

A MARXIST
QUARTERLY

FALL
1954

Fourth
International

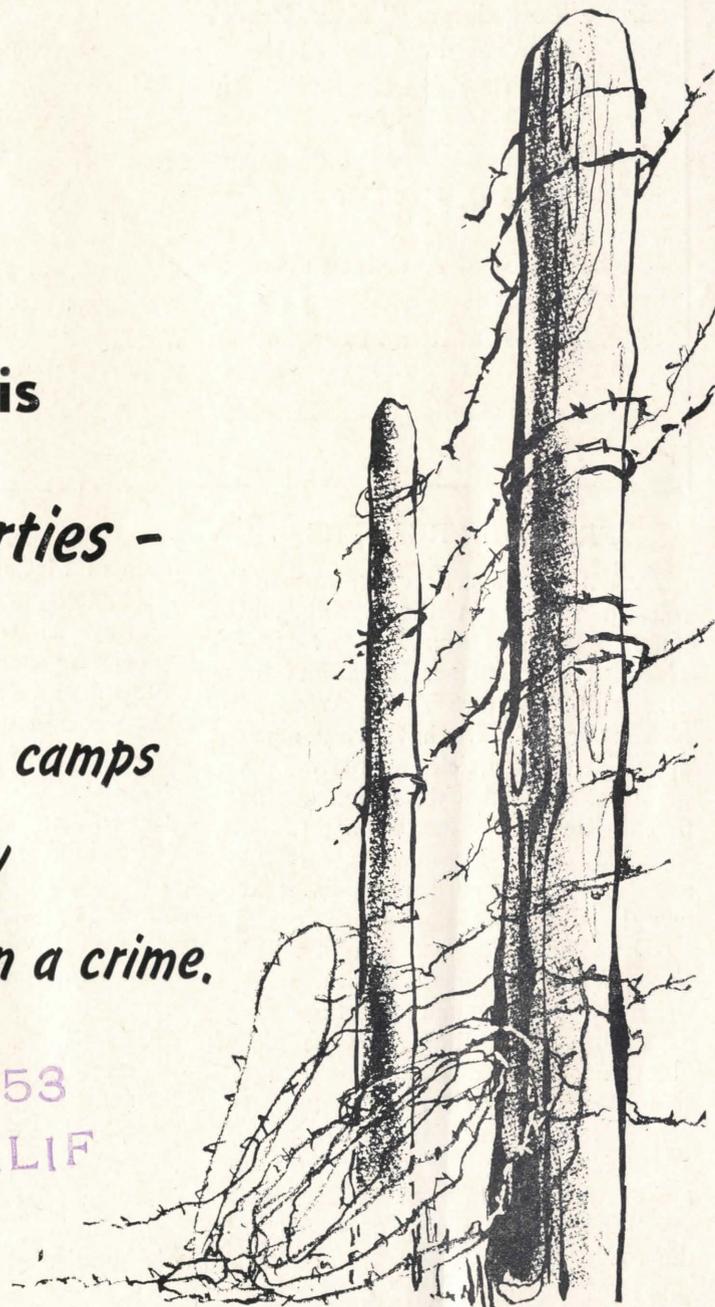
Police-State Liberals

by Art Preis

*They TALK about civil liberties -
But how do they VOTE?*

- *To establish concentration camps*
- *To outlaw a political party*
- *To make dissenting opinion a crime.*

PO BOX 1953
OAKLAND CALIF



35 cents

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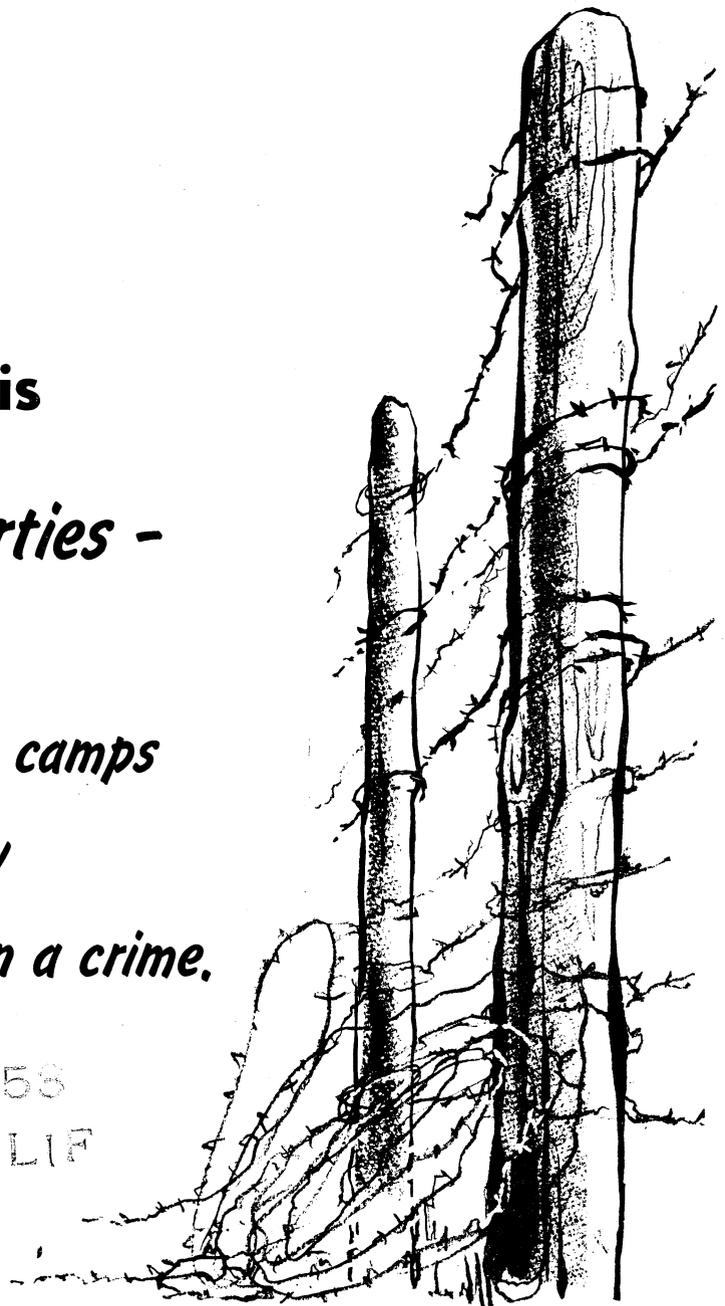
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Vol. 15—No. 4.

Fall 1954

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FROM OUR READERS

Evelyn Reed's articles on woman's role in society in the Spring and Summer issues of *Fourth International* continue to attract much interest. St. Paul Literature Agent Winifred Nelson writes: "We have very much appreciated the articles on the woman question. We had a discussion on the first article last Wednesday night, and Thursday when the new *FI* came, I sat down and read her article right away!

"Discussion stimulates reading, you know, and vice versa. And these articles on the woman question are new, although dealing with an old, old subject, and different from anything we have had on the subject before. In fact some of the questions raised in last Wednesday's discussion are answered in her new article. We say 'Fine!' to see these documents in the *FI*.

"In addition, we think Laura Gray's cartoon of McCarthy on the cover of the Summer issue is priceless! The McCarthy sneer and the shrugged shoulder are characteristic and wonderfully drawn—and the color scheme of the whole is very attractive."

* * *

Oakland Literature Agent Dolores Seville writes: "We expect to increase our *FI* bundle order substantially. The last issue sold so well at a newsstand on the Berkeley campus that we plan on doubling the amount when the fall term starts."

* * *

Seattle Literature Agent Helen Baker reports: "The last issue of the *FI* is attracting a lot of interest here."

* * *

Jean Simon writes from Cleveland: "Please send us extra copies of the Summer issue. We have sold our whole bundle."

Literature Agent Carol Houston reports an excellent response to the *FI* on the Chicago campus. She comments: "Incidentally, the Summer issue is really wonderful, both in appearance and content. Everyone here is very impressed."

* * *

Comrade Al Winters reports good sales on the campus in Detroit. "We placed a bundle of the Winter *FI* in a bookstore near Wayne University. They sold them out in about two weeks — So the students seem to go for it. We put a bundle of the Spring issue there also."

* * *

San Francisco Literature Agent Gordon Bailey writes: "We have put *Fourth International* on another newsstand and are planning to get it placed on more. The new format makes it far more saleable."

* * *

An agent for the magazine in England writes: "The new format is much appreciated here."

* * *

Rev. H. W. of Boston, Mass., writes, "Your material helps me keep abreast of socialist trends and has helped me very much in presenting liberal ideas."

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Police-State Liberals

by Art Preis

ONCE MORE the intellectual, journalistic and labor supporters of the liberal politicians in Congress are drenching the wailing wall with their tears. They are crying about the flagrant act of indecent exposure committed by the New Deal-Fair Deal Congressional liberals who authored the so-called "Communist Control" Law which, for the first time in American history, outlaws a political party.

Not a single voice of official liberalism dares to defend the conduct of the Senate and House liberals in connection with enactment of the law which puts political liberty in America in mortal peril and places a new legislative knife at the throat of organized labor.

The Aug. 24 N.Y. Post admitted that "it will be justly said that liberal Democrats disgraced themselves by striving to out-McCarthy McCarthy." Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the Post's chief political soothsayer, spoke of "midsummer madness" in a "group of Democrats, infected by pre-election fever" and predicted that "their hasty and reckless action will plague themselves, as well as the country, for some time to come." He added that "the Democrats succeeded triumphantly in placing their party to the right of Joe McCarthy, of Pat McCarran, of Judge Harold Medina . . ." Murray Kempton, the Post's labor columnist, went all out in his excoriation of the liberal capitalist politicians that he, along with all the other liberals, had urged the people to elect. Kempton admitted: "Every great name in the pantheon of liberalism in the United States Senate was on the list of those who voted to

make simple membership in the Communist Party a felony . . . *Real politik* has all but killed the liberals in this country, and we might as well drink the death brew at the wake . . . The recent record of the Democratic Party on civil liberties is at least as bad as that of the Republicans. And liberals are its architects."

The Aug. 21 Nation magazine, oldest and most respected voice of traditional liberalism in America, declared editorially that "once again, the Democratic 'liberals' have out-smarted themselves in their neurotic election-year anxiety to escape the charge of being 'soft on communism' even at the expense of sacrificing constitutional rights." The liberal weekly admonishes the Senate to "censure itself for the disgraceful 85 to 0 vote by which it has attempted to edge us a little closer to the concept of the one-party state."

Speaking of the Senator who introduced the political outlawry section of the law, the Aug. 30 New Republic explains that "of course Senator Humphrey [Hubert Humphrey (D-Minn.)] is tired—and embattled in the current campaign. But neither fact is justification for saddling the nation with restrictive laws . . . The sad truth is that the Democrats were . . . weak in judgment, in miscalculating the course of public opinion. Far more important, they were weak in spirit . . ."

The labor union bureaucrats, who take their ideology mainly from the liberal intellectuals and journalists, served up diluted versions of the latter's complaints. The Sept. 1 Advance, organ of the CIO Amalgamated Clothing Workers, found that

the contest between the liberal Democrats, the Eisenhower Republicans and the McCarthyites to offer the most repressive, anti-democratic measure was "one of the most amazing acts of demagoguery any Congress has put on display . . . a sorry spectacle . . . Frankly, we are at a loss to understand how the bill travelled so far without defeat. Many of the Senators and Representatives voting for it have long stood out as champions of civil liberties. If, as some observers have suggested, they joined in the stampede for political expediency, their actions were heinous."

The official national CIO and AFL papers play down the real danger of the new law to organized labor and even find merit in the conduct of the Congressional liberals who pushed this law that now hangs like a headsmen's axe over all parties which make any pretense of observing the democratic forms and over the entire union movement.

In the Aug. 23 CIO News, we find the moves and countermoves over the bill in the Senate described in terms of a slick trick by the liberals through which the Eisenhower Administration's "insistence on passage now of anti-Communist legislation aimed only at unions backfired . . . The Republican Party and the President got the anti-labor provisions they asked for, but they had to swallow with them a bill they didn't want—a bill which outlaws the Communist Party and establishes severe penalties for being a member."

The CIO News does object to the measure's "loose language." But the impression is given that the Eisenhower administration, yelling and balking, was driven by sheer force to back the outlawry of the Communist Party and that this wonderful political achievement of the liberals was secured at a small price—just a law to undermine political liberty and free trade unions.

As for the AFL tops, their AFL News-Reporter not only found nothing

ing wrong with the law as a whole, but emphasized in a front-page headline on Aug. 27: "AFL Units Not Affected By New Anti-Red Law." They based this deluding notion on the amendment, by Sen. Ives (R-N. Y.), whereby affiliates "of a national federation . . . whose policies and activities have been directed to opposing Communist organizations" are "presumed" not to be "Communist-infiltrated organizations." However, Ives himself admitted his amendment would not prevent the Attorney General or the Subversive Activity Control Board making an "inquiry" and "determination" against the AFL or its affiliates as "Communist-infiltrated." "That is definitely the intent of the amendment. Nothing stands in the way of such action by the Attorney General or the Board," said Ives (Congressional Record, Aug. 12, 1954, p. 13551).

How do publications like the N.Y. Post, the Nation, the New Republic and the Advance explain the fact that the liberals in Congress strove to "out-McCarthy McCarthy"? They attribute the "heinous" conduct of Senators Humphrey, Herbert Lehman (D-N.Y.), Estes Kefauver, (D-Tenn.), Wayne Morse (Ind. R-Ore.) and their liberal associates in Congress largely to personal physiological and psychological factors—to everything but the inherent nature of political liberalism itself. Senator Humphrey, and presumably his confreres, were "tired" and also "weak in judgment . . . weak in spirit" (New Republic). A case of "neurotic, election-year anxiety" opined the Nation. "Mid-summer madness," said Arthur Schlesinger (N.Y. Post), who even found an element of juvenile delinquency—"a collection of hotheads running wild like kids after their first glass of beer at a picnic." The Advance protested simple ignorance of any reason for the liberals' conduct—"we are at a loss to understand . . ."

From this we might conclude that the liberals in Congress are either physical wrecks, or crazy from the heat, or mentally deficient, or moral weaklings, or inexperienced youth fallen victims to their environment.

We might then have to ask what there is in liberalism that attracts as its best elements—the persons we were urged to elect to government office—a bunch of neurotic weaklings who were nothing but idiots to begin with.

The supporters and apologists for the political liberals feel that anything is better than the truth, even to pleading "temporary insanity." The truth is, of course, that the liberals in Congress are seasoned, shrewd, coolly calculating machine politicians. They didn't just "run wild," on impulse, due to unendurable Republican provocations. They did what they did because they wanted to and they behaved true to their political lights. The beer-addled schoolboys that Schlesinger depicts is a lie. The Social-Democratic New Leader of Aug. 23 describes the real picture—the organized, well-prepared, disciplined character of the liberal Democrats in Congress:

"The most articulate group in the Senate has been the band of a score or so who have carried the New Deal-Fair Deal standard. They have met regularly every fortnight to coordinate their tactics and objectives, and on alternate weeks their administrative assistants have gathered for the same purpose."

Senator Humphrey, a vice president of Americans for Democratic Action, had originally introduced a Communist Party outlawry bill four years ago during the discussion of the McCarran Subversive Registration Bill. His August 1954 contribution, therefore, was nothing he drew up at the spur of the moment while his brain was dulled by fatigue and inflamed with the heat. When the Republicans readily accepted his proposal and attached it to the Butler bill dealing with "Communist-infiltrated" unions—a bill which Humphrey ostensibly opposed—the Minnesota senator and the rest of the liberals unanimously voted for the combined bill in its final version.

In doing so, the liberals were not attempting some "naive tactic in the fight against communism," as the Social Democratic New Leader explains

it. They were not trying to give the "kiss of death" to the Butler bill by having it combined with a section on the Communist Party which would make it unpalatable to Eisenhower and therefore cause its veto. Humphrey himself has testified that he did everything to meet Eisenhower's objections and to make the whole anti-union, police-state bill palatable to the President and thereby ensure against a veto. At no time was the question of civil liberties involved.

Consider the following dialogue in the Senate on Aug. 19 between Sen. Humphrey and Sen. Butler, author of the bill Humphrey said he opposed and a man whom McCarthy personally had helped elect in Maryland. The Minnesota senator is calling on Butler to affirm that Humphrey had done everything to facilitate passage of the whole bill.

"Mr. HUMPHREY. . . . First of all, let me say that those who were members of the conference committee [joint Senate-House group] knew that they must at least take into consideration the views of the attorneys of our Government, who have some responsibility, and in fact the responsibility, for the prosecution of subversive activities.

"Mr. BUTLER. That is true.

"Mr. HUMPHREY. I think it is fair to say, and it should be said, that the changes which were made in the conference report were made because we did not want in any way to jeopardize proceedings now under way to fulfill the requirements of the internal-security law.

"Mr. BUTLER. I wholeheartedly attest to that.

"Mr. HUMPHREY. Let me say, as one who wants to cooperate with his Government, and at the same time strike a blow against those who would subvert the Government, that I felt a responsibility as one of those who had participated in formulating this proposed legislation, to give the utmost cooperation to the Department of Justice.

"Mr. BUTLER. I believe the Senator has.

"Mr. HUMPHREY. If I have a choice between giving cooperation to the Department of Justice and legislating regardless of their will or views or of their sincere observations, then my choice must be to recognize the superior knowledge and the responsibilities of the Department of Justice.

"Mr. BUTLER. I think the Senator has been very amenable to the wishes of the Department of Justice."

What a priceless commentary on liberalism this dialogue is. The leader of the liberals boastfully states a series of facts regarding his cooperation with the government political police in enacting the exact type of legislation the police-staters want. The McCarthyite affirms, like an amen, each claim of the liberal that his political policies conform to the line laid down by the Department of Justice and the FBI.

At another point in the debate, on Aug. 19, Sen. Kefauver, who originally opposed the Humphrey proposition, expressed his fear "that the application of this provision is not limited to the Communist Party. It may apply to the Republican Party, the Democratic Party or the Farm Labor Party. I assume the Senator from Minnesota would agree that this provision is not limited to the Communist Party." To which Humphrey replied: "Of course not. It is not limited to the Communist Party . . ."

In the end, Kefauver, too, swallowed his trepidations and scruples, voting for the bill in its final form because "I have now been assured that this will not adversely affect prosecutions under the Smith Act or adversely affect the Internal Security Act." That is, he was assured the bill would not interfere with the operations of previous police-state measures, including the Internal Security Act of 1950, which Kefauver had actually voted against. But by 1954, Kefauver told the Senate, "while I did not vote for the internal security bill, I now feel it may do some good . . ."

