

... all political economy—if one has learned anything at all from it—the whole history of the revolution, the whole history of political development during the nineteenth century, teaches us that the peasant goes either with the worker or with the bourgeois. If you do not know this, I should like to say to such citizens, just reflect upon the development of any one of the great revolutions of the eighteenth or the



nineteenth centuries, upon the political history of any country in the nineteenth century. It will tell you why. The economy of capitalist society is such that the ruling power can only be either capital or the proletariat which overthrows it. Other forces there are none in the economics of society. (Vol. XVI, page 217).

The IKD's intentionally vague talk of the struggle of the "whole people against the national and political oppressor" is intended to cover up their capitulation to the petty bourgeois conception of the revolution. Confronted with the above quotation, they would undoubtedly be compelled to accept it, if only in words. But what follows from it? What is the *class* character of this "peoples" movement? Is it proletarian, is it bourgeois or is it petty bourgeois? In attempting to skip over the class character (always a characteristic of petty bourgeois thought) of this movement, the IKD reveal the genesis of their ideas, petty bourgeois capitulation to *bourgeois* democracy and imperialism.

Taking as their point of departure, the failure of the proletariat to overthrow capitalism, the IKD comrades argue that society has been thrown so far back that the bourgeois-democratic revolution solved by the French Revolution of 1789 is posed anew for solution! What a conclusion. From the failure of the proletariat (due to its leadership) they turn to the petty bourgeoisie, the people, for salvation. But precisely the impotence of the petty bourgeoisie to find a new road, and its frenzy opened the way for the Fascist gangs to come to power. From the petty bourgeoisie, there can come no leadership. In modern society, they must find leadership in one or the other basic classes, bourgeoisie or proletariat. Having rejected *the proletarian revolution* as a solution, quite naturally the IKD find themselves in tow to the bourgeoisie. But these conceptions represent an entire break with the Marxist conception of the epoch which is, in the words of Lenin, one of wars and revolutions, proletarian revolutions. Thus the bourgeoisie is plunged into its wars and bestial repressions not because there is any solution for it thereby, but because they are driven to these extremities by the insoluble contradictions of the system. Wars and repressions cannot provide a solution, but only aggravate the problem.

The victory of the German imperialists led to the collaboration of the conquered bourgeoisie of France and other countries in Europe with the victors as junior partners in the exploitation of the masses. This could not but lead to an intensification of the *class hatred* of the workers, not alone against the foreign oppressor but against his agents at home. The petty bourgeoisie as well as the workers could not but conceive hatred for the trusts and combines who placed their profits above the fiction of the "nation." Consequently, the basis for an alliance of proletariat and petty bourgeoisie against the foreign and home oppressors, *against capitalism*, arose.

In the backward countries, the national bourgeoisie prefers in the last analysis to combine with the landlords and foreign imperialist oppressors against their own workers and peasants because of the incapacity to solve the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, according to Lenin and Trotsky. (Especially the latter developed this idea with the theory of permanent revolution.) Because of the impossibility of the petty bourgeoisie playing an independent role, only the *proletariat as a class* could lead the struggle against the foreign oppressor and carry through the bourgeois democratic revolution and the struggle for national liberation. But such a struggle, by its very nature, could only lead, either to the victory of the imperialist bourgeois counter revolution or to the conquest of power by the proletariat. Under such conditions, the task of the prole-

tariat and its vanguard is to maintain its independence from the bourgeoisie and to fight to win the plebian masses to its side.

The ideas of the IKD thus revise the conception developed by Trotsky for the Chinese and Indian revolutions and apply this revised conception to the advanced countries of Europe!

The confusion in the minds of these comrades is shown by their insistence on the necessity of a transitional revolution before the proletarian revolution, a so-called "democratic" revolution. In this they repeat all the mistakes of Stalin-Bukharin in 1925-27, in the Chinese revolution. With the *difference* that the Stalinist clique could manufacture the semblance of a case as the national democratic revolution had not been accomplished in the East. But even here, as the experience of the Russian revolution had already shown, such conceptions could only lead to disaster. But to apply an even more crass formulation than that which the Stalinists applied in China, to Europe, is to reach the limit of revisionism of the doctrines of Trotskyism. At least Stalin tried to cover his confusion with the outworn Bolshevik formula of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry." That was the only *class* formula he could find to describe the "democratic" revolution which he foresaw in Asia. Not having sufficiently thought out the problem, our German comrades leave these questions unanswered. What will this democratic revolution look like? Which class will play the leading role in its realization? Which class will rule in the government? What difference is there between the regime of bourgeois democracy and the regime of this "democratic" revolution?

Posing the problem correctly is already half-way to answering it. Not using the Marxist method, our comrades have lost themselves in a fog of petty bourgeois phrasemongering.

It seems fantastic that there should be any argument on questions that any raw student of Trotskyism should understand. Especially so with people with great "theoretical" pretensions. It underlines the necessity for a regular re-statement of the basic theories of the movement, not alone for the benefit of new recruits but for people to whom such propositions ought to be elementary.

In dealing with the problem of the permanent revolution in *China*, Trotsky, answering in advance our comrades of the emigration, explained ". . . in China, the question of national liberation occupies a large place. This demonstrates that the formula of the democratic dictatorship (to replace that of struggle for proletarian dictatorship) presents a much more dangerous reactionary snare. . . ." And again "in a bourgeois society with already developed class antagonisms there can only be either an open or disguised dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or of the proletariat. There cannot be any talk of a transitional regime."

Our comrades have been unable to think their ideas through to the end and thus they end up with a policy which is a ludicrous caricature of that of Stalinism. They argue: "The retrogressive development of capitalism led to the destruction of national independence and democratic liberties of the most important European nations. Nowhere did the movement go beyond the limits of bourgeois demands, the first attempt of the suppressed masses of Europe to realize the democratic revolution and to re-conquer national independence, was doomed to failure . . . the second wave of democratic revolution will find many obstacles removed which impeded the first . . ."

Since these comrades argue that Europe has been thrown back centuries and that the task is to carry out the *bourgeois revolution* (for that is the class nature of the "democratic revo-

lution") how is this to be accomplished? In the past it was carried through by the plebian masses who could not go beyond the limits of the bourgeois forms of property. If this so-called bourgeois revolution is to be carried through by the proletariat, then the whole scheme does not make sense. For if the proletariat is to play the leading role, then the revolution can only be the proletarian revolution, leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In lashing the Stalinists, Trotsky remarked on the attempt to separate "democracy" from its social content. "The hopelessness of the epigones is most crassly expressed in the fact that even now they still attempt to contrast the democratic dictatorship with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, as well as to the dictatorship of the proletariat. But this means that the democratic dictatorship must have a transitional character, that is, a petty bourgeois content." If the comrades argue that they stand for a bourgeois democracy then the leading role of the bourgeoisie is reinforced and their criticism of the Stalinist line in France is absurd. The Stalinists and reformists who had developed a "line" in France and the other occupied countries very similar to that of the IKD consistently fought for the "national war of liberation" in which all classes were involved in the fight for "democracy" without explaining its social content. Consequently the feeble criticism of the IKD of their role in the "national liberation" movement is completely unreal. If the position of the IKD were correct, instead of criticizing, they should have agreed entirely with the course pursued by the old workers' organizations in Europe.

The trouble with the IKD is that, having been thrown off course by the reactionary wave, they mistake history's posterior for its face. Searching for an impossible "democratic" revolution, they cannot see the visage of the early stages of the proletarian revolution and equate bourgeois "democratic" counter-revolution of the period of the decline of the bourgeoisie with the democratic revolution of its rise! They do this because they confuse the democratic demands of the proletariat with the nature of the revolution which the proletariat is called on to face. Democratic demands, the right to strike and organization, the right of free speech, press, elections, Constituent Assembly, etc., etc., are part of the transitional demands of the proletariat in its struggle for the Socialist revolution. These demands must be inscribed on the banner of the Revolutionary Party in its efforts to mobilize the masses in the struggle to educate them in the need for the conquest of power. In every revolution of the proletariat in modern times, one or the other democratic demand has played its part in the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. But in and of itself, this did not determine the nature of the struggle upon which the proletariat was embarked.

Both the opportunists of the IKD and various sectarians were answered in advance by the tactics pursued by the Bolsheviks in the Russian revolution. Here, while steering a course towards the October insurrection, on the basis of the understanding of the social nature of the tasks facing the proletariat, the Bolsheviks combined this strategical objective with flexible tactics. They fought for democratic demands, but this struggle was indissolubly linked with the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Our epoch, even in the backward countries which have not accomplished the democratic revolution, remains the epoch of proletarian revolution and bourgeois counter-revolution (whatever its specific form), not at all the epoch of democratic revolution. The victory of fascism in no way alters the social character of the regime, the economy of capitalism or the role of the different classes in society. The victory in war, the

plunder and national oppression of one capitalist nation of other imperialist powers, in itself marks no decisive change within bourgeois society. The epoch of the democratic revolution is long since past, consequently, the policies that base themselves on non-existent phantoms of "democratic revolution" can only play into the hands of the bourgeoisie. Not at all accidental is the fact that the Stalinists-reformists in Spain during the civil war, and under the German occupation in Europe, carried out their counter-revolutionary work under the guise of a "struggle for democracy."

Such a conception of the tasks facing the proletariat can be no less than a "democratic noose" to strangle the movement of the proletariat. It represents an idealization of the role of the petty bourgeois masses and because it involves capitulation to their conceptions inevitably hands the proletariat bound hand and foot to the "national" bourgeoisie.

Precisely because of this, what the "Three Theses" comrades imagine to be the "clever" utilization by the Stalinists of the so-called "national" movement constituted the greatest betrayal. Our comrades announce "unconditional support" of the "Resistance Movement." But which section of the Resistance Movement, they do not explain. They reject, apparently, the leadership of de Gaulle and the other imperialists. But unconditional support to the Resistance Movement, in its very essence, must mean support for the imperialists who were in control of it. Perhaps they mean unconditional support of the Stalinist wing of the Resistance Movement? We can imagine the shudders such a suggestion would bring to the comrades of the IKD.

However, they land themselves in the camp of Stalinist theory, simply because they have not understood, or have forgotten, the social content of the "democratic" revolution: the creation of the national state; the overthrow of feudalism and the introduction of bourgeois relations; the separation of Church from State; the agrarian revolution.

What they imagine is the basic content of "democracy": freedom of organization, speech, etc., is in reality a by-product of the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. It is the building up of the bulwarks of proletarian democracy within capitalism, points of support for the new system within the framework of the old. Precisely here is the real "retrogressive" mark of fascism: the razing to the ground of all the independent organizations of the proletariat. It is not without importance that this work is accomplished using the petty bourgeoisie as a lever against the working class. True, the petty bourgeoisie can play a different role under certain conditions. But only if the proletariat in an independent struggle fights to win the middle classes to its side and does not dissolve itself into the petty bourgeois swamp.

Certainly the plebian masses carried through the bourgeois revolution in 1789. But they are incapable of ever again playing a leading role, an independent role, in the development of society. They will always be an adjunct to one of the two basic classes, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Where they do not follow the proletariat, as all history shows, they inevitably land in the camp of reaction. Thus in the struggle for the socialist revolution, under the Nazis as well as under the regime of the "liberated" countries and the Allies, the proletariat fights for the winning over of the petty bourgeoisie to the socialist revolution by economic as well as democratic transitional demands. There may be many ebbs and flows in the struggle. At one stage or another the revolutionary communists may demand a fight for elections, local and national, Constituent Assembly, etc. But whether successfully realized or not the struggle for these demands can be but episodes on the road to the proletarian

revolution and the programme of socialist revolution with which they must be linked.

The hopeless muddle and eclectic outlook of the comrades is indicated when they say in one passage, which contradicts everything else they write, that the "democratic revolution" they visualize can only be carried out by the proletariat. As a matter of fact, in the sense in which they visualize "democratic revolution," it is not at all excluded for a longer or shorter period that parliamentary democracy will exist in Western Europe. Indeed, this process is taking place before their eyes in France, Italy and other countries. They are too blinded and biassed by the so-called "national question" to see this process taking place and to understand what it means. No, comrades, this is not the democratic revolution, but the means utilized by the bourgeoisie (*democratic counter-revolution*) in its struggle against the proletarian revolution.

But transitional demands, if allowed to become ends in themselves and separated from the strategic policy to be pursued by the Marxists, must inevitably become a trap for the proletariat. Thus, under the Nazis, the struggle for national liberation had to be linked to the struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe. The collapse of the national states objectively posed the problem of the unification of the proletariat of Europe against all the oppressors.

The movement of the resistance in the various countries was a *class* movement of the proletariat and the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie. Directed against German imperialism under correct guidance and leadership, it should have been directed against the quisling bourgeoisie as well. Events have shown that it was the mass organizations which constituted the core of the resistance movement. The *class antagonism*, despite the Stalinists' attempt to reconcile the proletariat to the "national" bourgeoisie (which could only be done by capitulating to it), could not damp down the class struggle which burst forth in Yugoslavia, Greece, Poland *in civil war even before the ousting of the Germans*. Was this also the result of the attempted carrying through of the democratic revolution?

In reality, the so-called "democratic" struggle, the uniting of the whole "people" was in itself an example of the worst caricature of Popular Frontism and class collaboration, under the pretext of unity with the middle class. It was unity in a national struggle together with the agents of the bourgeoisie while the *decisive sections of the bourgeoisie* were in the camp of the foreign oppressor.

Against the foreign oppressor, as the comrades in Europe correctly understood, the struggle could only be waged as a *class struggle* appealing to the solidarity of the German workers and peasant soldiers. The chauvinist methods of Stalinism and reformism were grist to the mill of Hitler. A "democratic" phase in Europe will result not from the objective need for the phase of democratic revolution but because of the sell-out of the old workers' organizations. Had Stalinism and Social Democracy stood on the program of Marxism, there would have been the possibility of a transition immediately to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The one thing lacking was precisely the revolutionary party which could imbue the masses with a consciousness of their Socialist task. Only the weakness of the revolutionary party and the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism has given capitalism a breathing space. Seeing that it is virtually impossible to rule by the method of fascist or military dictatorship, the bourgeoisie has prepared to switch, for the time being, to the bourgeois democratic manipulation of their Stalino-reformist agents. *This does not constitute a democratic revolution, but, on the contrary, a preventative democratic*

*counter-revolution against the proletariat*. Under modern conditions, there can be no other kind of democratic revolution or regimes. In Germany in 1918, precisely the Social Democracy carried out their hangman's work under the slogan of "democracy." But this was no democratic revolution wherein different classes replaced those already in power. It was a *proletarian revolution* which was strangled by the agents of the bourgeoisie.

Similarly, what Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin (who understood the problem much better apparently, than the comrades of the IKD) were afraid of in Italy, Greece, Germany, France, Belgium, was not the "democratic" revolution, but the proletarian revolution, as Churchill clearly explained.

After the recent experiences in Europe, only those who have abandoned the idea of the class struggle, could in any way doubt this. Our comrades must have a peculiar sense of humor to say, with a straight face, "The situation today is, therefore, in its fundamental traits, the same as that of 1941 and the 'Three Theses' have not only been confirmed, but their practical proposals retain full validity." To back this up, they tell us "The national oppression has remained, only the uniforms of the oppressors have changed. For the French, 'national independence' by grace of the USA, is a farce and an ever-growing part of the French people realize this . . . American imperialism has not the slightest interest in restoring to health an old imperialist competitor. In consequence, it does not lift a finger to put on its feet again, the absolutely broken down French industry and, with it, French national independence." To compare the domination of America over France and "liberated" Europe which is maintained by means of economic pressure, with the direct visible jackboot of the Nazis is ridiculous. In the consciousness of the masses, while there may be a dislike of Uncle Sam, it is against the French bourgeoisie, the trusts and combines that the hatred of the masses is directed. This talk of merely the uniform being changed is an indication of how far from reality the comrades have strayed. The workers' parties and organizations are legal in France and the totalitarian heel has been lifted. It would have been quite impossible for the Anglo-American imperialists to rule France and the other liberated countries with the methods of the Gestapo and SS, if only because of the resistance of their own soldiers to the playing of such a role.

