

**Ups and Downs of the Labor Party Movement - - A Survey**

# **The New** \_\_\_\_\_ **INTERNATIONAL**

**April • 1944**

*Badoglio plus Sforza plus Stalin*

## **Second Stage Opens in Italy**

*By Max Shachtman*

## **The 'Good Neighbor' Goes to Arabia**

*By The Editor*

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## **Spain, 1936**

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Editor: MAX SHACHTMAN

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

*A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism*

VOLUME X

APRIL, 1944

NUMBER 4

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### **Ups and Downs of the Labor Party Movement**

What would be a Labor Party of the American workers, worthy of the name?

If one is not inhibited by the nominal similarity with the British or Belgian or Australian Labor Parties, that is, by the mysticism of words, there are no limitations placed in advance upon the revolutionary development of such a party. We have known parties bearing the name "Labor Party" which were reformist through and through but, as in the case of the Social-Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks) of Russia and, for a time, the Norwegian Labor Party, there have also been revolutionary parties with that name. The character of a party is determined not by its name—not in the first or even second place—but primarily by its program, its leadership and the extent to which the leadership carries out the program. However important other factors may be—for example, the organizational structure—they cannot be put on the same plane of decisiveness as the program.

#### **Labor Party and Marxian Party**

The Marxian socialists are of course the proponents and builders of a revolutionary party. Throughout the world, the organized Marxists are only a tiny minority of the working class. In the United States, their situation is complicated by the fact that they function within a proletariat that has had virtually no socialist political education and is still tied to the political parties of capitalism. The problem of building up a revolutionary party that speaks for substantial sections of the working class is directly connected with the problem of breaking the allegiance of that class to the bourgeois parties and setting it in motion as a politically independent class. The solution of the latter problem leads to the solution of the former. The key to solving the second problem, today, in the United States, lies in the struggle for an independent Labor Party with a militant class program.

A workers' party, to be effective, must not only have the support of millions of workers, but must act on the basis of the boldest and most radical program of our time, the program of revolutionary socialism. Such a program, consistently worked out, is the foundation stone of the Workers Party. It seeks to have this program adopted by the majority of the American workers. Its campaign for the formation of a Labor Party by the trade unions is essentially a campaign for this program. But, just as some time will elapse between now and the time a representative Labor Party is established by organized labor, so some time will elapse between then and the time

such a Labor Party, or, more accurately, the decisive elements in a Labor Party, adopt as their own the fighting program of revolutionary socialism.

Meanwhile? Should the revolutionists refuse to support a Labor Party unless and until it has adopted a fully correct program, refuse to support it because its program is reformist? This does not follow. Where the Labor Party represents a genuine step forward, a break with capitalist politics, a means whereby the class independence of the workers can be expressed politically, it is entirely correct—more, it is imperatively necessary—for the revolutionary vanguard to support it, to support it on the basis of its own program and in spite of the reformist program of the Labor Party.

Does it follow that the revolutionists should give such support to any and every political group formed by workers or calling itself "Labor," regardless of any other consideration, such as its program, for example? The Marxists have a "maximum" requirement for working class politics—a revolutionary program. A party that does not have a revolutionary program merits the support of the working class only if it meets two minimum requirements: that it be organized separately from the capitalist parties and run its own independent candidates; and that it be the political machine of the organized working class. This is still far from a revolutionary socialist workers' party, such as corresponds to the real needs of the working class, and is capable of dealing with the great political and social crisis of our time. But it is the workers organized politically as a class, separately from the capitalist parties; it is a workers' party, even though, by virtue of its reformist program, it is a middle class workers' party.

It must be added that it is not a reformist workers' party in the same way as, say, the German Social-Democratic Party. It is a special kind of reformist party. It is—that is, it should be—constituted by the trade unions, based upon them, controlled by them. The trade unions embrace all political opinions. Their control of the Labor Party makes it an arena in which the revolutionizing of the party (again, more accurately, of the decisive elements in the party) may take place; consequently, an arena in which the Marxian vanguard can and must function.

The minimum conditions that must be fulfilled before a Labor Party is worthy of that name are thus indicated. Given these minimum conditions, working class support, critically rendered, is entirely justified. This is the fundamental approach of the Workers Party to the problem of the struggle for a Labor Party in the United States.

#### **Tactics in the Concrete Situations**

However, there is no Labor Party in the country that meets these conditions. There is a growing dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the Democratic and Republican Parties among the workers. There is a growing sentiment for independent political action by labor, or by labor in combination with the farmers and other middle-class elements. There are even many unions which have adopted resolutions commit-

ting them to the formation of a Labor Party, but which have gone no further than the word. There is also the American Labor Party in New York, the recently formed Michigan Commonwealth Federation, and groups of varying strength that have been formed to establish something like an ALP in other states. There is the CIO's Political Action Committee under the chairmanship of Sidney Hillman, with its tentative plan to call a national convention this year. And there is, finally, the special question of the Stalinists.

A fundamental approach to the Labor Party question, no matter how correct, does not yet answer in advance the countless problems of tactics to employ in concrete situations. It may give the key to the answer. But the key must, as it were, be inserted into the proper lock and turned in the right direction. That is not simple. The campaign for a national independent Labor Party can easily deteriorate into pure and simple propagandism, devoid of any positive significance for the actual development of the Labor Party movement. It can easily become, paradoxical as this may sound, a sectarian refuge from the real fight for independent political action by the American working class.

The "concrete situations" which demand tactical consideration generally arise today in those hard-to-define movements which are located somewhere between the outright capitalist politics that are the tradition and current practice of the AFL and the independent working class politics of a genuine Labor Party, genuine at least in the sense of the conditions set forth above. Such movements are an inevitable stage in the political evolution of the American workers. They were an inevitable stage in the British and German evolution. What will distinguish the American development from, broadly speaking, the European, will be its duration or durability. Between bourgeois politics pursued by labor and independent politics there is always the attempt at a combination of the two. If this statement seems too dogmatic, it is certainly incontestable in one of two modified forms: (1) there *may* be such an attempt, and (2) there *has* been such an attempt, as witness the course of the American Labor Party.

How are the revolutionists and the class-conscious militants to orient themselves in such movements, in such situations? These movements—transitory and internally contradictory—constitute a special problem, of which the ALP is a good example. The mere fact that the ALP was set up as a labor-vote-getter for the New Deal wing of the Democratic Party was an implicit recognition, not only by the labor officialdom in New York, but even by Roosevelt, that hundreds of thousands of workers were restless under the old policy of outright capitalist politics in the labor movement. The ALP represented a partial abandonment, at least in form, of this kind of politics. Yet it did not represent the adoption of independent working class politics; it was not a genuine Labor Party, regardless of whether or not thousands of its working class supporters thought of it as one.

Because it was not a real Labor party it was impossible for revolutionists to call upon the workers to support it in the elections, for a vote cast under its symbol would not be an expression of independent class politics. This, highly summarized, was the position taken by the Workers Party in New York. Yet, although the ALP was not *our party*—the party of the working class—it proved to be *our problem*—the problem of the working class. The fight in the recent ALP primary elections showed how true this was. The fight was a part of the struggle taking place throughout the organized labor movement—not perfectly identical with it, not fought in the

same sphere, but part of it nevertheless. The ALP battle was fought not only at the polls, but in the unions. Its outcome was affected by the situation in the unions, and in turn affects that situation. It had a direct connection with the future of a real Labor Party development in New York and affected the fate of a Labor Party movement nationally. What course should the revolutionists have taken? This is not an academic, but less a "historical" question, because similar problems will arise tomorrow and elsewhere.

### The ALP Primaries Fight

The two main forces contending for control of the ALP—the primary fight was a fight for control of the party machinery—were analyzed in a recent issue. There was the Dubinsky-Rose-Counts group, in formal control, but losing ground; and the Stalinist-Hillman bloc. Of the three choices before the ALP, these represented two. The former stood, more or less, for the ALP as it was—a political machine of the reformist labor officialdom for corraling labor votes for Roosevelt in return for modest concessions, and for putting up minor candidates "independently" here and there. The latter stood for destroying the ALP as it was, and certainly for destroying the chances of making it what it should be, in order more easily to turn it into an instrument with which the Stalinists, reoriented by their new policy, can operate within the Democratic Party.

In addition, there was a third choice, represented in one degree or another by the Workers Party and those holding a similar position, by individual union militants and, formally, on the basis of resolutions once adopted, by some of the unions themselves. These forces were exceedingly weak because they were dispersed and unorganized and without much more than formal agreement among themselves. Their choice was to convert the ALP into an acceptable Labor Party, one based upon the unions and maintaining its independence from the capitalist parties.

Why "convert"? Why not ignore the ALP and proceed with the organization of a genuine Labor Party as if the unacceptable ALP did not exist? Such a position would have been utopian. The bulk of the militant workers—using the term in its broadest sense—looked upon the ALP as the *basis*, to say the least, of the kind of Labor Party that was desirable and necessary. The workers who were ready to "ignore" the ALP were those "not interested in politics at all" or the capitalistically-minded workers who are altogether opposed to working class politics.

The Workers Party, in the fight between the two main groups, therefore began by urging the left-wingers, progressives and militants in the New York unions to combine to put a third ticket into the primary elections with a program for a real Labor Party. Its efforts did not meet with sufficient response. No third group was formed, no third ticket presented. The field of choice in the primaries was reduced in the end to the two main groups. The Workers Party then called upon the registered ALP voters to cast their ballots for the misnamed "right wing" as a lesser evil in comparison with the equally misnamed "left wing," i.e., the Stalinists.

Why? How reconcile this policy with a refusal to support the ALP candidates in the regular elections?