In case anyone believes that Humphrey — who continued to describe himself during the debate as "one who is deeply interested in the preservation of our basic liberties"—worked under some misconception as to the anti-civil liberties character of his proposal, the verbatim record makes everything clear. On Aug. 12, Sen. Johnston (D-S.C.) asked:

"Is it not also true that there are two types of Communists? One is the soap box orator. This amendment would certainly do away with him. Does not the Senator from Minnesota

think that when we let them talk, and talk and talk we are aiding them to a certain extent, and that this amendment would put them out of existence?"

Humphrey replied succinctly: "I think so."

This disdain for democratic rights, this rude brushing aside of elementary civil liberties is not something new with the political liberals. It is, as a matter of fact, their characteristic mode of behavior under pressure from the extreme right. Indeed, the record shows they have systematically sponsored some of the most repressive measures enacted by Congress to destroy the political liberty of the American people.

The previously cited Murray Kempton, who proclaimed the death of liberalism, summed up in a half-correct way the characteristic conduct of the liberal politicians: ". . . Liberal politicians have generally had a sorry record on civil liberties. Woodrow Wilson stuffed our jails . . . (in) the first World War; he whooped up the Palmer raids; he sent Eugene Debs to prison . . . Franklin D. Roosevelt was much more tolerant; yet many of his retainers would have sent Col. McCormick to jail in World War II if they had had their way. . ."

Roosevelt's tolerance was limited to fascist-minded multi-millionaires like Col. McCormick. What Kempton carefully covers up is that the first police-state law — the savage Smith "Gag" Act of 1940 which makes mere expression of opinion without any overt act a felony — was rushed through by a Democratic Congress and signed by Roosevelt himself. And it was Roosevelt personally who in 1941 ordered the Smith Act prosecution of 18 members of the Socialist Workers Party and Minneapolis Truckdrivers Local 544 and had them sent to prison for their anti-war views. It was Roosevelt who ordered scores of thousands of American citizens of Japanese descent arrested, held without trial and incarcerated in concentration camps throughout World War II.

The Aug. 21 Nation reminds us of the role played in 1950 by some of

the same liberal Democrats who, in Arthur Schlesinger's words, "organized a runaway stampede" in the 83rd Congress to trample on the Bill of Rights. The Nation recalls:

"When the McCarran Act, which became the Internal Security Act, was before the Senate in 1950, Senator Paul Douglas argued that the bill was 'ineffective' because it did not 'go far enough' in attempting to curb communism. A group of seven Senate 'liberals,' all Democrats, then offered the detention-camp proposal as an amendment, thinking it would discredit the bill itself — or so they said. But, as now, they were caught in their own trap, and the amendment was eagerly accepted by the Republicans."

The irrefutable fact is that the New Deal-Fair Deal liberals have been the chief authors and sponsors of the first laws (1) to make mere opinion a crime, (2) to establish concentration camps in America where political dissenters can be sent without trial in a "national emergency" and (3) to outlaw a political party. In short, they have been chiefly responsible for setting up the legal machinery which the McCarthyite fascists can use, if they come to power, to suppress all other political tendencies, including the liberal Democrats themselves.

The complaints of the liberal writers and publications about the latest anti-democratic acts of the liberal politicians sound like an echo of the lamentations these writers and publications have voiced time and again over the past 15 years. In the Fourth International of July 1942, we described the liberal mouthpieces then as "beginning to beat their breasts" over the reactionary conduct of Roosevelt's New Deal government in the war presumed to be against fascism (The Wailing Liberals, by Art Preis). Then, too, it was a case of the liberal regime's witch-hunt against political dissenters and radicals in the labor movement and government, of alliances with dictatorships abroad, of dollar-a-year men in control of the war machine in Washington.

Similarly, as reported in the Aug. 14, 1950, Militant (Liberals at Wailing Wall Over Korea, by Joseph Keller), the supporters of the Fair Deal Democratic regime of Truman

were pouring out their woes over the reactionary moves of the liberal government. Then, the big gripe was the crudely aggressive character of the U.S. invasion of Korea, conducted without any real attempt to put forward a "progressive" program to disguise the pro-capitalist, anti-land reform aims that were discrediting American imperialism throughout the colonial world. Then, too, the liberal apologists tried to make the conduct of the liberal Democrats appear as a mere temporary aberration.

The reactionary acts of the political liberals are "shocking," "amazing," "inexplicable," "neurotic" only if we consider liberalism as a fixed set of principles. Chiefly, the liberals would have us believe that they constitute a movement to preserve, defend and extend civil liberties and to promote social reforms and improvements. It is true that the liberals do a great deal of talking and writing about these things, but their record in government, as we have cited it, belies their claim. Concern for civil liberties and social betterment is not a fixed attribute of liberalism, except for electioneering purposes. For a long time now, it has been more precise to speak of the *police-state liberals*.

The schizophrenic, or "split personality," trait of liberalism is explainable only in terms of a class phenomenon. Liberalism is a tendency reflecting the interests of that class in modern society which has the least firm foundation and the most instability, the middle class. This class, caught in the midst of the basic struggle between big monopoly capital and organized labor, oscillates back and forth between the two, with no clear, precise program of its own.

Historically, liberalism arose in the struggle of the rising capitalists against feudalism and the landed nobility and was epitomized in the slogan of the French Revolution, "Liberty, equality, fraternity." It continued as a tendency in the conflict between small and big capital, between heavy industrial and financial capital and light industrial and mercantile capital. The latter at a certain stage

sought to win the lower-middle class masses and the workers with promises of social reforms and civil liberties and to use these classes as a counter-weight to the big bourgeoisie, the monopolists.

In England, liberalism had its special party called the Liberal Party. But class politics has long since superseded over the "non-class" concepts of liberal politics. The Liberal Party has been reduced almost to a relic, while the basic class forces are polarized in the Conservative Party and the Labor Party. In the United States, however, this polarization, as expressed in terms of class parties, has been delayed, primarily because the labor union leaders have accepted the political lead of the middle-class liberals.

Whatever the programmatic oscillations of the liberals, they have one constant: they are unshakably for the private-profit system which has enabled the middle-class to enjoy a privileged status, economically and socially, over the great productive class of modern society, the workers. In the final analysis, the middle-class liberals are wedded by class interests to capitalism and are loyal to it above all else.

But capitalism in decay leaves no room for liberalism to continue in its earlier manifestations. Capitalism is torn asunder by insoluble contradictions which it seeks to resolve by wars between nations for economic advantages and by intensified exploitation of labor. The lower-middle class, on which the liberals lean most heavily, are driven into frenzy by the instability and ever-threatening crises of capitalism and seek some way to retain their status as a class. Offered no program of social betterment by the labor leaders, who themselves look to the middle-class for guidance, the lower-middle class in greater and greater numbers turns toward demagogic solutions—above all, to fascism and its thesis of "treason" by the traditional capitalist parties and the "menace of communism."

The liberals seek to keep their hold on the lower-middle class and the more backward sectors of the unor-

ganized workers, who had previously looked for salvation in the promises of the New Deal and Fair Deal, by more and more asserting and demonstrating that they are the "best" fighters against "communism." They try to maintain "class harmony" by supporting increasing government intervention in unions and restrictions on organized labor. They may still try to preserve the shell of the old forms of democratic capitalist rule but they give it a police-state content.

This, of course, will not halt the basic class struggle. Police-state liberalism will not stem the tide of McCarthyism but help to create conditions for its stronger flow. It will not even save the liberals from annihilation should McCarthyism come to power.

When Sen. Humphrey introduced his political outlawry bill because "I am tired of reading headlines about being 'soft' toward communism," it won the liberals no respite from the McCarthyite attack. McCarthy rose on Aug. 16 in the Senate and menacingly replied: "I am not much impressed by some of our friends who oppose the activities and the methods, if you please, of those who dig out the individual Communists—I refer to members who in their whole lives have never dug out a single Communist—but who wish to make an anti-Communist record by sponsoring a law outlawing the Communist Party."

McCarthy only demands more evidence of their "anti-Communism," more proof that they are not "traitors." They will have to back his witch-hunt, his methods, his movement. Nothing less will satisfy him. In the end, they will have to jump on the fascist bandwagon and work for the total destruction of organized labor or find themselves in the concentration camps, torture chambers and death cells.

Liberalism is no bulwark of our liberties. Nothing can save America from the iron heel but a class party of the working people in mortal combat against the fascist party of capitalism.

Does "Co-Existence" Mean Peace?

by Milton Alvin

THE GENEVA cease-fire agreement, bringing to a close the long war in Indochina, seems to have left us with no major war in the world for the first time in some 22 years. At least we are so informed by the Stalinist press, and the opinion is echoed by part of the capitalist press.

According to the Stalinists, the agreement marks a momentous step toward co-existence—the peaceful co-existence of capitalism and the Soviet bloc. The official Stalinist leaders both here and abroad have greeted this with jubilation, as though it represented some kind of victory for the peoples of the world in general and the people of Indochina in particular.

But the Geneva agreement handed over the people of the French-controlled territories to further imperialist exploitation without regard for their years of heroic struggle for freedom. They were bargained away like cattle. Their well-deserved victory was snatched away just as they were about to throw off the chains of imperialism once for all.

The Indochinese were sacrificed by the Stalinists in hope of getting a deal with the capitalist countries. By their betrayal, the Stalinists say to the imperialists, "See, we are not such bad fellows. We are willing to give away a great deal if you will only give us a chance." They hope that

the capitalists, especially the Americans, will take the hint.

But this is essentially the same kind of betrayal we have seen time and again in the past 20 years, the surrender of the basic interests of the exploited masses in favor of a temporary understanding with the capitalists.

The idea of a protracted peace based upon agreements between the capitalist world and the Soviet bloc seems to have many adherents in official seats of power today. However, the concepts of the character of the agreement are as varied as the routes by which they were reached.

For example, Churchill, the old war-dog of British imperialism, has stated that we must give co-existence "a real try." That is a considerable shift from his position in 1946, voiced at Fulton, Missouri, when he launched the "cold war."

Churchill reflects the deep-seated fear the British people feel at the prospect of another war. Everyone knows that the cities of England would be among the first targets in a new war—and everyone knows equally well that there is no defense against the new types of weapons.

Furthermore, Churchill understands that the fortunes of capitalist Britain cannot be retained, let alone expanded, by depending in the main on the old ways. Small detachments of troops used to conquer entire colonies

and keep them in subjugation. But those days are gone forever. British imperialism must seek time, in hope that internal developments in the colonial areas will eventually turn to its advantage.

The case of Iran is instructive in this respect. Churchill did not send troops when the Iranians, under Mossadegh, kicked the British out of the oil fields and took over the refineries. The imperialists waited and plotted; and when Mossadegh did not go further, and the Stalinists with their decisive following also halted the movement half way, the counter-revolution, formed around the Shah, struck back successfully. Churchill did not have to fire a shot to reinstate the oil companies.

Eisenhower Shifts

Even the power-drunk American imperialists have had to pause in their war plans. President Eisenhower himself favors trying for a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union. But the arrangement he wants is so hedged with qualifications that it has proved unacceptable to the other side.

Wall Street is caught in a contradictory position. Armed with hydrogen bombs and perhaps worse weapons, American Big Business hopes to recapture control over those areas that have slipped out of the imperialist sector. But there is wide opposition to war here at home plus the opposition of America's allies. In fact, the only allies that seem to be anxious to get on with another world war are those who have little or nothing to lose, such as Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee.

For this and other reasons, the Eisenhower administration has been compelled to recognize a state of "co-existence" with the Soviet bloc. No one knows how long it will last, but for the time being we have a sort of peace.

That is, if you are willing to overlook the fighting in North Africa, where the Tunisians and Moroccans are trying to win independence from France; the fighting in Burma and Malaya and Kenya, where the people are trying to win independence from British imperialism; the civil war in the Philippine Islands. That is quite a bit to pass over.

However, the Stalinists — who thought up the idea of co-existence—believe that this state of affairs, which they term “peaceful,” can be made permanent by establishing trade relations and by “good will.”

Is it possible to have good trade relations, to say nothing of good will, when countries are divided arbitrarily after generations of development as economic and cultural entities? Germany, Korea and Indochina are divided down the middle. This kind of solution solves nothing. Instead it plants a time-bomb in each of these areas that is bound to explode with terrible force.

These divisions formalize a latent civil war which in the end must be carried through to victory by one side or the other. People who believe this state of affairs can be made to last any length of time are living in a political dream world.

Forty years ago Lenin characterized the era then opening up as one of wars and revolutions, the end result of which would see the replacement of world capitalism by world socialism. This idea, which dominated the early Third International, was also held by Leon Trotsky, who saw the revolution as “permanent,” or continuous, until the goal of world socialism was reached.

“Socialism in One Country”

About 30 years ago, after Lenin’s death in 1924, Stalin challenged this basic idea of the world communist movement and advanced in its place the theory of building “socialism in one country.”

Outside of the communist movement itself, Stalin’s theory and Trotsky’s struggle against it attracted little or no attention at the time. But in

our time it has become the key question of world politics.

The great struggle between Trotsky and Stalin over this question has been repeated at every critical stage of world history since then. It now appears once more, forcing us again to re-examine and re-appraise it in the light of new events.

Boiled down to its essence, the question is this: Can two qualitatively different forms of property relations co-exist peacefully?

Depending on the answer given to this question hinge the answers to all questions of strategy and tactics.

The Stalinist answer, that peaceful co-existence is possible, implies maintenance of the status quo, keeping the world as it is today. This answer requires that the workers in capitalist countries give up the class struggle in favor of supporting capitalism and that the workers in the Soviet bloc uncritically support the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy. In short, the Stalinist position advocates permanent division of the world as it is and opposes revolution or any other major change.

For example, where the capitalist rulers have a friendly agreement with the Kremlin, in that country the Stalinists, in order not to disrupt the agreement, must not even seek for reforms. This was the case in France in the post-World War II days when the Stalinists, as members of the government, were against wage increases and strikes and voted money to conduct the war in Indochina.

The fact is that where a capitalist government is in alliance with the Kremlin—this is the aim of co-existence—the Stalinists play the role of capitalist agents within the working class openly and without much subterfuge. We had a good dose of this in America during World War II when the Communist Party acted as strike-breakers, stoolpigeons for the bosses and generally opposed every forward movement the workers tried to make.

Where such an alliance does not exist, the Stalinists play the role of militants to put pressure on the capitalists. This masks their real role

which is strictly limited to getting an alliance.

Experience has taught that the Stalinist policy of supporting capitalist governments in exchange for alliances with the Soviet government results in the betrayal of the workers’ movement. But does it bring peace? The experience of the period preceding World War II says it does not.

The Stalinists promised in those days that “collective security” would maintain peace. In the name of this policy, they derailed the Spanish revolution and the French revolutionary movement of 1936. In the name of this policy in the U.S., they herded the workers into the Democratic Party, insofar as the Stalinists had influence among the workers in those days, and they had a lot then. But despite collective security, the war came anyway. And it turned out that the least secure was the Soviet Union itself, deprived as it was of the support of the revolutions the Stalinists had betrayed in the Thirties. After the war, the alliances with England and the U.S. blew up in the faces of the Stalinists and the “cold war” was upon us. In the light of this experience, one must take a dim view of the lasting quality of alliances with capitalist countries.

We do not rule out all temporary agreements between the Soviet Union and capitalist countries. What is impermissible is the subordination of the workers’ struggles in the capitalist countries to the alliance. What we condemn is the Stalinist policy of betraying the fundamental aims of the workers in favor of agreements with the bosses.

Why They Plan War

It is not the good will or bad will of Big Business that determines the instability of agreements with the Soviet Union. It is the requirements of capitalist economy. For example, it is admitted everywhere that the American economy would be plunged into a terrible depression if government spending for war should be stopped or sharply curtailed. Even with the present huge expenditures, the begin-

nings of a serious economic crisis are with us.

In addition there is the problem of investments. American capitalism has accumulated unprecedented aggregates of new capital in the past 15 years. Much of this cannot find profitable investment at home. But abroad even countries like India and Indonesia are today considered too risky to suit the tastes of Wall Street.

The world tendency of revolutionary upsurge, reducing the area of safe investment on the one hand, and the piling up of idle capital in America on the other, are contradictory movements of far greater explosive force than the hydrogen bomb.

The need to make the world safe for investments impels capitalist America toward war and makes any deals or agreements with the Soviet bloc highly temporary.

The resumption of trade, advanced by the Stalinists as a panacea, would not alter this. It is not trade that American economy requires so much as fields of investment. But this is ruled out in the Soviet bloc for two reasons: (1) American capitalists will not risk their money in Soviet bloc countries under present circumstances. (2) The Stalinists cannot permit financial invasion of Soviet industries in substantial amounts without putting a question mark over their own future.

The fact that England and France are so depleted of capital reserves that the need for trade looms large and thus impels them toward friendly relations with the Soviet bloc for the time being does not reduce the impulsion American capitalism feels toward finding safe areas of investment. It simply means that in each case economic necessity determines the varying current attitudes of these capitalist sectors toward the Soviet bloc.

Analysis of the underlying economic reality shows that American imperialism will not swerve from its basic course toward war. This is true even if the Eisenhower administration reaches some kind of temporary understanding with the Kremlin. Such a change would be a formal but not

an essential change. It would be undertaken for tactical reasons with the aim of utilizing it to further the long-range aim of war. Hitler even signed a pact with Stalin as a preliminary step toward launching an invasion of the Soviet Union. American Big Business would agree to a temporary deal with the Kremlin without the slightest illusion about its real character.

The Stalinists on the other hand take "peaceful co-existence" as their guiding line, the real line that determines fundamental policy. Trotsky pointed out 30 years ago what illusions the theory of "socialism in one country" would sow and what betrayals it would lead to. He warned that Stalin's theory, which is the premise of "peaceful co-existence," would disarm the workers of the capitalist countries as well as those of the Soviet Union. And we have seen how tragically his warnings were verified.

The present theory of co-existence will fare no differently. With Moscow concentrating on winning an alliance with France, for example, the French workers will get a new dose of betrayal. The same holds good for any other country where the Stalinists have any influence whatsoever.

As against the Stalinist concept, here is what Lenin said about the possibility of co-existence: "We have now passed from the arena of war to the arena of peace and we have not forgotten that war will come again.



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As long as capitalism and socialism remain side by side we cannot live peacefully—one or the other will be the victor in the end. An obituary will be sung either over the death of world capitalism or the death of the Soviet Republic. At present we have only a respite in the war."

Like dozens of similar statements made by both Lenin and Trotsky after World War I, this shows that the founders of the first workers state had no illusions about peace enduring between capitalism and socialism.