Thus the attempt to justify a false position only leads to further errors. In reality, the position in Europe arising out of the collapse of capitalism and the aftermath of war is that the *most favorable* objective conditions are created for the victory of the proletarian revolution. All the conditions laid down by Lenin are present: loss of confidence and uncertainty of the ruling class, vacillation and discontent of the petty bourgeoisie, readiness of the discontented working class to make the most heroic sacrifices in order to overthrow the capitalists. All that is lacking is the subjective condition—the revolutionary party.

The mass, not alone of the working class, but of large strata of the petty bourgeoisie, are looking *towards Communism* as a way out of the social impasse. Yet the revisionists and faint-hearts put forward a policy far more backward and reactionary than even the reformists in Europe have dared to do, for the period which now unfolds. The "crisis" in Europe consists only in the fact that the Stalinists and reformists are carrying out a policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie in the construction of "democracy." With this, the comrades of the "Three Theses" should really have no quarrel. It is impossible with an orientation towards a "democratic" revolution to carry out any other policy.

If the comrades of the "Three Theses" condemn the Stalinist course, that can only be from force of habit and because they have not thought out their own policy to its necessary conclusions.

The shift away from the ideas of the proletarian revolution and the petty bourgeois capitulation to nationalism can best be seen in the references to Germany. Here, the comrades appeal to the tradition of the national liberation war of 1813-1815, the students' movement (Burschenschaft) and 1848. This is an entirely reactionary and retrogressive movement on the part of the comrades: the great tradition of the *proletarian revolution* of 1918, the tradition of Liebknecht and Luxemburg: this is not even thought worthy of mention!

It is true that, as a consequence of her defeat, Germany will suffer national oppression and dismemberment. But after the last war, Germany was also reduced to the status of a State oppressed by her imperialist rivals. Nevertheless, the emphasis was laid on the *class* issues in Germany by the Leninist Comintern, while opposition to the Versailles Treaty was maintained. Similarly, today the German workers can struggle against the foreign oppressor, only through the struggle against the national bourgeoisie, which collaborates with the victors. The struggle against national oppression can only be waged as a struggle for the proletarian revolution.

The comrades have written a lot of nonsense about the change from the regime of the Nazis to that of the Allies in Europe merely being a change of uniform (as usual with opportunists, they find themselves in warm support of the ideas of the ultra-lefts). Even in Germany itself, that is not so. The Allies rapidly, even if reluctantly, were convinced of the impossibility of merely continuing the Nazi regime with the Allies in the place of the Hitler gangsters. They had neither the internal points of support within the population, the backing among the masses at home, nor the willingness of the British and American troops to play the role of SS. Thus, in order to gain some sort of basis, they have had to allow organizations and rights to the proletariat, however limited these may be.

In Germany, obviously it will be the duty of the Trotskyists to fight for an extension of democratic rights against the dismemberment and reparations, against the occupation of Germany. But, no more than the struggle against Versailles, can such a struggle be regarded as a "detour through the democratic revolution."

The struggle for the national liberation of Germany, by its very essence can only be a struggle directed against the German bourgeoisie. The German ruling class will be only too willing to play the same lackey role to the Allies as the French bourgeoisie played to Nazi imperialism. The German capitalists called Hitler to power, they bear the responsibility for the catastrophe Germany has suffered. That should be the axis around which the propaganda of the German Marxists will revolve. Far from being separated, the struggle for German freedom can only be won as a struggle for the proletarian revolution. The British and American troops will only respond to *class propaganda*, to the idea of a Socialist Germany and a Socialist Europe, as an answer to the nightmare of war and economic misery.

The ideas of the "Three Theses," especially for Germany, are false through and through. In appealing to the moth-eaten and now reactionary tradition of 1813, etc., they are playing the traditional role of the German petty bourgeois intellectuals, whom Marx so scathingly castigated. If these ideas played any role at all, they could only be the basis for a new petty bourgeois reaction. Having been utterly discredited in its Nazi guise,

the Nationalist reaction is quite likely to hark back to these old traditions. The Stalino-Social Democracy, acting as agents of the conquerors, will discredit themselves in the eyes of the masses. If the Trotskyists do not put forward a clear internationalist revolutionary alternative, the way will be cleared for the petty bourgeoisie to rally round such a platform and become a helpless tool once again in the hands of the bourgeoisie. How "imminent" or not the proletarian revolution in Germany may be, it is the goal to which all the "democratic" and economic demands from the transitional bridge and not the bridge to the "democratic" revolution. In Germany, as in Europe, there can be no "democratic" revolution separate and apart from the proletarian revolution.

In Europe today, we stand, not on the threshold of the struggle for "democracy" and "great national wars of liberation" but on the struggle for the proletarian revolution and revolutionary wars against all attempts at capitalist intervention.

To end this article, we can do no better than quote extensively from Trotsky on the problems of the revolution against Fascism in Italy. Foreseeing, in advance, the reactionary arguments of the type of those of the IKD, though he could not have expected that such would emanate from within the ranks of the Fourth International, Trotsky wrote:

... what social character will the anti-fascist revolution acquire? You deny the possibility of a bourgeois revolution in Italy. You are perfectly right. History cannot turn backward a big number of pages, each of which is equivalent to half a decade. The Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party already tried once to duck the question by proclaiming that the revolution would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian but popular, (i.e. "democratic," E.G.). It is a simple repetition of what the Russian Populists said at the beginning of this century when they were asked what character the revolution against Czarism would acquire. And it is still the same answer that the Communist International gives today about China and India. It is quite simply a so-called revolutionary variant of the social democratic theory of Otto Bauer and others, according to which the state can raise itself above the classes, that is, be neither bourgeois nor proletarian. This theory is as pernicious for the proletariat as for the revolution. In China it transformed the proletariat into cannon fodder for the bourgeois counter-revolution.

Every great revolution proves to be "popular" in the sense that it draws into its tracks the entire people. Both the Great French Revolution and the October Revolution were absolutely popular. Nevertheless, the first was bourgeois because it instituted individual property, whereas the second was proletarian because it abolished this same individual property. Only a few petty bourgeois revolutionists, hopelessly backward, can still dream of a revolution that would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian, but "popular" (that is, petty bourgeois). . . .

However, while holding to this or that democratic slogan, we must take good care to fight relentlessly against all forms of democratic charlatanism. The "democratic Republic of the workers," watchword of the Italian Social Democracy, is a sample of this low-grade charlatanism. A republic of the workers can only be a proletarian class state. The democratic republic is only a masked form of the bourgeois state.

**It is precisely the type of "democratic charlatanism" propagated by the supporters of the "Three Theses" that Trotsky warned the cadres of the Fourth International against. Continuation on the road mapped out by the comrades of the IKD must, in the long run, lead to a break with the Fourth International, with the program of the proletarian revolution.**

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# The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party

By WARREN CREEL

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In 1944, the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party ended twenty-six years of activity as an independent party by merging with the Democrats. The party was eliminated by a bureaucratically forced merger although it was still a strong political force. The Farmer-Labor candidate for governor had been defeated in 1938, after eight years of electoral victories. Yet up to the merger the party was still polling 38 percent of the vote in state elections, more than the Minnesota Democratic Party.

The Farmer-Labor Party's quarter century of activity provides the longest experience with a labor party that U.S. history offers up to the present. The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Association was a genuine labor party. It was not just a pro-labor party, it was a party of organized labor, a political federation of labor unions.

The Minnesota Association was started by a convention of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor, and was largely financed by a per-capita tax from the affiliated unions, which included practically the whole trade union movement. Unions in Minnesota carried on the party's political work as a regular union activity.

The Farmer-Labor Party contained another class element, a current of middle class political protest, based particularly on the farmers and small business men. The relation between these two class elements, working class politics on the one hand, and middle class or petty-bourgeois politics on the other, played a large part in governing the party's life, and finally brought about its death. It was a variable relation, shifting from cooperation to opposition at various stages of the movement.

The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party started in 1918, at the end of the First World War and took form from the class pattern of its time. This pattern has changed greatly since then.

The seed of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party was in the Socialist Party, which reached its height just before the First World War. The Socialist weekly *Appeal to Reason* had a circulation of a million, with two to four million printed for special editions. Other Socialist periodicals had mass circulations. The Socialist Party elected mayors in Milwaukee, Minneapolis and elsewhere.

The Socialist movement of that day sprang, not from capitalist decline, but from capitalist growth. Large scale enterprises were taking over the economic scene. Monopolies were ousting the small business men. Capitalism was changing America from an agricultural to an industrial nation, forcing out the farmers by the debt and mortgage foreclosure route.

While the workers organized against capitalism for working class reasons, a separate movement of the middle class attacked capitalism for reasons of its own.

The American petty bourgeoisie, the middle class, steadily reduced and circumscribed by capitalism, formed a series of political movements in the hopeless attempt to stop the historical development that had doomed them. The Populists, who merged with the Democratic Party and became the William Jennings Bryan Democrats, and the Bull Moosers behind Theodore Roosevelt, the phony "trust-buster," and the various "money crank" movements, were some of the expressions of this petty-bourgeois protest against capitalism.

Many of the best and most far sighted of these middle class protesters, both small business men and farmers, joined the Socialist Party, and helped make it the mass movement that it was. But they also helped import their non-working class tendency into the Socialist Party.

## A Fraudulent Alibi

In the Minnesota labor movement before the First World War, as in other states, a large and active Socialist group constantly advocated political action by labor. The labor bureaucrats, who were Republican politicians themselves, found an easy excuse by pointing to the bugaboo of the "conservative, backward farmers." In Minnesota the population was evenly divided 50 percent urban, 50 percent rural during this period. When a resolution for political action was debated at a labor convention the bureaucrats would agree that labor needed political action, but they would say, "You can't win an election without the farm vote, boys, and the farmers are conservative, they are anti-labor, they always vote Republican, so it's useless to try."

That notion exploded in 1916 when the farmers organized the Nonpartisan League and swept into office a state ticket and a legislature in North Dakota in their first election campaign.

The Nonpartisan League soon grew into a mass movement covering the middle west, putting its candidates into office in a large group of states, and then was liquidated so thoroughly that the scope of the movement is almost forgotten. It was strictly a farmers' group, a small proprietors' party, an organization of petty-bourgeois political action.

The Nonpartisan League built on the farm following of the old Socialist Party; the organizers would go into a county with the list of subscribers to the *Appeal to Reason* as their starting point. The League won immediate mass support, gaining startlingly prompt election success. In Minnesota it soon gained a large membership. The League scored substantial achievements in economic and social legislation in several states. But it set itself no goals beyond this, and even during its victories fell to pieces. In the space of a few years the national Nonpartisan League went through its complete evolution ending in death.

The First World War brought a crisis for organized labor which was attacked by a nationwide open shop drive, and in Minnesota by anti-union prosecutions of a particularly vicious Minnesota Public Safety Commission. While this emergency turned labor's eyes to a political defense, the Nonpartisan League put a stop to the labor bureaucrat's stall about the impossibility of getting the farmers into motion. It was labor's move.

At a convention of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor in July 1918, Socialists who were delegates from numerous unions offered a resolution calling for a state labor political convention. In the war atmosphere, many delegates were afraid to sign the resolution for fear of being labeled pro-German. But the resolution was nonetheless passed and the State Federation called the unions to a convention which set up the Working People's Nonpartisan Political League. The labor movement took as its model the farmers, who had been called "backward" for so many years.



At first the labor and farm leagues worked jointly in the election campaigns. In 1923 the separate leagues were merged into the Farmer-Labor Federation, and later the name was changed to Farmer-Labor Association. This was the membership organization, made up of both affiliated unions, paying a per capita tax of two cents a member a month, and Farmer-Labor clubs, with membership dues of a dollar a year.

The rise of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party was not an exceptional one-state development, but part of a national political upsurge in the postwar period which brought the organization of similar Farmer-Labor parties in many states, and the national campaign for LaFollette for President in 1924. The exceptional state feature was this, that during its rise the Minnesota party was given official labor sponsorship and organized labor party machinery. While in other states Farmer-Labor parties were formed by a few unions, in Minnesota the State Federation of Labor issued the call to the whole labor movement. The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Association drew its finances from a per capita paid by stable union organizations.

### "Declaration of Principles"

Out of all the nationwide organizations, the Minnesota movement, having official organized labor backing, was the only one to survive.

In spite of continued loyalty from Minnesota farmers, and a continued strong farm vote, the dues-paying membership in rural counties dropped to almost nothing in a few years, and the function of financing the Association fell completely on the labor unions through the 'Twenties.

In various detailed points the Association's "Declaration of Principles" expressed its general aim, to serve as the political arm of the working people, without differentiation between workers and farmers.

The Farmer-Labor movement seeks to unite into a political organization all persons engaged in agriculture and other useful industry, and those in sympathy with their interests, for the purpose of securing legislation that will protect and promote the economic welfare of the wealth producers.

And further,

It maintains that the prevailing inequality of opportunity is due to special privileges and monopolistic advantages, which can and should be abolished by legislative action.

It declares that the government at present is dominated by the few and its powers are used to serve special interests. Money and credits, market and exchange facilities, the means of transportation and communication and the natural resources and other basic industries of the nation are practically monopolized by an industrial and financial oligarchy, which is in a position to extract tribute from all who live by labor and to keep great masses of people in a condition of unemployment and destitution by manipulating the productive powers of the nation.

It aims to rescue the government from the control of the privileged few and make it function for the use and benefit of all by abolishing monopoly in every form, and to establish in place thereof a system of public ownership and operation of monopolized industries, which will afford every able and willing worker an opportunity to work and will guarantee the enjoyment of the proceeds thereof, thus increasing the amount of available wealth, eradicating unemployment and destitution, and abolishing industrial autocracy.

As immediate aims the party fought for labor rights and labor strength and protection of labor organization, for better prices for farm products, relief from farm debts, and strengthening of farm cooperative organizations. It campaigned for "honest government" and fought the corrupt old parties.

It always pressed the point that the two-party system was a fraud, that the workers and farmers couldn't win in a choice between two old parties, both controlled by the capitalist class.

The effect of this Farmer-Labor program was electrifying. The members sacrificed to finance campaigns. They distributed literature, made house-to-house drives to register voters, etc., to build the party of the working class, "to promote the economic welfare of the wealth producers."

### Why Party Survived

Victory in each immediate election is not necessary for a party's survival so long as it has this class orientation. Its very existence is a victory. The labor members of the party feel well rewarded for their campaign efforts by getting a few spokesman into effective positions. And they are right, for a spokesman who is a servant of the labor party is a great gain. Thus, a few Farmer-Laborites in the Minnesota state legislature were able to force real concessions for both farmers and organized labor in the 'Twenties. The record of legislation, especially farm legislation, won by a Farmer-Labor minority in the Minnesota state legislature is phenomenal.

When the party began getting majorities in the 'Thirties, the petty-bourgeois office-holders who had jumped on the bandwagon put forward the idea that only majorities and election victories can count, because that's all that can count for jobs for office-holders. They set to work to weaken the program and turn away from the class line to appeal to everybody, so as to always have the majority and the election victory. Dropping the class orientation for victory at any price brought defeat and eventually killed the party.

The prosperity of the 'Twenties was a lean time for political protest movements. The Minnesota party, however, was able to survive the general decline that killed off the national Farmer-Labor movement precisely because of its stable organized labor backing. While the Minnesota FLP suffered along with the rest, it continued to be, not a third party, but the second party. Minnesota politics was a fight between the Republican and Farmer-Labor parties, with the Democratic Party a poor third, even through the Coolidge prosperity era.

The first election campaign of the Farmer-Labor Party, in 1918, gave this vote for governor (to the nearest thousand):

1918 FINAL ELECTION FOR GOVERNOR OF MINNESOTA	
Farmer-Labor, David H. Evans.....	112,000
Republican, J. A. A. Burnquist.....	167,000
Democrat, Fred E. Wheaton.....	77,000

In 1920 the candidates were run in the final election under the name "Independent." (All votes show larger than 1918, because the suffrage amendment had given women the vote.)