Two different problems—two different policies. In the regular elections, the test is: "Is this a genuine Labor Party we are called upon to vote for?" The ALP failed to meet this test. In the primary elections, the question was: "Who shall control this party? Under the control of which of the

two groups to which we are now limited (if we are to vote at all) is there a better opportunity to convert the ALP into a genuine Labor Party, a better arena for the advocates of such a party, more 'elbow room'? Between the two, whose victory will retard the struggle for a Labor Party?" The answer was not difficult to give: the Stalinists were the *greater* evil; the Dubinsky group was not a "good," it was also an evil, but the lesser evil. It was not that Dubinsky aimed at converting the ALP into a real Labor Party. It was that the Stalinists, in accordance with their all-but-plainly-stated new policy, were determined to liquidate the ALP into their faction of the Democratic Party and that wherever they control, totalitarianism and putrefaction set in.

### The Stalinist Victory

The primary election was won by the Stalinists. The utterly stupid, inept, conservative, licked-before-you're-started, liberal-labor, pro-Roosevelt whimpering the Dubinsky group substituted for a militant campaign (which they are incapable as well as unwilling to conduct) helped play into the hands of the Stalinists. Yet the vote against the Stalinists is noteworthy. In the first place, almost fifty per cent of the enrolled membership of the party voted—a remarkably high figure which is probably a record in such elections. Everyone felt, and rightly, that this time it was make or break for the ALP. It was not regarded as a mere fight for power between two gangs—nor was it. In the second place, the official figures for the four main boroughs of New York City (up-state voting was inconsequential) showed 51,129 votes for the Stalinist-Hillman bloc, which is not very much greater than the high vote cast by the Communist Party when it ran its own candidates. This indicates that the vote for the bloc was cast mainly by the Stalinists and their direct followers. The vote for the Dubinsky slate—which had no such party machine as the CP at its disposal—reached the very high figure of 36,502 in the same boroughs, which exceeds the vote of the nonagenarian Social-Democratic Federation by almost a thousand times, and undoubtedly includes thousands of workers who have learned to know what Stalinism and Stalinist control mean, as they demonstrated in smashing defeats of the Stalinists in a series of union elections conducted in the same period.

The defeat of Dubinsky left the Stalinists in real control. Hillman and his embarrassed cohorts from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and associated unions were given a formal majority of the new State Committee by the gleeful and shrewd Stalinists. The latter control, lock, stock and barrel, the ALP in the five boroughs of New York City, the only city where the ALP has any serious meaning. The famous "Hillman Plan"—for making the trade unions the basis of the ALP—which tricked many people into thinking that perhaps the Stalinist-Hillman bloc ought to be supported, was not even mentioned by the new leadership. As a matter of fact, Hillman announced its abandonment by accepting the preposterous La Guardia "compromise" proposal, which rejected the original "Hillman Plan."

To all intents and purposes, the ALP is now the Communist Party. Any working-class organization that supports it in any way under the impression that it is some sort of Labor Party is deceiving itself and others. It might just as well proclaim its affiliation and support to the Communist Party directly—at least before it is formally "dissolved." The fight for a Labor Party in New York continues—but it is no longer a fight directed toward the ALP, as it were, but a fight directed against it. It is now nothing but a Communist-Party-controlled

bridge back to the Democratic Party. In Minnesota, the Stalinists have greeted (and undoubtedly helped to engineer and promote) the dissolution of the former Farmer-Labor Party into the Democratic Party. That is their line. In New York, entry into Mr. Farley's party will be rather more difficult than in Minnesota. But efforts will not be spared.

The Stalinist victory in the ALP, facilitated in its own way by Dubinsky-Rose-Counts, is even clearer in its meaning now than it was before the primary election. It marks a setback for the genuine Labor Party movement, and it would be absurd to ignore this fact. A setback is not death, however, and the basic forces moving the American workers toward independent class political action have not been and cannot be eliminated by the Stalinists or by anyone else. The task is now to continue more energetically the work of agitation, propaganda and organization, to bring the more advanced unions together for the purpose of launching an independent Labor Party. The lessons of the destruction of the ALP will help launch the coming party under more promising auspices.

### Two Policies in the ALP Fight

In the New York fight, the Workers Party was the only organization to put forward the policy described above, a policy whose validity is now demonstrated, alas, by the very victory of the Stalinists. The Socialist Workers Party acted differently. That is, it acted not at all. It followed, to use one of its favored objurgations and to use it appropriately for a change, a policy of "abstentionism." The fight between the two factions and the situation it created did not, it appears, concern the SWP; its mind is on higher things, such as its alleged defense of the allegedly genuine but considerably degenerated "workers' state." It found, before the election as afterward, that there were no real issues in the fight. "The campaign was fought over one single question: Who would make the best lackey for Roosevelt. . . . For a worker striving to create a genuine Labor Party independent of the capitalist parties there was no choice between the two contending cliques inside the ALP." (*The Militant*, April 8.)

There is profundity for you, there is perspicacity for you, there is revolutionary statesmanship, if you are looking for them. No issue—except who would make the best lackey for Roosevelt! There is a real analysis of the social and political differences between the two factions for you, if you should happen to want it in a nutshell! What has happened to the argument often made by *The Militant*, quoting Trotsky, that "Stalinism is the syphilis of the labor movement"? Bah! Rhetoric! What has happened to the thesis that Stalinism is the *greatest* danger in the labor movement? That's for another time and another place! Has the failure to defeat the Stalinist faction resulted in the destruction of the ALP, its destruction by a more reactionary and not a more progressive force? Has the Stalinist victory resulted in advancing the movement for a real Labor Party or in retarding it—or has it perhaps left the situation just as it was yesterday and the day before? What are the effects of this victory upon the struggle for a Labor Party, not in the pages of *The Militant*, but in the union movement—good or bad? What are the effects of this victory upon Labor Party movements and half-movements outside New York State—good or bad? No answer from *The Militant* on these trifling points! It seems that it was all just a matter of a couple of butlers fighting in the pantry to see who will serve the boss. Nothing else involved. A matter of total indifference to us. A bored yawn, a ho-hum, and let us pass on to something interesting.

But before we let *The Militant* pass on to topics that interest it more, it is worth noting that, in contrast to our policy, *The Militant* has in the past urged its readers to vote in the regular elections for candidates put up by the ALP itself. Let us not debate this matter here. What is important is the fact. By this policy, *The Militant* and the SWP implied that the ALP was a genuine Labor Party, in some respects at least, to some extent, "genuine" in the limited sense defined above. Or, to narrow the point as much as possible, the policy implied that to some extent the ALP was a vehicle for expressing independent working class political action. To exactly that extent, the ALP was—again, according to the SWP policy—a working class party and therefore the SWP's party.

But when this party is threatened with liquidation into an outright capitalist party, is threatened by domination of a reactionary force which is "the greatest danger inside the labor movement"—the SWP is bored with the whole business, finds that there is nothing at stake in the fight, no issues involved and now that the fight is over and the patient is dead—well, thank God, we can continue as if nothing had happened.

### "Thanks, I Don't Smoke"

If someone had decided to stand firmly on his head, he could not do it more consistently than the SWP did in both cases affecting the ALP. In the regular elections, when the issue was—"Is the ALP a real Labor Party? Is a vote for it an expression of independent political action?"—it answered, "Yes, vote for the 'independent' candidates of the ALP." In the primary elections, when the issue was—"Who shall control the ALP, those who seek to move it backward, liquidate it, or those under whom the conditions for fighting for a real Labor Party are more favorable to militants?"—it answered, "Not interested. Not important. Thanks, I don't smoke."

That would be enough for one day. But *The Militant* must perforce embroider the yawn it substitutes for politics with a pompous sermon from history. It seems there are people—and so indeed there are—who call themselves "anti-Stalinist," and fight Stalinism with a bad program and worse methods. And "all they accomplish is to antagonize thousands of workers by their bureaucratic high-handedness and build up support for the Stalinists." Is it these people *The Militant* is getting at—the Dubinskys, the social-democrats or the renegades from Marxism? Not at all! It is another fish they want to fry in the lard of history. Here is the lard just as it appears on the spatula:

We witnessed this phenomenon in 1938 in the faction fight of the auto union. Homer Martin, then president of the UAW, by his red-baiting, his bureaucratic high-handedness, only built up Stalinist strength. At that time a group of petty bourgeois opportunists, the late unlamented Lovestoneites, cliqued up with Homer Martin and excused everything on the grounds of the "Stalinist menace." They accomplished little more than to disgrace themselves. We witnessed an equally disgraceful performance today on the part of a group of petty bourgeois opportunists—ex-Trotskyists, who alibied their support of the Dubinsky-social-democratic clique on the grounds of the "lesser evil."

History, as we have had deplorable occasion to note, is not the long suit of the editors of *The Militant*, and politics not their forte. In this particular case, to serve bad politics, they suborn history, and recent history, in a shameless and perfidious way. We use the terms as scientifically as Noah Webster: *Shameless*, without shame, immodest; *perfidious*, faithless, contrary to loyalty and truth. To wit:

1. The late unlamented Lovestoneites did not support Homer Martin as a lesser evil, or any kind of evil. They supported him as a "good." They opposed the formation of an

independent third group in the UAW on the ground that the Martin group was quite satisfactory. They did not merely "support" Martin, they were part and parcel of his group, its organizers, and indistinguishable in any political or organizational respect from Martin himself. They covered up all his defects and even crimes. They had no program except his program. Not as an analogy, but as an illustration of what we mean, we can take the period of the civil war in Spain. We, as well as the Cannonites, supported bourgeois democracy as a lesser evil in comparison with fascism. That did not make us bourgeois democrats; we supported it with our own independent revolutionary program and criticism. The social-democrats and Stalinists, however, were part and parcel of the machinery of bourgeois democracy, with no independent program of their own. Does the editor of *The Militant* understand the difference? Perhaps! Does he want to understand it? No!

### A Little Bit of History

2. The policy of supporting Martin in 1938 as a lesser evil in comparison with the Stalinist gang was the particular policy of the SWP. It was originated and most prominently enunciated by the then leader of the party, Cannon; we supported it along with the rest of the SWP at that time. It is a pity that we cannot quote Cannon's long editorial in full; it is a double pity for the editors of *The Militant* that Johannes Gutenberg invented movable type, which led eventually to Cannon's editorial appearing in quotable print. Here are the most cogent excerpts from it:

... The class conscious and militant forces in the unions must take the lead in the life and death struggles of the unions to overcome the dread disease of Stalinism in their ranks. They must become the champions of the united front of all union-loyal and constructive forces against the Stalinist wrecking crew.