As in those days, this problem is the key to world politics today. If you believe that co-existence is possible, then you must logically give up any perspective of the workers taking power in America and organizing socialism here. You must help achieve an alliance between Wall Street and the Kremlin. That means giving up any struggle in the interests of the workers. That is the perspective of the Stalinists.

If, on the other hand, you believe as we of the Socialist Workers Party do, that co-existence is an illusion, leads the workers into a trap and betrays their real interests, you will double and re-double your efforts to win a Workers and Farmers Government in America.

That is the way the question is posed today: Co-existence or socialist revolution. And not only for us, but for all the oppressed, all the exploited of the world. Are these multi-millioned masses, rising to their feet for the first time in history, to give up their struggle as the Stalinists propose?

We do not believe they will do so! We do not believe that the Stalinists can much longer sign away the gains made by those who have fought and won. The road to peace is not through "co-existence," through alliances of the workers with the capitalists, either within any single country or internationally. The road to world socialism is the only road to peace. When the workers of the world have ousted the capitalists from power, then and only then will we have peace, cooperation among peoples, brotherhood. There is no other way.

The Farm Crisis In the Soviet Union

by John G. Wright

SEPTEMBER 1954 marked the first anniversary of a farm crisis that was formally admitted by the Malenkov regime on September 3, 1953. At that time Khrushchev, the first Secretary of the Russian party, publicly acknowledged in his report that the "level of agricultural production as a whole" was "inadequate"; that there was a "lag in a number of important branches of agriculture" with the worst shortages existing "in animal husbandry, the growing of feed and fodder crops, potatoes and vegetables"; and, finally, that this lag in agriculture was already so serious as to act as a brake upon industrial growth, in particular, said Khrushchev, it "retards the further development of the light and food industries."

These and other admissions came as a stunning surprise to the Soviet people. In the entire post-war period the Kremlin had claimed nothing but successes, admitting only minor "shortcomings" in agriculture. This, in fact, was the keynote of Malenkov's report to the 19th party Congress in October 1952. Malenkov then boasted: "Our agriculture is becoming more and more perfected, more productive and is turning out more and more produce for the market." The chronic problem of assuring grain to the country had been forever solved. "The grain problem," announced Malenkov, "formerly considered the

most acute and gravest problem, has thus been solved successfully, solved once and for all. (*Tumultuous, prolonged applause.*)"

When it no longer became possible to deny the farm crisis, the Malenkov regime took the road of trying to explain it away as simply a "crisis of growth." Khrushchev in his report continued flatly to deny that there was any shortage of grain. "Generally speaking," he said, "we meet the country's grain requirements in the sense that our country is provided with grain, that we have the necessary state reserves and export definite quantities of grain." There was, he explained, a shift in the demand of the Soviet population "more and more from bread to meat and milk products, vegetables, fruit, etc.," owing to "the rise in the material well-being of the working people." The campaign for "abundance" was the cover chosen by the Kremlin in its struggle to overcome the farm crisis.

There followed a whole series of agricultural reforms coupled, as usual, with administrative measures. The regime made sweeping concessions to the individualist tendencies in agriculture. Private ownership of cattle and cultivation of individually-owned strips of land were spurred; taxes on crops were reduced and so were delivery quotas, benefiting primarily the rich peasants and rich collective

farms; overdue taxes were remitted and prices raised on state deliveries and state purchases of crops; bonuses for "over-fulfillment" of crop quotas were raised, etc.

Among the more important administrative measures were the following:

The structure of the government-owned Machine and Tractor Stations was overhauled. The MTS personnel was made permanent and separated completely from the collective farm personnel, with each MTS member provided by law with a private land-strip, privately owned cow, plus grants of long-term loans to build privately owned dwellings.

More than 100,000 specialists, agronomists, zootechnicians, engineers, etc., were sent into the countryside, with one or more being attached to each collective farm and each MTS. Many of these specialists have taken over the post of chairman of the collective farm. No official statistics have been issued in this connection, but from all indications in the Soviet press, the administrations of the overwhelming majority of 94,000 collective farms and almost 9,000 MTS have been changed from top to bottom, many of them several times since September 1953.

Sweeping Changes

An equally drastic change has been carried out in the structure of the party apparatus in the rural areas, with the local and district secretariats transferred to the MTS as their center of operations, and with only a skeletal structure retained of the former local and district bodies.

It is no exaggeration to say that since the early Thirties, when Stalin launched wholesale collectivization, the Soviet countryside has not witnessed such sweeping changes, such shifts of administrative personnel and other "innovations" as have taken place in the recent period.

Literally armies of Soviet bureaucrats armed with "plenipotentiary" powers are now swarming over the countryside. Among the recent emergency measures it is instructive to note that tens of thousands of "organizers" were ordered sent into the fields during this year's harvest season, with a team of "organizers for every 3-5 combines in order to assure the uninterrupted and highly productive operation of the combines." (Decision of the Party Plenum, June 24, 1954.)

Developments, entirely unforeseen, aggravated the Soviet farm crisis. The ink had hardly dried on the emergency decrees that emanated from the September 1953 Plenum when the Soviet countryside was hit by early and severe frosts and blizzards. The very measures of "material interest-ness" by which the Kremlin had hoped to overcome existing shortages, boomeranged against the regime. The mass of the peasants neglected the collective-farm crops in order to save their own midget economies from the unexpected blows of early winter, the severest in recent years. The full extent of the losses incurred last year remains unknown.

But the columns of the Russian press did report heavy losses of cattle, sheep and horses, feed and fodder crops. Even the grain crop was admittedly affected. The 1953 grain harvest was apparently the poorest in post-war years, at all events, by official admission, it fell below the 1952 levels.

In this new situation, the Kremlin made another abrupt shift. The slogan of "abundance within the next two-three years" was modified to read "a sufficiency and then an abundance." And more significantly, the Kremlin for the first time admitted that the production of grain was "inadequate" for the country's needs. By July of this year the official press was citing six basic reasons why Soviet grain production had to be sharply increased "in the course of 1954 and 1955."

First, there is the need "to increase the annual per capita consumption of flour and grain products"; second,

to "improve" cattle feeding; third, to create "sufficient" seed and insurance reserves; fourth, to provide enough grain for industrial purposes; fifth, to raise the state reserves; and sixth, to raise the grain exports (*Pravda*, July 2, 1954). Thus, the grain problem, which Malenkov had boasted less than two years before had been forever solved, has emerged once again as the primary and most acute problem confronting the regime.

Emergency Program

Less than six months after the promulgation of the September 1953 agricultural reforms and new program, the Malenkov regime was compelled to promulgate an entirely different program designed to overcome the lag in grain production. This emergency program was adopted at the February-March 1954 Plenum. It called for the cultivation of grain on the semi-arid steppes of Kazakhstan, the Urals and Western Siberia, with some 32 million acres to be cleared and cultivated in 1954 and 1955.

As late as January of this year there was no talk in the press of



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such a vast project. The most that was originally contemplated was the possible opening up of one, perhaps two million acres of this "virgin land" for agricultural production, and this, over a period of several years.

Only sometime in February was the decision suddenly made to plunge headlong into this vast venture. The Plenum which formally adopted this new emergency plan was held only a few weeks before the actual opening of the spring sowing season.

Let us further recall that the areas for this projected huge-scale grain production have lagged notoriously, having for years produced the lowest yields in the Soviet Union. In his September 1953 report Khrushchev singled out "the Volga area, West Siberia and Kazakhstan" as "lagging" and poorest in "yields of grain and especially grain-leguminous crops."

These same areas have likewise been among the least efficient in the utilization, maintenance and repair of agricultural machinery and in the operation of their Machine and Tractor Stations. The June 1954 Plenum has once again singled out for criticism "many MTS and state farms" of Kazakhstan, the Urals and Western Siberia for their "failures and short comings" in the 1954 sowing season.

Meanwhile the operations have proceeded on a scale hitherto unknown even in the Soviet Union. Into the "virgin lands" a whole army of technicians, mechanics, tractor and combine drivers, primarily members of the Russian Communist Youth, has been sent. The June 1954 Plenum boasted that "more than 140,000 individuals have already arrived in the MTS and the state farms and are actively involved in the work" on the virgin lands. This is evidently only the first installment of a projected large-scale migration. The lead editorial of July 2 *Pravda* makes this quite clear.

"As the scale of operations in acquiring the virgin and fallow lands expands, it will demand," says *Pravda*, "a new influx of working forces into the Eastern regions from other cities and industrial centers... It is necessary to bear in mind that the population of these regions will grow rapidly in numbers in the next few years."

It is noteworthy that *Pravda* foresees not only a rapid growth of these

regions but underscores the source of this growth, namely, "other cities and industrial centers." This means that administrative pressure will be exerted to an increasing extent to force workers from factories to migrate into the West Siberian countryside, the Urals and Kazakhstan.

On July 1 the Chelyabinsk tractor factory "initiated" a move that was given nationwide publicity. "The factory," reported *Pravda*, "sent into the villages more than a thousand production workers... The workers who remained behind in the production departments undertook the obligation to fulfill the plan (of production) for themselves and for the comrades who departed to the collective farms." Ostensibly this movement of production workers into the countryside is "voluntary" and temporary, only for the period of the 1954 harvest season. But from many indications the regime envisages a more permanent shift of at least a part of the existing labor force.

"Only a Beginning"

The June 1954 Plenum suddenly announced that the plan adopted in March to bring under grain cultivation 32 million acres of virgin lands was "only a beginning." Far more extensive areas are to be opened up and cultivated.

The Plenum ordered the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of State Farms and the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federated Republic and that of Kazakhstan to submit new plans by October 15, 1954. Without waiting for the submission of these new plans *Pravda* on July 2, 1954 declared that the area of virgin lands to be placed under cultivation "in the next few years can be increased twofold and threefold." In other words, the March 1954 plan for cultivating "only" 32 million acres in 1954-55 was scrapped within ninety days in favor of a plan to cultivate from 75 million to 100 million acres "in the next few years."

Under the original March 1954 plan, it was necessary to divert the bulk of new agricultural machinery

to the virgin lands. Some of this machinery proved inadequate to the needs and new types were found necessary. Under the new and far bigger plan the Soviet agricultural machine industry will have to be reorganized to produce primarily for the projected stupendous operations, to the obvious detriment of the rest of Soviet agriculture.

The labor shortage which already admittedly exists on Soviet farms will not be ameliorated but aggravated in the next period by the need to divert greater labor forces into the Asian steppes and former mountain pastures. Again, the rest of the Soviet agriculture will not be aided but hampered thereby. Why then has the Kremlin finally decided upon this course? Obviously for one reason and one reason only. The Malenkov regime sees no other way out of the current farm crisis.

There is a tell-tale clause in the June 1954 Plenum decision that highlights the bankruptcy of the Kremlin's entire agricultural policy. It is this, that the projected expansion of Soviet agriculture must take place "chiefly by way of organizing *new state farms*." (*Pravda*, June 27, 1954. Our emphasis.)

The June 1954 Plenum boasts that in the course of the spring months alone there have been created 124 new state farms averaging in size over 51,000 acres each. These are giant grain factories. And the current plan obviously aims to increase their number tenfold and more, with the view toward making the state-owned and state-operated sector the dominant one in Soviet agriculture. State ownership and state operation turns out to be the only way out of the blind alley created by more than a quarter of a century of Stalinist "collectivization." To put it in different words, the Malenkov regime, unable to cope with the opposition and resistance of the Soviet peasantry, incapable of supplying the village with enough manufactured goods and necessities to spur the peasants to produce more for the market voluntarily, has plunged into another bureaucratic adventure in agriculture.

High Risk

It is an adventure because Soviet agriculture still depends overwhelmingly for its production on the work and skill of the mass of the peasantry. The existing state farms, some 4,700 in number, account for only a small fraction of the total agricultural production. Their yields have run as a rule lower than those of collective farms and their operations have been far more costly. In October 1952 Malenkov admitted that "one of the major shortcomings in the work of a large number of state farms is the high production cost of grain, meat, milk and other produce." In September 1953 Khrushchev repeated: "The high cost of producing grain, meat, milk and other items still constitutes a big shortcoming in the work of the state farms," and he added: "Many state farms are headed by inadequately trained workers." A large percentage of the existing state farms have operated only thanks to state subsidies.

Under the most favorable circumstances, a major expansion of state farm operations in these conditions, could not be considered other than a calculated risk. The bureaucratic adventure into which the Malenkov bureaucracy has plunged is nothing short of a desperate gamble. The lands they have brought and propose to bring under cultivation are marginal lands; that is, it is a gamble whether good crops can be grown there under favorable climatic conditions. Inclement weather, periods of drought could prove insuperable obstacles.

As if to warn the bureaucratic adventurers, on the heels of early winter there came this year a belated spring over virtually the whole Soviet Union. The June 1954 Plenum listed ten major provinces that failed to fulfill the plan for spring sowing of grain, plus two Republics (Estonia and Latvia), and seven more major provinces that failed to fulfill the plan for potato sowing. The opening up of the first virgin lands took place under admittedly unexpected and unfavorable conditions. But all this did not deter the bureaucracy, it

The Degeneration of the Communist Party And the New Beginning

by James P. Cannon

made it only the more determined to take the plunge.

The year 1954, when both the sowing campaign and the harvesting took place under the sign of emergency, was originally intended by the Kremlin to mark the breaking point in the farm crisis. The bureaucracy has been disappointed in its expectations. None of the previously existing major shortages has been alleviated. And in contrast to 1953, the grain problem has once again emerged to the forefront.

Impose New Strains

The new plan, which on paper appears to solve everything, has imposed new and tremendous strains on both the Soviet countryside and Soviet industry.

The June 1954 Plenum adopted special measures, as yet not made public, "to strengthen labor discipline" on the farms and "to assure the active participation of all collective farmers in the social production of the collectives." The peasants find it more profitable to work on their own midget enterprises and no amount of administrative pressure will substantially alter their attitude. But the collision between the bureaucracy and the peasants will be intensified.

The Soviet workers find themselves also under mounting pressures. In 1953 they were called upon to produce more "within the same productive areas and with the same equipment"; the June 1954 Plenum has summoned them to "aid" the collectives and the state farms "without detriment to the work of the state enterprises and constructions." As in the case of the Chelyabinsk tractor plant, this means that an increasing number of workers will be drafted for work in the countryside, temporarily or permanently, while the remaining workers are speeded up to fulfill the quotas "for themselves and for the departed comrades."

The second year of the still unresolved Soviet farm crisis will therefore unfold under much greater social tensions and conflict than the year that has just elapsed.

I.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY, as it stands today, is undoubtedly the most friendless party in the history of American radicalism, and this unpopularity is by no means confined to reactionary ruling circles which are fiercely persecuting the party incident to the cold war. The party is despised and rejected by the workers too, and not only by the ignorant and the backward. For the first time, a party faces persecution without the moral support and sympathy of even the more progressive workers who have traditionally extended their solidarity to any party or group hounded by the ruling powers.

In its later evolution the Communist Party has written such a consistent record of cynical treachery and lying deception that few can believe it was ever any different. A quarter of a century of Stalinism has worked mightily to obliterate the honorable record of American communism in its pioneer days.

Yet the party wrote such a chapter too, and the young militants of the new generation ought to know about it and claim it for their own. It belongs to them. The first six years of American communism—1918-1923—represent a heroic period from which all future revolutionary movements in this country will be the lineal descendants. There is no getting away

from that. The revolutionist who would deny it, is simply renouncing his own ancestry. That's where he came from, and without it he would not be.

The Communist Party did not change its nature and its color overnight. Between its early years of integrity and its later corruption there was a transition period of the transformation of the once revolutionary organization into its opposite. This transition period, which began in the last half of the Twenties, is the subject of this inquiry.

The degeneration of the Communist Party of the United States in this fateful period did not happen by accident. It had profound causes which must be considered in their entirety. The same can be said of the struggle for the regeneration of American communism which began in 1928.

A complex of external factors, upon which the party tried to operate, also operated upon the party and eventually determined its course. Different problems—posed by national and international developments—confronted the party in the different stages of its evolution. Different influences—national and international—predominated at different times. The actions of the party leaders must be related to their context of time and circumstance. Only from this point of view can one approach an understanding of the party's retrogressive transfor-

mation. The rest is only malicious gossip or special pleading, which presents a mystery without a clue.

II.

The history of the first ten years of American communism properly falls into three distinct periods. These three periods may be summarized as follows:

From 1917 to 1919 the life of the left wing of the Socialist Party—out of which the first troops of American communism were assembled—was governed primarily by international events and influences. Two “outside” factors, namely, the First World War and the Russian Revolution, created the issues which deepened the division between the left and the right in the American SP; and the theoretical formulation of these issues by the Russian Bolsheviks and the Comintern gave the left wing its program.

The factional struggle of this period occurred along clearly defined lines of political principle. The left wing, which had previously fought as a theoretically uncertain and somewhat heterogeneous minority, was armed with the great ideas of the Bolsheviks and unified on a new foundation. The left wing as a whole clashed with the traditional leadership of the SP over the most basic issues of doctrine, as they had been put to the test in the war and the Russian Revolution.

Leaving aside all the mistakes and excesses of the left wing leaders, personal antagonisms engendered in the fight, etc., the lines of principle which separated them from the old leadership of the Socialist Party were clearly drawn. The split of 1919, resulting in the formal constitution of the communist movement as an independent party, was a split over *international* issues of *principle* in the broadest and clearest sense of the term.

III.

The period from 1920 to 1923 presents a different picture. After the split with the right socialists, the left wing was pre-occupied with differences and divisions in its own ranks, and the issues of factional struggle were different. *National* considera-

tions dominated the life of the young communist movement at this time.

The big question of this period—Americanization, legalization, trade union work, labor party, leadership—were specifically *American* questions. The issues of internal controversy were not matters of principle—since all factions supported the program of Bolshevism and all acknowledged allegiance to the Comintern—but of tactics.

Nevertheless, the political nature of the differences in that period stands out very clearly above all secondary questions of personal antagonisms, rivalries, etc. The *international* factor—the Comintern—appears in this period as a helpful advisor in the settlement of *national* questions. The American party was throwing up its own indigenous leadership and fighting out its own battles with the help of the Comintern, rather than, as in the preceding period, simply reflecting and re-enacting the international fight on American grounds.

IV.

The years 1924 to 1928 stand out as the great dividing line between progress and regression in the evolution of the Communist Party of the United States.

Prior to that time national conditions, on the whole, had favored the consolidation of a revolutionary party, even though a small one, and the process was greatly aided by the powerful inspiration of the Russian Revolution and the friendly intervention of the Comintern in matters of doctrine and policy. The party, like all other parties, had developed in the course of internal struggles. The issues of these struggles, as written in the record, stand out in retrospect sharp and clear. Everything that happened in those earlier periods makes political sense and is easily comprehensible. The record explains itself.