1920 FINAL ELECTION FOR GOVERNOR OF MINNESOTA	
Independent, Henrik Shipstead.....	281,000
Republican, J. O. A. Preus.....	416,000
Democrat, L. C. Hodgson.....	81,000

The party's percentage of the vote, it will be noted, had dropped badly. In 1922 the movement abandoned "nonpartisan" tactics altogether, fought all the way through the primaries and general election under the Farmer-Labor name, and came very close to victory, with the Democrats still nowhere:

1922 FINAL ELECTION FOR GOVERNOR OF MINNESOTA	
Farmer-Labor, Magnus Johnson.....	295,000
Republican, J. O. A. Preus.....	316,000
Democrat, Edward Indrehus.....	80,000



In 1922 the party elected two Farmer-Labor congressmen and a senator.

Even in 1928, which marked the low point in the party vote, it kept its second position, exceeding the Democrats by a small margin. In 1930, with the outbreak of the depression, the party elected the first Farmer-Labor governor and started the eight years of Farmer-Labor state administration.

In the farmer and labor alliance trouble did not develop in the form that might be expected, as a conflict between the interests of the two groups. In Minnesota the farmers and labor cooperated very well on the level of immediate issues. The farmers were most favorably impressed by what the labor movement was willing and able to do for them.

However the genuine farmers as well as pseudo-farmers—small town bankers and lawyers—were an influence for retreat from a working class orientation. When the movement was taking shape there were sharp battles over opportunist steps, such as the nomination of Henrik Shipstead for U.S. Senator in 1922. The farmers, of course, considered themselves as holding the party on the correct middle of the road. As Marx explained, the petty bourgeois, pulled two ways by his double class position, “inwardly flatters himself that he is impartial and has found the right equilibrium . . .”

In Association conventions the farm and labor delegates represented entirely different types of organizations. The farm delegations came from a few small or even inactive clubs, since the dues-paying rural membership dropped away after the first wave of organization. Yet they cast convention votes all out of proportion to their membership, because the Association constitution allotted votes by areas in proportion to Farmer-Labor strength in the state election. As long as the party's farm vote held up, which it did, delegates from a few small rural clubs voted for half the Farmer-Labor Association.

The labor section was basically a political federation of labor unions, a genuine labor party organization. It had in operation the elementary machinery that is necessary for real working class politics. Political activity started in the affiliated labor union locals, where political discussion, reports of political delegates, and political campaign activity were part of the regular business of each meeting, and payment of per-capita to the labor political organization was a constant part of the budget. Delegates from the unions of each city met in monthly meetings or oftener, as the Farmer-Labor Association city central committee. This went on month after month and year after year.

In the cities, on the fringe of the political federation of unions there were other organizations, also part of the Farmer-Labor Association, and also sending delegates to the Farmer-Labor central committee. These were mainly Farmer-Labor clubs; some other organizations, such as Socialist Party locals also were affiliated. All these organizations played a secondary role to the unions, until the days of decline of the party.

A functioning labor party organization, based on the unions, is a powerful means of holding the party to a class program. The petty-bourgeois politicians wanted to turn the party away from the class program and toward compromise. They soon saw that they would have to begin by eliminating the labor party form of organization and they tried it. The leader in this attempt was F. A. Pike of the Nonpartisan League. Pike was a Democrat, not a farmer but a lawyer, the Nonpartisan League's attorney. He was state chairman of the “Farmer-Labor Party” which was the non-membership skeleton “organization” required by the state election law for all parties on the ballot. He pro-

posed liquidating the membership organizations and operating with only ordinary election machinery like the two old parties.

Some of the story of this struggle was retold in the May 13, 1925 issue of the movement's state newspaper (then the *Farmer-Labor Advocate*, later named *Farmer-Labor Leader*):

A peculiar conflict of opinion has prevailed within the Farmer-Labor movement since its organization. Many of the supporters coming from the old political parties cannot see the necessity for maintaining active organization and educational work between campaigns. These voters have not yet been able to discover the vital difference between the Farmer-Labor Party and the old capitalist parties. . . .

Perhaps the most intense discussion of party affairs arose out of the campaigns of 1922-23 over the difference of views between the state chairman of the Farmer-Labor Party, F. A. Pike, and state chairman of the Working People's league, [ex-Socialist] Wm. Mahoney. . . .

Mr. Pike, as head of the Farmer-Labor Party, took the position that it was identical with the old parties in form and method and that it was not permissible nor necessary for it to assume any other functions than that prescribed by the state law creating and governing political parties. On his side of the controversy were a large number of persons who did not have a fundamental grasp of the Farmer-Labor movement and considered it simply a variation of the old parties.

On the other side, Mr. Mahoney and others maintained that the Farmer-Labor movement and the party that represented it was fundamentally different from the old parties, and required an entirely different form of organization to accomplish its purpose.

Pike was defeated at a convention in St. Cloud by a coalition of trade unionist and Communist Party forces. This set the movement on the path of labor party organization and cleared the way for the merger of the labor and farm leagues into the Farmer-Labor Federation. The following year the trade unionists expelled the Communists and changed the name to Farmer-Labor Association.

## Olson and the FLP

The struggle against the forces led by Pike forecast the party struggle of the 'Thirties, when another lawyer from the Democratic Party, named Floyd B. Olson, was to try again to substitute old party forms for the labor party machinery.

Floyd Olson, a capable, courageous and spectacular politician, had been county attorney in Minneapolis for several years, and had made himself immensely popular. The depression offered the Farmer-Laborites a chance of victory in 1930, and they wanted Olson as standard-bearer. As a condition of accepting the nomination, he demanded that the Association convention vote him a free hand in making appointments. The convention granted it.

Olson promptly proceeded to set up an organization of “Olson All-Party Committees,” outside the Association. These were made up of band-wagon climbing Republicans, Democrats, and political opportunists of every stripe, who supported Olson on the promise of state jobs, or other political deals. The task of the “All-Party” politicians was to campaign on the “good man” platform. Meanwhile the Association was to keep on getting votes for the Farmer-Labor program.

The campaign of Olson and his supporters was an open effort to “slur over contradictions and differences,” and to “unite people of different views and tendencies, and subordinate clarification of their differences to success in the organization struggle.” Such an aim required them to get rid of the Association. Olson began his attempt to replace and eliminate the Association immediately after he was elected. But he ran into trouble, and a lot of trouble.

This labor party, even though it was divided within itself by its two-class composition, even though it was crippled by limitation to one state, even though at this time it lacked leadership conscious of the party's role and organizational needs, still this labor party showed an amazing vitality, a capacity to absorb punishment and keep moving forward.

Olson went into office as the first Farmer-Labor governor, but he appointed old party politicians from the "All-Party" machine to policy-forming state posts, and even appointed a Republican as State Personnel director, in charge of hiring for all state jobs. Naturally, state patronage went to "All-Partyites." The loyal Farmer-Laborites stood out in the cold for a while before they woke up to what their idol was doing, and then they started a party struggle which boiled in the movement for years.

The struggle couldn't be resolved as Olson had planned it, because even the state jobs did not succeed in building up the "All-Party" machine into a party to replace the Association. The Association just did not submit to being eliminated. In spite of political patronage starvation it grew, until it forced substantial political recognition from Olson. When Olson came up for re-election he was forced to recognize the strength of the Association.

Yet through the years the political opportunists slowly gained. They outmaneuvered the rank-and-file Farmer-Laborites, principally by exploiting and betraying the loyalty of the members to the party. The "All-Party" politicians themselves could accomplish little in the fight, because they couldn't command respect or trust from the party's rank and file. It always had to be politicians from the Association who served as cover.

The worker members had strong organizational loyalty. Even when skeptical, they preferred to try almost anything before forcing a break that would jeopardize their party. The protesting worker Farmer-Laborites, in the various committees from the state Association, from local clubs and affiliated unions would confer again and again with state and party officials on their grievances. What the workers wanted, at bottom, was to take the situation into their own hands and do it their way, but the matter was always presented to them as if they did not have that choice. It was made to appear that they had to choose between accepting a bad bargain or breaking ranks and injuring the whole organization. Faced with this choice the workers often backed down, "for the good of the party."

Various items of the Farmer-Labor program, on which the administration had been delaying, finally saw some action as a result of Association pressure. In the end the administration yielded on the patronage issue, which was a burning one in years of unemployment like 1932 and 1933. A system of preferred lists was set up for state jobs, made up on endorsements from Farmer-Labor clubs. Although some big policy-forming jobs went to "All-Partyites," a Farmer-Labor endorsement became necessary for the general run of state jobs.

In this period the Association grew by leaps, previously unorganized counties were covered with Farmer-Labor clubs in a rush, and the club membership began to rival the affiliated unions in size. By the convention of 1934 for the first time all counties of the state had Farmer-Labor organizations. There was no guarantee of the political interest of the new members. A large part of them eventually came to be controlled through their state jobs, and acted as a state employee machine in the Association. The attempt to replace the Association with an "All-Party" machine had failed, but the administration captured the Association by the patronage route. For a time finally came

when the Association's state committee voted on organization issues squarely on job lines, with all the state employees on the committee voting to uphold the governor, and all the rest voting against the governor. In the end the administration had a majority of job-holders on the state committee.

Unbelievable as it seems, with all the advantages on the side of the politicians, there was still a period of several years of struggle before the Farmer-Labor members were licked.

The Minneapolis workers found that the Farmer-Labor Party was less dependable as a class instrument than their unions. Early in the 'Thirties at the Minneapolis city election the Farmer-Labor voters turned out the Republican mayor, on the issue that his police had killed two pickets during the truck strike. The new Farmer-Labor mayor was, not a militant worker, nor a union worker at all, but a lawyer named Thomas Latimer, a former Socialist Party candidate for governor. Before many weeks Mayor Latimer marched in person at the head of his police to escort scabs through a picket line at the Flour City Iron Works, where later his police tear-gassed and shot pickets, killing two bystanders.

Latimer was following the advice of certain conservative Minnesota labor leaders. These bureaucrats were terrified by the strike wave, which was under the leadership of the Minnesota Socialist Workers Party; they were alarmed by the rank-and-file activity this stirred up, and the militant leadership this was advancing in the unions. They wanted the Farmer-Labor mayor to make the labor movement safe for union bureaucracy by stopping mass strikes and sending all labor disputes to government arbitration. Latimer created a city Board of Mediation, appointed some employers and conservative labor officials to it, and called on all strikers to go back to work without a settlement, leaving their disputes to his board.

When the strikers wouldn't trust their fate to Latimer's Mediation Board he lost his head and tried to use the police to enforce his "labor peace" with bullets. Latimer and his kind not only couldn't understand working class action, they were panic-stricken by it.

But the workers had a hold over the Farmer-Labor mayor, even such a miserable example as Latimer. Minneapolis labor boiled. The movement held a protest mass meeting to which it summoned Latimer and *he had to respond*. Behind the scenes the party officials and union leaders tried to close ranks to protect Latimer ("these protests will embarrass the governor") but they only succeeded in keeping him from being bodily thrown out of office. He remained a political cripple for the rest of his term.

## Aftermath of 1934 Victory

The party officials thought the "radical platform" adopted in 1934 under the workers' pressure would kill the party, but in the 1934 election the Farmer-Labor ticket as a whole polled better than ever before. Olson was reelected by a good margin, although his personal vote went down a little from the previous point. It was more a party, and less an "All-Party" vote. Still the convention's action scared the Farmer-Labor state officials out of their wits, and they set out again to get rid of the inconvenient rank-and-file, more precisely the membership organization form.

One of their plans was to eliminate the Association entirely by merging with the Progressive Party of Wisconsin. The latter was a LaFollette family affair, with no membership organization to demand adherence to a program. The party tops maneuvered frantically. They removed the state secretary of the

Association because he pushed Association policies against Olson's wishes. They discharged the editor of the *Farmer-Labor Leader* because he supported the Association against the "All-Partyites." They changed the paper's name.

With all their scurrying they couldn't find a substitute for the Association, nor a way to get along without its votes. The Farmer-Labor Association continued to stand for a certain program to thousands of workers and farmers, and they clung to it. The office-holders only succeeded in tightening up control to stop any more voice from the ranks, to make more clear the widening gap between the worker members and the petty-bourgeois politicians in office. They succeeded in adding more and more to the feeling of the worker members that it was no longer their own party. Thus they dealt mortal wounds by striking at the basic program of the movement, "to serve as the political arm of the working class." Nevertheless it took four years before the movement suffered an election defeat, and ten years before the Association could be liquidated.

The movement became weakened especially at its core, the affiliated unions. The dissatisfaction of the union members led them to demand party discipline, which demand comes in the normal course of events in a labor party. But this dissatisfaction was used by the large bloc of labor officials whose real feelings were against the labor party. Every political grievance of the union members gave them opportunity to do deadly work.

The labor skates used every opportunity to stir up discontent with the Farmer-Labor Party, and to channel that discontent away from an attempt to enforce discipline. They did not want to improve the party, but only to split the unions away from it. They were in a fine position to deceive the union members. They denounced the same politicians that the members denounced, and cursed the same betrayals. They stressed the main issue, that the party no longer belonged to the workers. Only their remedy was not to get rid of the petty-bourgeois parasites, but to march out and leave the party in their hands.

Floyd Olson's early death in 1936 brought on a scramble for control which speeded all the tendencies of decline in the party. Elmer Benson, who was elected governor by the Farmer-Labor Party after Olson's death, was a prisoner of the deals he had made for support from various blocs in the party. Benson was a small town banker, with no knowledge of the labor movement and no skill in politics. In the party struggle he grabbed for allies and hung on.

## Perfidious Role of Stalinists

It was the Communist Party (Stalinists) who cashed in on this situation through their superior organizing techniques and methods plus their recklessness resulting from their desertion of working class principles. Benson and the Stalinists used the Farmer-Labor organization and state patronage strictly for their own ends. Veteran Farmer-Laborites were spurned, union organizations rebuked. Union representatives were refused appointments to see the governor, and labor's program was thrown out the window by Benson.

Benson's antics brought great satisfaction to the labor skates. They proclaimed that the movement was in a hopeless mess from Stalinist control, and could no longer be considered an instrument of labor. They urged the unions to walk out, and set up separate labor central political committees in each city, to serve as direct political arms of organized labor. They proposed such committees as a cure for the sick Farmer-Labor Party, by giving simon-pure independent labor political action, the genuine article, representing labor alone and excluding the non-worker elements. In practice this was a step back to the Gompers

method of an "independent" labor choice between two identically anti-labor old parties. The Farmer-Labor mess was so bad, and the workers were so sick of the interlopers, that this proposal succeeded in confusing genuine Farmer-Laborites in the unions. The labor fakers' proposed "reform," of course, turned out to be a bridge back to old party politics, to Republican Party politics for most of the labor skates. The labor political committees didn't give Republican endorsements, but they tied up the labor movement while the skates themselves went in droves on "Labor Volunteer Committees for Stassen."

Some Farmer-Labor militants had welcomed the Stalinists, expecting them to be allies against the "All-Party" politicians. But entanglement with the old parties was exactly the Stalinist plan. They led the fight against a working class program, and united with any discredited reactionary who would go with their bloc.

## Scuttling of the FLP

The party's retreat from its working class orientation killed it politically during Benson's administration. In the fall of 1936 he was elected by the largest majority ever polled for governor in a Minnesota election. In 1938 Benson was ousted and the Republican Stassen elected by the largest majority ever polled except one, the record set by Benson two years before!

Following this catastrophic defeat, the Association called a post-election convention, in January of 1939, to cure the ills of the party.

Pre-convention maneuvers showed that the "All-Party" politicians and conservative labor leaders planned to use the Stalinists as scapegoats for the defeat. That convention was reported in this magazine. (Walter Bierce, "A Party Without a Program," *The New Internationalist*, March 1939.)