This is the burning problem right now in the automobile workers union. In their mad drive to control or wreck the UAW, the Stalinists have formed a factional combination with the ultra-reactionary, red-baiting Frankenstein [Hillman? Oh, no; Frankenstein!—Ed.] and his similars against the Martin administration. This crooked factional maneuver is carried forward, of course, under the slogan of "an end to factionalism." In this, the jingo-Stalinists only slavishly imitate the hypocritical tactics of the imperialist diplomats who always advance their war preparations under the guise of peace conferences and peace pacts.

Will a single intelligent militant in the auto unions be taken in by this cynical stratagem? Can they really wish, after the horrible experiences of workers in the Stalinist-controlled unions, to experiment with such "control" in the great organization of the auto workers?

... No, the militant and progressive members of the UAW must give a different and more responsible answer to the Stalinite drive for control of their union. They cannot stand as neutrals on the sideline of the struggle for control of their union. If the militants in the auto union want to save their organization from such a fate, they need an active policy now in the present situation.

Take note, you shameless and perfidious editors of *The Militant*, who were the ones to compare the UAW and ALP situations, even though they are not identical, but only... comparable—take note! What, said Cannon, should this unneutral and active policy be? Let us see just what was "this phenomenon in 1938 in the faction fight of the auto union" and who "alibied their support of the Dubinsky—pardon us, the Martin—clique on the grounds of the 'lesser evil.'"

The policy here recommended does not imply extensive negotiations over questions of program, etc. It does not necessitate formal agreements of any kind. The most important facts are already known, and the duty of responsible militants is clear. In the crisis provoked by the Stalinite bid for power, the militants have no choice but to support the Martin administration as against the Stalinite-Frankenstein combination. And

this support should be given openly, frankly and aggressively. (Italics in original.)

All this, and more that was to the point, appeared in the then official organ of the SWP, the *Socialist Appeal*, of May 14, 1938, the year, if we are not mistaken, when the present editors say they "witnessed this phenomenon." Whatever they witnessed then, it is evident that they did not witness the files of the *Socialist Appeal*. If they had, they might have seen the wisdom of following Cicero's motto, "*Malo indisertam prudentiam, quam loquacem stultitiam*—I prefer silent prudence to loquacious folly."

Using the words scientifically again: it is shameless to attribute your own policy to others (and stupid to renounce it when it was right); it is perfidious to attack your own party and party leader under guise of attacking others; and it is shameless and perfidious to tell brazen and easily-exposed falsehoods.

3 and finally. It is the editors of *The Militant* who put the UAW and the ALP on the same plane. They do not belong there. The former is and was a genuine workers', class organization. The latter was not, and certainly is not now. However, what is correct is that the problem in the two fights was analogous and comparable. For reasons already set forth, we favored supporting the Dubinsky group against the Stalinists for control, in the absence of a really independent group. We supported it, as Cannon said, without "extensive negotiations over questions of program . . . [or] formal agreements." There were no negotiations at all, no agreements at all. We not only did not support the Dubinsky program, but more than any other group in the labor movement we fought it, and fought it on the basis of our own revolutionary class program. To compare our strictly defined support of Dubinsky in the ALP with Lovestone's complete fusion with Martin in the UAW is not only to perpetrate a fraud, but is stupid. It is not only stupid but suicidal. We shall see how far *The Militant* is able to go with this stupid and suicidal line.

The problem of the ALP may be terminated, so far as the bored editors of *The Militant* are concerned. Actually, the problem will face all of us, every class-conscious militant and progressive, many times yet, in many places and in many guises.

### **The New Party in Michigan**

In New York, the movement for a Labor Party has suffered a temporary setback, which we must try to make up with all possible speed. But such is the power of the idea of independent working-class political action that it is down in one part of the country only to rise in another. Detroit, the most important citadel of the organized labor movement, has just witnessed the formation of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation. It is a great step forward. Adequate to the needs of the day? No, far from it. But it is a great step forward.

Is the Michigan Commonwealth Federation a genuine Labor Party, one that meets the minimum conditions set down above? Yes and no. It was formed on the basis of a deliberate compromise between the pro-Roosevelt and pro-Labor Party forces, in which the former were given more than they gave. The resolution adopted leaves the door wide open for support of Roosevelt and the fourth term, which is the principal plank in the program of the Stalinists and the labor bureaucracy. The forming conference deliberately avoided the name "Labor Party" in order not to give it the clear-cut class character it must have; it even considered the name "Farmer-Labor Party" too "narrow." Its leaders wanted to make it a

party of the "common people" and a modified version of the Coöperative Commonwealth Party of Canada seemed to suit that wish best. The conference equivocated on the key question of allowing members of the new party to support and vote for candidates of the capitalist parties. But—

The MCF voted to base itself upon trade unions, whose affiliation it seeks. This already establishes its superiority over the New York ALP. It was established in recognition of the need of a party separate and apart from the two capitalist parties and in opposition to them. Contrary to the ALP, which bore the stigma at its birth of being organized to win traditionally socialist workers to a vote for a capitalist candidate, the MCF was organized in opposition to the Stalinists and even to the Hillman-Stalinist-CIO Political Action Committee, which aims to do the original job of the ALP without forming any kind of new party. Finally, the MCF was organized mainly by rank and file militants and by some of the lower rank union officials, without the blessings of the top flight union leaders such as the ALP originally had in the persons of Dubinsky and Hillman.

From the very beginning, the MCF has a fight on its hands, a fight it will not conduct effectively if it continues to fear the big bureaucrats as much as it does, continues to look for some way to make compromises with them, continues to hope that a serious fight—not a cat-and-dog fight, but a serious, sober, dignified political fight conducted on the basis of sound principles and organized in every labor organization—can be averted forever. The fate of the ALP is recent enough experience to show that an organization like the MCF either marches forward swiftly and consistently to genuine independent political action on a working class basis, or it disintegrates in the course of hopeless internal battles.

### **Prospects of the MCF**

The MCF will no more be able to avoid the problem of Stalinism than did the late ALP. Stalinism cannot be ignored or maneuvered out of existence. It can only be fought, and to fight it effectively and with progressive results for the labor movement, it must be fought on a militant, working class program and by democratic methods. The road the Stalinists are taking, the road along which they want to trick or drag the whole labor movement, should be clear to anyone with eyes in his head. In Minnesota, they have already helped (if they did not inspire) the dissolution of the Farmer-Labor Party into the Democratic Party, that is, the party of Roosevelt, Farley, Cotton Ed Smith, Byrd and the Great Bilbo. New York is next. In Michigan, they are already in the Democratic Party up to the hips, and we just learn that some of the Stalinists or Stalinist stooges have been elected (already!) to attend the Democratic national convention as part of the Michigan delegation. Browder and Bilbo! Frankenstein and Farley! Long live Teheran! On to Warsaw! A plague on them all. Labor must build a party of its own, free of all this scum and cynicism and intrigue and treachery and reaction, ready and able to strike two blows—and better ones—for every one it receives.

Is the MCF a genuine Labor Party? We have tried to explain what is meant by the otherwise equivocal answer, Yes and No. It is a most important step forward on the road. It contains all the necessary elements for developing the kind of party that the labor movement needs. It must be supported by every good militant. Above all, it must be supported as against the Hillman Political Action Committee and the Stalinists, both of whom are whetting their daggers for its heart.

Compared with either of them, the MCF, even as it is right now, is miles ahead and on the right road. The job is to keep it there and keep it moving forward.

The MCF is young, fresh, enthusiastic. It is the most promising development in the labor movement since the beginning of the CIO. Is its future assured? If it takes the road mapped by the great strategists and statesmen of the ALP, Dubinsky, Rose, Counts, Alfange and the others, the answer is a most emphatic "No!" If it does not work out a strong working class program, does not win and base itself primarily upon the magnificent and powerful unions of Michigan, does not

refuse to compromise with or condone capitalist politics and the various spokesmen for it, the answer again is "No!" But if it does work out such a program and roots itself in the unions and turns its back squarely on capitalist politics, its future is assured and bright. It can become the forerunner, perhaps the leader, of a powerful national political movement of labor. To fumble such a great opportunity would not be a pity—it would be a crime.

The militants of the Workers Party and all those who work with them will bend every effort to speed the movement to success. There is no more urgent task in the country today.

# Imperialism by Any Other Name

## *The "Good Neighbor" Is Off To Arabia*

During the rise of American imperialism, its defenders would point to the "manifest destiny" of the country and justify imperialist expansion with the "mission" the nation had to spread its civilization in those parts of the world yet unconquered.

The methods employed in this imperialist expansion were varied, depending on the amount of native resistance, the degree of competition with other powers and the specific aims of a particular adventure. But whether the policy was identified as "spheres of influence," "armed intervention," "political regulation," "acquisition without annexation," or "conquest and purchase," no one doubted in the least that it was imperialism. All manner of anti-imperialists fought against the imperialism of the pre-New Deal decades, charging that the pursuit of such a policy could only lead to war with other powers engaged in the same pursuits—control of markets, sources of raw material, cheap labor and new territories.

Those who dared to deny the existence of an imperialist policy were few, and they were not taken seriously. Cuba, Haiti, Hawaii, Nicaragua, the Philippines—these were only too well known. It was only with the coming of New Dealism and Roosevelt that American imperialist policy underwent a drastic change—in method only. Roosevelt introduced a "new" technique in the inter-imperialist struggle, namely, the "Good Neighbor" policy. It applied chiefly to this hemisphere, although an extension of this policy to other parts of the world has taken place to one degree or another. In essence, the Good Neighbor policy is the continuation of imperialist policy by other means; in this case, a peaceful penetration of colonial and semi-colonial areas based upon a peculiar conjuncture in world relations (the economic crisis and the war) and the enormous riches of the United States. But it arises, it should be remembered, in the midst of the bloodiest war in all history and is directed against the "have-not" powers through military means.