The evolution of the party in the last half of the Twenties must appear as a puzzle to the student who tries to decipher the formal record of this period; for the record was in part falsified even while it was being made, and has been even more falsified in later accounts. In these years

real differences between the factions over national policy actually narrowed down, and they were usually able to agree on common resolutions, but the faction fight raged fiercer than ever.

Something went wrong, and the party began to gyrate crazily like a mechanism out of control. The purposeful and self-explanatory internal struggles of temporary factions in the earlier periods, by which the party was propelled forward in spite of all mistakes and inadequacies of the participants, gave place to a “power fight” of permanent factions struggling blindly for supremacy or survival in a form of political gang warfare.

People who had started out to fight for communism began to lose sight of their goal. Factionalism, which in earlier times had been a means to an end, became an end in itself. Allegiance to communism and to the party gave way, gradually and imperceptibly, to allegiance to the faction-gang. There could be no winners in this crazy game, which—unknown to the participants at the time—was destined to find its eventual solution in a three-way split and a new beginning.

V.

What threw the machine out of control? That is the question. Stories told about the unsightly squabbles and scandals of that time of troubles, whether, true or false, which leave unanswered the question of basic causes, are mere descriptions which explain nothing and properly come under the heading of gossip.

Such gossip represents the individual participants in the events of that period as masters of their own fate. This gives them too much credit—or too much blame. The party leaders did not operate in circumstances of their own making. Their actions were far less significant than the forces that acted upon them. To be sure, they were communists, committed to the service of a great cause. By that fact, they were superior to others of their generation who limited themselves to small aims. But they were neither gods nor devils, and they were not able to make history accord-

ing to their will. They were not even able to stick to their original design.

The story of the Communist Party in the different stages of its evolution is a story of different people, even though some of the names are the same—a story of people who changed. In examining the record of the early days one must try to see the people as they were then, and not as they became after the passage of time and many pressures had wrought their changes. The period of party history under review was a time of change—in the party and in the people who headed it.

In order to understand what happened to them it is necessary to recognize what was happening in the world at large and how they were affected by it. Like many before them and after them, they who had set out to change the world were imperceptibly changed by it. They meant well—with a possible exception here and there. Their fault, which was their undoing, was that they did not fully recognize the forces operating upon them.

This made it all the easier for objective factors in the national and international situation of the time, which proved to be weightier than their will, to convert most of them into instruments—at first unconsciously—of a course which contradicted their original design and which eventually brought the majority of them, by different routes, into the camp of renegacy.

VI.

It has long since become fashionable for ex-communists, repenting of the idealistic follies and courageous excesses of their youth—along with others who lack this distinction—to attribute all the evils and misfortunes which befell the native left-wing movement to “Moscow domination” exerted through the Communist International. From this it is implied that everything would have been all right with American radicalism if it had followed a policy of isolationism and rejected the “outside influences” of the outside world.

At the same time, without noticing the contradiction, the representatives

of this school of thought—if you want to call it that—fervently recommend a “One World” policy of internationalism to American imperialism, whose virtues they have belatedly discovered and which some of them serve as unofficial advisors, and even, in some cases, as direct agents.

There is no doubt that the Russian Communist Party, itself corrupted into conservatism under Stalin, transmitted its own corruption to the other parties of the Comintern which looked to it for leadership. But that’s only part of the story. There were other influences working to sap the revolutionary integrity of the party—right here at home. It took more than outside influences—from Russia or anywhere else—to ruin the Communist Party of the United States.

As a matter of fact, in the modern world, internationalism is not an outside influence at all. The whole is not foreign to its parts. America, especially since 1914, has been a part of the “One World” and a very big part indeed. In reacting to events in other countries, America also reacts upon them. There is no such thing as “the international situation” outside and apart from this country. And the American communist movement, in all its reactions to international influences, was never free from the simultaneous influence of its national environment.

The causal factors which brought the Communist Party into being in the first place were both national and international. The same holds true for its later evolution at every stage. American communism, at the moment of its birth, represented a fusion of the Russian Revolution with a native movement of American radicalism. It is not correct to say that “everything came from Russia.” The ideas of the Russian Revolution needed a given social environment to take root in, and receptive people to cultivate them; as far as we know, the Russian Revolution did not create a Communist Party on the moon.

International events and ideas were the predominating influence in bringing the American Communist Party into existence, but these events and ideas needed human instruments.

These were provided by the native movement of American revolutionists which had grown up before the Russian Revolution out of the class struggle in the United States.

VII.

These two combined national and international factors likewise operated interactively on the American Communist Party in the later transition period of its gradual degeneration, which began in the middle of the Twenties and was virtually completed by the end of the decade. At that conjuncture the deadening conservatism of American life, induced by the unprecedented boom of postwar American capitalism, coinciding with the reactionary swing in Russia, caught the infant movement of American communism from two sides, as in a vise from which it could not escape.

In this period the reactionary Russian influence, transmitted through the Comintern, wrought unmitigated evil in the American party. There is plenty of evidence of that. But here again it is false to ascribe all responsibility to the Russians, as an outside and uncontrolled force, for they, in turn, were powerfully influenced by the evolution of American capitalism. The American boom of that period, carrying European capitalism with it to a new stabilization after the postwar crisis and revolutionary upsurge, was the prime influence generating the mood of retreat to national reformism, and therewith the rise of Stalinism in Russia.

At the same time, the astounding vitality of expanding American capitalism seemed to close off all perspectives for a revolutionary movement in this country. As the wave of labor radicalism was pushed back by the ascending prosperity, the party began to run into difficulties on all fronts.

All the get-rich-quick schemes of Pepperite adventurism, all the “high politics” of bluff and make-believe, had blown up in disaster. Even the previous achievements of solid work began to crumble away. The trade union successes, which had piled up so impressively in the preceding pe-

riod, were turned into a series of defeats which became a virtual rout, while the Gompers "red hunt" rode triumphantly from one end of the labor movement to the other. The poor showing of the party in the presidential election of 1924 testified most convincingly to the party's isolation.

All the bright prospects which had fired the ambition of the party leaders to build a mass party of American communism in a short time, by a series of determined forced marches, had gone glimmering by the time the party picked up the pieces after the election campaign of 1924. And the worst was yet to come.

It was a time for the party to re-examine its prospects in the light of basic doctrine and to settle down for a siege; to recognize the new, unfavorable situation in the country, but not to mistake it for permanence. The party needed then a serious theoretical schooling, and a historical perspective upon which to base a confident and patient work of preparation for the future. But that was precisely what was lacking.

The great crisis of the Thirties, with its limitless possibilities for the revolutionary party, was just around the corner, but the party leaders could not see it. They spoke about it, from old habit, but they began to doubt it. The degeneration of the party as a revolutionary organization definitely began already then, and partly for this reason. When the crisis finally arrived — pretty much on schedule according to the Marxist prognosis — it was no longer the same party.

VIII.

The party needed then such ideological and political help from the Comintern as it had previously received in the time of Lenin and Trotsky — when the purpose of its intervention had been, in truth and in fact, to help the young American communists to build the party of the American revolution. But that was lacking too. The Comintern itself, following the Russian party, was sliding down into national reformism, dragging all the other parties with it.

The dimming of international revolutionary perspectives, and the loss of confidence in the capacity of the working class to transform society in the advanced countries, had motivated the retreat to national reformism in the Soviet Union and the wish to come to terms with world capitalism, to "coexist" with it, and to settle for "Socialism in One Country," which implicitly signified a renunciation of the program of international revolution.

The acceptance of this theory by the other Communist parties in the capitalist countries, prepared by their own weariness and loss of historical perspective, implicitly signified their renunciation of the revolutionary program in their own countries. At the same time, it gave them—for consolation—an ersatz program which enabled them to save face in making the transition to reformism and to pretend to themselves and others that they were still fighting for "socialism"—in another country.

A more efficient way of cutting the revolutionary guts out of the Communist parties in the capitalist countries could not have been devised. This anti-Leninist theory of "Socialism in One Country" and "coexistence" with capitalism, transformed the Soviet bureaucracy into the most conservative, anti-revolutionary force in the world, and debased the Communist parties in the capitalist countries from agencies of revolution into border guards of the Soviet Union and pressure groups in the service of its foreign policy.

Comintern intervention in the affairs of the American party, under this new and revised program, only aggravated the difficulties of its national situation and confounded the confusion.

IX.

The party was influenced from two sides — nationally and internationally—and this time adversely in each case. Its decline and degeneration in this period, no less than its earlier rise, must be accounted for primarily, not by national or international factors alone, but by the two together. These combined influences,

at this time working for conservatization, bore down with crushing weight on the still infant Communist Party of the United States.

It was difficult to be a working revolutionist in America in those days, to sustain the agitation that brought no response, to repeat the slogans which found no echo. The party leaders were not crudely corrupted by personal benefits of the general prosperity; but they were affected indirectly by the sea of indifference around them.

"Moscow domination" did indeed play an evil role in this unhappy time, but it did not operate in a vacuum. All the conditions of American life in the late Twenties, pressing in on the unprepared infant party, sapped the fighting faith of the party cadres, including the central leaders, and set them up for the Russian blows. The party became receptive to the ideas of Stalinism, which were saturated with conservatism, because the party cadres themselves were unconsciously yielding to their own conservative environment.

Some of the original leaders became Stalinists, and as such, have made an occupation of betraying the American workers in the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Others made their way in stages, over the bridge of Stalinism, into the direct service of American imperialism. Others fell by the wayside. That did not happen all at once. It was a long, complicated and involved process. It took time. But once the process got fairly started, time worked inexorably to demoralize its victims and turn them into traitors.

I believe the corruption of the pioneer cadres of American communism—by its wholesale scope, by the extremes it called forth of self-repudiation and of treachery to a noble cause once espoused—is the most disgraceful and the most terrible chapter in American history. Never has a movement of social idealism suffered such a moral catastrophe, such a rotting away of its human material. Still, it must be recognized that—apart from its depth and scope—there is nothing really new or strange in this ugly spectacle of men and

ideals devoured by time and circumstance.

By and large, that is the story of the gradual evolution of all backsliders in the history of the labor movement, from the early leaders of British labor reformism who had once belonged to the First International with Marx and Engels, to the latest CIO functionary, grown worldly-wise and fat around the ears, who will tell you, with shyly proud self-deprecation, that he "used to be a socialist himself," and was quite a hell-raiser in his Yipsel days.

This materialistic analysis of the ugly transformation of the pioneer leaders of American communism deprives them of their halo, which did not fit them in the first place, and also frees them from judgment by demonology. It simply shows them in their true light as human, capable of error and default under pressure. They stood up better and longer than others of their generation, but in the end they too succumbed to the pressures of their time. There is tragedy in their downfall, if the wretched renunciation of youthful allegiance to a great ideal deserves that name. But there is no mystery about it.

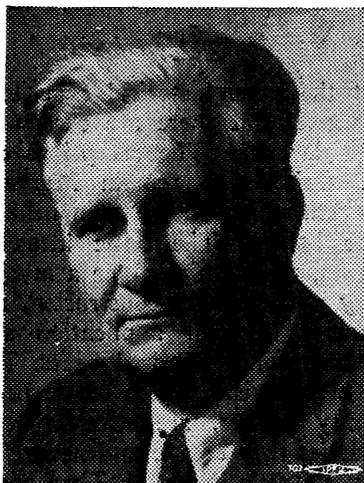
X.

The degeneration of the Communist Party did not swallow up everybody in its ranks. A small minority revolted against Stalinism without capitulating to American imperialism. There were reasons for that too.

Those gossips who explain the degeneration of the others as the natural result of their personal traits and delinquencies, or as the logical outcome of immoral communism, see a mystery in this apparent deviation from the rule. They are at a loss to explain why a few of the original communists became neither Stalinist flunkies nor government informers, but remained what they had been and continued the struggle for the revolutionary program under the leadership of Trotsky and the Russian Opposition.

The moralistic judges have been especially puzzled by the circumstance that I was among them; was, in fact, the initiator; and—still more inex-

plicably—have held consistently to that position in 25 years of struggle. These noble commentators on the doings and motivations of others never fail to point out that I was mixed up in all the factional alley-fights of the party, without any pretensions to non-partisan holiness, then or afterward, and have neglected to offer any apologies or make any con-



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fessions—and on this point they do not lie. How then, they ask, could such a person "come out for Trotsky" after he was completely defeated, expelled, and isolated in exile in far away Alma Ata?

That question has really intrigued the kibitzers, and there has been no lack of speculation as to the causes for my action. In my reading of the political tradepapers, which is part of my routine, I have seen my revolt against the Stalinized Comintern in 1928 variously described as a "mistake," an "accident" and a "mystery"—the mistake, accident or mystery being why a communist faction fighter of the Twenties who, like all the others, fought to win, should deliberately align himself with a "lost cause"—and stick to it.

There was no mystery about it, and it was neither an accident nor a mistake. In the first chapters of my *History of American Trotskyism*, I have already told the truth about the circumstances surrounding my action

in 1928 and the reasons for it. These reasons seemed to me to be correct and logical at the time as the simple duty of a communist—which I was, and am—and 25 years of reflection, combined with unceasing struggle to implement my decision, have not changed my opinion.

When I read Trotsky's "Criticism of the Program" at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, I was convinced at once—and for good—that the theory of "Socialism in One Country" was basically anti-revolutionary and that Trotsky and the Russian Opposition represented the true program of the revolution—the original Marxist program. What else could I do but support them? And what difference did it make that they were a small minority, defeated, expelled and exiled? It was a question of principle. This may be Greek to the philistine, but it is not an "accident" for a communist to act on principle, once it becomes clear to him. It is a matter of course.

My decision to support Trotsky and the Left Opposition in 1928, and to break with all the factions in the Communist Party over that issue, was not a sudden "conversion" on my part; and neither was my earlier decision in 1917 to support the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks and to leave the IWW behind.

Each time I remained what I had started out to be in my youth—a revolutionist against capitalism. The Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks in the first instance, and the heroic struggle of the Left Opposition in the second, taught me some things I hadn't known before and hadn't been able to figure out for myself. They made me a better and more effective fighter for my own cause. But they did not basically change me into something I hadn't been before. They did not "convert" me to the revolution; I was a revolutionist to start with.

XI.

I have nothing more to say about that. But here, following my exposition of the basic causes which brought about the degeneration of the Communist Party, I will undertake to

explain why the initiators and organizers of the revolt and the new beginning came—and had to come—from the same party which, in its majority, had succumbed to external pressures; and why, therefore, the revolutionary movement of the present and the future must recognize its ancestral origin in this party.

Objective circumstances are powerful, but not all-powerful. The status quo in normal times works to compel conformity, but this law is not automatic and does not work universally. Otherwise, there would never be any rebels and dissenters, no human agencies preparing social changes, and the world would never move forward.

There are exceptions, and the exceptions become revolutionists long before the great majority recognize the necessity and the certainty of social change. These exceptions are the historically conscious elements, the vanguard of the class who make up the vanguard party. The act of becoming a revolutionist and joining the revolutionary party is a conscious act of revolt against objective circumstances of the moment and the expression of a will to change them.

But in revolting against their social environment and striving to change it, revolutionists nevertheless still remain a part of the environment and subject to its influences and pressures. It has happened more than once in history that unfavorable turns of the conjuncture and postponement of the expected revolution, combined with tiredness and loss of vision in the dull routine of living from day to day, have acted to conservatize even the cadres of the revolutionary party and prepare their degeneration.

On the basis of a long historical experience, it can be written down as a law that revolutionary cadres, who revolt against their social environment and organize parties to lead a revolution, can—if the revolution is too long delayed—themselves degenerate under the continuing influences and pressures of this same environment.

This was the case with the pre-war German Social Democracy whose original leaders had been the immediate disciples of Marx. The same thing

occurred in the Communist Party of Russia, whose leaders had been taught by Lenin. It happened again—with a big push and pull from the Russians—in the Communist Party of the United States, whose leaders lacked the benefit of systematic theoretical instruction and who had, in addition, to work in the most unfavorable social environment in the richest and most conservative country in the world.

XII.

But the same historical experience also shows that there are exceptions to this law too. The exceptions are the Marxists who remain Marxists, the revolutionists who remain faithful to the banner. The basic ideas of Marxism, upon which alone a revolutionary party can be constructed, are continuous in their application and have been for a hundred years. The ideas of Marxism, which create revolutionary parties, are stronger than the parties they create, and never fail to survive their downfall. They never fail to find representatives in the old organizations to lead the work of reconstruction.

These are the continuators of the tradition, the defenders of the orthodox doctrine. The task of the uncorrupted revolutionists, obliged by circumstances to start the work of organizational reconstruction, has never been to proclaim a new revelation—there has been no lack of such Messiahs, and they have all been lost in the shuffle—but to reinstate the old program and bring it up to date.

They have never sought to destroy and cast out the positive values and achievements of the old organizations, but to conserve them and build upon them. They have never addressed their first appeals to the void and sought to recruit a nondescript army out of people unidentified and unknown. On the contrary, they have always sought—and found—the initiating cadres of the new organization in the old.

This was demonstrated when the Second International, which collapsed so ignominiously in the First World War, nevertheless provided the forces, out of its own ranks, for the new

parties and the new International. Some socialists remained socialists; not everybody capitulated and betrayed. From the Russian party, in the first place, from the German party, and from every other Socialist Party in the entire world, uncorrupted socialists, who simply remained true to themselves, stood up against the degeneration of the old organizations and began to build the new. Even the Socialist Party of the United States, that ugly duckling of the Second International, which really wasn't much of a party, furnished cadres not undeserving of mention in this honorable company.

The same thing happened in almost exactly the same way—according to the same laws and the same exceptions to the laws—in the case of the Communist International. The degeneration of the leading cadres of the Russian party, and of all the other parties of the Comintern, including the American party, followed the same general pattern and was induced by the same basic causes as the degeneration of the Second International. The great majority of the leading cadres of the Russian party, and of all the other parties of the Comintern, betrayed the program.

But not all. Once again the old organizations provided the forces, out of their own ranks, to begin the determined struggle for the old program. Again the Russian party provided the leaders, and again all the other parties in the International provided supporting cadres. Even the Communist Party of the United States, with all its handicaps of ignorance and inexperience, with all its faults of unfinished youth and premature senility, furnished its quota of uncorrupted communists for the new struggle and the new beginning.

XIII.