At the 1939 convention the party bureaucrats and labor bureaucrats, in close teamwork, finished off the Farmer-Labor Party. They used up the whole convention with a sham battle on the Stalinist issue, and protected their own records by keeping out every word about program. The convention did nothing but adopt a "purge" rule against the Stalinists, which nobody took seriously.

The role of the labor officialdom appears in the *St. Paul Union Advocate*, in its issue of February 2, 1939:

On no less than half a dozen occasions the majority of the Ramsey county (St. Paul) delegates were on the point of walking out of the convention in a body. Had they withdrawn from the convention it would not have been for the purpose of holding a rump convention, but to definitely wash their hands of the Farmer-Labor Party.

And how the labor skates were urging the unions to that conclusion!

A few days later the Duluth Central Labor Political Committee withdrew from the Farmer-Labor Association. That's what the committee had been created for—to withdraw. A general union exodus followed, leaving the Association machinery in the hands of the Stalinists, in spite of the "purge."

In the Minnesota election of 1942 the union bureaucrats went the farthest in open support of Stassen, paying off because the latter used every resource of state machinery down to his State Labor Conciliator in order to force the Minneapolis drivers into Tobin's AFL union, prohibiting a vote on whether they preferred 544 CIO, under the leadership of the Minnesota section of the Socialist Workers Party who had built the drivers union. Their hands trembling with gratitude, these skates rushed labor endorsements to Stassen, and Joe Ball, and any other Republican who would accept a labor endorsement.

In the 1942 general election the Farmer-Labor nominee, Hjalmar Peterson, a weak candidate of a split movement, with no organized union support, still polled 38 percent of the vote.

That was the last Farmer-Labor campaign. In 1944 the Farmer-Labor Association was merged into the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. The merger was a Stalinist bureaucratic move from start to finish, perpetrated in order to demonstrate loyalty to Roosevelt. It was not a Minnesota plan, but part of the same world-wide Stalinist maneuver that brought the formal burial of the Third International, and the dissolution of the American Communist Party at the time.

When we sum up the lessons of Minnesota's labor party certain main points stand out:

1. Minnesota's experience refutes the assertion that the two-party system of politics is "natural" to the United States. The two-party system was breached when class issues were raised. Conditions for labor party development were not highly favorable, as the collapse of the movement in the rest of the country showed. Yet the class division in politics turned out to be the natural one, so natural and so strong that even this isolated, distorted, diluted and crippled working class party hung on for a quarter of a century and won victories, and it took the reactionary period of the Second World War and the abysmal treachery of the Stalinists to kill it.

2. The Minnesota experience gives evidence against the proposition that a national labor party in America, in this period, could settle down into a stable, bureaucratic labor machine, holding the workers in line by distributing a few reformist crumbs, like the labor and Socialist parties of Europe in an earlier period. In Minnesota there was no such stable relationship between the members and the conservative labor

leaders. The bureaucrats were willing enough; all they wanted was to settle down. But they couldn't find a way to manage it. They had to settle down with Stassen.

Labor parties hardened into stable reformist machines in Europe in the upswing of capitalism, during a lengthy period when the ruling class had some degree of security and some substantial economic concessions to offer the workers. The labor party movement in the United States by contrast, comes when capitalism and its class relations are at a later stage, a higher level.

This same high level of class relations, which makes the first steps slow, will greatly aid the party once it gets a start. The character of the times will not help the bureaucrats in their efforts to turn the labor party into an efficient brake to hold back the workers.

3. The Minnesota movement scored its greatest successes when the workers took the leadership. The workers had to act for their own class program, not only free from capitalist politics, but free from non-working class influences in the party's ranks. In the coming national labor party the workers will find the same paramount need to build working class independence.

Events will confirm the need for independent working class political action and help them in this task. The new national labor party movement will develop in a stormier period of economic crisis, and with a more advanced working class than existed in America at the time of the previous national labor party movement. The achievements of the Minnesota workers under much less favorable conditions have shown the tremendous power latent in the American working class, only waiting for a chance to find expression in political growth and struggle.

# European Perspectives and Policy

## 1. A Letter to the European Secretariat of the Fourth International

By FELIX MORROW

EDITOR'S NOTE: Continuing the discussion of European perspectives and policy which has been conducted in these pages, we publish here a letter by Felix Morrow and a reply by the European Secretariat of the Fourth International. Both documents were originally printed in the Internal Bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party.

July 10, 1945

To the European Secretariat:

I urge upon you the necessity of undertaking a new approach to the situation, quite different from that embodied in your February 1944 theses and the January 1945 resolution.

To plunge immediately to the heart of the question, what was wrong with the theses and the resolution was that their authors were bewitched by the "objectively revolutionary" situation. True, one can find a paragraph or two in which they recognize well enough that a revolutionary party is needed. But even these paragraphs are revealing of the falsity of the approach. The whole weight of the documents is given over to portraying the revolutionary nature of the situation, and then, almost buried amid the glowing picture of the coming (and already begun) revolution comes: "The only thing lacking in the principal countries of Europe is true revolutionary parties."

The inevitable result of such an approach is that your conception of the perspectives is dictated by your preoccupation

with the "objectively revolutionary" situation, and is not even modified by your recognition of the need for a real revolutionary party.

To demonstrate this, let me cite a few examples from the February 1944 theses:

1. "With an inexorable necessity, the imperialist war is developing toward its inevitable transformation into civil war." Here Lenin's exhortation to turn the imperialist war into civil war becomes, instead, an objective function of the social process independently of the intervention of the revolutionary party (which in actual fact does not exist yet).

2. Extending this objectively revolutionary situation to the Soviet Union, you conclude that "the rapid development of revolutionary events and the situation in the USSR will create all the conditions for a break between the masses and the Stalinist leaders." But can this break inside the Soviet Union come without the leadership of a revolutionary party? And is there such a revolutionary party? Here you don't even mention the problem of a revolutionary party in the Soviet Union. Making revolution an objective function of the social process you end up with such fantastic ideas as that "the large scale use of the Red Army as a counter-revolutionary force is excluded," and that the Soviet bureaucracy will be unable "to control the

revolutionary movements which the occupation and even the approach of the Red Army will unfurl in the countries of Central and Western Europe."

3. "The German revolution remains the backbone of the European revolution." "These masses will not stop with a few fake conquests . . . The German proletariat, stronger than ever in numbers, more concentrated than ever, will from the first play a decisive role. Soldiers' committees in the army and workers' and peasants' councils in the rear will rise to oppose to the bourgeois power the power of the proletariat . . . The most favorable conditions will exist for a victorious revolutionary movement." You wrote all this without a single reference to the fact that the German proletariat would begin its life after Nazi defeat under military occupation and without a revolutionary party; and without the slightest attempt at appraising the state of class-consciousness of the German proletariat after eleven years of Nazism. Is this not a clear example of assuming a revolutionary development purely on the basis of objective factors without any regard for the subjective factors? (And even then you did so by leaving out the objective factor of military occupation.)

I was very much dismayed when I first saw this false approach in the theses, but consoled myself with the thought that they were written under the conditions of Nazi occupation, when so much information was lacking and the need imperious to hold out great hope for the future. But the January 1945 resolution, written under quite different conditions, begins by confirming the February 1944 perspectives, repeats the formula about the "inexorable necessity" which transforms the imperialist war into civil war, etc.

## Greek Events

You were writing after the terrible defeat in Greece, yet you wrote: "The recent Belgian and Greek events constitute the first phase of the revolution which has effectively commenced in these countries." The defeat becomes proof of "the first wave of the revolution which has begun." This would be true enough if revolutions were an objective function of the social process. But since instead they are made by workers of flesh and blood, the Greek defeat has proved to be a very strong deterrent on the workers of all Europe, weighing them down with the thought that their struggles might meet the same fate; especially weighing them down because there is no revolutionary party (one, that is, big enough to reach them and get them to listen) to explain to them why the Greek proletariat was defeated unnecessarily thanks to Stalinism.

I hope I have proved my point that the theses and resolution were based on a false conception. I should add that the next resolution of the European Secretariat should in all honesty not pass over the mistakes of the earlier documents but should note them and explain how they came to be made.

What is urgently necessary today is to draw all the necessary consequences from the fact that our cadres everywhere are tiny and that the great masses, insofar as they are politically active, are following the Communist and Socialist parties. This approach, if systematically carried out, does not ignore the objective situation but does subordinate it to its proper place.

One of the first conclusions to be drawn from this approach—and we must say it openly—is that the present situation is not to be compared with the aftermath of the last war. We are not repeating 1917-1923. We are in a far more backward situation. At that time the October revolution made all the difference. It was the inspiration for the German revolution. It meant that under the inspiration of the example of the Russian Bolshe-

vik Party, there could be established very quickly although starting from very little, mass revolutionary parties in Germany, France, etc.

Now, however, we cannot expect such a process. Instead of mass revolutionary parties confronting reformist parties of relatively equal size, our tiny cadres confront two mass reformist parties. In France, our few hundreds confront a Stalinist party of nearly a million!

Under these conditions, can we proceed directly to the building of a revolutionary party? Or must we enter one of the reformist parties, constitute a faction in it and work in the direction of a split out of which we will come with sufficient forces to begin seriously building the revolutionary party?

It is, unfortunately, rather late to pose this question. It should have been posed two years ago, certainly a year ago. At the October 1943 plenum it was already clear to me that the Italian events demonstrated that throughout Europe the Communist and Socialist parties would emerge as the parties of the masses, but I failed to draw then the necessary conclusions from this fact concerning the question: party or faction?

The question, of course, cannot be answered for all countries uniformly on the basis of the general situation. But I am positive that in Italy, where the Socialist party disposes of considerable masses, our comrades should never have formed a party but should have gone into (in the case of most of them it would have simply meant, I believe, to remain in) the Socialist party. I am also positive that it would be a terrible error if our German comrades attempted immediately to form a party of their own in Germany; their place is in the Socialist party.

In Belgium, the Labor Party is still the party of the masses. I am sure that in the rosy hue of the days of liberation, our Belgian comrades could have gotten in and established themselves as a faction, with their own paper, etc. Today no doubt it would be far more difficult, but I suspect that it could still be done. In any event, I propose that the question be investigated without prejudice and with a cold-blooded realism.

In France, the problem is perhaps more complicated. But instead of looking at the difficulties, look coldly at the fact that the membership of our party is pitifully small. Perhaps direct entry into the SFIO will not be possible. But there can be found another way—for example, through an understanding with Malraux' wing of the MLN.

I don't claim a priori that entry is imperative and can be achieved in every single country I have named. Investigation by you and those in each country will have to determine the facts. But what I demand is a real recognition of the problem, and a serious investigation without reservations in advance.

If the cost of entry in some cases is the temporary loss of a public faction organ and/or no guarantee of the right of constituting a faction, that is no argument against entry. Remind the comrades that in the U.S. we entered the SP with neither an organ or an admitted faction. For a time we were in one caucus with the miserable so-called Militants who allowed us about one innocuous article per month in their weekly and monthly organs. Two or three good pamphlets can serve as a substitute for a public faction organ for a while. It might be very advantageous to live for a while in one of the "left" factions instead of openly having one of your own.

As loyal members of the Socialist party you will be able to contact Communist party workers in a direct and political way which is scarcely open to you today.

I could go on at length on this question, but I leave further comment until I can grapple concretely with your objections, if any.



Whether in the Socialist party or outside, the primary approach to Communist and Socialist party members must be geared, not to *our* estimate of the situation but to *their* consciousness. This generalization will be readily agreed to by every comrade, but perhaps not some of the examples I offer.

The question of the monarchy in Italy and Belgium is an example.

I would like to know why the Belgian party's program of action was silent on the monarchy. If I recall correctly, the demand for a democratic republic was in the 1934-36 program of action. Why isn't it in the present program? The problem of problems is to tear the masses away from the SP and CP. The way to do this is on the vital political questions which actually arise and appear vital to the masses, and not on the questions *we* think vital. Ever since the expulsion of the Nazis, and with Leopold out of the country, the question of his return was brewing. It seems clear the masses felt very strongly on the question. When he did attempt to return, what was our task? To condemn the SP and CP ministers for saying they would resign if he returned, and to demand instead that they remain the government, expel the bourgeois-royal ministers, arrest the royal family and proclaim the democratic republic. In other words, transform the dispute on Leopold into a question of abolition of the monarchy. This would be in consonance with the feelings of the masses and would appear to them as a reasonable and possible demand upon their leaders.

The European Secretariat's theses went on at great length about Italy but neither there nor in the resolution is there any reference to the demand for a democratic republic in Italy. Yet there the question is even more sharply posed than in Belgium, so sharply that the CP and SP have to give lip-service to it. Fortunately, our Italian party understands this question; it has the demand for the republic in its program of action. But I fear that it is too isolated from the masses to drive home the point (and perhaps the fact that they are not encouraged by the rest of the International causes the Italian comrades to hesitate to concentrate on this demand). If we have a faction in the Socialist party, it could make great capital contrasting the actual behavior toward the monarchy of the Socialist ministers with their lip-service to the struggle against the monarchy; demand that the SP and CP press concentrate on the demand for ending the monarchy; demand demonstrations to force Umberto to abdicate, etc., etc.

The monarchical question would enable us to say to the SP and CP members: Your leaders promise to lead you eventually to socialism and meanwhile point to the difficulties which prevent going now to socialism; but those difficulties do not prevent us from finishing now with the monarchy; can leaders and a program which cannot even get rid of the monarchy, can they be trusted to lead us to socialism?

I give the example of the monarchical question only because it is glaringly absent from your documents. But even the democratic demands which you do mention, you do so in such a way that I cannot help but consider perfunctory. For example, you mention the demand for the constituent assembly but hasten to add: "On the other hand, to launch such demands in the midst of a revolutionary crisis, when there are actually in existence elements of dual power, would be the most unpardonable of errors." Here again you are bewitched by your idea of an "objectively revolutionary" situation and without considering the effect on that situation of the fact that the revolutionary party is still only a tiny cadre. In another paragraph you say "that in the present period the economic and democratic 'minimum' program is very rapidly out-distanced by the very logic of the mass struggle itself."

I will venture a prediction, dear comrades: that the "minimum" program will not be outdistanced in France until you have won the status of a legal party and *Verite* is a legal newspaper.

*Everything* should be subordinated to the fight for legality today in France. One or two issues of *Verite* were very good in this connection, particularly that devoted to the letter, *Liberte de la Presse*. But neither from *Verite* or other sources do I get an impression that the French party is making a really systematic fight for legality.

Such a fight requires among other things a perfectly legal defense committee in whose name it is to be made. I think I have some understanding of the difficulties in Paris today, but I am sure that some literary people like Gide, some politico-literaries like Malraux, etc., can be gotten to sign their names as members of a defense committee or to a petition asking the legalization of *Verite*. With this legal cover, the party members can be mobilized to go from door to door collecting names. *Verite* or its successor should be filled with letters endorsing your campaign, not only from big names but also from simple workers. You should ask the British and American parties to circulate petitions getting well-known people to petition de Gaulle for the legalization of *Verite*, and publish this material in France. In a word, the usual techniques of defense work.

Before you can hope to succeed in such a defense campaign, however, you have to believe in it and convince the party membership that it is important and can succeed. For my part, I am certain it can succeed. There is no irremovable political obstacle to it. If you carry out the campaign wholeheartedly, you can make life sufficiently miserable for the SFIO and CGT leaders to have them bestir themselves—and they have good reasons of their own to want to see the Trotskyists legal—to ask somebody in the de Gaulle entourage to have it done. France is entering a period of parliamentarism, however short it may prove to be, and in such a period, you should be able, if only you do what is necessary, to win legality.

During the fight for legality, do not be afraid of making *Verite* appear entirely as an organ fighting for nothing more than real democracy. That is fighting for a great deal today! It should be a period in which, instead of negative criticisms of the SFIO and the CP and CGT, you should appear instead as urging them to certain positive actions. Don't be afraid that if you don't end each article saying the leaderships won't do what you're proposing, that you will be sowing illusions. The illusions are already there and you will not be adding to them. On the contrary, if you convince a worker that something positive should be done, and then his party doesn't do it, you will be teaching him to be critical of his party.