### **The Method Differs**

This continuation of imperialist policy, made imperative by the nature of the capitalist organization in the United States, in no principled way different from the capitalist organization of any other imperialist power, is now denied by the liberal hangers-on of the New Deal. Confusing the method with the policy, they overlooked the truth that economic pene-

tration and control, establishing, in the final analysis, American hegemony over the hemisphere, was and remains a quintessential characteristic of modern imperialism.

By the same kind of reasoning which characterizes the thought processes of the liberals, one could say that England is not an imperialist nation because all her conquests were made many years ago. And England would be quite content to rest on these laurels if only the other powers would permit it. But no, our native apologists, overlooking past acquisitions, are certain that, under Roosevelt, imperialism was driven from our shore. It has taken the Second World War to demonstrate the continuity of American foreign policy over a period of decades, the changing methods notwithstanding.

Differences in method and rate of development in imperialist policy depend on many factors. Without elucidating all of them, we can point to the tremendous internal expansion which occupied the main attention of American capitalism for most of its existence. There is also the pertinent factor of America's entry into the field of international divisions of spoils at a late period, when the growing consciousness of the long-exploited colonial peoples dictates quite another policy.

The new imperialist leaders of the "smile and the dollar" are no less imperialistic than the firebrands of the Teddy Roosevelt type. Times are different and the manner of executing tasks altered. But the fundamental aim remains: American domination of the economic and political life of the world. This is revealed in the extremely sharp conflicts which exist between England and America. No matter what description you give of this struggle, reduce it to real terms and it is clearly evident that America and Britain are fighting now over territory, raw materials and markets.

The war merely accentuated the tendencies which have existed for many years. The impact of the war and the requirements of modern warfare, together with the concrete situation in which the Empire now finds itself, has led to the following transformations, some of which are already completed, and some which are yet in the process of completion.

### **The Boss of the Western Hemisphere**

The United States now monopolizes the Western Hemisphere. The outbreak of the present war guaranteed the total exclusion of German (and Italian and Japanese) imperialism, which had made enormous inroads in South America prior to



1939. But just as Germany was eliminated from the Western Hemisphere, England too has lost her most important economic and political bases. There remains only her relatively unimportant island possessions and the tenuous hold in Argentina. The Dominion of Canada is closer to the United States than ever and ties with England have been considerably weakened. As a matter of fact, other dominions now look to Washington rather than London as the leading capital in the world.

England has been replaced by the United States as the maritime power of the world. This is true of both military and commercial navies. The future of the Empire in this field is obviously dismal, since it will be impossible for her ever again to regain her pre-war position. England suffered annihilating blows to her merchant marine in the early years of the war.

The United States has made great inroads in the Pacific and Asiatic areas. It will no longer be possible for Great Britain to dominate exclusively these sectors of the colonial world. It is not merely that she is incapable of reasserting her former military, industrial and financial powers which belong to Washington. The fact is that "passive" America has entered these areas with the purpose of remaining.

Thus you have three important aspects of the total world problem which illustrate the decline of the British Empire and the rise of the American. A more immediate concretization of the foregoing is represented in the intense struggle over oil. Oil is integral to the life of any modern industrial nation, and is especially important in a period of increasing inter-state antagonism and the prospects of continual warfare between the powers. Without oil the imperialist powers would be literally paralyzed. With this in mind, it is easy to understand the oil war now going on between England and the United States in the midst of their joint campaign against Germany and Japan.

Mindful of the prospects of an oil shortage in the future, American capitalism, through the government, or jointly with it, or independently, has gone into new areas of the globe to acquire new oil interests. The vast expansion of its interests caused the *United States Weekly* to write:

This country's sphere of interest rapidly is being extended to every corner of the globe. As this sphere expands, there is growing up what has come to be recognized as a modern brand of American imperialism, modified but nonetheless real.

The article goes on to cite the manifestations of this imperialist expansion which bears within itself the germs of the next world war. After describing the limited expansion areas of previous years, it speaks of the statement made by the government to "protect" Canada against any "threat to that country." The new area of interest is the Middle East. But with the acquisition of oil interests in this part of the world, American imperialism has acquired stakes, for the first time, in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, both formerly the exclusive hunting grounds of the British. Here is a line-up of the newly acquired interests:

#### **New American Interests**

1. Saudi Arabia. King Ibn Saud has not merely been "cultivated as a friend," but it has been made "interesting" and lucrative for the ruler of Saudi Arabia. Roosevelt entertained his sons. Weapons were furnished him. Consumer goods were also supplied. And the King was actually given millions of dollars for his own private purposes in order to insure American rights in Arabian oil. The private companies in this ven-

ture are Standard Oil of California and the Texas Company and they have established a "pact" between them for joint operations.

2. Bahrein. This is referred to as an "independent sheikdom situated on an island in the Persian Gulf." The same companies mentioned above own the oil rights.

3. Kuwait. This too is an independent sheikdom located north of Saudi Arabia. A third American enterprise operates in this area, the Gulf Oil Co., which is in partnership with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co., in which the British government "has majority control."

4. Iraq. Here the British government dominates, but two American companies, Socony-Vacuum Oil and Standard Oil of New Jersey, have a 23.75 per cent interest in the Iraq Petroleum Co. While the British government is officially interested, the American is not.

5. Iran. Although the British dominate in Iran, Russian interests are growing. But so are American, and quickly, too. There are a large number of American advisers to the Iranian government. Arthur C. Millspaugh is Administrator General of Finance. A. B. Black, formerly connected with the U. S. Farm Credit Administration, is now there to help modernize native agriculture, while Major-General Clarence Ridley, with a staff of American officers, is adviser to the Iranian army. The Iranian gendarmerie, or rural police, is "being reorganized under Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf, formerly head of the New Jersey state police." The city police is "being advised by L. Stephen Timmerman," another American. There are many other high-ranking officials from the States who act as advisers to important governmental institutions.

This penetration of American state and private interests in the Middle East is merely one aspect of American penetration in the whole of Asia and waters previously considered the spheres of influence of other powers. In addition to the direct effects this will have on political and economic developments at home, the international ramifications of this policy will prove even more important. They immediately involve relations with Great Britain over Palestine, pipe lines, military supervision and civil administration, and they involve, too, relations with Russia.

It has recently been disclosed that Washington has directly intervened in this situation, just as the British government is directly involved. This is added proof that in this period of capitalist decline, imperialist developments are unthinkable except as state projects operating in complete solidarity with private monopolistic combines.

Inter-state conflicts thus flow *directly* from economic conflicts, and not *indirectly*, as in earlier times. War is constantly before the imperialist powers as the final means of solving "differences."

An examination of the state of relations within the United Nations reveals the Third World War in the making. This is not the result of imaginings of feature writers, but is incontestably present in the concrete relations between the powers over future economic positions.

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# The Second Stage Opens in Italy

## A Caricature of Kerenskyism

The decision of the "six parties" to enter a new Badoglio government with King Victor Emmanuel still on the throne marks a new stage in the development of the revolution in Italy.

When the revolution first broke out in Italy, the masses who came out into the streets by the hundreds of thousands gave ample evidence of their long-suppressed desire to put an end to fascism, to all it stood for, and to the war which it had imposed upon them.

This display of popular hatred, which drove the Black shirts from the streets, was overwhelming enough to topple the Mussolini régime. It proved to the capitalist class and the monarchy that Mussolini did not retain enough support of any kind to keep the masses of the people in check any longer. To save themselves, they hastily abandoned their old savior, Mussolini himself, and all his more discredited henchmen.

A new figure was needed who could perform the task of preserving the old order. The ruling class and the monarchy picked Badoglio, in the hope that even though he might not be able to win the support of the masses, he could maintain "order" by the control over the remnants of the army which they expected would come to him from his previous military position. In addition, they felt, what he lacked in popular authority would be made up by the support he would receive from the Anglo-American forces. With the mantle of friendship for the "great democrats" of Washington and London draped around Badoglio, they thought that this butcher of the Albanian and Ethiopian peoples, who was Mussolini's military tool in maintaining fascism in Italy for years, might pass as a democrat and appease the discontent of the people. The bread handouts of AMG would help, too.

The ruling class reckoned without its host—the masses of the people. We pointed out at the very beginning of the revolution that Badoglio was only a man of an hour, that his apparent triumph represented only the first stage of the struggle, and that this stage would not last long. The passing of the Badoglio régime, at least of the Badoglio régime as it was first constituted, bears out this prediction.

Why did it pass?

### A Phantom Ruler

Badoglio and his master, the King, failed to obtain even as much social support, or even tolerance, as Mussolini had before the crisis broke out. The military forces he expected to command, and base himself upon, disappeared like water in sand. What was not retained by Mussolini's gang in the North and incorporated into the Axis divisions, simply went home, fed up completely with the war and leaping at the first opportunity to withdraw from it. The famous "army" that Badoglio and Victor Emmanuel were going to contribute to the great Allied "war for democracy," in which they blandly made themselves at home, simply failed to materialize.

The masses of the people did not rally to the support of the new régime, either. They did not do it in the South, which is weak industrially and backward politically, and they certainly did not do it in the North, the industrial heart of the

country and its most advanced section politically. The masses of the people had not made their superb and successful effort to fling Mussolini into the discard only to accept in its place Mussolini's general, Mussolini's King, and a mob of discredited fascist politicians and gunmen who set themselves up as the new government in every southern locality. They did not overturn Mussolini with the idea of "really getting into the war," but of getting out of it. They got neither the freedom, the peace, the republic, nor the end to starvation for which they yearned and still yearn.

The Anglo-American imperialists would have preferred to have Badoglio remain in power just as he was. Wherever possible and efficacious, they want just such a "strong man," that is, a hard-boiled reactionary who does not yield to the aspirations for freedom of the "mob." Darlan was no accident; Badoglio was no accident.