Those who see a "mystery" or an "accident" in this origin of the revolutionary party of the present and the future, who ask why and how it was possible for the original banner-bearers to come from the Communist Party of the late Twenties, which has been described here so unsparingly, really ought to be answered with an-

other question: Where else could they come from?

The struggle for the regeneration of American communism was a task for people capable of understanding the responsibilities and hazards of their undertaking and prepared by their past to stand up to them. Where else could such people be found at the end of the first decade of American communism outside its ranks?

Certainly not from the Socialist Party or the IWW, not to mention the Socialist Labor Party and the Proletarian Party of pretentious pundits. By 1928 these organizations were hollow shells of reactionary futility, sucked dry of all revolutionary juice. By 1928, when the big fight started, all the organized revolutionists—that is to say, all those who professed allegiance to socialism and were willing to do something about it—were organized in the Communist Party, and nowhere else.

It may be that there were other people, outside all parties, in the United States in the year 1928, who were better informed in matters of theoretical doctrine and more qualified by intellect and character, than those who came forward to lead the struggle out of the rough-and-tumble faction fights of the Communist Party. I cannot deny it because I have no way of knowing. But I do know that if there were such people, they remained in hiding, and no clue to their whereabouts has been discovered till this day. They didn't show up for the battle, as they had also failed to show up for the previous work and struggles of American communism which had sifted out and tested the people for the new responsibility.

These hypothetically superior forces were not committed; as the French say, they were not "engaged." And therefore they did not count. Abstentionists never count when responsibilities and hazards are involved. The fight had to be started by those who were on hand and ready. The fulfillment of the assignment by some previously unknown and uncommitted people—some strange Men from Nowhere—would indeed have been a mystery and an accident.

The original Trotskyists in the

United States, the initiating nucleus of the revolutionary party of the future victory, came from the Communist Party because the Communist Party — and the Communist Party alone—contained the human material prepared by the past for the work of reconstruction. There were, and could be, no other volunteers for the burden and the hazard, no other candidates for the honor—to call the thing by the right name.

XIV.

Long experience has shown that economic conditions, which produce revolutionary movements in the first place and largely regulate the tempo of their growth, can also, in changed circumstances, halt their progress and push them back. Individuals on both sides of the class struggle can do only so much, for they are required to operate within this general framework. It would be well to keep this in mind if one is to make head or tail of the ups and downs of early American communism and see something in the process besides personal delinquencies, quarrels and accidents.

The current witch hunt in the United States is apparently motivated by the theory that a revolutionary movement is created by the will of conspirators, and conversely, that it can be eliminated by police measures. This assumption finds little support in the history of the first ten years of the Communist Party in this country.

The American radical movement, in all its branches, was fiercely persecuted during the war and postwar period (1917-1920). Vigilante raids on radical meetings were the order of the day. Practically all the prominent leaders were indicted. Thousands were arrested. Whole shiploads of foreign-born radicals were deported. Hundreds were imprisoned.

It took tough people to stand up against all that, but the pioneer communists were pretty tough, as the record shows. The persecution cut down the numerical strength of the movement, but did not break its basic cadres. The party emerged from the underground at the end of 1921 with a strong morale and with a leadership tested in the process of natural selec-

tion, including the test of persecution.

The quick recovery of American economy after the crisis of 1921, and the beginning of the long boom, was accompanied by a relaxation of the political tension and a virtual suspension of police action against the radicals. That did not help the revolutionary party, far from it. That's when it began to run into real trouble.

The prosperity, which appeared to push revolutionary perspectives far into the future, dealt heavier blows to the party than the earlier persecution. The persecution had cut down its numerical strength, but its cadres remained intact and self-confident. The prosperity sapped the confidence of the cadres in the revolutionary future. Persecution inflicted wounds on the body of the party, but the drawn-out prosperity of the Twenties killed its soul.

Across the sea the same basic objective factor—the new stabilization of European capitalism sparked by the American boom—had similarly affected the ruling majority of the Russian party, and through them, the Comintern; and the conservatized Comintern brought a heavy retrogressive influence to bear on the American party which had already begun to acquire the senile disease of conservatism before its youth was spent.

This is the true setting within which the history of the party in the last half of the Twenties must be studied. There is an instructive lesson here for our present times too. From the whole experience we can conclude that the present slump of American radicalism is due more to the long prosperity than to the witch hunt, and that a new economic crisis will set the stage for a revival of the movement, with or without the witch hunt.

We can also expect that the new revival will find more worthy leaders, who have learned from the mistakes of their ancestors to stand up against an unfavorable conjuncture and keep the historical perspective clear. This perspective reads: The stability of American capitalism is only the transient appearance of things; the revolution of the American workers is the true reality.

Perspectives of American Marxism

by Leon Trotsky

Dear Comrade Calverton:

I received your pamphlet, "For Revolution," and read it with interest as well as profit to myself. Your arguments against the American "knights of pure reform" are very convincing, certain of them are really splendid. But, so far as I understand your request, what you wanted from me was not literary compliments but a political evaluation. I am all the more willing to grant your request since the problems of American Marxism have acquired at the present time an exceptional importance.

By its character and structure, your pamphlet is most appropriate for the thinking representatives of the student youth. To ignore this youth would, in any case, be out of the question; on the contrary, it is necessary to know how to talk to these students in their own language. However, you yourself repeatedly emphasize in your study the thought which is elementary to a Marxist; namely, that the abolition of capitalism can be achieved only by the working class. The revolutionary education of the proletarian vanguard, you correctly proclaim as the chief task. But in your pamphlet, I do not find the bridge to that task, nor any indication of the direction in which it must be sought.

Is this a reproach on my part? Yes and no. In its essence your little book represents an answer to that special variety of petty bourgeois radicals (in America they seem to be wearing out the threadbare name of "liberals") who are ready to accept the boldest social conclusions provided they incur no political obligations whatever. Socialism? Communism? Anarchism?

This open letter was written to V. F. Calverton when he was editor of the magazine *Modern Monthly* (formerly *Modern Quarterly*). Calverton considered himself a Marxist and an intellectual fighter for socialism; and in those depression years, when the system of American capitalism was tottering, he grouped around himself and his magazine a considerable number of leftward-moving writers and intellectuals. Among the contributors to *Modern Monthly* were such names as Sidney Hook, Lewis Corey, Bertram Wolfe and others, virtually all of whom — including Calverton himself — were sooner or later to abandon their socialist ideals and capitulate to the pressures of American imperialism.

The letter was first published, in Russian, in the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*, No. 32, Dec. 1932, and appeared in English in *Modern Monthly*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Mar. 1933. It is published here in a new translation by John G. Wright.

Very good! But not otherwise than by way of reforms. Transform society, morality, the family from top to bottom? Splendid! But absolutely with the permission of the White House and Tammany.

Against these pretentious and sterile tendencies you present, as I have said before, a very successful line of argumentation. But this controversy itself thereby inevitably takes on the character of a domestic dispute in an intellectual club with its own reformist and its own Marxist wing. It was in this way that thirty and forty years ago in Petersburg and Moscow the academic Marxists disputed with the academic Populists: must Russia pass through the stage of capitalism or not? How much water has flowed

over the dam since that time! The mere necessity of posing the question as you do in your pamphlet throws a glaring light on the political backwardness of the United States, technologically the most advanced country in the world. To the extent that you neither can nor have the right to tear yourself out of the American conditions, to that extent there is no reproach in my words.

Yet at the same time there is a reproach. For, side by side with pamphlets and clubs where academic debates for and against revolution are carried on, in the ranks of the American proletariat, with all the backwardness of its movement, there are different political groupings, and among them, revolutionary ones. You say nothing at all about them. Your pamphlet does not mention the so-called Socialist party, nor the Communist party, nor any of the transitional formations, in particular the contending factions within the Communist movement. This means that you are not calling anybody in particular to go anywhere in particular. You explain the inevitability of the revolution. However, the intellectual who is convinced by you can quietly finish smoking his cigarette and pass on to the next item on his daily agenda. To this extent there is in my words an element of reproach.

I would not have put this circumstance at the top of the list if it did not seem to me that your political position, as I judge by your articles, is typical of a rather numerous and theoretically skilled stratum of left intelligentsia in the United States.

There is, of course, no need to talk of the Hillquit-Thomas party as an instrument of the proletarian revolution. Without having achieved in the slightest degree the power of European reformism, American Social Democracy has acquired all of its vices, and, barely past childhood, has already fallen into what the Russians call "senility of dogs." I trust that you agree with this evaluation and have perhaps, more than once even, expressed similar views.

But in the pamphlet "For Revolution" you did not say a word about Social Democracy. Why? It seems to me because, had you spoken of Social Democracy, you would have also had to give an evaluation of the Communist party. And this is not only a touchy but also an extremely important question, which imposes obligations and leads to consequences. I may perhaps be mistaken with respect to you personally, but many American Marxists obviously and stubbornly avoid fixing their position with respect to party. They enroll themselves among the "friends" of the Soviet Union, they "sympathize" with Communism, write articles about Hegel and the inevitability of the revolution and — nothing more. But this is not enough. For the instrument of the revolution is the party, don't you agree?

I would not like to be misunderstood. Under the tendency to avoid the practical consequences of a clear position, I do not at all mean the concern for personal welfare. Admittedly, there are some quasi-"Marxists" whom the Communist party scares off by its aim of bringing the revolution out of the discussion club and into the street. But to dispute about a revolutionary party with such snobs is generally a waste of time. We are talking about other, more serious Marxists, who are in no way inclined to be scared by revolutionary action, but whom the present-day Communist party disquiets by its low theoretical level, by its bureaucratism and lack of genuine revolutionary initiative. At the same time, they say to themselves, that is the party which stands furthest to the Left, which is bound up with the Soviet Union and which "represents" the USSR in a certain sense. Is it right to attack it, is it permissible to criticize it?

The opportunist and adventurist vices of the present leadership of the Communist International and of its American section are too evident to require emphasis. In any case, it is impossible and useless to repeat within the framework of this letter what I have said on the subject in a series of independent works. All questions

of theory, strategy, tactics and organization have already succeeded in becoming the object of deep divergences within Communism. Three fundamental factions have been formed, which have succeeded in demonstrating their character in the course of



LEON TROTSKY

the great events and problems of recent years. The struggle among them has taken on all the sharper character since in the Soviet Union every difference with the current ruling group leads to immediate expulsion from the party and to state repressions. The Marxist intelligentsia in the United States, as in other countries, is placed before an alternative: either tacitly and obediently to support the Communist International as it is, or to be included in the camp of the counter-revolution and "social fascism." One group of intelligentsia has chosen the first way; with eyes, blinded or half-blinded, it follows the official party. Another group wanders without a party home, defends, where it can, the Soviet Union from slander, and occupies itself with abstract sermons in favor of the revolution without indicating through which gate one must pass to meet it.

The difference between these two groups, however, is not so great. On both sides there is renunciation of

the creative effort in working out an independent opinion, and renunciation of the courageous struggle in its defense which is precisely where the revolutionist begins. On both sides we have the fellow-traveler type and not an active builder of the proletarian party. Certainly, a fellow-traveler is better than an enemy. But a Marxist cannot be a fellow-traveler of the revolution. Moreover, as historical experience bears out, at the most critical moments the storm of the struggle tosses the majority of the intellectual fellow-travelers into the enemy's camp. If they do return, it is only after the victory has been consolidated. Maxim Gorky is the clearest but not the only example. In the present Soviet apparatus, incidentally, clear up to the top a very important percentage of people stood fifteen years ago openly on the other side of the October 1917 barricades.

Is it necessary to recall that Marxism not only interprets the world but also teaches how to change it? The will is the motor force in the domain of knowledge, too. The moment Marxism loses its will to transform in a revolutionary way political reality, at that moment it loses the ability to correctly understand political reality. A Marxist who, for one secondary consideration or another, does not draw his conclusions to the end, betrays Marxism. To pretend to ignore the different Communist factions, so as not to become involved and compromise oneself, signifies to ignore that activity which, through all the contradictions, consolidates the vanguard of the class; it signifies to cover oneself with the abstraction of the revolution, as with a shield, from the blows and bruises of the real revolutionary process.

When the left bourgeois journalists summarily defend the Soviet Republic as it is, they accomplish a progressive and praiseworthy work. For a Marxist revolutionist, it is absolutely insufficient. The problem of the October Revolution—let us not forget!—has not yet been solved. Only parrots can find satisfaction in repeating the words, "Victory is assured." No, it is not assured! Victory poses the problem of strategy. There is no book

which sets in advance the correct orbit for the first workers' state. The head does not and cannot exist which can contain the ready-made formula for socialist society. The roads of economy and politics must still be determined only through experience and worked out collectively, that is, through a constant conflict of ideas. A Marxist who limits himself to a summary "sympathy" without taking part in the struggle over the questions of industrialization, collectivization, the party regime, etc., rises to a level not higher than the "progressive" bourgeois reporters of the type of Duranty, Louis Fischer and others, but on the contrary stands lower, because he abuses the calling of revolutionist.

To avoid direct answers, to play blind-man's-buff with great problems, to remain diplomatically silent and wait, or still worse, to console oneself with the thought that the present struggle within Bolshevism is a matter of "personal ambitions"—all this means to indulge in mental laziness, to yield to the worst Philistine prejudice, and to doom oneself to demoralization. On this score, I hope we shall not have any differences with you.

Proletarian politics has a great theoretical tradition, and that is one of the sources of its power. A trained Marxist studies the differences between Engels and Lassalle with regard to the European war of 1859. This is necessary. But if he is not a pedant of Marxist historiography, not a bookworm but a proletarian revolutionist, it is a thousand times more important and urgent for him to elaborate for himself an independent judgment about the revolutionary strategy in China from 1925 to 1932. It was precisely on that question that the struggle within Bolshevism sharpened for the first time to the point of split. It is impossible to be a Marxist without taking a position on a question on which depends the fate of the Chinese revolution and at the same time that of the Indian, too, that is, the future of almost half of humanity!

It is very useful to study, let us say, the old differences among Russian

Marxists on the character of the future Russian revolution; a study, naturally, from the original sources and not from the ignorant and unconscionable compilations of the epigones. But far more important is it to elaborate for oneself a clear understanding of the theory and practice of the Anglo-Russian Committee, of the "third period," of "social fascism," of the "democratic dictatorship" in Spain, and the policy of the united front. The study of the past is in the last analysis justified by this, that it helps one to orient himself in the present.

It is impermissible for a Marxist theoretician to pass by the Congresses of the First International. But a thousand times more urgent is the study of the living differences over the Amsterdam "anti-war" Congress of 1932. Indeed, how much is the sincerest and warmest sympathy for the Soviet Union worth, if it is accompanied by indifference to the methods of its defense?

Is there today a subject more important for a revolutionist, more gripping, more burning, than the struggle and the fate of the German proletariat? Is it possible, on the other hand, to define one's attitude to the problems of the German revolution while passing by the differences in the camp of German and international Communism? A revolutionist who has no opinion on the policies of Stalin-Thaelmann is not a Marxist. A Marxist who has an opinion but remains silent is not a revolutionist.

It is not enough to preach the benefits of technology; it is necessary to build bridges. How would a young doctor be judged who, instead of practising as an interne would satisfy himself with reading biographies of great surgeons of the past? What would Marx have said about a theory which, instead of deepening revolutionary practice, serves to separate one from it? Most probably he would repeat his sarcastic statement, "No, I am not a Marxist."

From all indications the current crisis will be a great milestone on the historical road of the United States. Smug American provincialism is in any case nearing its end. Those com-

monplaces which invariably nourished American political thought in all its ramifications are completely spent. All classes need a new orientation. A drastic renovation not only of the circulating but also of the fixed capital of political ideology, is imminent. If the Americans have so stubbornly lagged behind in the domain of socialist theory, it does not mean that they will remain backward always. It is possible to venture without much risk a contrary prediction: the longer the Yankees are satisfied with the ideological castoff clothes of the past, the more powerful will be the sweep of revolutionary thought in America when its hour finally strikes. And it is near. The elevation of revolutionary theory to new heights can be looked for in the next few decades from two sources: from the Asian East and from America.

In the course of the last hundred-odd years the proletarian movement has displaced its national center of gravity several times. From England to France to Germany to Russia—this was the historical sequence of the residency of socialism and Marxism. The present revolutionary hegemony of Russia can least of all lay claim to durability. The fact itself of the existence of a Soviet Union, especially before the proletarian victory in one of the advanced states, has naturally an immeasurable importance for the labor movement of all countries. But the direct influence of the Moscow ruling faction upon the Communist International has already become a brake on the development of the world proletariat. The fertilizing, ideological hegemony of Bolshevism has been replaced in recent years by the stifling oppression of the apparatus. It is not necessary to prove the disastrous consequences of this regime: it suffices to point to the leadership of the American Communist party. The liberation from the unprincipled bureaucratic command has become a question of life and death for the revolution and for Marxism.

You are perfectly right in saying that the vanguard of the American proletariat must learn to base itself on the revolutionary traditions of its

*A Study of What the Need for
Planning Does to Capitalism
In Backward Areas*

The Role of Statism In the Colonial World

by David Miller

own country, too. In a certain sense we can accept the slogan, "Americanize Marxism!" This does not mean, of course, to submit its principle and method to revision. The attempt of Max Eastman to throw overboard the materialist dialectic in the interests of the "engineering art of revolution" represents an obviously hopeless and in its possible consequences retrograde adventure. The system of Marxism has completely passed the test of history. Especially now, in the epoch of capitalist decline—the epoch of wars and revolutions, storms and shocks—the materialist dialectic fully reveals its inexorable force. To Americanize Marxism signifies to root it in American soil, to verify it against the events of American history, to elaborate by its methods the problems of American economy and politics, to assimilate the world revolutionary experience from the standpoint of the tasks of the American revolution. A giant labor! It is time to start it with shirtsleeves rolled up.

In connection with strikes in the United States, where the shattered center of the First International was transferred, Marx wrote, on July 25, 1877, to Engels: "The porridge is beginning to boil, and the transfer of the center of the International to the United States will yet be justified finally." Several days later, Engels answered him: "Only twelve years after the abolition of chattel slavery, and the movement has already achieved such acuteness!" They, both Marx and Engels, were mistaken. But as in other cases, they were wrong as to tempo, but not as to direction. The great Trans-Oceanic "porridge" is unquestionably beginning to boil, the breaking point in the development of American capitalism will unavoidably provoke a blossoming of critical and generalizing thought, and it may be that we are not very far away from the time when the theoretical center of the international revolution is transferred to New York.

Before the American Marxists open truly colossal, breathtaking perspectives!

With sincere greetings,

L. Trotsky

Prinkipo, Nov. 4, 1932.