Two examples: Call upon the workers' organizations to inspire the workers to rally to the polls in the elections, by an agreement among the workers' organizations that they will elect a workers' representative as Provisional President of France. Take up the resistance's perfunctory demand for democratization of the army, and really explain its profound necessity, the lesson in this connection of Petainism, gather together all the horror tales about Petainists still leading the army, royalists, etc., etc. Explain the urgent need for political meetings of the soldiers, their need to protect themselves by having delegates. Take nothing for granted but argue the question as if the workers had never heard of it before. Give it a legal handle, by urging that the workers' delegates in the coming Assembly include it in the new constitution.

Instead of continuing, let me refer you to the Program of Action of 1934 for France, practically all of which is apropos



today. But before you can apply it, you must rid yourself of all traces of a conception of the "objectively revolutionary" situation today. The absence of the revolutionary party—and it is absent—changes the whole situation. Instead of saying, "Only the revolutionary party is lacking," we must instead say, at least to ourselves, "The absence of the revolutionary party trans-

forms the conditions which otherwise would be revolutionary into conditions in which one must fight, so far as agitation is concerned, for the most elementary demands."

I must close now. But I hope to continue very soon.

With warmest greetings,  
Felix Morrow

## 2. A Reply to Comrade Morrow by the Secretariat of the Fourth International

We are more and more under the impression that the differences on the perspectives of the European revolution which broke out in 1943 among the leadership of the American party are not limited to disagreements on the *tempo* of events, but go beyond this question and involve the *nature* of the period into which we have entered. The two documents of Comrade Morrow—his July 10, 1945, letter addressed to the European Secretariat and his Open Letter, November 15, 1945, addressed to all sections of the Fourth International—together with the position held by the minority of the American party on the question of unification with the Shachtmanites, enable us today to state that serious and singular modifications have meanwhile been introduced into the political orientation of the American minority; or rather, that certain germs, hardly perceptible in its original position, have so grown with time as to confront us today with a tendency which, while it criticized with some justifications the weak points in the majority's orientation, has today crystallized on a platform dangerously different from ours insofar as concerns the general character of the present period, and the perspectives, and above all, the tasks which flow from it.

Conditions in wartime prevented us from closely following the discussion in the SWP. After a considerable delay we have familiarized ourselves with this discussion but we still cannot say that we are fully informed concerning all the various ramifications of this ideological struggle. Nevertheless we do appreciate all its importance for the future development of our International.

Throughout the war we have been obliged to elaborate our political line in the absence of any ideological contact with our comrades outside of Europe and we were pleasantly surprised to discover that despite this forced isolation, the ideas, particularly those of our American comrades and our own, have followed virtually the same lines.

Today we observe the formation of conflicting tendencies within the International and we see as unavoidable an ideological struggle which must be conducted to the end and which in our opinion puts at stake the very existence of the International.

It is obvious and to a certain extent inevitable that a certain unrest should arise in our ranks because the war did not give rise to revolution in Europe either during its course nor immediately following its termination; because the German revolution has not taken place; because reformist organizations, first and foremost, the Stalinists, have experienced a new and powerful growth and because our organizations have up to now been able to record only a slow growth.

This unrest has manifested itself inside the International in the formation of tendencies which have in one manner or another placed under discussion essential sections of our program; tendencies which seek to revise our perspectives and to modify our tasks, in particular, the ways and means of tackling the problem of building the party.

The road recently taken by the American minority and by

Comrade Morrow in particular, imbues us with the greatest reservations towards this tendency and arouses in us the greatest concern about its further evolution.

### Self-Criticism

We received the July 10, 1945, letter of Comrade Morrow long after the adoption and the publication of the June 1945 resolution of the EEC with which Comrade Morrow declared himself to be in agreement, while expressing his regrets over its lack of self-criticism of our earlier position. Unfortunately, we, for our part, find it extremely difficult to declare ourselves in agreement with the content of his letter, that is to say, while there is room for self-criticism it is assuredly not in the sense indicated by Comrade Morrow.

We do not at all find it difficult to state openly and frankly just wherein we were wrong in the past. In part we have already done so during the June 1945 session of the EEC and in the above-mentioned resolution which declares:

Contrary to our optimistic prognosis—issued on the eve and at the beginning of the new imperialist carnage—relative to the latter's probable duration which we deemed would be brief, and the reaction of the masses which we deemed would be far more rapid and far more efficacious, this war, despite the colossal havoc it caused and despite the unprecedented sufferings it inflicted upon the masses, lasted much longer than the war of 1914-18 and terminated in Europe only in the total military destruction of one of the belligerent camps. . . .

Another important factor which has conditioned the development of the revolutionary crisis in Europe, its scope and its tempo, is the partial destruction of the material and human premises for the German revolution.

The war in Europe especially during its last few months brought about the sudden and almost complete destruction of the industrial backbone of Germany, laying waste her cities, her ports, her means of transportation.

The human material suffered no less grave blows. Germany has lost an enormous proportion of her male population on the battlefields and another enormous percentage finds itself in captivity.

One cannot count on the revolutionary action of the German proletariat until material life is reorganized in Germany and until several million German prisoners are able to find their place in the country's economic life.

Comrade Morrow is not satisfied with this self-criticism. He desires a precise condemnation of the errors committed in the "earlier documents," that is to say, the February 1944 theses of the European Conference and the January 1945 resolution of the EEC.

It is difficult to understand exactly what "errors" are referred to here. The elucidations provided by Comrade Morrow up to now are not sufficiently clear to us. On the other hand, his manner of conceiving the relationship between the objective and subjective premises of the revolution renders spurious, in our opinion, his criticism as a whole.

Before we pass on to a general self-criticism of the docu-

ments mentioned by Comrade Morrow, it is first necessary to get complete clarity on this ground.

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The conception of an objectively revolutionary situation— independently of whether the revolutionary party exists or not and independently of its role—is a Leninist conception which guided Lenin's entire policy in building the Bolshevik party, from the very outset to the day of his death.

## Lenin's Position

This conception acquired particular importance for the elaboration of Lenin's perspectives in the course of the war of 1914-18.

By an objectively revolutionary situation Lenin understood a situation in which the ruling class, passing through a profound crisis, reveals itself to be disoriented and indecisive, while the exploited classes including the petty bourgeoisie aspire, in their discontent, for a decisive change and prepare for revolutionary action. Such situations are not only possible but inevitable within the framework of the objectively revolutionary period into which the capitalist world has entered with the opening of its imperialist phase and above all with the war of 1914-1918.

Generally speaking, in our epoch wars as well as economic crises create "objectively revolutionary situations" which are linked "objectively with the revolution," according to Lenin. Throughout the war of 1914-1919 Lenin repeated that the latter had created "the objective conditions for the revolution." "Now we are faced with this alternative," these are Lenin's literal words, "either we are really and firmly convinced that the war is creating a *revolutionary situation* in Europe, that all the economic and socio-political circumstances of the imperialist epoch lead up to a revolution of the proletariat . . . or we are not convinced that the situation is revolutionary, then there is no reason why we should use the words 'war against war' in vain, etc." (*Revolutionary Marxists at the International Socialist Conference*, September 5-8, 1915. Collected Works, vol. XVIII, p. 347.)

Comrade Morrow expresses astonishment that the February 1944 theses speak of the inevitable transformation of the Second World War into civil war. "Here Lenin's exhortation to turn the imperialist war into civil war becomes, instead, an objective function of the social process independently of the intervention of the revolutionary party," writes Comrade Morrow.

Comrade Morrow identifies anew the class struggle during the war, which is an objective process, with the conscious activity of the revolutionary vanguard whose aim is to organize the struggle, guide it and lead it to victory, that is to say, to the seizure of power.

"By the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war we mean to say the same thing that was recognized hundreds of times by all the leaders of the Second International during all the years preceding the war," wrote Zinoviev in 1916. "It is the knowledge that the objective conditions of our epoch create a connection between war and revolution. Nothing more." And he then goes on to add, "The class struggle during the war, above all during such a war as the current one, leads necessarily to civil war, it cannot mean anything else except civil war. The actions of the revolutionary masses of the proletariat during the war have exactly the same significance as the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war."

For Lenin the success of the subjective effort, of the conscious vanguard of the proletariat, of its slogans, including the slogan of turning the imperialist war into civil war, depended on the fact that an objective revolutionary process existed in

reality, a current, as he said, determined by the objective conditions created by the war.

Revolutions such as Turati and Kautsky are "ready" to recognize, i.e. revolutions for which the date and chances can be told in advance, never happen. The revolutionary situation in Europe is a fact. The extreme discontent, the unrest and anger of the masses are facts. It is on strengthening *this* torrent that revolutionary Social Democrats must concentrate all their efforts. (*A Turn in World Politics*, January 1917. Collected Works, vol. XIX, pp. 430-1.)

Lenin heaped scorn upon those who refused to recognize the revolution, that is to say, the objectively revolutionary action of the masses aspiring for a profound change before its actual accomplishment.

When the revolution has begun the liberals together with all other enemies recognize it; they often recognize it only in order to deceive and to betray. The revolutionists foresee it *in advance* before it has commenced, understand its inevitability, teach the masses its necessity and show the masses its road and its meaning.

In his article *The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up* (October 1916) Lenin sketched out an admirable picture of the objective revolutionary process in our epoch:

To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without the movement of non-class conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against the oppression of the landlords, the church, the monarchy, the foreign nations, etc.—to imagine this means *repudiating social revolution*. Only those who imagine that in one place an army will line up and say, "we are for socialism," and in another place another army will say, "we are for imperialism," and that this will be the social revolution, only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic opinion could vilify the Irish Rebellion by calling it a "putsch."

Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution is. . . .

The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be anything else* than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all oppressed and discontented elements. Sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will inevitably participate in it—without such participation, *mass struggle is impossible*, without it *no* revolution is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack *capital*, and the class conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a heterogeneous and discordant, motley and outwardly incohesive, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, to capture power, to seize the banks, to expropriate the trusts (hated by all, though for different reasons) and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism, which, however, will by no means immediately "purge" itself of petty-bourgeois slag. (Collected Works, vol. XIX, pp. 301-2.)

Objectively revolutionary situations have existed, do exist and will continue to exist independently of whether a revolutionary party is present on the scene or not.

To confine ourselves only to current instances, the situation became objectively revolutionary during the last war in more than one country in Europe and throughout the world.

It is a fact that the situation in Italy after the downfall of Mussolini and after the German debacle was revolutionary. It is a fact that the situation in Greece was objectively revolutionary at least after the liberation of the country, reaching its apogee in December 1944.

It is a fact that the situation was objectively revolutionary in

almost all the European countries during the period which elapsed between the debacle and the departure of the German troops and the arrival of Anglo-American and Russian troops.

It is a fact that the situation is at present objectively revolutionary in the majority of the colonial countries and particularly in Indo-China and Indonesia.

Comrade Morrow does not seem to attach any great interest to this aspect of the question. For him,

The absence of the revolutionary party—and it is absent—changes the whole situation. Instead of saying, “Only the revolutionary party is lacking,” we must instead say, at least to ourselves, “The absence of the revolutionary party transforms the conditions which otherwise would be revolutionary into conditions in which one must fight, so far as agitation is concerned, for the most elementary demands.”

The paramount importance of the role of the party has not escaped our attention and it seems to us puerile to repeat that the Fourth International proposes to solve the crisis of mankind which coincides in our epoch with the crisis of the revolutionary leadership, precisely by building such a leadership. But on the other hand it is stated in the transitional program:

The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first, of course, is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus. No matter how the methods of the social-betrayers differ . . . they will never succeed in breaking the revolutionary will of the proletariat. As time goes on, their desperate efforts to hold back the wheel of history will demonstrate more clearly to the masses that the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International.

Comrade Morrow will therefore not find it so secondary a matter that we, having understood once and for all that our principal task is to build genuine revolutionary parties, seek to discern in the objective development of the situation factors favorable to the accomplishment of this task.

## Our Slogans

The rapid building of the Fourth International is inconceivable except on the basis of a perspective of an objectively revolutionary period and of objectively revolutionary situations, only within the framework of the latter will the masses be enabled through their own experience to learn about the treacherous leaderships and the correctness of our program. On the other hand, the objective character of the situation determines not only our possibilities but also the program of our demands and the tactic of building the party.

In our opinion the chief merit of the American minority lay in its drawing attention to the importance of democratic slogans. But it is also necessary not to exaggerate the importance of these slogans and above all to know how to tie them up with transitional slogans, each time placing the emphasis on those slogans which correspond to the living conditions of the masses, to the development of their struggles and to the degree to which their consciousness matures. For example, it is incontestable that the struggle for the abolition of the monarchy, for elections, for the constituent assembly in Belgium, in Italy and in Greece must be inscribed in our program and must be conducted with vigor.

But it is equally incontestable that other slogans of a transitional character touch the masses in these countries (as in the rest of Europe) even more directly and contribute to their mobilization still more definitively than do the foregoing demo-

cratic slogans, namely such slogans as: the sliding scale of wages and of working hours, workers' control of production, nationalization without compensation, Workers' and Peasants' Government concretized in the formula: Workers Parties to Power, independence of the colonies. Our sections in Europe have gained successes in France, in Belgium, in Holland and England and elsewhere above all thanks to the struggle conducted by them for these slogans which correspond more than ever to the objective situation, to the needs of the masses, to their own demands.

Comrade Morrow who counsels us in his letter of July 10, 1945: “not to be afraid of making *Verite* appear entirely as an organ fighting for nothing more than a real democracy (?). That is fighting for a great deal today!” will perhaps be astonished to learn that the party in the course of the last few months has gained influence above all thanks to its campaign for the CP-SP-CGT government, for the sliding scale of wages, and for the independence of Indo-China.

The transitional program, particularly in Europe, is today more *actuel* (timely) than ever and our parties are acquiring their own revolutionary physiognomy by placing emphasis first and foremost on the transitional demands, as distinct from the reformist and Stalinist parties which present themselves as ardent defenders of the slogans and institutions of the democratic parliamentary bourgeoisie.

And here we come to what in our opinion is a false conclusion drawn from Comrade Morrow's false evaluation of the present period and its perspectives.

Comrade Morrow advises us to reconsider the question of building the revolutionary party; he advises us not to proceed directly but once again merely apply a total “entrism” policy with respect to reformist parties. This is the tactical conclusion which flows from his analysis of the general situation and of the character of the period into which we have entered.

Comrade Morrow's principal argument is that we once again face (after the liquidation of the war) mass reformist parties, that our own cadres are few and that we cannot hope—as was the case after the first imperialist world war and the Russian revolution—to establish “very quickly, although starting from very little, mass revolutionary parties in Germany, France, etc.”

Comrade Morrow proposes that we immediately adopt as the solution entry “into one of the reformist parties, constitute a fraction in it and work in the direction of a split out of which we will come with sufficient forces to begin seriously building the revolutionary party.”

In view of the difficulties of working inside the Communist parties, Comrade Morrow is in favor of entry into the Socialist parties (he cites the Italian, German and Belgian Socialist parties) or other centrist formations, as for example . . . the MLN in France “through an understanding with Malraux' wing.”

We found ourselves on many occasions plunged into consternation upon reading in the press of the American comrades information concerning Europe which at times revealed an almost complete ignorance of the actual state of affairs, among other things the character of the “national” movement during the German occupation, its importance in the various European countries, as well as the composition and importance of “resistance organizations.”

Comrade Morrow is no exception to this rule when he attempts to judge the existing situation among the reformist parties in Europe and when he cites with a serious air “Malraux' wing of the MLN,” into which our party, in his opinion, ought to dissolve itself. Comrade Morrow is in all likelihood a victim of journalistic and irresponsible dispatches which have

led him to believe that there exists a centrist organization which has a certain importance among the French masses. But let us continue.