But Badoglio's régime proved inefficacious even from the standpoint of Washington and London. And that for two reasons. First, it showed itself incapable of winning even the passive support of the people in the south, in "liberated" Italy, because it could give them nothing except a slightly modified version of what they had in the old days. Second, it could not win the support of the people in the German-occupied North. The North is decisive for Italy, as indicated. The military progress of the Allies in Italy depends in considerable measure upon the "coöperation," so to speak, of the rebellious workers of the North. At the same time, the further North the Allies move, the more difficult the problem of dealing with the Italian population would become. The workers of the North could not be sold the idea of a Badoglio régime for even five minutes.

### A Little Face-Lifting

Hence the Allies, Moscow of course included, began a campaign to lift the face of the Badoglio régime, to give it a more popular aspect, to make it more acceptable to the people, both in the South and in the North. Here, as in nine-tenths of the cases which involve Allied political moves in Europe, they were dominated above all by fear of revolution. The campaign involved putting as much pressure as needed on Badoglio and Victor Emmanuel to accept a government reorganization that would include the "democratic" parties of the Committee, or Junta, of the "Six Parties"; and putting similar pressure on these parties, especially on the party of Count Sforza and the Socialist Party, to enter a Badoglio government without insisting upon the abolition of the monarchy or even the abdication of Victor Emmanuel.

The Allies were forced into this policy by the considerations mentioned above. The Badoglio government had to be "democratized" without running the risk of anything so upsetting as the overturn of the monarchy, in order to win the support of the masses without really giving them what they want and need. The government had to be "democratized" in order to trick the masses out of fighting for democratic rights and powers.

The "Six Parties," which are mostly bureaucratic committees without real organizational strength or following, were

reluctant to be pushed into this compromise. This was especially the case of the most important of them, the Sforza party and the Socialist Party, which does have some support among the people. Their reluctance was not due, despite their lofty declarations, to any noble principles. They are showing this by their present action. It was due to fear of compromising themselves too badly—and so early in the fight!—in the eyes of the people. They know the bitterness the people feel toward the monarchy; they know the hatred of the people toward Badoglio and the black gang of cut-throats supporting him. They were compelled, from the very beginning, to make the most highfalutin and indignant denunciations of the monarch and his Premier. They swore the most solemn oaths that they would never enter a government of so discredited a scoundrel as Badoglio, that they would take no part in a government that did not first receive the abdication of Mussolini's co-criminal, the King.

Never? Well, hardly ever! When the pressure grew, these fake democrats collapsed like a jack-knife. They burned all their solemn oaths, they threw all their grandiose principles down the drain, hoped against hope that everybody would forget their heroic speeches and articles and posturings, and went with hat in hand to visit the detestable Marshal in order to bargain with him about the jobs they would get in his new cabinet, formed with the blessings of the High Seats of Democracy, Washington, London and, last but not least, Moscow.

### **The Stalinist Rôle**

The filthy, the perfectly characteristic, rôle of the Stalin régime is especially noteworthy. The professional perjurers and bootlickers who edit the Stalinist press throughout the world had been shouting at the top of their bought-and-paid-for lung-power against the Badoglio régime for months. They clamored that it was reactionary; that it was hardly a hair's-breadth different from Mussolini's; that it represented nobody but a cabal of despots and criminals. They denounced and pleaded with Washington and London to cut loose from Badoglio.

Then, for his own good reasons, including the aim of breaking through the "freeze-out" policy practiced by AMG against Moscow in Italy, Stalin granted diplomatic recognition to the government that was reactionary and represented only a handful of despots and criminals. The Stalinist editors and press thereupon made one of their typical turnabout-faces, without so much as the flicker of an eyelash. They know what side their bread is buttered on.

The recognition of the Badoglio régime by Moscow was, however, only the first step. Stalin wants influence in Italy. His imperialist aims do not stop at the shores of the Mediterranean, but extend to the sea itself. Besides, he must always be on the spot to prevent any socialist revolution or revolutionary movement from rising to any strength—the beginning of the socialist victory in Europe means the end of the Stalinist tyranny in Russia.

To Naples, therefore, came one of the most despicable characters in the foreign machine of Moscow, Palmiro Tagliatti, alias Ercoli. Ercoli was for years one of the most unscrupulous tools of Stalin in the Communist International. This cold-blooded, cynical, corrupt flunkey stood by applauding while the best militants in the Italian communist movement—the genuine communist movement, not the present-day caricature of it—were driven from the party, or went sent to prison, or even executed. He cheered with the mob of bureaucrats when the flower of the Russian Revolution was framed

up in Russia and executed in the cellars of the GPU. He was just the man for Stalin's job in Italy.

His job in Italy was, first, to force the "Six Parties" to enter the Badoglio régime to give it a more palatable appearance. With Stalinist pressure on one side and Allied pressure on the other, the rest of the Six Parties capitulated.

It is of the highest interest to learn that the job demanded by the Stalinists in the new cabinet is the Ministry of the Interior. They may not get it, but that is what they want first. The Ministry of the Interior in Italy is in charge of . . . police and prisons. That is what the Stalinists want to control. That is how they have trained themselves and their representatives to deal with all dissenters—by police and prisons. Success in this field would mean that Stalin has sunk an entering wedge deep into Italy—the wedge of the GPU, this time a GPU clothed with the official authority and power of the Italian state.

But acting officially through the police of the government, or unofficially and in the dark, the knife of Stalinism is directed against the independence of the people, against their democratic and socialist strivings, against all those who represent these strivings to any serious degree—be it our comrades, the revolutionary Trotskyists of Italy, or the socialists who are not ready to take orders and a stipend from Moscow, or even ordinary democrats and liberals who will not do Stalin's dirty work. It is in the Stalinists that the Italian revolution will find its most sinister enemy, its most potent menace.

The first stage of the revolution in Italy could only give way to the present stage, the second. But the second is no more durable than the first. It must, in turn, give way to a new stage.

### **A New Staff to Come**

The very circumstances in which the new Badoglio régime—the "democratized" Badoglio régime—is coming into office clearly indicates that it can give the people little, if anything, more than did its predecessor. Will these "democratic" governors now try to recruit and mobilize the Italian people for a "more active" part in the war? But that is precisely what the harried masses, ruined by the war, do not want. Will it give them food, which is a burning question for the starving masses now? It is more than doubtful. The profiteers will continue their shameless profiteering, the masses will continue on the brink of exhaustion.

The profiteers, capitalists and princes will not be crushed by a gang of cowards who dared not even break completely with a zero like Badoglio—much less with that other master of food, AMG. Will it give them a republic? What the masses want now, these "democrats" will probably continue to promise them . . . in the future. Will it give them democratic rights, the genuine right of free press, free speech, free assembly, the right to vote for a government of their own, a National Constituent Assembly which will decide the government of Italy? Yes. . . . When? Tomorrow, always tomorrow, and never today. "After the war," they say. But the people want these rights now, and promises made by those who have already condemned themselves by their cynical violation of solemn promises are not a substitute.

The events leading up to the second stage of the Italian revolution that has just opened, emphasize what we and, we are glad to note, our Italian comrades whose first proclamation we printed recently, have said from the beginning. The people of Italy cannot expect to get their liberation from foreign imperialism, and they cannot expect it from the Stalin-

ists, the Sforza-Croce "democrats" or the right-wing socialists. The winning of their freedom is their own job, and it can be achieved only in the course of an independent struggle.

Real freedom, peace, security, abundance—these are not to be won short of the victory of socialism throughout Europe. The old Europe, the Europe of capitalism, can bring the people only what it has brought them, suffering, war, exploitation, despotism, national hatreds, poverty, weakness. There is not a single country of Europe that can solve its problem by itself. The problem of each of the countries is the problem of all of Europe, to be solved unitedly by the free nations and peoples of Europe, organized in a Socialist United States of Europe. There is no other road but leads to despair and ruin.

This does not mean that each country of Europe must wait until all the others are ready for revolution. One can start; the others will follow. For various reasons, it is Italy that has started. If it continues, the purifying fire will light in other lands.

### Struggle for Democratic Rights

In Italy, the developments have already showed the tremendous revolutionary significance and power, both from the standpoint of the masses of the people, and from the standpoint of revolutionary socialism, of the struggle for democratic rights. So far as the fascists are concerned, it is all clear. But especially so far as the "democratic" imperialists are concerned, and the totalitarian Stalinists, and the capitalist liberals and right-wing socialists as well—they all fear the exercise of democratic rights by the people. They want to do everything from above, without the masses "interfering," in the hope that this is an easier way to keep the masses in check.

All of them are afraid of what the masses will say about them if they have the unrestricted right of free speech. They fear what the masses will say and plan in their halls and do in the streets if they have the right of assembly. They fear what the masses will organize if they have the right to organize. If the strength of the masses were unleashed, they would not hesitate for a moment to step right into industry and the machinery of distribution and, disregarding the profit interests of capital, see to it that there is food for the people and food equitably shared. This is especially what the capitalist politicians fear. They fear the power of an independent and untrammelled press at the service of the masses.

They are afraid of elections, for then they must submit themselves to the suffrage and judgment of the masses, especially masses of people who are in a revolutionary frame of mind, who demand deeds and not only words, who demand that promises be taken off paper and carried out in life. They are therefore also afraid of calling for a National Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal suffrage to decide the government of Italy. They prefer to do that in the dark of the moon, by bureaucratic arrangements with Anglo-American imperialism, with Moscow, with the monarchists and the bankers—all behind the backs of the people.

Our Italian comrades, who are concentrating their efforts under the most difficult circumstances to build up a truly revolutionary socialist party, a party of the Fourth International, rightly point out to the workers of Italy that they must set themselves the goal of a Socialist United States of Europe.

At the same time, they call upon the workers to fight now for the democratic rights we have outlined above. They call not only for the right of free speech, free press and assembly, and the right to organize, but the right to vote and the convocation of a National Constituent Assembly. In this call, our

Italian comrades once more show that the revolutionary socialists do not merely talk about democracy and democratic rights, but are the most consistent and fearless fighters for it. They show that the fight for democracy for the masses of the people lies along the road of the fight for socialism and is best conducted under the leadership of revolutionary socialists.