IT WOULD be a stale truism to say that the events in the colonial world of the past decade have not been integrated by any unified conception into the general framework of Marxist world revolutionary perspectives and theory. Three major problems arising from the past revolutionary decade of colonial wars are: (1) The nature of the state in China; (2) the relation between permanent revolution and the emergence of new bourgeois states in Asia; (3) the significance of the historically unique, developing economic structures of these new states as well as of other industrially backward areas. It is as a contribution toward the formulation of a comprehensive Marxist conception of the world-wide colonial revolution—various in its forms, but all of them aspects of one socio-economic whole—that this presentation aims.

Basic to our conception is the acceptance of an over-all picture of the economy which, except as a series of isolated facts, has not been sufficiently appreciated in the movement's analyses of the colonial world—specifically, the role of the bourgeois state in the economic process. A historical summary of the situation has not yet appeared in the Marxist press, and we must begin with this crucial feature.

I. India

The Indian nationalist movement has long recognized the indispensability of some measure of economic planning in their scheme for a new bourgeois India. In accordance with this view the famous Bombay Plan was issued in 1942. It is also known as the Tata Plan, because the main figures in its creation were a group of industrialists headed by Tata, the most important Indian industrial figure. The plan was essentially a detailed outline of a \$33 billion investment program spread out over a period of three five-year plans, in which the government was to play an undefined, but central role.¹ This general orientation was confirmed in the government Resolution on Industrial Policy of April 6, 1948, which reserved for government investment the following industries: coal, iron, steel, aircraft, shipbuilding, communications equipment, railroads, oil. Existing properties in these fields were ultimately to be nationalized.

But the vast problems of organizing the new state compelled delay in the projection of a full-scale plan and the first five-year plan did not go into effect until 1952. Involved was a moderate goal of \$4 billion new in-

¹ Far East Survey, 1945, p. 137.

vestment. Of this sum, roughly 10% was to take the form of industrial equipment, the remainder for power units, dams, irrigation, training, and agricultural reorganization.² (The seeming slight emphasis on factory construction and equipment is due to the immensely pressing and immediate crisis in agriculture.)

Of the new industrial plants, approximately half are expected to be built by private entrepreneurs. However the prospects of realizing these industrial goals cannot be discussed without consideration of the significant course of investment history in the postwar period. In the numerous previous partial efforts at government planning in investment, the share allocated to and expected of private capital has always fallen short of realization. Indeed, in the provisional projection of the most recent plan, on two occasions, revisions were made necessary, increasing the government share of projected investment at the expense of anticipated private. The growing lag in textile and other consumer goods allocated to the private sector supports the likelihood of unfulfillment of private responsibilities, and the consequent further disproportionality between the public and private sectors.

The entire history of investment and of the plan demonstrates incontrovertibly that the Indian bourgeoisie "prefers" increasingly to restrict itself to light industry and commercial ventures. As a consequence, irrespective of formal policy decisions, the actual course of Indian economic development follows more and more that of a government-dominated economy. In attempting to fulfill the urgent needs of the economy, constant encroachments have brought government plans and realized investment into the following areas: fertilizers, chemicals, machine-tools, locomotive factory, instrument, cement, paper and pharmaceuticals. These are in addition to those industries already preempted by law for the government.

Precisely what proportion of industry will be in government hands

at the termination of the plan, is difficult to estimate, but plainly it is a rapidly growing proportion. And its future is equally plain from the knowledge that government investment in India will continue to be of the order of 75% of all capital investment, with the concomitant consequences of planning and state ownership.

As a result of the plan, it is estimated that output will increase as follows: coal 30% (35 million tons), steel 40% (1.5 million tons) and other industrial commodities an average of 100%. Despite this, no serious rise in consumption is to be expected, with the possible exception of food. The inflation of the past 12 years has driven real wages to below their pre-war level. Average per-capita cloth consumption has fallen from 16 yards to 13 yards; food consumption is only 92% of pre-war standards.³ At the same time industrial production has risen considerably, particularly in producer goods. (Fuel-energy 180, cement 195, steel 170; 1939 equals 100.)

Expectations for the future as a result of the plan are for more of the same. Textile mills, for which a 40% rise over the plan had been projected, are in a slump in response to "necessary" continued low wages, while producer goods output has held up fairly well. The state intervention in capital accumulation seems therefore to be leading to nothing but a repetition of old bourgeois norms, i.e., the development of the means of production at the expense of the proletariat.

China Before the 1948 Revolution

The new phase of modern industrial history in China begins with the approximate unification of China by Chiang Kai-shek in the late 1920's. From the start, "peculiar" economic policies were projected. In 1928, Sun-Fo, the son of the founder of the Chinese Republic, was responsible for the projection of a long- and short-term plan for a \$30 billion industrial development by state industry. The plan was quite utopian, but was fol-

lowed at regular intervals by more modest plans in 1930 and 1932.⁴ None of these were more than moderately successful. Several provinces, in the flush of national resurgence, produced their own plans. Kwangtung province had a three-year plan for a \$100 million investment in basic industry (more than the total existing industrial capital in the province at the time) which was partially fulfilled. But continued internal instability, gross inexperience and vacillation conspired to reduce the plans to a level of secondary importance in terms of capital growth. Nevertheless, on a small scale, the state investment was never fully interrupted, and remained an indication of a hope and a policy, or, at the very least, a symptom of a struggle of policies. Doubtless one strong factor in this irresolution was the pressure of the comprador wing of the bourgeoisie, agents of western imperialism.

In 1935 the government role of industrial development was reorganized in its final form under the Natural Resources Commission, and was set off on a new three-year plan for a diversified industrial development including an additional steel capacity of 300,000 tons.⁵ The outbreak of war with Japan in 1937 forced a reorganization of the Commission's plans but from this time on it played the decisive role in China's industrial growth.

The pressing need for industry during the war was met mainly by government funds and management. Between 1939-44, new investment in government industrial enterprises totaled 142 billion Chinese dollars. In the same period, private investment totalled 117 billion Chinese dollars, with much of this capital a government loan.⁶

In a policy statement of 1944, the government preempted for itself (the first halting gesture of its kind) all development in munitions (a vast all-inclusive segment of industry in a backward economy), power, mining, railroads, iron and steel, leaving the

⁴ H. D. Fong, *Toward Economic Control in China*.

⁵ C. Y. W. Meng, "Survey of China's Industrial Development," *China Monthly*, June-July, 1946.

⁶ *Ibid.*

² *Eastern Economist*, Mar. 6, 1953.

³ "Report on the Indian Economy," *Pacific Affairs*, 1949.

remaining sectors of the economy to private enterprise.

However at the close of the war the forces of experience and necessity compelled the government to a de facto violation of its own policy in dealing with the industry of the restored territories of Occupied China and Manchuria. This phase has been amply documented by Germain.⁷ In addition to taking over all Japanese and collaborationist industry (the overwhelming part of Chinese modern industry) the government also established a monopoly in the merchant marine, the sugar industry of Formosa, and created a four billion Chinese dollars corporation for the further industrial development of Manchuria.⁸ The end result of this process of appropriation was that fully 60% of China's industrial capacity was nationalized.

One consequence of this lump-sum nationalization must not be ignored. Insofar as heavy industry was concerned, cutting off the source of experience and training for the classical bourgeoisie as well as the source of private capital accumulation, made it inevitable that the future development of industry would also proceed in the channel of state enterprise or not at all. It is this historically unique political economy to which the Chinese Communist Party fell heir upon coming to power.

But before proceeding to the policy of the new regime, it will be of interest to glance at the economic structure which the Kuomintang forces have created and maintained on their last retreat, Formosa. This island of eight million inhabitants has today, under Chiang Kai-shek, proportionately more statified economy than any area of the world outside the Soviet Union. The state has a practicing monopoly in the following industries: aluminum, cement, coal, fertilizer, gold and copper mines, shipbuilding, petroleum, electric power, pulp-paper works, steel works, machine manufacture, sugar mills, chemicals. It also operates nine textile mills with half the output of the island. In addition the state operates 186 sugar

plantations covering half the total acreage in sugar and employing 200,000 laborers.⁹ No, nationalist policy on planning of nationalization on the mainland of China was not a freak, but an inevitable bourgeois response in an all but impossible situation.

The New China

The participation in a real, not merely window-dressing role, of bourgeois groups in the revolutionary government, the theoretical declarations of the Chinese Communist Party on the relation between state and private capital (and the numerous supporting decrees), the actual protective course pursued by the CP during the agrarian revolution toward all non-land capital, have all been previously and amply documented, particularly in the work of Germain. *Apart from the land question, the policy for industrial development of the CP is essentially a continuation of that of the previous regime!*

Catapulted to power, the new government proceeded to nationalize the property of bureaucratic capital, i.e., those elements intimately tied to the Chiang regime who fled to Formosa. By 1952, 80% of all heavy industry was in government hands, and 30% of light industry.¹⁰ But apart from these political expropriations, the situation was not changed qualitatively in comparison with the condition of state economy under Chiang. The state retains dominance in heavy industry (and must extend this); light industry and commercial capital remain largely in private hands.¹¹

⁹ Report of the National Resources Commission, Taiwan, 1951.

¹⁰ China Reconstructs, Jan-Feb., 1953.

¹¹ In terms of employment and resources used, the specific weight of light industry is much greater in backward areas than in developed economies. Thus, for example, in one industry which remains in a semi-handicraft stage, paper manufacture, in Chekiang province alone in 1929, in 24,000 mills employing 125,000 workers, capital investment in each mill ranged from \$1,415 to \$14 and the number of workers varied from 17 to 2. Outside of textile goods, most mass consumption goods are produced under such conditions (pottery, bricks, flour, oil, wine, lanterns, etc.).

It is not, however, the strength of the classical bourgeoisie which is responsible for this reservation about private enterprise. The real limiting factors to fuller nationalization lie in the technical and administrative backwardness of the bureaucratic apparatus, and in the poverty of the economy, resulting in the enormous difficulty of integrating the public and private sectors of the economy; and in government control and planning in general. The recent five-anti's and three-anti's movements were a reflection of this problem, as is also the fact that these campaigns have not been followed by any tendency toward further expropriations among the numerous investigated private firms.

As in the other Asiatic states, the policy of the Mao regime toward foreign capital is *not* a hostile one. Not only is domestic capital protected, but foreign as well.¹² An exception to this policy may have been made in regard to American properties, as a response to the refusal of the U.S. government to release Chinese funds in American banks to the new regime. There is no reason to believe that the government would not welcome and encourage foreign investment, on policy considerations. The \$50 million annual capital loan from Russia is an insignificant amount for China's immediate needs and capacity to absorb capital, and even runs a poor second to U.S. loans and grants to India, which are approximately double this amount.

As to current and future capital accumulation in China, its distribution between the public and private sectors, no significant data is yet available; consequently it has been impossible to determine the actual source of the capital or to compare the rate of development with that of India. However, if one is to be at all guided by government policy statements, it seems likely that it is the area of government heavy industry and development which will continue to absorb the predominant share of new capital in China.

¹² Open Letter of Peng Shu-tze, *The Militant*, Nov. 2, 1953.

⁷ Fourth International, Nov.-Dec., 1950

⁸ Far East Survey, 1946, p. 296.

Indonesia

The Dutch government of pre-war days pursued a policy in Indonesia somewhat distinct from that of the other imperialists in Asia in several significant aspects. An outstanding example was the fact that no non-Indonesian could own agricultural land. The large estates for industrial agriculture could only be on leased land, and for the most part, land not previously cultivated (hence the concentration of estates in thinly populated Sumatra). To this policy was due the unusual degree of survival in Indonesia of ancient communal land distribution and the relatively low concentration of land ownership.

But paralleling this attempt to preserve some aspects of the pre-Dutch economy, was the failure of Indonesia, perhaps more than any other Asiatic colony, to develop its own bourgeois class. The role of this class—to supplement the western bourgeoisie in the exploitation and development of the country—fell to the Chinese immigrant (commercial investment) and to the state. Consequently, even in the pre-war period the government owned two-thirds of the railroads, all telephone and telegraph, 60% of electric power, 75% of coal output, 60% of the tin mines (and five-eighths interest in the rest).

At the conclusion of the struggle for independence a policy of industrial development was accepted universally, and all major parties claimed to aim at a socialist commonwealth. The constitution (Article 38) states, "The national economy shall be organized on a cooperative basis." But in the short run, the ruling groups agreed that this would preclude expropriation of foreign properties due to the great capital shortage and the need for foreign help.

In 1950, the first industrialization plan was proposed, the Sumitro plan, oriented about the construction of relatively small plants, complementary to the basic agricultural products of the islands (wood-pulp and paper, rubber milling, tiles, plywood, spinning and knitting mills, jute bag plants, cement, saw mills, chemicals, aluminum plants, fertilizer, glass, scrap reduction plants. Unlike India,

however, there was almost no counter-part private investment to supplement development. Private capitalism restricts itself to commerce despite generous government offers of loans, so that in industrialization the field is yielded almost entirely to the state. The only other source of growth has lain in the field of industrial cooperatives, which, facilitated by strong communal tradition and government policy, now number 1,500, employing 218,000 workers.¹³ These exist mainly in handicrafts.

But it is not only native capital that is not forthcoming. The huge foreign-owned investments, while guaranteed by the state, are no longer the viable economic units they once were. (The very obviously unfinished state of the revolution in Indonesia in the city as well as on the land has resulted in paralysis and even some exodus of private *foreign* investment.)

The major capital holdings, those in industrial agriculture, are hard hit by a dual problem, the general hostility to foreign capital and the growing food crisis. During the war, the Japanese, unable to use all the products of Indonesia's vast industrial agriculture, acquiesced in the return of land to food production to meet the growing shortages. As a result many estates (particularly in Sumatra) were divided by the peasants into small holdings. Thus far it has proved impossible to reconstruct these estates, and the attempts to do so are partly responsible for the Darul Islam movement. Naturally this does not serve to encourage further private investment, though the capital shortage is very severe. One consequence is that even in estate agriculture the state has been largely responsible for the necessary reconstruction. But to this day, the real and incipient war in the countryside is such that even at the peak prices and demand of 1951 (Korean war stockpiling), the production of raw material for export was only 60-80% of 1938.¹⁴

¹³ U.S. Information Office, Republic of Indonesia, "Report on Indonesia," Oct. 1, 1952.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Burma

In Burma we find a territory in much the same position as Indonesia, yet meriting distinct treatment for the unusual political features of the regime. Here too we find an insignificant native bourgeoisie, whose role is usurped by British and even Indian capital. Burmese industrial capital is almost confined to the smaller rice mills.

After independence was attained under the leadership of the Socialist Party, a Constitution and policy were promulgated much more specifically "socialist" than in any other state in Asia. Under the Land Nationalization Act (Nov. 4, 1948), land was nationalized, and individual holdings limited to a maximum of 50 acres, except for producers cooperatives. Also nationalized were all rice mills (an industry employing half the industrial labor force of the country), as well as the distribution and sale of rice. Under Articles 44 and 219 of the Constitution, state enterprises were to have a monopoly in arms, railroads, power, communication, chemicals, iron-steel, extractive industries.

As usual in these cases, the state in practice was forced beyond even these industries into almost every field. Thus river transportation has been nationalized, and government plants were constructed in textile, glass, salt mines, cement, paper, fertilizer, jute bags.

In 1950, a development plan was introduced covering 1951-59, and involving \$1.5 billion. It is difficult to determine to what degree this is being realized. But it is quite plain that private domestic capital is playing practically no role, remaining restricted in practice to commerce.

The predominant role of the state in investment and production is not altered qualitatively by the fact that foreign capital still retains some hold in the country. The vast capital requirement for reconstruction of the oil industry has discouraged the government from nationalizing it to date on the premise that only foreign capitalists could supply the needed resources. The policy is, in fact, one of encouraging more private foreign capital, but so far very little has

been forthcoming, due no doubt to the over-all industrial policy of the

regime and the persisting revolutionary situation.

II.

It is, and indeed should be, a genuine source of theoretical concern, to find this formation of similar economic structures developing within a group of countries encompassing the widest range of seemingly divergent political superstructures—the Formosa and China of Chiang Kai-shek and of Mao Tse-tung, so-called socialist Burma and overtly bourgeois India. It is possible, however, to demonstrate that these superficially diverse states are really but different manifestations of a common social necessity in much the same sense that it was possible to understand Hitler Germany, Social Democratic Sweden, and pre-war Japan all as expressions of bourgeois society, despite their certainly non-classical character. *The full concrete reality, the diversity in appearance, can, of course, be understood only by an analysis of the general socio-economic problems facing this group of countries, the manner of attempted resolution of these problems, and the specific historical circumstances in which the attempt was made.*

The Economics of Stratification

There is an extensive Marxist literature on the subject of the role of imperialism in impeding the industrial development of the colonial areas. Three major factors seem to be responsible for this, and they need only be mentioned here. (1) Certain industries were not permitted for competitive reasons. (2) The most profitable industries (extractive) were reserved for European capital, depriving the home economy of a great source of ready capital accumulation. (3) The political necessity of preserving power imposed a policy of encouraging "feudal" social relations and repressing the dynamic potentialities of urban-industrial development.

Valid as this analysis is, it is certainly inadequate, being incapable of explaining the failure of independent semi-colonial countries to mature industrially (pre-war Eastern Europe,

South America). The significance of the analysis rests essentially upon the relationship it bears to that central organizing principle, the problem of capital accumulation and investment. Within this framework we can recognize that there are other equally important problems on the road to capital accumulation, and that the traditional analysis is therefore incomplete.

The forced involvement of the Asiatic countries in the world market imposed upon them for the first time the revolutionizing tasks of capital creation. We are accustomed to speak summarily of the backwardness of pre-revolutionary Russia, and of the overriding significance of this condition. How much more so this is true of Asia is rendered graphically clear by one simple index. In 1913, Russia had a steel capacity which, *in per capita terms*, was more than ten times that of India or China in 1950—4.2 million tons vs. approximately one million tons.

This imperative necessity to accumulate is buttressed by the fact, which history so amply demonstrates, that failure to do so yields not stagnation, but relative and absolute decline! The overwhelming necessity and the method by which it is attacked, determine the character of all policy; and it is this common situation and method that impose their stamp upon seemingly diverse *regimes*. Above all stands the tremendous contrast between the indispensable minimum capital requirements (determined by political as well as economic pressures) and the quantities realizable under given social relations.

In advanced countries; the problem of capital accumulation is comparatively simple. Our whole economy, way of life, is geared above all else to this one demand. So much so that we forget that to a feudal or agrarian society, capital accumulation is almost incomprehensible. Such societies are geared about wealth production, not capital formation. The transform-

ation in Europe from the feudal to the bourgeois conception of wealth took centuries.