### Morrow's "Entrist" Policy

The new "entrist" policy proposed by Comrade Morrow is motivated by the very same considerations which we advanced for its adoption before the last war.

"If the cost of entry in some cases," writes Comrade Morrow, "is the temporary loss of a public faction organ and/or no guarantee of the right of constituting a faction, that is no argument against entry. . . . Two or three good pamphlets can serve as a substitute for a public faction organ for a while. It might be very advantageous to live for a while in one of the 'left' factions instead of openly having one of your own."

It is clear that if Comrade Morrow goes so far it is because he is very much impressed by certain external and superficial traits of resemblance between the present period and the period prior to the last war (the importance of the reformist parties, the limited forces of our sections, etc.) and because he ignores entirely all the essential differences between these two periods.

Trotsky advocated the "entrist" policy with respect to the Social Democracy in a period of the general ebb of the labor movement following a long series of defeats and on the day after the victory of German fascism which sounded the tocsin for world reaction and accelerated the outbreak of the war.

Social Democracy which had still retained considerable influence among working class circles, was capable under the menace of fascism of again passing through a healthy reaction and of permitting, thanks to a more or less democratic internal atmosphere, the development of revolutionary tendencies (and this was only a hypothesis to be verified).

Today it is first of all a question of a period entirely different in character.

The war has destroyed the equilibrium in international and social relations and as a consequence of the economic, social and political dislocation provoked by it, has ushered in a lengthy revolutionary period and a lengthy revolutionary perspective. We were mistaken about the tempo of events during the closing phases of the war; we overestimated the rapidity and scope of the reaction of the masses. On the other hand, it was impossible for us to have foreseen in 1944 the consequences of the havoc caused by the war (greatly speeded up in the course of the last few months) in a highly developed country like Germany where a part of the material and human premises for all large-scale mass actions have been eliminated. Nor could we have foreseen the far-reaching extent and consequences of military occupation of Europe by the imperialists and the Red Army. All these factors have introduced important corrections into our short-term perspectives and this is, to a certain degree, inevitable for all Marxist perspectives.

"Every historical prediction is necessarily conditional," wrote Trotsky, and the more concrete a prediction, the more conditional it is. "A prognosis is not a promissory note which can be cashed on a given date. Prognosis outlines only the definite trends of a development. But along with these trends a different order of forces and tendencies operate which at a certain moment begin to predominate. All those who seek exact predictions of concrete events should consult the astrologists, Marxist prognosis aids only in orientation."

But the general perspective of "a whole revolutionary epoch" (Manifesto of the 1940 Emergency Conference) emerging out of the imperialist war still remains valid.

The reformist parties have emerged from the war strength-

ened but this strengthening in reality reflects the first stage of the radicalization of the masses. On the other hand, these parties have been placed, both by their reformist policies as well as by the objective situation, under conditions which render more and more precarious the continued adherence of the masses to their banners.

In many countries in Europe we are already witnessing signs which indicate that the phase of discontent has commenced and that important layers of the most militant elements of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie are in process of breaking more or less openly with these parties.

But how to win over these elements? A total "entrist" policy with respect to the Social Democracy is at the present hour equivalent to sure political suicide. These elements are moving away from the reformist parties because they want to struggle and because they are suspicious of and discontented and angered by reformist politics which run directly counter to all the existing possibilities of European capitalism to grant reforms or to proceed to its reconstruction otherwise than by super-exploitation of the toiling masses under a discipline of blood and iron.

These elements are seeking a different banner for revolutionary regroupment and struggle and it is our duty to show them this banner.

The day-to-day work of all our European sections demonstrates graphically what great chances exist for building the revolutionary party provided we are capable of appearing before the masses, participating in their struggles and inspiring confidence in them by the seriousness of our organization and our activity.

On the other hand, we will not be able to accomplish really effective fractional work within these reformist organizations (work which we consider very important and which we have never ceased advocating) except by maintaining an independent organization which develops in complete liberty its entire program and which polarizes around it the elements and the revolutionary currents which are detaching themselves from the reformist organizations. Variants of this general tactic might be envisaged in certain countries where exceptional conditions prevail as for example in England in the case of the Labor Party. In a period such as we are now actually passing through in Europe and with the reformist parties practicing policies which run so directly counter to the needs of the masses and to the possibilities of capitalism, it is fatal, at a time when more and more important layers are splitting away from these parties and in the absence of any other pole of regroupment, to seek refuge either in the movements of the right or in demoralization and apathy.

Contrary to the opinions of Comrade Morrow, it is our own subjective weaknesses and not the objective conditions which are actually blocking in Europe the attraction and organization of all elements in search of a new revolutionary orientation.

So far as the Socialist parties on the European continent in particular are concerned, Comrade Morrow has perhaps failed to take into account the modification of their social basis which has occurred during the war.

In speaking of reformist parties which have emerged strengthened from the war, it is necessary to draw a distinction between the Socialist parties which have lost a great deal of their influence among working-class circles, and which have gained among petty-bourgeois circles (assembled before the war in bourgeois parties of the center) and the Stalinist parties which have grown at the expense of the working class following of the Socialist parties.

Furthermore, the internal atmosphere of the European Social-Democracy has likewise been greatly modified in a bureaucratic and anti-democratic sense, which restricts the possibilities for the development of revolutionary tendencies.

The "entrist" tactic with respect to the Social-Democratic parties can, on the other hand, be envisaged for certain countries which are occupied by the USSR where the Soviet bureaucracy is obliged to support the legality of these parties and where the brutality of Stalinist reaction renders extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, independent activity for a revolutionary tendency in the labor movement.

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Surely we are not mistaken in accusing Comrade Morrow of having been carried away by his reaction to the revolutionary optimism expressed by the American majority which has at times distorted the reality of the European situation; he has swung far away from his own basis as we are acquainted with it through the documents criticizing the 1943 Plenum resolution of the National Committee of the SWP and he has made dangerous concessions to opportunist and right-wing currents.

For example he speaks of the "terrible" defeat in Greece which has proved "a very strong deterrent on the workers of all of Europe, weighing them down with the thought that their struggles might meet the same fate." This does not at all correspond to the reality of the situation in the country and of the European working class.

The Greek proletariat, despite its defeat, does not think itself beaten and has demonstrated this by incessant struggles since December 1944, struggles which have unfolded up to the level of a general strike.

Even the Stalinist influence, despite all the past experience, remains, while somewhat diminished, still extremely powerful.

The trade union elections conducted under the Voulgaris regime have once again brought the Stalinists triumphantly to the leadership and the public meetings of the EAM have experienced genuine successes. As paradoxical as this seems, it is first of all the result of the internal situation which has undergone no improvement, but on the contrary, has even become aggravated and, on the other hand, it is the result of the general situation now existing in Europe and which the great mass of the workers, who follow the Stalinist party and who believe in the revolutionary role of the USSR, have not interpreted as demoralizing.

While reaction still keeps scoring gains, while it is beginning to regain confidence in itself, while it is utilizing the Socialist and Stalinist parties for its own aims and while it is organizing under their cover its offensive of tomorrow, this process is still passing unperceived by the great masses who are interpreting the electoral success of the traditional parties as so many defeats for reaction.

It is in this, among other things, that the difference consists between the pre-war period and the current one.

The proletariat was dragooned into the war, demoralized by a long series of previous defeats, having exhausted a large part of its revolutionary potential. The war and all the more so its consequences, as has already and correctly been stated by the 1940 Emergency Conference, have acted to regenerate this potential. What is actually involved today is the prelude to a lengthy revolutionary period in which the Fourth International will have the greatest possible chances to build its mass parties.

But in order to achieve this the Fourth International must vanquish defeatism under whatever form it manifests itself, within its own ranks.

*(The text unanimously adopted by the European Secretariat.)  
January 1946.*

# Class Forces in the American Revolution

By HARRY FRANKEL

The American Revolution was directed, and its fruits were harvested by, a coalition of two classes: The budding Northern bourgeoisie and the Southern landowning aristocracy. For three quarters of a century thereafter, the evolution of these two classes and their mutual relations were to determine, to a major degree, the course of American history. Their struggles were to cut the main channels in which events would flow.

These two classes were particular and special types of the landowning and bourgeois classes. They were planted on the shores of a rich and vast continent by an already developed Western European civilization. They had no feudal antecedents in this country. Nor did they find it necessary to recapitulate the European stages in the course of their growth. The hitherto unprecedented conditions created an American social structure with a minimum of excess baggage in the form of feudal rubbish. The dead hand of the past lay lightly on the American brow. A society of exceptional vigor and directness was developed.

The differences between the North and South which led to the development of differing social structures with dissimilar ruling classes were accentuated by the natural conditions encountered by the early settlers. The Appalachian range, which for two centuries delimited the field of the colonists, forms an angle with the Atlantic coastline, the intersection of which is in the North. Thus the further South one proceeds, the broader

is the alluvial belt so necessary for staple crop cultivation. In the North, where the mountains lie close to the coast, the fall line of the rivers is correspondingly close. Thus the rivers and streams of New England are navigable for only a short distance from their mouth. The New England settlements hugged the coast, and such agricultural produce as was raised in the interior was not too readily floated to market.

The Southern states, quite the opposite, possessed a vast agricultural domain within the belt allotted to them by the Atlantic and Appalachian boundaries. Broad rivers, navigable even by ocean going vessels for a long distance into the interior were provided by nature as future arteries of commerce. The pre-conditions for a land of great plantations were ready and waiting.

A cheap labor supply, an easily cultivated crop and a ready market were all that were required for the establishment of the plantation system. The first was provided partly by indentured servants but primarily by Negro slavery. The second, the planters found in tobacco. And in the growing addiction of Europe to the new and popular habit, the planters found their market.

Thus by the beginning of the eighteenth century, a plantation system resting primarily, in fact almost exclusively, on tobacco was dominant throughout Virginia and Maryland. In South Carolina and Georgia, the same system resting upon rice as the chief staple, was prevalent. Around 1750, indigo was



introduced into these two states, and soon ran rice a close second. North Carolina added to the cultivation of rice, tobacco and indigo the large scale export of lumber and naval stores.

The plantations were huge in area, their owners were powerful and towns were small and unimportant. The political hegemony, under these conditions fell to the plantation owners. This ruling class was a blood cousin to the landowning classes of all history, and yet it possessed certain peculiarities which were to give it great revolutionary significance in American history. In the first place, it possessed no feudal history. The feudal restrictions on land tenure were slight and only such as the British aristocracy and its American allies could impose from afar. Even these remnants of feudalism were soon to be swept away by the revolution.

Secondly, the Southern plantation owner was a producer for the world market from the very first. His economic position thus gave to his interests and activities a more cosmopolitan cast than is common in landowning classes. True, he could not rival in this respect the merchant of a busy New England port. And yet, throughout the South, ocean going vessels tied up at the private docks of planters whose lands lay on the broad rivers and the news of the world was at their front doors.

The third peculiarity of the Southern agricultural ruling class carried the most revolutionary potentialities. It is this. While they raised the crops themselves, the planters did not market them. The produce of the South was marketed by British merchants, whose British and Scotch agents and factors were concentrated in the coastal towns for the purpose of acting for British mercantile houses.

Here the difference between New England and the South can be clearly seen. In the North, of the trade that passed through the ports, three-fourths was handled by American owned ships and one-fourth by British. In the South, on the other hand, only one-fourth of the trade was carried on American bottoms. The proportion was exactly reversed.

## The Planter's Plight

How was it possible that the Southern planters allowed themselves to be imprisoned in a cell the key to which was held only by the British merchants? The answer is simple: it lay in the limitation of the planters by law to the British market only. And the British merchants drove a hard bargain. The English duties on tobacco were from four to six times its selling price in America at the end of the seventeenth century. By 1760 they had risen as high as 15 times the value of the tobacco, and although a large part or even all of the duty was remitted when the tobacco was re-exported to Europe, the planters had small comfort from this since the benefit of it went to the English merchants and bankers.

The results of this system are fully explained by Jefferson, who, being himself a planter in the Piedmont, or upland, region of Virginia, was in a position to know:

Virginia certainly owed two millions sterling to Great Britain at the conclusion of the war. Some have conjectured the debt as high as three millions. . . . This is ascribed to the peculiarities in the tobacco trade. The advantages made by the British merchants on the tobacco consigned to them were so enormous, that they spared no means of increasing those consignments. A powerful engine for this purpose, was the giving good prices and credit, till they got him more immersed in debt than he could pay, without selling his lands or slaves. Then they reduced the prices given him for his tobacco, so that let his shipments be ever so great, and his demand of necessaries ever so economical, they never permitted him to clear off his debt. These debts had become hereditary from father to son, for many genera-

tions, so that the planters were a species of property, annexed to certain mercantile houses in London.

In this paragraph, Jefferson reveals more of the springs of revolutionary action in his class than in the whole Declaration of Independence. ". . . The planters were a species of property annexed to certain mercantile houses in London. . . . They got him more immersed in debt than he could pay. . . . They never permitted him to clear off his debt. . . ." The superior position of the British merchant with his access to Parliament where he could make the laws for the colonies was utilized to the fullest. The more the planters produced, the deeper in debt they found themselves.

Throughout the first three quarters of the eighteenth century, the price of tobacco was steadily lowered by the British merchants. The import duties in Britain, to which all tobacco must go, rose. Even the most prosperous of planters sunk into debt. We find Washington, the richest planter in the colonies and highly esteemed for his astuteness in managing the affairs of his plantation, writing to London for extension of credit, and explaining that he was far in arrears because of bad crops for three years. When after 1763, the revolutionary disturbances began, and the British merchants took alarm and began to tighten their credit, the Southern planters were put in an almost inextricable position. Is it any wonder that they took the revolutionary road, risking thereon "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor"? Without a sharp turn in the situation, their fortunes and their "sacred honor" were virtually forfeit, and what good is life to a landowning gentleman deprived of these?

Nor was this the only condition under which the planters suffered. Certain royal restrictions on the ready acquisition of western lands were very irksome to them as well as to the smaller farmers of the uplands. As we have seen, the planters were constantly under the imperative necessity of increasing the area of land under cultivation, in order to increase the size of their shipments of tobacco. In addition, the wasteful one-crop cultivation exhausted the soil and made a westward movement the chief recourse of the planter. The Crown restrictions hung heavily on them.

Upon this basis rose the struggle between the Crown and its Royal governors together with such of their allies, seaboard planters dependent on the King's favor, agents and factors in the coastal towns on the one side, and the planters and smaller farmers of the interior on the other. Like debtors in all ages, the planters sought a widening of the credit base and a paper money inflation to ease their situation. The state legislatures, such as the House of Burgesses in Virginia, would pass debt-cancelling laws and were answered with debt-protecting laws passed by the British Parliament. The provisional governor exercised the royal veto power to nullify the laws of the State legislatures whereupon they promptly retaliated by withdrawing his salary.

As his funds ran out, his attitude was relaxed in proportion, and the legislature would carry a point. No sooner was his salary restored, than he revoked the laws and the duel began anew.

It was this that prompted the colonial hatred of the Stamp Act: not so much the hardship of paying it as the fact that out of its proceeds, the Royal Governors were to be paid, thus making them independent of the State legislatures.

Thus grew up several generations of planters whose political lines circled around the axis of opposition to the British government. Their young sons, scions of families like the Masons, the Pendletons, the Henrys, the Randolphs, the Jeffersons, sent to William and Mary, or across the ocean to Oxford or Cambridge, studied avidly the revolutionary doctrines with which the Eng-



lish bourgeoisie had justified *its* revolution. Seizing upon the teachings of Coke in jurisprudence, of Sidney and Locke in politics and government, they applied them readily to their own situation. An intellectual climate of revolt accompanied the material acts of the struggle.

The bourgeoisie, concentrated primarily in the Northern States, was situated quite differently. Up until 1763 the British mercantilist theory was laxly applied. Despite minor restrictions on their activities, the preceding century had been for the merchant class a "golden age."