Our comrades are not deceiving themselves, however, or the workers to whom they speak. They do not ask the workers to look to AMG for the realization of their legitimate demands. They do not tell them to expect it of the King, the bankers, the industrialists, the "ex-fascists" like Badoglio, or even from Sforza and his ilk. To the contrary, in their very first pronouncement, our Italian comrades warned the workers against such illusions. Their warning has already been more than amply justified, and the recent decision of the "Six Parties" serves to underscore it.

Our Italian comrades tell the workers that they must organize and fight for these rights, that they themselves must acquire these rights, including the calling of a National Constituent Assembly. To organize themselves most democratically and most effectively, the workers, soldiers and peasants of Italy, say our comrades, must organize their own councils. It is in such organization that the future of the Italian revolution is assured.

From our standpoint, the course recommended by our Italian comrades is not only thoroughly wise and correct, but corresponds perfectly to the needs and interests of the people of Italy.

### Meaning to American Labor

Are the events in Italy, its future, of concern only to the people of that country? No, to the people, especially to the workers, of the United States as well. We have a stake in the development of the revolution in Italy. For if it is defeated, that is a direct blow at us here, and reaction will know how to deliver it. If it is victorious, it is a victory for us, because labor will be as encouraged and emboldened as the capitalists will be upset and demoralized.

We have our duty to perform. It is a downright shame that our labor movement has kept silent while Anglo-American authorities are maintained as conquerors over the Italian people, while these "liberators" continue to deny the Italian people the most elementary democratic rights. We must raise our voices in protest against this disgraceful state of affairs and demand: "*Hands off the Italian people and their rights! Hands off the Italian Revolution!*"

There is much we can do, of a most concrete kind, for our Italian brothers. Labor must not be remiss in its duty. The freedom of a people is involved.

MAX SHACHTMAN.

### CORRECTION

A regrettable error was made in the printing of Leon Trotsky's article, "What is Leninism?" in the last issue. On page 78, it reads: "Leninism, on the other hand, seeks to pose and resolve the fundamental revolutionary problems, in creating an illusory appeasement, in lulling critical thought to sleep." It *should* read: "Leninism, on the other hand, seeks to pose and resolve the fundamental revolutionary problems, to overcome the principal obstacles; its demagogical counterpart consists in evading the problems, in creating an illusory appeasement, in lulling critical thought to sleep."

# Spain, 1936 – A Study in Soviets

## *An Analysis of a Civil War and Revolution*

Today the eyes of all revolutionary internationalists are turned toward the coming European revolution. In order to help us understand and anticipate more clearly the events that are looming up before us, I propose to look backward into the history of the little known chapter of the struggle for socialism, the Iberian revolution of July, 1936. We have studied again and again the Russian Revolution of October, 1917, as the classic example of the seizure of power by a proletarian vanguard party. We cannot learn all of the same lessons from Spain, but we can get a further insight into the potentialities of the soviet, or committee, form of state power, as well as a better understanding of the changed objective circumstances which made the Iberian revolution of 1936 from the first, *more profound and intense than the Russian in all that related to mass economic and political activity.*

In many respects there were very close parallels between the proletarian revolutions of 1917 and 1936. Spain and Russia were both gripped by profound economic crises rooted in their semi-feudal land systems. Both were agricultural economies based on a poverty-stricken peasantry. Capitalism had made little headway in Spain because of its inability to compete with the great industrial nations which had got into the field ahead of it; and because of the restricted internal market open to it. Spanish industry struggled along by supplementing the economies of the major powers. The Basque country produced steel and iron, the Asturias coal, and Catalonia textiles (300,000 textile workers were concentrated in that one province). Catalonia also had some light metallurgical and consumption-goods industry.

Neither in Spain nor Russia had the capitalists been able to wrest control of the state from the hands of the feudal aristocracy, linked as it was with the banking interests (native and foreign) who financed the agricultural holdings and operations. Hence industry suffered a continual hamstringing of its activities: no tariff protection, heavy taxes, lack of facilities, such as roads, power, etc. All these difficulties only worsened the condition of the proletariat, already underpaid because of their capitalism's unfavorable position on the world market (fifteen dollars a week was the wage of a skilled auto worker in Barcelona in 1936).

In Russia the situation was brought to a climax by World War I; in Spain, by the 1929 depression. These weak, semi-feudal economies could not stand any additional stress. The starving, long-suffering peasants stirred into action and peasant revolts began, supported by strikes of the city workers. They led to the overthrow of the Czar in February, 1917, and the abdication of King Alfonso in 1931. So began two social revolutions. Here the similarity stops.

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The *organizational* history of the class struggle in these two countries was vastly different. In Russia there was a socialist vanguard party oriented toward the establishment of a workers' state. After the initial anti-monarchist revolt that started the revolution, the Bolsheviks were able, thanks to the genius of Lenin, to take full advantage of subsequent political

developments. They won the support of the masses of workers and peasants, and removed state power from the shaky hands of the liberals and capitalists. This the Communist Party did in the eight months between February and October, 1917. There was no such party in Spain, and events took an entirely different turn, the most obvious feature of which was a lapse of five years before proletarian revolution succeeded bourgeois revolution.

### **The Indispensable Missing Factor**

The great weakness of the Iberian proletariat was its lack of a true Marxist party, and its division into two mass union organizations (the reformist socialists and the anarchists), *neither of which wanted to fight for workers' power.* The socialists controlled the UGT (General Workers Union) and the anarchists the CNT (National Confederation of Workers). The UGT practiced business unionism, collaboration with all the governmental agencies, etc., while the CNT was anarcho-syndicalist, always calling general strikes (with no strike benefits), minor insurrections, putsches and the like in anticipation of the general strike that was to inaugurate The Revolution. All of the proletariat was enrolled in one or the other of these organizations. Their numerical relation to one another (each had about one and a half million members) did not change appreciably between 1931 and 1936. Neither recruited from the other, nor did any third, Bolshevik, party appear to crystallize the discontent that existed within both of them. The long static period of labor politics is in strong contrast to the regroupings, splits, individual and mass defections from the reformist parties that Lenin fomented in the short interval between February and October.

The split in the labor movement, plus the lack of a revolutionary party, was responsible for the five years of indecisive class conflicts between 1931 and 1936, years in which the working class saw demonstrated again and again the inability of its leaders to mobilize its strength and strike a definitive blow for freedom. The peasants became disillusioned in the republic in this interval because it failed completely to improve their miserable situation. It did not divide the big estates among the peasants, nor did it give them easy access to that much coveted land as renters.

Agrarian resentment found expression in the victory of the Catholic-led reactionaries, the CEDA, in the 1933 elections. A tremendous leftward movement of the working class in defense of its economic organizations met this right-wing political victory. The strike wave of 1934 reached its climax in the Asturian revolt of October, when the miners of the North created active united front groups, seized all the power in their region, and commenced an attack on Oviedo, the capital of the province. Their Commune held out for fifteen days, and then was subdued by Moroccan troops and foreign legionnaires: neither the CNT nor the UGT came to its support. The UGT came out on a "peaceful general strike," but that was insufficient to keep the police and military detachments out of the Asturias. Indeed, only a well planned armed insurrection could have saved the first Spanish Commune. The

CNT boycotted even the mild efforts of the socialists to support the Asturians.

The most important feature about the Asturian Commune was this, *that once the masses overcame their division, they made an immediate bid for power, and simultaneously commenced a socialist economic transformation.* October was a dress rehearsal for July. In the interval between the fall of 1934 and the summer of 1936 there were still no significant shifts of influence within the labor movement, although there was a certain disgust among the Catalan vanguard toward the CNT for its ignominious rôle in the 1934 events. The few so-called Trotskyists on the scene were unable to make their ideas felt. (Most of the Fourth Internationalists, Nin, Andrade, Molins, entered the Maurin-led POUM, or Workers Party of Marxist Unity, which waged ineffective politics against the anarchist-controlled CNT. Another handful went into the SP and was not heard from again.)

However, despite their traditional organizational weakness, the revolutionary Iberian people continued to press for an improvement of their economic conditions. The fierce economic struggles forced the landowners and bankers into action, and the fascist revolt of Generals Franco, Sanjuro *et al.* was prepared. *It cannot be too strongly emphasized that this counter-revolutionary offensive of the owning class was possible only because of the complete lack of revolutionary political leadership in the proletarian camp,* a failure which kept the powerful movements of the masses limited to purely economic actions which had no future unless they were generalized into political action. In this case it was only too clear that Spanish politics was concentrated economics.

#### **A Spontaneous Revolution\***

The fascist counter-revolution was the blow that fused the divided Spanish proletariat into one revolutionary anti-fascist mass, which rose spontaneously in insurrection to prevent the success of the military coup. The Iberian proletariat showed, as has been shown before in other countries, that it was capable of basic, decisive political action without the leadership of a vanguard party. The workers' reaction to the open fascist attack had two important characteristics. First, their action was universal throughout the peninsula, and was everywhere identical in form: in all the principal cities, two days before the revolt was scheduled to come off, a general strike was declared, the workers took to the streets and armed themselves. This happened in Barcelona, Madrid, Malaga, Oviedo, Seville, Lerida, Gerona, Cartagena, as well as in hundreds of smaller towns and villages. Secondly, and equally important, in so doing the masses acted independently of, and in most cases *against* the will of their official leadership.

Both the UGT and CNT leaders opposed the masses coming into the streets to demonstrate—much less to rise in insurrection. In spite of the open secret of the rebellion scheduled for Sunday, July 19, the Madrid UGT—far from taking the logical step of calling a political general strike—tried to stop even the legitimate economic strike of the construction workers because of the troubled situation! *Claridad* (the official UGT daily paper) urged them not to respect the CNT picket lines, and to be sure to report for work on Monday, the 20th. On Saturday night, when the fascists had already seized power in Spanish Morocco, the Social-Democratic and Communist Parties called on the workers to strike *only where the fascists were already in power!* Where they had not yet succeeded, the

\*I have purposely used the much-debated term "spontaneous" because I feel that Spain is a true example of what it means. I would be interested to hear from any dissenters what the term does mean, if not what is described herein.

people were to leave all to the government—the same which had let the fascists arm and rise! What a monumental betrayal of their rôle as leaders of the proletariat! The strategy of the social-democratic leaders was a sure guarantee of defeat.