Asia, an agrarian society, is to this very day still essentially wealth and not capital oriented. Surpluses are not invested, but rather kept in hoards of bullion, luxury goods, or sent abroad. In the more "dynamic" sectors, wealth can be invested in trade, speculation, but only rarely in genuine capital construction. Due to the late arrival of capital accumulation, the incipient bourgeoisie is faced simultaneously with the *historically most mature impediment*—revolutionary class struggle.

Capital scarcity is, of course, a relative conception. Asia has been sufficiently shaken by the impact of industrialism to make it likely that if these nations could be isolated from the world market, capitalism would slowly but surely grow, much as it did in Europe in the late middle ages. But the concretely overwhelming links to the world market pose a problem which Europe (outside Russia) never had to face regarding the *rate* of capital accumulation. The nature of capitalism, and of the market, demands that as each country enters the sphere of capitalist production it must do so at the highest level reached by industrial civilization up to that point. Nothing short of this level will do if the economy entertains serious perspectives; any lower level can lead only to stagnation. This is, of course, "old hat." But to say that Asia enters industrial society in the period of the emergence of atomic energy is to dramatize, without departing one iota from reality, the enormous leap that must be taken. The law of combined development takes the stage with a vengeance.

Perhaps some explication of the meaning of catching up *today* may not be superfluous. Industrialization involves more than the use of the latest technical apparatus. The scale of operations of modern industry is such that the unit of capital expenditure in under-developed areas is not *the plant*, but a coordinated group of industries. Thus setting up one modern steel mill in India would mean a minimum increase of 25-50%

in her steel capacity. A change in output of such scope could not be met by a mere internal expansion of all the industries and services related to steel. Instead one would simultaneously have to open up new coal and iron mines, quite possibly new railroads, electric power units, schools for training labor, perhaps new cities and certainly additional steel fabricating plants to absorb the qualitatively new steel capacity.¹⁵

To all this, one must add the revolution in culture involved in the overnight creation of a labor force for modern industry. Students of the history of the creation of the contemporary Soviet labor force will not be prone to underestimate the magnitude of this aspect of industrial revolution. Under these circumstances, the development of Asia by capitalist means can only be achieved under conditions socially tumultuous and unbelievably costly in human terms.

Under such conditions it becomes equally clear that the demands of accumulation involve the utter inadequacy of classical techniques of accumulation; i.e., that only the state ~~can now perform that historic function of the capitalist, on the requisite scale.~~ This new function of the state and the new demands upon the *scope* of investment predicate a leap from the most primitive forms of capitalist organization to that of the most advanced (in principle), namely, state planned economy.

Planning per se is of course not always a substitute for the rigors of capital accumulation; it can, and does, as easily provide the weapon for the most absolute, most thorough exploitation known to man. For, indeed, it is only via the state that the most concentrated techniques of accumulation (in its two-fold aspect) can be introduced in contemporary society—the repression of the proletariat, and the most efficient tapping of the incomes of every segment of the population, by taxation or other methods of “forced saving.”

¹⁵ This disproportion arises occasionally even in the economy of advanced countries, and is to some extent the case with some recent gigantic investments in Canada.

Where this development proved impossible, or delayed, as in pre-war colonial areas under direct imperialist domination, it is hardly surprising to find that, historically, the emergence of a bourgeoisie in the classical form was of necessity an abortive one. The best that these economies were able to manage up to now was a bastard development, the comprador capitalist, so prominent throughout the colonial world, the marginal entrepreneur who lives in and through the limited industrialization carried out by the imperialists.

The logic of the condition in which they find themselves has not been lost upon the more dynamic, non-feudal elements in colonial societies, and is now almost universally accepted. This appreciation has been greatly facilitated in Asia by several historical factors whose impact is quite well-known. (1) The powerful strain of communalism that persists throughout Asia in the form of clan and family rights and obligations taking precedence over individuals. The ideology of cooperation and group priority remains a powerful barrier against bourgeois-individualism. (Communal property is still quite common in Java, India, and China.) (2) The ready consistency of communalism and state organization of economy with the objective needs of the time. (3) The hostility toward colonial imperialism is easily and naturally extended to include a hostility to its ideology and social organization. (4) The crisis of capitalist economy and ideology since 1914, which is especially obvious to outsiders.

The Politics of Statification

“The nationalization of railroads and oil fields in Mexico has of course nothing in common with socialism. It is a measure of state capitalism in a backward country which in this way seeks to defend itself on the one hand against foreign imperialism *and on the other hand against its own proletariat.*”¹⁶ (My emphasis. D.M.)

With this penetrating analysis of a

¹⁶ Leon Trotsky, “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay.”

concrete instance of nationalization (and under trade union management!) Trotsky presents us with the *political* necessity for the new role of the state. So perpetual, so all-embracing is the crisis of the colonial areas of the world, that the preservation of *bourgeois* society demands that the state take direct charge, in one final decisive effort at disciplining the revolution and the new additional revolutionary impulses which efforts at industrialization must unleash.

The major source of the vast revolutionary mass movement which has swept the entire colonial world is the unchecked decay of Asiatic economy during the past hundred years, and particularly during the recent period of western decline. The destruction of a vast class of artisans and small-scale industry by the intrusion of the world market compelled a mass retreat to the soil, involving the destruction of a tenuous balance between city and farm, between production and population, that had been preserved for centuries in the stagnant but not declining economies of the pre-capitalist states. As a consequence, per capita output in agriculture began an uninterrupted *decline*; because of surplus labor, farms were broken into even smaller less economic units, and the entire economy took a nose-dive. Within the past 15 years alone, India has suffered a 10% decline in per capita food consumption. In Java (an area of few estates) 96% of all arable soil was under cultivation in 1936, yet population was increasing at the rate of 1½% per annum. Throughout the area, urban life on the whole was in relative decline. Every stratum of the population writhed under this impossible restriction of life!

But if to this impoverishment and decay we add the prospect, the daily image, of a better way posed by the very existence of imperialists, their technology, the slight industrialization and the dribble of their goods into the economy—i.e., the vision of abundance—then every degree of decline necessarily propels the revolution forward. A seemingly exaggerated, yet an important *pure* case of this phenomenon, the contradiction between

declining reality and rising expectations and demands, was given us by a movement among New Guinea laborers upon the final withdrawal of American troops in 1946. The return of the Australians, and their lower wage policy for natives, caused a strike among these sons of headhunters for a 4,800% increase in wages and an American diet!

The attempt to resolve these vital problems of the economy by intensified industrialization requires statification of production for reasons beyond the economic indispensability of planned integrated development. The unbelievable capital poverty of these states imposes upon them a program of capital accumulation which, under bourgeois conditions, can only be realized by the most barbarous direct exploitation of the proletariat precisely at a time when its expectations and demands for improved circumstances are at a new peak.

Thus pressed by economic and political necessity—the attempt to *meet* the revolution, to master it, to develop the economy and thus meet the urgent revolutionary demand for production—the situation is approachable for a bourgeois resolution only through some variant of state-dominated economy. And now, in the fullest sense of the word, the state in all its functions and fullest potentialities is revealed beyond disguise as the executive committee of the capitalist class—the state as the “personification of capital.”

The Historical Circumstances

The abstract realization that a social system is at an impasse, and the availability of a “solution” (in this case statification of production), does not guarantee that the society will be able to muster the resources for the requisite effort. For example, the urgent necessity of economic and political unity of Europe is quite clear to everyone in Europe, even to most sections of the bourgeoisie. Despite this, to all appearances the decay is so deep that bourgeois Europe seems quite unable to consummate even this secondary effort. So in the colonial countries, understanding is not invariably followed by action. Here politics, history play their role.

The traditional response of the colonial bourgeoisie to revolutionary anti-imperialism was governed by fear of the permanent revolution, the fear that once the masses entered the scene and expelled imperialism, they would move on to the destruction of bourgeois society itself. The need of the native bourgeoisie for national independence and the elimination of the feudal elements in society was therefore met by only half-hearted, compromiser attempts, with which the history of the inter-war period is replete.

And this remained the perspective of the native bourgeoisie until devious history demonstrated that in conditions of great revolutionary upsurge and weakened imperialism, the revolutionary masses could no longer be suppressed, contained, and that the only slight remaining chance for both domestic and foreign capital lay in the surrender of political power by imperialism and its assumption by the native bourgeois classes, or in most cases, by its “socialist” representatives.

The revolutionary history of Asia over the past decade is actually not too well known. It is very sparsely documented. Our analysis is therefore of necessity sketchy. But the main outlines of some of the processes are reasonably distinct.

Burma

Even before World War II broke out, sections of the nationalist movement, including the Socialist Thakin movement, had established close ties with the Japanese government, which promised to supply funds, arms and military training to the anti-British movement. These promises were only partially fulfilled, but one of the Burmese who received military training in Japan was Aung San, the future leader of Burma.¹⁷ Under such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the outbreak of war in 1941 was greeted as the first step toward Burmese independence (an illusion widely shared throughout Asia) and led to the immediate formation of the Burmese Independence Army (BIA) which

helped in the defeat of the British in Burma.

Though hardly an independent regime, the Japanese did institute a government in Burma with far more power and participation for the Burmese than the British had ever granted. Burmese were appointed to all government positions, internal authority was extensive, and the BIA was maintained as a sizable armed force. Plainly, these were the minimal concessions consistent with maintaining order; i.e., preventing revolution. The vast territory to be administered, the awakened, confident, militant nationalist movement made a deal with the native ruling class absolutely necessary—risky though it was.

But these concessions were not sufficient to counterbalance the demand for full independence, or to compensate for the enormous demands which the Japanese began to make upon the conquered areas. Interrupted communications, general industrial shortages, the need for defense works, compelled the Japanese to forced requisitioning of labor and supplies which were far beyond the capacity of the economy. The net result was that a raging inflation set in by 1943.

When indications arose that the war was turning against the Japanese, the desperate occupying power could only attempt to halt the rising tide of hostility by declaring Burma independent in August, 1943. In what must have been an astonishing response, the declaration was the signal for the outbreak of a vast peasant war against the Indian land-owning class. Fleeing to Rangoon, the landlords received asylum, but neither the Japanese nor the Burmese regime dared to intervene to protect their property rights.¹⁸

The growing economic crisis, the growing certainty of Japan's defeat, caused a split in the nationalist movement, and, led by a cabinet minister of the government, Aung San, the anti-Japanese movement was organized as the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (AFPFL). Like the Chinese revolution, the mass base of

¹⁷ Thein Pe, *What Happened in Burma*.

¹⁸ V. Thompson, *Labor Problems in South East Asia*.

this movement, and of its largest component party, the Socialist Party, lay in the peasant associations which had arisen during the land seizure of 1943, and which were apparently led by socialists. For the AFPFL, the road to independence lay not in opposition to both imperialist camps. This would have been much too "impractical." Above all, the first maxim of opportunist and bourgeois politics is "Alone with the masses? Never!" Instead it proposed to achieve Burmese independence by aiding the British in their reconquest of Burma in 1945.

It must be confessed that the documented role of the proletariat in the period under consideration is obscure. The primitive, tiny Burmese working class (only 100,000 in modern-type industry) did not have its first experience as a class until 1938-39, which marked the real beginning of the Burmese union movement and its first significant strikes. But these strikes were already semi-political. The year 1941 witnessed a second, broader wave of strikes and efforts at the organization of an All-Burma Federation just six months before the war. Here information of independent class action ceases until September, 1946, when the first general strike in Burmese history took place, with a dual aim—wage increases from the predominantly foreign capital, and a demonstration for immediate independence. The unions were led largely by elements in the AFPFL, but to the left of the dominant Aung San Socialist Party.

Marxist surmises would be that this perilous general strike played no small role in convincing the British of the necessity to grant the Burmese demand for independence (negotiations were then in progress) and thus hand over the power to a native class of urban petty-bourgeois elements linked with the new small-peasant landholders.

Indonesia

To a startling degree, events in Indonesia followed closely the pattern of Burmese developments. Here too the nationalist movement accepted the Japanese, and held considerable

power under it, including a military force. Under influences and pressures similar to those in Burma, but more intense (1,000,000 laborers deported from Java alone, food consumption down by 25%), a pro-Allied wing soon split off, entering into moderate opposition to the Japanese-dominated regime, but without reaching the success of the AFPFL. As in India and Burma, the two wings of the nationalist movement were not hostile to one another—neither Soekarno nor Bose was considered a Quisling—but rather considered one another hedges against the victory of either imperialist group.

Imminent defeat, the desperate search for allies, the rising wall of hostility, prompted the Japanese to offer the Indonesians independence, and on August 17, 1945, the Japanese-sponsored "Committee for the Preparation of Independence" proclaimed the Indonesian Republic. It was to be three years before the Dutch could bring themselves to realize that the revolution was irreversible.

As in Burma, the role of the proletariat as a class in these events is still obscure in terms of available information. If one includes the proletariat on the plantations, i.e., industrial agriculture, then the industrial proletariat numbers no less than 1½ million workers in modern industry. But the pre-war repressions of the Dutch were if anything even more severe than those of the British; trade union membership in the Indies never reached above 90,000, of which many were European white-collar workers. During the 1930's, the peak strike year recorded 42 strikes involving a total of 2,115 workers. The precise form in which the working class participated in the booming revolutionary movement which followed the Japanese invasion, is difficult to determine in view of the complete absence of any detailed history of this period. Undoubtedly, the economic and political crisis, the reflected revolutionary movement, assumed some independent working class forms such as unions. Very possibly on the plantations the revolutionary organizations and the class organizations were often synonymous; but, either during or immedi-

ately after the declaration of independence, the movement reorganized itself on distinct class lines, and a period of intense class struggle ensued—a struggle which is today, and has been since the very birth of the republic, the primary immediate problem facing the new regime. Today, probably 80% of the proletariat is in the union movement.

We have already referred to the division of many large European estates during the war and the refusal of peasants to relinquish the land which is so desperately needed for food production. The war against the Dutch extended this incipient peasant war, directed it now against the relatively powerful feudal landlords in Sumatra (the remaining stronghold of feudal property). Considerable land redistribution was effected in this manner.

* * *

In these two developments it is abundantly clear that: (1) faced with a movement which had already experienced a considerable measure of independence, and had already organized a state and an armed force, to have refused recognition of independence would only have resulted in pushing the revolution to the left; (2) the experiences during the war precluded any possibility of profitable exploitation in the old way by imperialism; and (3) any effort to do so could only result in the situation we saw in Indochina, i.e., one that drained the life-blood of both contending parties. (It is notable that after eight years of war, the French cannot attain more than a toe-hold *even in the ruling native class!* Even the Assembly, hand-picked from the most reactionary wing of the Indo-Chinese bourgeois-feudal class, demanded an end to the French union, and recognized that without independence, all is lost for themselves and the French.)

It is in this matrix of economic, political and historic events and conditions, that the colonial revolutions of the past decade, and the economic statism which characterized them, become a comprehensive unity and reality.

Bernstein's Challenge To Marx

by Joseph Hansen

THIS IS A POLITICAL biography of Eduard Bernstein, an outstanding member of that group of disciples whom Marx and Engels knew personally and helped develop as leaders of the revolutionary socialist movement. Bernstein had the unenviable distinction of being the first after the death of Engels to break from the great founders of scientific socialism. Faced with new, unanticipated facts that seemed to vitiate the prognoses of the masters, he revised their basic views from top to bottom so that Marxist theory, as he saw it, would better correspond with what he took to be the living reality.

The causes of this spectacular change, Bernstein's substitute theories, and their impact on the Social Democratic movement make up three parts in Peter Gay's book. Of these the first two are the best. The third suffers from the author's unfortunate sympathy for his subject as a man and as a politician.

Bernstein began his political life like most other adolescents of the day as a patriot in the Franco-Prussian war. However, late in 1871 his reading of radical newspapers convinced him that the government's charge of treason against Bebel, Liebknecht and other socialist leaders was false. The war, he decided, was wrong. In February of 1872 he joined the Social Democratic movement.

The 22-year-old youth had left school six years before to begin his apprenticeship as a bank clerk. Now he began his apprenticeship as a rev-

THE DILEMMA OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM, by Peter Gay. Columbia University Press, New York, 1952. 334 pp. \$4.25.

olutionary socialist. The depression of 1873 touched off an upsurge of labor and the young enthusiast found his spare time occupied to the full.

The school of public speaking and debating in the suburbs of Berlin was rough. Besides evenings it meant three debates or speeches each weekend. This went on for six years. As his activities brought him into prominence in the party, he began his theoretical studies. These consisted of a little of Marx and more of a Professor Duhring who was then in repute as a socialist with a university education. Continually under attack from his superiors, the blind professor attracted much sympathy. Actually he turned out to be an anti-Semitic megalomaniac.

The educated Professor Duhring made such an impression on the unschooled Bernstein that he enthusiastically pushed his pretentious writings within the Social Democratic movement. The fact that this was well received even by the leaders indicates how low the theoretical level of the movement was in politically backward Germany. It took a long series of articles by Engels himself, which were finally published as a book, to finish off the Duhring fad. *Anti-Duhring*, Bernstein admitted, was what really won him to Marxism.

Despite some persecution, the party scored sufficient successes to frighten Bismarck, chancellor of the German government. In 1878 he deliberately framed up the Social Democratic Party after two attempted assassinations of the aged emperor by psychotics who had nothing to do with the party. The Reichstag passed the legislation he demanded, outlawing the Social Democratic Party, and Bismarck set in motion a nation-wide witch hunt. Meetings of the party were banned, its newspapers confiscated, members arrested. Companies all over Germany joined in the hysteria, compelling their employees to sign a "loyalty" oath; i.e., that they were not members of the proscribed party or would abandon membership immediately.

Bernstein went to Switzerland where he became editor a little later of *Sozialdemokrat*, the party's official paper, which was smuggled into Germany. He proved to be an able editor, receiving Engels' commendation and encouragement when the responsibility of the assignment and the inadequacy of his education caused him to think of resigning.

Those years of resisting the witch hunt and all its pressures became known as the "heroic years." Despite the persecution, which included the arrest and imprisonment of party leaders, the Social Democrats made headway. Not even the death of Marx dented their ranks. They concentrated their defensive fight around the ballot box and began to roll up an impressive vote.

Bismarck's response to their electoral gains was to grant concessions to the workers such as sickness, accident and old-age insurance at government expense. This was coupled with intensification of the witch hunt. Through diplomatic bullying and bribery, Bismarck even secured expulsion of the staff of *Sozialdemokrat* from Switzerland in 1888. Bernstein, under indictment in Germany for 'sedition' and now under attack from the Swiss authorities, went to London.