If New England was hampered by natural conditions insofar as agriculture was concerned, other natural advantages compensated, and as later events showed, more than compensated for the deficiency. The coastline provided abundant natural harbors. Its shore was grown with a supply of excellent ship building timber which extended almost to the waters' edge. The rivers, navigable though they were not, possessed in return many falls, excellent providers of motive power for machinery. The great Newfoundland Banks furnished endless fisheries, and the whaling grounds of the North Atlantic were close at hand. The prerequisites for a maritime and commercial society were present, and were assisted by the poor agricultural prospects which drove capital to sea.

The impression that agriculture was minor would be erroneous. Nine-tenths of the population of the colonies as a whole were engaged in agriculture, and even in New England a majority pursued that chief occupation. But the conditions of agriculture, the poor soil, the many natural obstacles, were such as to discourage the investment of large amounts of capital in the tilling of land. Holdings were in small parcels, and agriculture was carried on by small farmers.

Large urban centers such as Boston and Newport carried the major political weight, and in them the merchant bourgeoisie held the scepter of power.

This merchant class prospered within the framework of the British system. Under the Navigation Act of 1660, the colonial carrying trade was monopolized by British and colonial shipping. Naturally, the shipbuilding industry boomed, and, so favorable were the conditions for this trade, that soon, vessels could be constructed more cheaply in New England than anywhere in Europe. Oak ships which cost \$50 a ton in Europe could be built for \$34 a ton in America.

Building on the basis of this industry, and on the profitable fisheries, the merchants of New England rapidly constructed a vast carrying trade that soon encircled the globe. None too particular how they established their fortunes, the stern Puritan captains built the lucrative trade that was based on molasses, rum and slaves. When the Seven Years War broke out and the colonies joined Britain in the effort to drive out the French, the merchants did not scruple, despite their avowals of patriotism, to supply the enemy with foodstuffs at a heavy profit. Through energy, frugality and unscrupulousness they built the wealth and power of the merchant class, the forerunner of the modern bourgeoisie.

Thus they prospered under the British system and therefore they acquiesced in it. True, the restrictions on manufactures pinched here and there, but manufacturers were a minor interest of the bourgeoisie at that time and it is doubtful that they would have grown much more rapidly than they did had the restrictions been removed. True also, the Parliament laws protecting credit were aimed at American debtors of the London merchants and bankers. But these laws operated to provide excellent credit terms for the American merchants. Just as American capital poured into Germany after World War I when

it was under close financial supervision by the Allies, just so British capital was freely provided for American merchants when the British creditors knew that their loans were protected by legislation. In addition, the American merchantmen that roamed the world could feel secure in the protection of the Royal Navy.

The year 1763 marked the turning point in the relations of the British ruling class and the Yankee merchants. In that year the British concluded the Treaty of Paris which formalized the surrender of the French and their expulsion from America. Turning from that task the British ministry prepared to deal with their ally, the colonial mercantile class, soon to become a more formidable rival than the recently defeated foe.

The British had been incensed by the commercial relations of New England with the enemy. In addition, the conclusion of the war left them with the enormously swollen national debt of 147 million pounds, the war having added 70 million pounds to the already huge deficit. And what better place to find the money than in the colonies? In 1764, the measures designed for this purpose were passed by Parliament. The duty on molasses was reduced, but the intention was declared of beginning to collect it, and forces were provided to back this declaration. Import duties and restrictive acts of all sorts were multiplied, and in the resulting flare up of opposition the merchants were placed side by side with the planters in the struggle against Britain.

It would be incorrect to say that the merchant class had not opposed British rule at all previous to this time. The antagonism between colony and metropolis had existed from the beginning. In the Royal Governors and other officials who were sent to America to make their fortunes, the colonists had always seen unnecessary leeches. The monopoly of Britain in the American market acted as a sort of tax on the Americans, since prices stood higher than they would have been under freer conditions. These and a host of other petty annoyances had always been resented in the North. But the prosperity of the merchants under the system outweighed the disadvantages and they consented to its continuance. With the destruction of some of the main supporting pillars of the edifice of prosperity, such as the untaxed molasses trade, open and violent opposition began. The merchants extended the hand of friendship to the planters, and in 1765, at the Stamp Act Congress in New York, the alliance was concluded. Lincoln once said that the United States was "formed in fact by the Articles of Association in 1774." He might have, with considerable accuracy, placed the date nine years earlier, when the coalition between merchant and planter was made.

## Attitude of the Workers

When the planters and merchants sat down to organize the opposition to Britain, they found an unwelcome guest at the table, and even more noticeably, in the streets of all their large cities. The interloper was the group known as the "radicals."

Five cities of pre-revolutionary times exceeded 8,000 inhabitants in population: Philadelphia, Boston, New York and Newport in the New England and Middle colonies, and Charleston in the south. Others, such as Baltimore and Albany, though not so large were of considerable size for that day. These cities were the scene of action for another coalition of classes not yet mentioned in this summary. Here were the small shop keepers, the independent artisans, the mechanics and the laborers. Sections of the petty bourgeoisie, and the forerunners of the modern proletariat went to make up that urban mass so succinctly described by the French as *sans-coulottes*.

This section of the population was doubly oppressed. They

suffered from the depressions of the British as well as from the exploitation of their home bourgeoisie. With the unerring acuteness that they have always displayed in historical situations of this sort, the masses recognized the former as their main enemy.

Two extracts from letters appearing in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* upon the occasion of the Tea Act of 1773, signed by "A Mechanic" (which the author may or may not have been) will serve to give an idea of the reasoning which governed the attitude of the workers:

They (the British) will send their own Factors and Creatures, establish Houses among us, ship us all other East-India goods, and in order to full freight their ships, take in other kind of goods at under Freight, or (more probably) ship them on their own accounts to their own Factors, and undersell our Merchants, till they monopolize the whole Trade. Thus our Merchants are ruined, Ship Building ceases. They will then sell goods at any exorbitant Price. Our Artificers will be unemployed, and every Tradesman will groan under dire Oppression.

Is it not a gross and daring insult to pilfer the trade from the Americans and lodge it in the hands of the East India Co.? It will first most sensibly affect the Merchants, but it will also very materially affect . . . every Member of the Community.

Organized in The Sons of Liberty, and similar bodies, the shop keepers and workers formed the active arm of the struggle in the cities. They executed in the streets, at the wharves and customs houses, and at the homes of the well known Tories, the program of the merchants, often without their approval, sometimes against their violent opposition. So energetic and widespread did their activities become that, to give one example, when a mass meeting for workers was called in Philadelphia by the radicals in their struggle with the conservative merchants for control of the movement, it was attended by 1,200 mechanics, artisans and laborers. A huge meeting for those days, its size can be appreciated when one considers that five per cent of the population of Philadelphia was there!

The struggle against the Tea Act of 1773 was the high point of the activity of the masses in the cities, especially in Philadelphia and Boston. Later, when the First Continental Congress formed the Continental Association in the fall of 1774, the first collective action to enforce its non-importation agreement in Massachusetts was taken by the 41 blacksmiths of Worcester County. They agreed on November 8 not to work for violators of the agreement, and, after December 1, to do no work for persons of known Tory leanings. When General Gage wanted to fortify Boston Neck, he had to send to Nova Scotia for carpenters and bricklayers, so tight did the Committees of Mechanics in Boston, New York and Philadelphia close the labor market! This they did despite the hard times. Such unanimity in the struggle, even at the sacrifice of earnings was displayed by no other class.

The "radical" leaders were drawn primarily from the petty bourgeoisie. Chris Gadsden was the southern leader in the city of Charleston, and his chief lieutenant among the workers was Peter Timothy, printer of the *South Carolina Gazette*. Here the workers had, in the election of October, 1768, ventured to enter a slate of six for the lower house of the Assembly, and had elected half of it.

In New York, leadership was in the hands of Isaac Sears, and Macdougall, who led the Committee of Mechanics in opposition to the Committee of Merchants. The struggle was duplicated in Philadelphia where the forces were mustered by Charles Thomson, Joseph Reed and Thomas Mifflin. In Boston, the leader of the radicals was the incomparable Sam Adams.

Adams bore the unmistakable stamp of the professional revolutionist, for, in the words of one of his biographers, "He had no private business after the first years of his manhood."

His business was in the rope walks and shipyards, the tavern discussions and the town meeting. His prematurely white hair and his shaking hands were familiar in the plebian places of Boston.

Sam Adams stands out among all of the leaders of the American Revolution, marked by the singularity of his belief in the rule of the popular mass, and in the efficacy of the work the people can do in the meetings and in the streets. He set himself the task of organizing the population for a break and a struggle with Great Britain. A masterful strategist and an indefatigable organizer and agitator, he was eminently suited to the task. His talents and energy found a rare setting in his uncommon selflessness and modesty. At the First Continental Congress, where the most able men who attended were not without a touch of vanity and self-conceit, Adams stood out like a hammer among tinkets. While others regaled themselves in the pleasures of the great Philadelphia mansions, basking with self-importance in the presence of their rich hosts, accepting the hospitality of those who would support their conciliationist arguments with the bounty of their tables and cellars, Adams worked ceaselessly. In his boarding house room, he applied himself to his letter-writing, keeping constant watch on the struggle in Boston, advising, organizing, encouraging tirelessly. His wife wrote him uncomplainingly of the poverty of the household. When Adams had left for the Congress, his friends, by strategem, supplied him with a new outfit of clothes and some money for the journey. This was the man whom Galloway, his Tory enemy, described so aptly in the oft quoted sentence: "He eats little, drinks little, sleeps little, thinks much and is most decisive and indefatigable in the pursuit of his objects."

## Organizer and Agitator

The Adams organizations were distinguished by an excellent working harmony, due in the first place to Adams' ability in working with people of all sorts. He was a master of men—"master of the puppets," the irate governor of Massachusetts called him. He utilized men as they came to him, pushing forward now a fiery orator to give ardor to the cause, and again a rich merchant, to lend the appearance of solidarity. In all his work his tact and modesty are outstanding, and his ability, energy and selflessness earned him respect to the point of veneration, and loyalty among the common people. Among his associates in the national councils of the Revolution, where he and his followers were known as "Adams and his vulgar men," he earned a grudging admiration coupled with a large portion of mistrust. Bourgeois history has attempted to obscure his name, but nothing can destroy his place as the first organizer of the revolution prior to the opening of hostilities.

The activities of Adams and the radicals of Boston antedated 1764, hence they were already engaged on the battlefield when the merchants appeared in their shining armor. Adams must have had some of the feelings of young Hotspur, when, covered with the blood and grime of battle, he beheld the young, scented dandy before him. But Adams had none of the impetuosity of Shakespeare's warrior, and if he had such feelings he effectually concealed them. He quickly pushed Hancock and John Adams to the fore. For he realized that, as he said himself, the merchants were the main force in a battle in which he was an "auxiliary." Later, when the merchants deserted their struggle in one of their moments of alarm at their allies, conciliated by a small concession from the Crown, Adams remarked that they had held out longer than he had expected.

In the struggle with the Crown led by the merchant-planter coalition, the merchants were the most fickle side of the partner-

ship. Having a golden age of prosperity such as the planters never had enjoyed in their history, they contended for a return to the old system, and the smallest concession of the Crown was sufficient to breed conciliationism among them. In addition, their fear of their energetic allies in the cities brought them to attempt to restrain the movement or abandon it wholesale. In this situation, it devolved upon the radicals to give to the movement in the cities its continuity and intransigence. More than once was Adams deserted by his timid allies. It is among his most brilliant achievements that at one such time he created the revolutionary committees of correspondence, a form of organization which caught on and spread like wildfire throughout the country, until, by the time of the revolution, they formed the basis for a dual power. What a tribute to a master organizer and agitator that he made the fight grow despite the aloofness of the merchants!

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Bourgeois historians have attempted to accord to the American Revolution two doubtful privileges to distinguish it from other revolutions. The first of these is that the revolution was a gentlemanly affair unmarked by the too noticeable or too violent interference of the populace. But the rough facts peep through from beneath the frock coat that the historians have flung over the event. The course of the preliminaries to the battle and the struggle itself were marked with violent popular demonstrations having as their end the intimidation of Tories, the destruction of Tory property and the enforcement of the cam-

paigns and agreements of the revolutionists. From under the disguise of latter-day historians, our familiar and notorious friend *popular revolution* peeps out.

The second "privilege" of the revolution has been well summarized by the historian J. Franklin Jameson as follows: That "our revolution was unlike other popular revolutions in having no social results flowing from the political upheaval." This idea is as false as the other, and cannot bear the test of facts. All of the Crown restrictions on the ready acquisition of western lands were ended. Primogeniture and entail, feudal remnants, were dealt their death blow by the revolution, and within 15 years after the Declaration of Independence were abolished in every state. These changes, together with the confiscation and breakup of the huge Tory estates constituted a virtual land revolution, opening the way for the population of the western lands on the basis of small free holding. The seaboard planters resisted, but the pressure of the farmers of the interior, swept into the political arena by the revolutionary ferment was too much for them. Similarly, the suffrage rights underwent much extension.

Treachery to the revolution was widespread among the merchants, and thousands of them went into exile. Thus in New England, New York and Pennsylvania, new strata were everywhere brought to the surface. This is to be distinguished from the course of events in the South where the planters in the main stood solid for the Revolution. In the coalition of planters and merchants during the revolution, the planters were the firmest element, and took the lead.

## Bonapartism in Europe

By PIERRE FRANK

*This is the second section of Pierre Frank's article on Bonapartism. The preceding section appeared in the January issue of Fourth International. We are publishing this section as a discussion article—Ed.*

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The importance of a correct definition of the European governments goes beyond the domain of theory. What Trotsky wrote in 1932 on the subject of bonapartism in Germany preserves all its value *mutatis mutandis* for the bonapartism of 1945:

If we have insistently demanded that a distinction be made between Fascism and Bonapartism, it has been in no wise out of theoretical pedantry. Names are used to distinguish between concepts; concepts, in politics, in turn serve to distinguish among real forces. The smashing of Fascism would leave no room for Bonapartism, and, it is to be hoped, would mean the direct introduction to the social revolution.

Only—the proletariat is not armed for the revolution. The reciprocal relations between Social Democracy and the Bonapartist government on the one hand, and between Bonapartism and Fascism on the other—while they do not decide the fundamental questions—distinguish by what roads and in what tempo the struggle between the proletariat and the Fascist counter-revolution will be prepared.

One must no more confuse the bonapartism "of the right" with fascism than the bonapartism "of the left" with democracy. We have seen that bonapartism takes very different forms according to the conditions in which the two mortally opposed camps find themselves; we maintain also that the existence of democratic liberties, even of very great democratic liberties, does not suffice to make a regime democratic. The bonapartists à-la-Kerensky, Popular Front . . . are even notorious for their

flood of democratic liberty up to the point where capitalist society thereby even risks its balance and is in danger of cap-sizing. Democratic liberties do not proceed, as in a regime which one can correctly define as democratic, from the existence of a margin for reforms within capitalism, but on the contrary, from a situation of acute crisis, the result of the absence of all margin for reforms.

Precisely because we do not generally have in Europe at the present time democratic regimes, because there is literally no place for them and because the extension of democratic liberties can only undermine the bonapartist regimes, we put forward the most extreme democratic demands, in connection of course with the transitional demands which prepare the duality of power.

The resolution of the recent national conference of the English section of the Fourth International ignores, alas, in a general fashion bonapartism for Europe, and employs the expression, devoid of content, "democratic counter-revolution" for the European governments. The resolution contains on the other hand a fairly good example for the future development of events in Europe, namely that of Spain in the period which extends from the fall of Primo de Rivera up to the civil war against the fascism of Franco. In all this period of the Spanish Republic there was no democratic regime properly speaking.