The July events had proved conclusively that there was only one virile class in Spain that could organize the anti-fascist war: the proletariat. And their method was that of uprooting fascism completely by overthrowing the system that breeds it. This the Spanish social-democrats could not tolerate for an instant, and fought relentlessly until the final victory of Franco.

The anarchists were not much better. In Barcelona, the workers started to arm on Friday. Saturday the left republican government of Catalonia\* called out the Civil Guards (national strike-breaking police) to disarm the unionists and raid their headquarters for arms. The top anarchist leaders, including Durruti, García Oliver, Ascaso, de Santillán, *urged their members to surrender their arms peaceably to the police,* since they considered a successful anti-fascist action impossible without the support of the bourgeois state, and the latter still denied the existence of the revolt. The thousands of CNT workers gathered outside their union hall refused to give up their precious guns and only a few hours later were using them in desperate battle against the fascist troops which had occupied the main buildings of the town.

Since the treachery and incompetence of the leaders of the mass labor organizations prevented an *organized* defense against the fascists, what *was* the nature of the popular action that stopped them? And who led it?

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The very nature of the fascist plans (which were broadcast through working-class neighborhoods by the telegraph and telephone workers) determined the first steps the people took. In every province the military governor was to march on the main cities, occupy the telephone exchanges, railway stations, public buildings and other strategic spots. When this news leaked out Friday, a general strike was declared by the *local industrial, or peasant, unions.* In the small towns and villages of Catalonia, Levant, Asturias, the Center and the South, *anti-fascist committees* were organized by the local unions and party branches. In many respects the small-scale actions in the rural areas were better organized than the mass action in the capitals, although the latter was in every sense of the word decisive. The local Revolutionary Committee (sometimes called the Popular Committee, or the Militia Committee, the Executive Committee, or just *el comité*) planned how to surround the town barracks and persuade the soldiers to come over to its side; it planned the blowing up of local bridges and highways if necessary; it arrested local fascists and occupied the strategic buildings in the vicinity. This pattern was universal in the smaller towns, where the Sunday revolt just failed to come off.

#### **Proletarian Initiative**

In the cities the apparatus of the big labor organizations concentrated there prevented such complete and centralized preparations for meeting the rebellion. Here the initiative was taken by *local industrial unions, factory committees, socialist or POUM party branches, and the FAI\*\* district de-*

\*The Generalidad of Catalonia was the pseudo-autonomous government allowed Catalonia by the Madrid government as a gesture to satisfy their nationalist aspirations. It had no police power prior to July 19 and little power to tax. It concentrated on administering libraries, museums and the like.

\*\*The FAI—the Anarchist Federation of Iberia—operated as a secret faction in the CNT, but did not completely control the latter's leading committees.

*fense committees* of the proletarian neighborhoods. Decisive battles were fought in Barcelona, Madrid, Malaga, Seville, Toledo and a few other cities. In Valencia and some other Southern towns, the fascists held back, waiting to see the outcome elsewhere. Barcelona, in whose vicinity was concentrated forty per cent of Spain's proletariat, was the Petrograd of the Iberian revolution. Madrid, the capital of the country, was the other decisive city.

This article is not an account of the development of the Spanish civil war; here we want only to examine the *nature and actions of the proletarian organs that launched the war by means of a social revolution*. Suffice it to say that the spontaneous rank and file actions of the first weeks cleared two-thirds of the Peninsula of fascists, and brought three-quarters of the population into the scope of their activities.

The Russian dual power of February-October, 1917, was also launched by the appearance of popular democratic organs, the soviets, whose historic rôle was identical with that of the Spanish committees. Both were the organs of power of the rising proletarian revolution. And, naturally, the fundamental differences in the character of the organized class struggle of the two countries found expression in these most democratic of all political forms.

The existence in Russia of a party consciously oriented toward a working-class seizure of power forced on the soviets continued discussion of basic political problems. It sharpened and clarified the positions of all the participating labor groups. The political agitation of the Bolsheviks, both in and out of the soviets, against their anti-working class majority, made the masses conscious of the rôle the new power could and should play; and kept continually before the people the problem of state power. The Bolsheviks were always pushing the soviets to the left.

(Some of the concrete actions that Lenin urged on the soviets are listed here as a yardstick for comparison with the accomplishments of the Spanish committees: workers' control of industry to stop the economic sabotage of the capitalists; unification and either state control or nationalization of the banks; abolition of commercial secrets; distribution of land to the peasants; regulation of consumption to equalize the war burden, by means of revolutionary democratic methods, such as compulsory organization into consumers' societies, labor duty for the rich, equal distribution of all consumption goods, popular supply committees of the poor to control the consumption of the rich, etc. These measures were not carried out in Russia until *after* the Bolshevik-controlled soviets seized state power.)

In Spain, where there was no such vanguard party, the development of the workers' committee, after they inaugurated dual power, was altogether different. Instead of becoming national policy-making and administrative bodies, they remained local united fronts of action. After September, they were not recognized by any of the working class parties. The very fact of their continued existence, after the numerous orders for their dissolution issued by their official leaders, was an accomplishment. The committees lived on because they were the only organizations on the scene with an intention of carrying out the extremely revolutionary will of the Spanish anti-fascists. They concentrated on resolving local economic and political problems and left untouched the ultimately decisive national problems of getting a coordinated state power, a unified army and carrying through a general planned economic and financial reorganization, beginning with the banks.

The local, factory and neighborhood committees carried

out on their own initiative economic and political reforms more drastic than those Lenin advocated in Russia. But because their revolution lacked just that planned approach to the basic problems that the Bolsheviks had supplied, the committees proved unable to consolidate their superior gains by the creation of a powerful workers' state to protect them. With this all-important weakness in mind, let us examine some of the things the committees did accomplish to see how far along the road to workers' power the spontaneous acts of a mid-twentieth century proletariat could take them.

### **Economic Power**

A few days after July 19 the local unions, municipal committees and factory committees began confiscating public services, hotels, apartments and office buildings, the transportation system, and all the principal industries. (Immediately prior to the rebellion they had begun seizing cars, food, guns, etc.) On July 30 the Barcelona Local Committee of the CNT had issued its famous order: "All denunciations from workers whose capitalists refuse to open their factories or other places of production should be presented to this federation, so that it can proceed to confiscation with precise legal formalities." Of course the *legality* of the confiscations actually depended on who won the dual power struggle, i.e., who got control of the state power. But that supremely important political question was universally ignored at the time. The expropriations continued in increasing numbers until September. By that time all of anti-fascist Spain's industry, commerce and agriculture had passed into the hands of committees of some variety. (Except for the Basque regions, where a powerful workers' control existed, a few small businesses and private land-holdings in Catalonia and Levant.)

In Russia the course of the economic revolution was vastly different. The private capitalists retained a large measure of control over their plants during the February-October period. They were able to lock out workers, disrupt the economy and exert political pressure by many other tricks. Only *after* the Bolsheviks seized state power and ended the dual power were heavy industry, transportation and the banking system nationalized.

Most of Spain's small capitalist class fled to France on the eve of the rising, as did the fascist land-owners. The petty industrialists who remained either assumed managerial posts in the confiscated industries or lost all contact with them and lived off their personal bank accounts, which, along with the banking system as a whole, were left untouched. Needless to say, the lack of a central plan for expropriating and reorganizing the economy led to a great variety of forms of "workers' ownership," which was what the workers confidently thought they were insuring. There was a sad lack of that "flood of decrees" with which Lenin was accused of deluging Russia in 1917: those same decrees would have instantly taken on a concrete socialist reality had they been promulgated from Barcelona or Madrid that summer of 1936.

The Spanish revolutionists were spared some of the trials that harassed the Russians. At least they had no struggle against individual capitalist and technical sabotage after the July revolt. The capitalists were gone, and the workers' control, reinforced by the proletariat in arms, was too powerful for the technicians to trifle with. But the Spanish workers' power met sabotage from the *state apparatus* in Madrid: a sabotage that was exercised in the realm of national and international finance and trade. The workers had the individual factories, and even industries, firmly under control: *their*

problems were posed at the initial stages of the dual power on a more advanced historical level than in Russia. Their main enemy, in the absence of the individual capitalists, was the state itself; nor did this make the struggle any easier—a point to be borne in mind by those who point to the “abdication” of the French capitalists as facilitating the coming European revolution.

The universal and spontaneous expropriation of Spain's social wealth by the very bottom strata of society was not limited to Catalonia, as is commonly and mistakenly supposed. All the major industries, including those dominated by the reformist UGT, were collectivized and put under workers' control. Outside of Catalonia, the railroads, metallurgical industry, construction, public services, maritime transport, mines and, most important of all, the land—all were expropriated by the toilers. Whether this property *remained* expropriated was a political question, but the masses had done all that could be asked of them.

Here again, in the question of the land, the basic economic problems were posed more sharply than in Russia: the further decay of capitalism in the nineteen years since 1917 had advanced popular *consciousness* of what is necessary to insure adequate production for all. It is significant that *collective* farming was the common form of organization of the expropriated land in Spain especially when we remember the long struggle of the Russian bolsheviks against the ever-present problem of the kulaks and the tragedy of the forced collectivization finally put through by Stalin. One reason for the immediate collectivization of the land in Spain was the experience of the landless share-croppers and agricultural day laborers as members of the UGT and CNT peasant unions. Another was the long Spanish tradition of village and communal coöperation. Still another was the improvement in transportation which enabled the proletarian revolutionists from the cities to penetrate all the agricultural regions with propaganda for collectivization.

Along with the mass expropriation of the means of production came the growth of a system of supply committees, which organized distribution on an equalitarian basis. The strong desire of the people to impose a labor duty on the rich became one of the main points of contention between the rank and file committees and the top labor leaders, who managed to prevent it. As was the case with all the other popular organisms cast up by the people, the supply and distribution committees were a spontaneous growth, and a surprise to the “official” labor leaders.