By 1890, twelve years after the

witch hunt began, the Social Democrats had become so powerful in Germany that Bismarck's policy of repression was considered a fiasco. He was dismissed by the young Kaiser and the party emerged into the public arena, seemingly well on the way to becoming Germany's most powerful political force.

Bernstein was now working in close collaboration with Engels. He spent considerable time in the reading room of the British Museum where Marx had labored for decades. In 1895 he published an important contribution to Marxist literature, *Socialism and Democracy in the Great English Revolution*. (In the English translation the title of the book is *Cromwell and Communism*.) This marked the pinnacle of Bernstein's achievements. In 25 years of revolutionary socialist activity and study he had more than made up for his lack of university training. He was now recognized everywhere as one of the leading intellectuals of the Marxist movement.

"Evolutionary Socialism"

But all was not well with Bernstein. As early as 1892 Engels had indicated his displeasure over Bernstein's enthusiasm for the Fabians in England, a grouping of socialists headed by such figures as George Bernard Shaw and Sidney and Beatrice Webb who thought the best way to get socialism was to talk the the capitalist class into it. Engels ascribed Bernstein's wavering to a "nervous illness" which he had recently undergone.

Bernstein's friends noted a growing moodiness and irritability in the usually affable writer as if he were suffering from an unresolved conflict. The reason for this cooling off toward his friends began to be apparent in 1896, a year after Engels' death, when Bernstein started a series of articles on "Problems of Marxism." By 1898 a storm was raging in the ranks of the Social Democracy over these articles, for they revealed Bernstein's basic break from Marxism. Kautsky and Bebel pressed him to develop his views.

He did this in a book published in 1899, *Evolutionary Socialism*, a systematic attack on the fundamentals

of Marxism that quickly became known as the bible of Revisionism. The sensation of his attack on Marxism made Bernstein famous throughout Europe, propelling him overnight into leadership of a powerful current in the Social Democratic movement.

Bernstein went to the heart of Marxism, the materialist dialectic. This method, which Engels described as "our best working tool and our sharpest weapon," was denounced by Bernstein as a "snare." He considered Marx and Engels to have been "seduced by the Hegelian dialectic, which after all is not integrally connected with the theory." In his opinion, "The great things which Marx and Engels achieved they accomplished in spite of, not because of, Hegel's dialectic." In place of the logic of contradiction he advocated "organic evolutionism"; that is, a concept of unilinear progress that conveniently leaves out the role of such abrupt transitions as revolution among the motor powers of history.

He felt, in accordance with this, that Marx and Engels had too much stressed the role of force in history and had overlooked the possibility of the gradual growth of capitalism into socialism. No longer seeing development through contradiction, the logic he substituted for dialectic gave him development through continuous, small, mostly irreversible changes. Thus as a practical result of his theory he visualized the "permeation" of capitalism with a socialist content (the Fabian view).

The principles which he had defended for a quarter of a century now appeared to Bernstein as "dogmas" that must be rooted out if Marxism was not to become ossified. And so he leveled his guns at the undue power of "tradition" in the movement. The entire concept of the coming decline and overthrow of capitalism in any sense except its gradual assimilation of a socialist content now seemed to him so much "cant." Against this "cant" he put Kant, the philosopher, advocating cultivation of a "critical spirit" and a "Critical Socialism" in the tradition of the "Critical Philosophy" of the Koenigsberg sage.

And, setting the example, he raised the banner of what he considered to be Kantian ethics. In place of Marx's view that socialism is inevitable, the next stage of society whose lineaments can be seen in capitalism itself as the present order prepares the economic, social and political groundwork for its replacement, Bernstein spoke of socialism as nothing more than an ethical ideal, something that "ought to be." He was not even sure that socialism would necessarily follow capitalism. Why not something different? Something completely unforeseen? He decided that socialism is really "utopian," not scientific, because it is "biased"; biased for the working class against the capitalist class.

Bernstein's revisionism was just as sweeping in economics. He accepted the views of the new bitterly anti-Marxist school of marginal economists as compatible with Marxist economics. He decided that capitalism was not heading toward worse depressions, but that instead the periods of prosperity were widening. In place of increasing concentration and centralization of wealth as forecast by Marx, ownership, along with its benefits, was being spread more widely among the people.

As for the class struggle, "In no way do I deny that a class struggle is going on in modern society. But I wish to argue against the stereotyped conception of this struggle as well as against the claim that it must necessarily assume ever harsher forms."

The continuous increase of productivity signified not increasing polarization of classes in society and the eventual destruction of the middle class, but steady improvements for the workers and the increase of the middle class. Thus, the role of the Social Democracy was not "to dissolve this society and to make proletarians of all its members. Rather, it labors incessantly at lifting the worker from the social position of a proletarian to that of a 'bourgeois' and thus to make 'bourgeoisie' — or citizenship — universal."

In that way the class struggle becomes increasingly milder as the workers become petty bourgeois and

eventually bourgeois. This view strikingly revealed the limitations of Bernstein's concepts. The class struggle within a few years was to reach pitches of unheard of ferocity as the workers instinctively sought to transcend capitalist society. Bernstein, however, was incapable of transcending capitalist society even in thought. To his mind, the socialist goal for a worker is to become bourgeois. His incapacity to pass beyond the limits of capitalist ethics and outlook showed that he had never really grasped capitalism as a whole in theory. This prevented him from seeing its rise and decline in a qualitative sense. He could only see it quantitatively—as less or more of what is. That is a typical limitation of non-dialectical thought.

On the political level, Bernstein was just as thorough in sweeping out what he considered to be cobwebs. He declared Marx and Engels to be wrong about the withering away of the state. In his opinion the capitalist state could be reformed into socialism and would continue to play a useful role. The talk about revolution was therefore so much nonsense. He demanded that the Social Democrats free the movement of such "outworn slogans." The influence of the party would increase, he declared, if "it found the courage to emancipate itself from a phraseology which is actually obsolete, and if it were willing to appear what it really is today; a democratic-Socialist reform party." Bernstein was specific about where the influence of the party would increase: among the bourgeoisie, who would lose their fear of socialism once they were assured it had no revolutionary intentions. In brief he demanded that the Social Democrats should rearm themselves by junking the old Marxism.

(An instructive present-day parallel to this revisionist view is the Cochranite contention that the influence of Trotskyism would increase among the Stalinists if it would only "junk the old Trotskyism" and give up calling for the revolutionary overthrow of the reactionary Soviet ruling caste. One is reminded of Hegel's observation that while we are often ad-

vised to learn from the experiences of history, "what experience and history teach is that peoples and governments have never yet learned from history, let alone acted according to its lessons.")

Bernstein's Empiricism

Gay's study of what lay behind Bernstein's revisionist views is the best feature of the book. "Bernstein came to technical philosophy late and without expert guidance," he points out. "This is not to say, by any means, that anyone trained in philosophy would automatically become an addict of the Hegelian logic. Nor is it to accuse Bernstein of ignorance in philosophy. But his lack of a really thorough philosophical education drove him to rely on common sense and to give free play to his already powerful skeptical and empiricist sympathies."

Again, "Bernstein . . . did not fully grasp the significance of the dialectic to Marxism Bernstein's empiricism is apparent everywhere. His philosophical case against Marxism was really an afterthought; it was appended to his attempt to refute Marxist conclusions on empirical grounds. He distrusted metaphysical structures as Utopian constructions and suspected abstract thought of leading to unwarranted results. The world to him was 'a complex of ready-made objects and processes.'* True, his empiricism was not identical with the extreme

* Gay quotes this from Bernstein. Evidently a reference to the following statement by Engels, it shows Bernstein's confusion in a most striking way: "The great basic thought that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind-images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away, in which, in spite of all seeming accidents and of all temporary retrogression, a progressive development asserts itself in the end — this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is scarcely ever contradicted." (Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 54, International Publishers, 1935 edition.)

antiphilosophical attitude of the Fabians, whom he condemned for reducing Socialism to 'a series of sociopolitical measures, without any connecting element that could express the unity of their fundamental thought and action.' But his kinship to the Fabians was closer than he cared to admit."

An empiricist such as Bernstein lacks a powerful network of thought that can sift and assess facts on a big scale, gathering them together in correct historic proportion. His thought therefore becomes entangled in the network of facts and their immediate relationships which are often superficial or even contradictory to the main trend. The empiricist is convinced to the marrow of his bones that he is viewing reality as it is. He sees it right in front of his eyes and no one is going to convince him otherwise. Hence the arrogance and contempt for theory that is so often seen in a vulgar empiricist. Don't try to tell him the earth is round or revolves around the sun. He can see otherwise and besides it's just as easy to plow a straight row if you consider the field flat; and crops grow just as well if you figure that it is the sun that rises in the east and sets in the west instead of the earth revolving under its rays. So what can the theory do for you that common sense won't do just as good?

Bernstein was impressed by the prosperity of England, the damping of the class struggle there, and then the unparalleled prosperity that swept Germany in the Nineties. Lacking the dialectic method of Marxism, he was unable to fit these unexpected facts into the general theoretical structure of Marxism. Hadn't Marx and Engels predicted worsening crisis, growing misery of the workers, disappearance of the middle class, even world war? And precisely the opposite was happening. A theory that led to such wrong results must be worthless.

The unhappy man, who did not have any insight into his own limitations, took what to him was the only course. Since the facts before his eyes could not be denied, he denied the theory. Seeking for the causes of the errors, he made the blunder of ascrib-

ing them to what seemed to him to be mystical hangovers from Hegel that had always proved a bit too hard for him to either crack or enjoy. Conscientiously, he set out to purge them from a movement which obviously needed re-arming with a "new" theory. He was forceful about it because he was completely convinced and sincere. He knew what he saw. But that was Bernstein's blind side. Despite all his honesty, he was incapable of putting together more than rags and patches from various sources, many directly from bourgeois currents, others indirectly.

Bernstein was not expelled from the party, nor did he resign as some pressed him to. Instead, to his own surprise as much as anyone else's he found himself at the head of a ready-made, powerful, and fanatic faction, who acclaimed his gross betrayal of Marxist principles. Moreover, in social composition they included not only middle class elements, including trade union bureaucrats, but a heavy section of workers. How did this seemingly strange turn occur?

The Effect of Prosperity

The Social Democrats had proved their capacity to survive and grow in the years of fierce persecution. What they couldn't stand was prosperity. "A sudden short depression in 1890," Gay explains, "was soon followed by moderately good times. But the boom that broke the Marxists' back began in 1895 and lasted, with brief interruptions, until the outbreak of the World War. With such a bright economic picture, who can wonder at the emergence of Revisionism?"

"The effect of the prosperity upon German Social Democracy," Gay notes, "was twofold: it sapped the proletariat's will to revolt by making nonsense of the Erfurt Program, and it gave grounds for theoretical skepticism regarding several of Marx's basic tenets."

The social source of revisionism was the skilled workers of Germany organized in trade unions headed by Social Democrats. These bureaucrats, as they gathered wind in their sails from the prosperity, insisted on equal partnership in guiding the party. But

conceding to this demand meant the surrender of political leadership to the trade union bureaucrats and their ascendancy at the expense of the revolutionary wing of the party.

A fight to the finish was clearly called for. Instead the centrist leadership headed by Bebel and Kautsky chose to temporize, to obscure the differences. They put party unity above principles. They sought compromises that meant verbal concessions to the left and power concessions to the right, an arrangement quite satisfactory to the "practical" trade unionists who didn't give a damn about official declarations so long as they were permitted to continue their anti-revolutionary course. As a matter of fact such declarations provided a convenient left cover for their politics. When the honest Bernstein at one time demanded that the party openly confess its reformist character, Auer wrote him in a cynical letter, "My dear Ede you *don't* pass such resolutions. You don't *talk* about it, you just *do* it."

Gay sums up the relationship of the conservatized union section to Bernstein as follows: "First of all, the trade unions never evinced the slightest interest in the theoretical side of Revisionism. Bernstein's re-writing of Marxism without dialectics, his demonstration that the middle class was not disappearing, his attempts to combine the Marxist theory of value with the new marginal utility approach, left the trade unionists completely cold. These matters, to them, were intellectual pastimes of no value for practical affairs. They felt that they *knew*, empirically, that the lot of the working class could be bettered by reformist activity within the existing order. After all, were not the unions doing it every day?"

They were as contemptuous of the intellectual leaders whom they followed as they were of the revolutionary wing they opposed. "I have the feeling," cried one of them at a Congress in 1908, "that our party comrades have too little contact with the masses . . . When science is remote from practice, it must lead to one-sided results." He was arguing for voting for the budget submitted by the govern-

ment to the legislature, an act long held by the Social Democrats to be wrong in principle since it indicated confidence in the capitalist government.

The failure of Bebel and Kautsky to open all-out faction war on the Revisionists and their trade-union supporters in defense of orthodox Marxism meant the ruin of the party. It paved the way for its colossal betrayal in 1914 when the party leadership supported the imperialist war, and later for its impotence in the face of Hitler's drive to power.

The debate over Revisionism raged for years; it was condemned in resolutions, and the party continued to preach revolution, but actually the Social Democracy had become a liberal bourgeois party in a shell of socialist declarations. Of those who fought Bernstein most vigorously, Gay deals only with Rosa Luxemburg whom he regards as "undoubtedly the most effective and profound." But she, too, did not understand the need for building a combat party—Lenin alone in those years advanced this concept—and so the great Social Democratic Party drifted toward disaster.

Party of Counter-Revolution

Gay follows Bernstein's career sympathetically through World War I—first his support of German imperialism along with the other social imperialists of the party, then his doubts and finally regret over the monstrous betrayal. Bernstein eventually split from the party because of its German chauvinism, but his shifting to the side of British and French imperialism was no better, coinciding as it did with their victory.

When the Social Democrats were thrust into power at the end of the war, Bernstein took a post in the government. To him the Weimar Republic was living proof of the correctness of his views. In his theory, Social Democrats in power equaled a Germany fast approaching socialism. He thought it would be absurd to call post-war Germany a "capitalistic republic," since organized labor had forced acceptance of higher wages and social legislation and was bring-

ing the dictatorship of the capitalists to an end.

In Gay's words, the Social Democrats "mistook form for substance." They were really consolidating the old bourgeois centers of power in the army, the government bureaucracy and the judiciary. To do this they waged civil war against the revolutionary currents headed by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who were murdered in cold blood. The Social Democracy had turned into its opposite—from a party of revolution to a party of counter-revolution.

Bernstein rejoined the Social Democrats in 1919. The extreme right wing now openly dominated the party. Bernstein served them no longer as theoretical cover but simply as a hack polemicist. "His favorite targets," Gay declares, "were those Socialists who advocated immediate wholesale nationalization, and the Bolsheviks. In true Revisionist fashion, Bernstein inveighed against haste which, he felt, was the besetting vice of many German radicals. He saved his heavy ammunition, however, for the Bolsheviks, who stood for all the things he abhorred."

The fear and hatred of the right-wing Social Democrats for the Bolsheviks was quite natural. First of all, the capitalist class, with whom they had made it a principle to collaborate, was engaged in a civil war and a vast armed intervention under Churchill's guidance against the infant workers' state, trying to put it down by force and violence. Secondly, the Bolsheviks represented the orthodox Marxism which they had long ago rejected as outmoded dogma. The catastrophe of World War I, the Russian revolution, and the revolutionary upsurge of the working class throughout Europe now offered the most crushing verification of the basic outlook of orthodox Marxism. Bernstein, however, did not undertake to revise his Revisionism. He simply sputtered at the stunning new facts and tried to sweep them back with rhetoric.

The former disciple of Marx and Engels lived until December 18, 1932, when he died at the age of 82. Six weeks later Adolf Hitler became

chancellor of the Reich. Thus Bernstein did not see the full consequences to the German working class of the Revisionism that destroyed their vanguard party.

In his own eulogy to Bernstein, Gay counts him as "one of the most attractive personalities produced by German Social Democracy." He lauds him for submitting "Marxist dogma to searching examination while not surrendering the Socialist standpoint," and considers his position on tactics "of great value," serving "as an antidote against the Leninists on the one hand and the Syndicalists on the other."

Gay's "Dilemma"

Gay ends somewhat unexpectedly with the old chestnut about means and ends, as if this were the main lesson history has to teach about the degeneration of Bernstein and the Social Democratic Party. "From the outset, Revisionism faced a dilemma that confronts all democratic movements intent on radical social change: What methods shall be used to gain the desired end? The use of violence may overthrow the ruling class that bars the way—but is it not likely that the exigencies of the revolution will transform the movement into a repressive tyranny? Can the rule of terror not be established in the sacred name of the general will? On the other hand, if the parliamentary path is followed and the use of force eschewed, will the reformers ever gain the power they must have to put their theories into practice?"

Such questions would seem to have been pretty well answered by what happened in Germany itself. Had the Social Democrats not succumbed to Revisionism, Germany would have been socialist for some 36 years now. Not only that, if Germany had gone socialist when it should have, Stalinism could never have risen in the Soviet Union. Can there be any doubt that all of Europe would long ago have been united in one planned economy, that we could have avoided the horrors of fascism and of World War II, the threat of World War III and the menace of atomic destruction that now faces us? The United States

itself would surely have gone socialist under those conditions when the great depression of the Thirties gave fresh warning that capitalism in the long run means only increasing misery for the working people.

But Gay does not appear to have considered such possibilities. Like Bernstein, he lacks imagination, is at heart only an empiricist. It is true that he is not as gross an empiricist as Bernstein, just as Bernstein was not as gross as the Fabians who attracted him. He is nevertheless an empiricist; moreover, one limited in a peculiar way.

He seems completely unaware of the fact that orthodox Marxism has given profound consideration to the problem of the inter-relation of means and ends, the "dilemma" that appears so tragic, so troublesome and so insoluble to Gay despite the "expert guidance" he seems to have received in "technical philosophy." One wonders, for example, if he is really ignorant of Trotsky's final contribution on this subject, "Their Morals and Ours," or if he is silent about it out of desire to strike the fitting "tragic" note in closing his book on Bernstein.

Similarly he seems unaware of the fact that orthodox Marxism long ago solved the problem of fascism in theory; for, in excusing Bernstein for his role in disarming the German workers before Nazism, he claims that "Marxism" has not been able to "offer more than a crudely mechanistic explanation" of its rise. Is he really ignorant of Trotsky's writings on the subject?

Much as one can learn from Gay's study about how Revisionism arose in Germany and how it helped paralyze the working class when the threatening figure of Hitler appeared on the political horizon, the lessons—so far as the book itself is concerned—remain negative ones. To work out the implications you need a course in Trotskyism as a prerequisite.

However, as background material for the writings of Lenin and Trotsky on the lessons of Social Democratic politics, the book is both valuable and interesting. I recommend it for your personal library.

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