Bonapartism, as will probably be the case in all Europe, expressed itself through a series of epileptic convulsions, of great shifts to the right and to the left. The same phenomenon likewise occurred in France after 1934: 1934, violent reactionary attack; 1936, general strike and occupation of the factories; 1940, coup d'état of Bordeaux; 1944, uprising against the

Pétain regime. These great leaps follow one another, accompanied by deepening division of the nation along with a political clarification on both sides in regard to the decisive struggle.\*

The use of democratic slogans—combined with transitional slogans—is justified more precisely because the possibilities of a democratic regime are non-existent, because present-day bonapartism is completely unstable and the struggle for the most extreme democratic demands can only end its existence. But again it is necessary for us to understand one another on the democratic slogans which we adopt and not to define slogans as democratic when they are not.

Let us merely recall in passing that the partisans of the "Three Theses" seriously propose to make a struggle for the freedom of religion—a democratic slogan, unquestionably—one of the most essential points in the struggle against fascism. For anyone who has not completely lost the use of his faculties in the course of these terrible years of reaction through which we have passed, it is clear that such a democratic slogan has nothing in common with us. It is on the contrary more and more evident that this slogan is today the property of a whole section of reaction which does not dare to show its true face.

But a great error, even a very dangerous error, has been committed in qualifying as democratic and in proposing to our organization the slogan of "the Republic" (cf. the article of Comrade Logan on Italy). We are completely in favor of the slogan "Down with the monarchy" in Italy, in Greece, and for all the countries where this institution inherited from feudalism exists. We are no less in favor of the slogan of the Assembly of a single chamber which is against the Senate, the House of Lords, etc. . . . But between these slogans and the "Republic" there is a deep moat which we cannot cross. In one case we endeavor to direct the masses against institutions of a profoundly reactionary character, which limit, even under the capitalist regime, the possibility of democratic expression of the masses, and which, in moments of crisis become quasi-automatically the rallying point for the forces of the counter-revolution. In the other case, we would advance the slogan which, if we made the mistake of adopting it, would make us the promoters of a completely vague state form. "The Republic"? This slogan does not concern a partial objective but puts to the fore the very question of the state. What republic can we recommend in the current epoch? The Republic of Workers and Peasants Soviets alone, and not a bourgeois republic. The slogan of "the Repub-

\*Since we here speak of the resolution of our English comrades let us note that it defines the new Labor government as "Kerenskyism". The Bonapartism, that they ignored, has found the means to insinuate itself into their document under a very special name. But we do not think that the present Attlee government is bonapartist à-la-Kerensky. Without questioning the coming to power of this government, that is to say, of a formation which rests on the working class but wishes to leave intact The City and British capitalism, at the moment when the latter has only gained a victory at the price of its very substance, will accelerate the downfall of British imperialism. The oldest of democracies has, as a result of the last elections, reached a dead end. But the term "Kerenskyism" is not appropriate, for it already presupposes the accomplishment of the passage from democracy to this form of bonapartism. On the contrary, it is in the future, probably very soon, that this passage will occur and the English workers and their organizations will then have to face an important crisis. In England one can only observe features of bonapartism. For example the Labor government, under the pressure of capital and encouraged by the administrative apparatus, of which it hasn't harmed a hair, is inclined to play a role of referee above the parties, while a section of the Labor parliamentary group endeavors to continue representing in a reformist and parliamentary fashion the worker masses who have elected them.

lic" is absolutely silent on this point and can only, by its confusion, favor the class enemy.

It is evident that, despite our rejection of this slogan, we will not be neutral in the plebiscites which may be held in Europe on the question of the monarchy. We shall call the workers and peasants to vote against the monarchy, but clearly specifying that we do not have the choice as to the other term of the alternative, that we are voting against the monarchy but not in favor of the bourgeois republic.

It is almost twenty years ago that the Italian Social Democrats in one of their fits of theoretical audacity inscribed in their program of the struggle against fascism the slogan of "the democratic republic of the toilers" and, for a certain period, the Italian Communist Party, in one of its zig-zags to the right, had an equivocal position towards this slogan. When in 1930, a section of the leadership of the Italian CP broke with Stalinism, formed the New Italian Opposition and turned toward the Left Opposition, this slogan was the object of a clarification in the exchange of views which took place at that time. The old opposition, that of the Bordigists, had an absolutely negative attitude on democratic slogans; it was especially necessary that the new Italian comrades should not take for their part a position which could be exploited by the Bordigists and which would have been fatal in the struggle against fascism. In a letter to the comrades in the NOI Trotsky expressed himself as follows on the slogan of the Italian Social Democrats:

While advancing one or another set of democratic slogans we must irreconcilably fight against all forms of democratic charlatanism. Such low-grade charlatanism is represented by the slogan of the Italian Social Democracy: "The Democratic Republic of the Toilers". The "Toilers republic" can be only the class state of the proletariat. The "Democratic Republic" is only a masked rule of the bourgeoisie. The combination of the two is a naive petty bourgeois illusion of the Social Democratic rank and file (workers, peasants) and deliberate treachery on the part of the Social Democratic leaders (all these Turatis, Modiglianis and their ilk). Let me once again remark in passing that I was and remain opposed to the formula of a "National Assembly on the basis of worker-peasant committees" precisely because this formula approaches the Social Democratic slogan of the "Democratic Toilers Republic" and, consequently, can render extremely difficult for us the struggle against the Social Democrats. *May 14, 1930.*

The slogan of "the Republic" as such is also as erroneous and pernicious as that of "The Democratic Republic of the Toilers" although, we are persuaded, few comrades in our international organization would have at present an inclination to mix in the above fashion the forms of bourgeois power with the forms of proletarian power. But it is not the thoughts and intentions of this or that comrade which are under discussion but the slogan of "the Republic" itself. This is not a democratic slogan but, to employ the strong expression of Trotsky, democratic charlatanism.

The theoretical principles and positions which are a part of the accumulated capital of the Bolshevnik-Leninists, gained in the course of their years of struggle against Stalinism, reformism and all the varieties of centrism in the workers' movement, and which we have called to mind in this article, obviously far from exhaust the questions which arise on the European situation. But it is indispensable to take them as a point of departure to permit our militants and our sections to orient themselves correctly despite the enormous confusion which rages and which, unhappily, will not fail to rage for the duration of a complete period, up to the point when the events and ourselves, in assisting events by a correct policy, consciously array an important fraction of the working class under the flag of the Fourth International.

## South Africa

An active group of South African Trotskyists, who adhere to the Fourth International, publish a paper in Cape Town called *Workers Voice*. They reprinted Trotsky's letter in the November 1944 *Theoretical Supplement of Workers Voice*. (Trotsky's letter appeared in the November 1945 *Fourth International*.) In the following issue of July 1945, A. Mon comments on Trotsky's letter and explains that Trotsky's views coincide with the positions of his organization. An excerpt from his article reads as follows:

As a result of learning Trotsky's lesson on the mutual connection between the two slogans (the national and agrarian), the comrades engaged in overthrowing the old muck which cluttered up the minds and path of action of would-be militants and revolutionaries, and in formulating our own program, were able to make progress which otherwise would have perhaps taken a longer period and caused the organization to suffer uncomfortably from growing pains. And in the same measure that Trotsky's letter went a step further than our own theses, so those who worked up Trotsky's ideas were themselves given a stimulus to enrich the form which Trotsky sketched in his letter, with the content of our concretized program for the city and rural masses of South Africa.

In order to understand the present land problem in South Africa, it is necessary to see how it was created. It is necessary to grasp that the landlessness of the Africans in particular has flowed from the imperialist policy of creating a migratory African proletariat kept in readiness in vast reservoirs of labor—the Reserves—driven out of these reserves by landlessness, starvation and the poll tax, and controlled in the cities by means of compounds, pass laws, etc. In short, the land question cannot be separated from the question of the way in which imperialism built up a supply of cheap African labor. Here the land question is not only the problem of fighting against landlordism, but furthermore a problem of fighting imperialism with its strongholds in the cities. Just as the rural African, in most cases, is also a city worker for part of his life, so the land problem is tied up with the problem of the anti-imperialist fight which has its bastions in the big cities of South Africa.

Imperialism has gone about its task of subjugating the toilers here by building up an intricate network of color bars, segregation, race-oppressive legislation and institutions, all of which it has created, built upon and maintained with increasing brutality and intensity in order to preserve, tap and control a supply of cheap labor. In order to have at hand a ready source of controllable cheap labor imperialism has deliberately prevented the development of an African peasantry, for such a peasantry would live off the land, would reduce the number of human beasts of burden to be exploited in the mines, factories and on the farms, and slow down or threaten to stop the migration of cheap labor from town and farm to reserves and back again. Imperialism has uprooted the African tribalist, expropriated the African small farmer, prevented their growth into peasants, extended their land-

lessness, and kept them in a state of permanent flux between the slave-conditions in the cities and the starvation conditions on the reserves—in short, imperialism has created the land question as part and parcel of its mechanism of depriving the Non-Europeans of their rights, of their land, of opportunities—part of its mechanism of the color bar and segregation and race-persecution. The landless Non-European is landless not merely because he has not got the money to purchase land, but, above all, because the machinery of state mercilessly carries out the policy of the economic bosses—to oppress the Non-European nationally in order to exploit him economically. His color prevents him from becoming a peasant.

## Land and Democratic Rights

Under such conditions it is clear that the struggle for land is an integral part of, and not distinct from or raised above, the struggle for full democratic rights. In the sense that this struggle for democratic rights means the abolition of race discrimination, the struggle for land means the struggle for the rights of Non-Europeans to own land and become farmers. But in the scientific sense of the term "realizing the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution," the struggle for "democracy" embraces the struggle, furthermore, not merely for the right to the land, but for the actual division of the land (as was the case with the 1789 French Revolution). Finally, since this land cannot be won except through a struggle against imperialism and the South African capitalists, and since the land can be divided only after it has been expropriated from the big land-owners, farmers and land-companies, the struggle for land, as part of the struggle for the realization of the tasks of bourgeois democracy in South Africa can be won only through the socialist revolution, i.e., only, in Trotsky's words: "Through methods of proletarian class struggle." This is the road leading to the solution of the problem of landlessness. This, the road of the toilers of South Africa, can be trod only if we see the road from the past which has brought us to the present position from where we are to set out along the path of national and agrarian emancipation, through the social revolution. . . . While the Whites robbed the Africans of the land they forced the African into smaller and smaller areas of land which became "reserves," into which the African was driven or whither he escaped from the attacks of the British and Voortrekkers. By means of brutal wars against the Africans in the Cape, Free State, Natal and the Transvaal, the Africans were savagely driven off their land and herded into small areas (or, in some cases, driven farther north out of the Union). The African was EXPROPRIATED by sword and fire.

Near the end of this process the imperialists began to industrialize the country and to employ masses of cheap labor on the Natal plantations, on the diamond mines, the gold mines, on the industries connected with these mines, and at the

big ports. They used the "reserves" where the expropriated Africans had been driven as real reserves—as reservoirs of cheap labor. To force the Africans off the reserve lands the ruling class tore more and more land out of African ownership and occupation, starved the reserve-population, concentrated them into villages inside the reserves, imposed money-taxes on the male Africans (and are now, in the Transvaal Provincial Council, considering a poll tax for African women as well), entangled the tribalists in debt to traders, and recruited Africans through Chamber of Mines recruiting agents. In the cities the bourgeoisie built up an elaborate system of compounds, passes, and regulations to control the migratory labor from the reserves. To prevent the formation of a stable, hereditary urban proletariat which would become used to the traditional methods of organization and struggle—trade union and political—of the city working classes all over the world—the imperialist bourgeoisie segregated the Africans from each other tribally or otherwise, and from city political life by means of compounds, and allowed a drift back to the reserves after some time of slavery in the towns.

At the same time, while preventing the formation of a stable urban African proletariat (which has nevertheless developed as a result of the process of urbanization and industrialization characteristic of all capitalist countries and counteracting the segregation policy of the imperialists here), the imperialists simultaneously and even more energetically prevented the formation of a settled African peasant in this country, either on the farms or in the reserves. In this way the economic purpose of the imperialists—namely, the exploitation of cheap labor—were served through the policy of segregation, and the prevention of both a settled proletariat and peasantry among the Africans. Combined inevitably with the policy of segregation and the color bar went the whitening away of the few rights possessed by the Africans in the form of the vote. The fate befalling the Africans steadily extended itself to the Coloureds and Indians, and segregation, the color bar, and race-discrimination became the *modus operandi* of the imperialist masters of South Africa, and their central instrument in maintaining and widening their economic exploitation of the peoples and resources of South Africa.

From this outline it is clear that the land question was historically created by the labor-demands of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the big farmers. Furthermore, that the land question is inseparably bound up with the whole race-oppression of the Non-Europeans, and that the land struggle cannot be divorced from the fight for full democratic rights. The land problem, created by imperialism, forms part and parcel of the entire problem of national oppression. The land struggle is part of the struggle against imperialism and national oppression. It is from this standpoint that we have to look upon the rural struggle; and it was from this angle that Trotsky approached the question.

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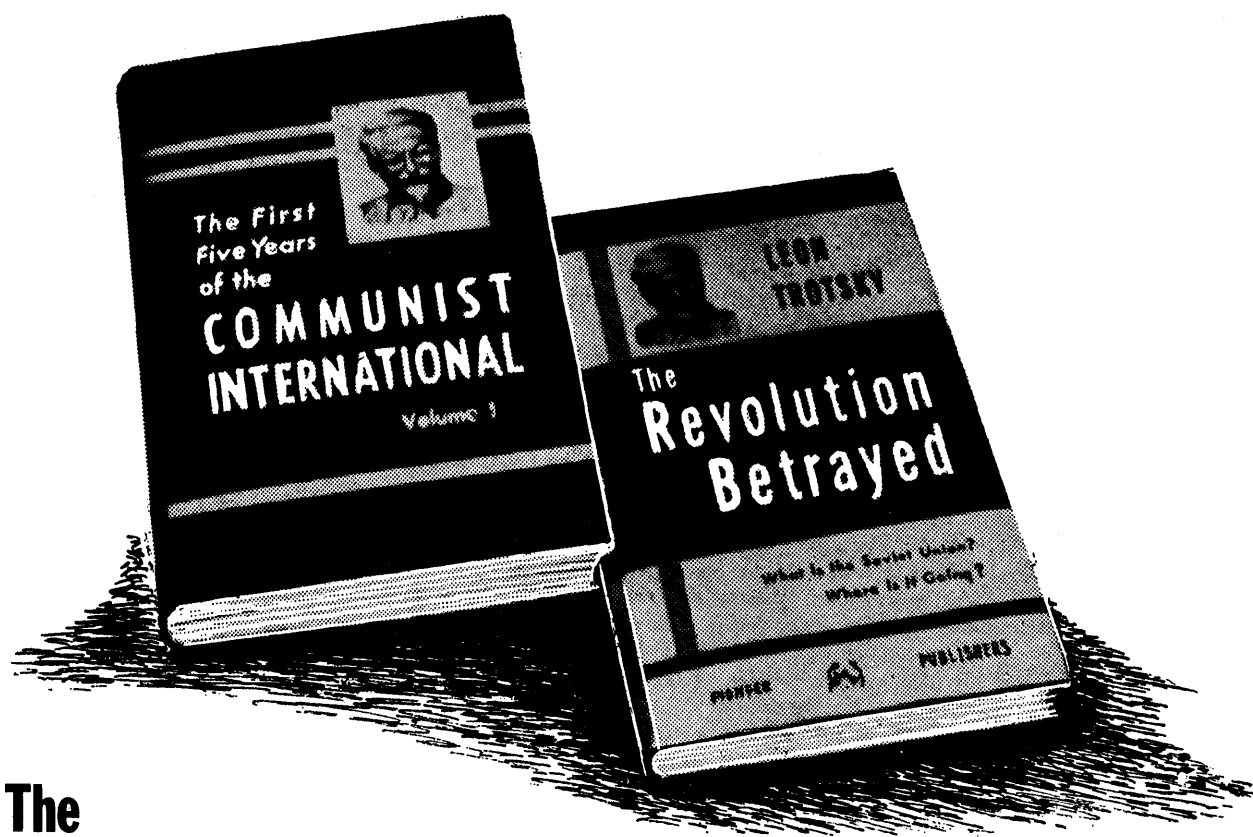
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