### Political Power

Inevitably, since the masses who carried out this social revolution were members of already existing labor organizations, the leaders of these organizations intervened in the revolution with disastrous results. That story we leave for another time. Here we limit ourselves to a brief record of what the workers were able to accomplish in spite of their misleaders. We will only sketch the main line of socialist and anarchist official policy because it is indispensable for an understanding of the subsequent political activities of the committees.

After their members disobeyed their orders by conducting a general strike, an armed insurrection, and finally a completely unauthorized expropriation of the expropriators, the labor leaders caught their breath and tried to regain control of the situation under the guise of centralizing and coördinating nationally what the masses had done on a regional and

local scale. Once again it was a case of elemental mass actions that left the self-styled “revolutionary leaders” far behind. Even the most radical party in Spain, the POUM, did not keep up with the proletariat. It was calling for economic concessions from the Generality while the workers were confiscating the factories and establishing dual power. It should have been raising slogans of “All Power to the Committees.”

For the aroused masses, arms in hand, had not stopped with the factory seizures: they took political steps to consolidate their control by erecting a powerful dual-power apparatus throughout the length and breadth of the land. They acted without knowing it on Lenin's dictum: *Without workers' power there can be no workers' control.* The revolutionary anti-fascist committees assumed full power in Catalonia and some degree of power in all the rest of anti-fascist Spain's towns and villages.

### Political Acts by Workers

The anti-fascist committees set up sub-committees of investigation and control, i.e., workers' police. Reliable militants from all groups worked together in these police corps, which resembled the Bolshevik Red Guard. Again with this difference: their control from the beginning of the dual power was more complete and unchallenged than in Russia. There were no instances of bourgeois or middle class crowds jeering or even assembling against the will of the Spanish workers' police. Just the opposite: these respectable elements in Spain tried to pass themselves off as anarchists, to buy or steal union cards off their domestic servants. They quit wearing ties, hats and their good suits in frantic efforts to pass through the vigilant street and building patrols of the proletariat.

Other political acts of the workers' power organs included seizure of the government buildings, barracks, railroad stations, post offices, customs, etc. They met no opposition, once the “so-called militarists” (as they contemptuously termed the fascists) were overcome. And who would dare oppose the victorious anti-fascists, who alone had put down the rebellion in most of Spain? In this respect they got off to a better psychological start in their relations with the middle class than did the Bolsheviks, who seized power after a relatively peaceful internal political struggle, marked only by the weak counter-revolutionary attempt of Kornilov.

The revolutionary rank and file authors of the fascist defeat followed their victory by an immediate clean-up of all military and reactionary circles. Popular tribunals of trade union militants administered swift justice to all known fascist and anti-labor elements. This revolutionary terror of the first weeks was not controlled—or desired—by the labor leadership.

The main function of these armed dual-power organs was to protect the economic conquests of the workers. *But once the fascists were gone and the revolution greeted enthusiastically by all, the armed workers were not at all sure whom they had to protect it against.* A Lenin or a Trotsky could have told them: against the state, that final repository of capitalist power, and against their own treacherous leadership. How incessantly Lenin put before the Russian masses the questions, Where is the power? and Where is the counter-revolution? Later on in the course of the dual power's development, the local committees began to realize where the counter-revolution lay, even though every political party on the scene tried to keep the knowledge from them.

From this brief description we can summarize the spontaneous revolution of July, 1936, thus: led by united fronts of local segments of the union and political organizations, fol-



lowing a period of mounting class tension and struggle, the Spanish proletariat rose in armed insurrection, against the orders of their top leadership, to meet the counter-revolutionary fascist blow. These united fronts organized themselves as anti-fascist or revolutionary committees, and *in the act* of putting down the revolt began the long-thwarted social revolution the people so ardently desired. During and immediately after the anti-fascist insurrection they expropriated all Spain's industry, and in the subsequent months (August, September, October) by intensifying and consolidating their economic and political power, the dispersed committees laid the groundwork for a democratic, mass-administered workers' state power throughout Spain.

Here was a classic example of how far the proletariat can go toward achieving its own emancipation. The trends implicit in other unsuccessful proletarian revolutions were given their fullest expression in Spain, and the result was a series of necessary but not sufficient steps toward securing workers' power. The masses showed that they had grasped the *general* historic truths of their epoch, and of their national situation. They understood the inability of Spain's bankrupt economy to support them; they realized that the dangerous and defini-

tive nature of Franco's counter-revolution was not to be trifled with (as their leaders were doing); and they saw the urgent necessity of *united* revolutionary action. But they could not achieve, untaught, the creation of a Bolshevik party.

Not only does this example of an unled, spontaneous and unsuccessful social revolution show us the limits of what may be expected from spontaneous efforts of the workers: it also defines for us once again the rôle of the Marxian vanguard party. As the dual power developed in Spain the tasks of the party stood out clearly. The local factory and revolutionary committees lacked that overall grasp of the internal and international political situation that only Marxist theory could supply. And they were completely disoriented about the rôle of their own leadership—although eventually, even without a party, they caught on to this. What was needed was a nationwide organization to bring together all the local political and economic initiatives according to a central plan for waging the civil war and developing the revolutionary economy. *This very plan would have been the best agitational weapon available against the anarchist, social-democratic and Stalinist misleaders.* (To be continued.)

MIRIAM GOULD

# Art of War – Ancient and Modern

## Prof. Earle's "Makers of Modern Strategy"

The publication of *Makers of Modern Strategy*, edited by Prof. Edward Mead Earle, of Princeton University, and lecturer at the Army War College, enables us to review briefly the ideas of the important military theoreticians whose influence has been decisive in this field. It also enables us to draw certain conclusions pertinent to the present World War.

The book is a series of essays by reputable authorities, ranging from Machiavelli's *Art of War*, Adam Smith, Clausewitz, Jomini, Mahan, Engels, Trotsky, Stalin, Ludendorf and Hitler to Japanese naval strategy. Comprehensive, well buttressed with notes and quotations, and with excellent bibliographical sources, these essays deserve study. For they are, above all, an accurate picture of capitalism at war.

Clausewitz's dictum, "War is a continuation of politics by other (i.e., forcible) means," is commonplace today. But his historic significance is generally unappreciated. His weighty influence on the war today is not understood. His particular influence and appreciation among the Marxian "greats," especially the "military" men of the Marxist movement, Engels and Trotsky, is likewise not thoroughly understood. This entire work brings out all these interesting facts. It reminds one again—and it is refreshing—of the important contributions to the understanding of war which Marx, Engels, Lenin (to a lesser extent) and Trotsky made. These are the judgments of serious students of military theory—not the journalistic outpourings of the Max Werner or George Fielding Eliot type.

Machiavelli's *Art of War* is generally recognized as the first modern classic on war. The author was the first modern military thinker. It is true that predecessors and contemporaries likewise sought to draw the lessons of ancient and feudal wars, but it took the genius of this shrewd politician and war-

rrior to summarize the conclusions of the newly-developing warfare, one which reflected his age, the age of mercantilism and the Renaissance. For his analysis of methods of war Machiavelli naturally went back to the Punic wars. He realized the difference between a general plan (strategy) and the technique of carrying it out (tactics). His sharpest ridicule was reserved for the feudal military system.

Machiavelli described the victory in the battle of Zagonara as one in which "none were killed excepting Lodovico degli Obizzi, and he together with two of his men were thrown from his horse and suffocated in the mud." Such was the military system of the flower of knighthood glorified in high school histories—a bankrupt régime with bankrupt military tactics. Machiavelli understood this to be the case. He emphasized the relationship between a war aim, the financial system of a state, and the strategy and tactics to be used in carrying out the general objective.

Of special interest was his disputed position on the rôle of artillery, an inevitable development from the discovery of gunpowder, and the rise of mercantilism, or embryo capitalism, which furnished sufficient wealth to make the employment of artillery possible. Just as with air power today, the contemporaries saw artillery, because of its devastating and, at that time, new effects, as THE weapon of war, replacing foot soldiers, etc. Machiavelli sought to put artillery in its proper place within the overall organization and method of an army.

### Foreseeing Modern Warfare

In crude form Machiavelli introduced many ideas which were rounded out and became the basis for the solid and decisive writings of Clausewitz. Vauban's writings on siege-

craft and the "science" of fortifications filled another gap in the understanding of battles and wars. Frederick the Great, a first-rate soldier, then came upon the scene with his *Principes généraux de la Guerre*, based on his own brilliant successes in the field. In the matter of discipline, organization, flexible tactics and strategy his work was outstanding. In the field of battle, in his time, and under the social conditions of the day, his work stands out as that of a genius. It led Napoleon (to repeat the worn-out story) to remark, when he visited the grave of the German King at Potsdam some fifty years later, "If you were here, I wouldn't be here."

The time was ripe for someone—a soldier with outstanding personal ability—to employ the totality of these advances in the fighting of wars and to make military history. When the French revolution broke the bonds of feudalism and created a new socio-economic structure to furnish a powerful, almost irresistible "home front" and an inspired soldiery, it was the hour of a Napoleon.

The French Revolution, once and for all, changed the basis of war. Under capitalism, war was a matter of the whole nation. The profound impact of the Napoleonic wars, coming after the French Revolution, set the stage and inevitably brought forth new schools of military thinkers. It laid the basis for modern warfare.

Two names are generally associated with the study and the conclusions drawn from the Napoleonic campaigns, Jomini and Clausewitz. Both were contemporaries of Napoleon, with Jomini being an unofficial "mouthpiece" of Napoleon. Clausewitz, the Prussian, living and studying in the army, had time and again felt the brunt of Napoleon's genius.

What Jomini and most military writers called principles of strategy are outlined briefly as follows:

1. Bringing by strategic measures the major part of an army's forces to bear successively upon the decisive areas of a theater of war and as far as possible upon the enemy's communications, without compromising one's own;
2. Maneuvering in such a manner as to engage one's major forces against only parts of those of an enemy;
3. Furthermore, in battle, by tactical maneuvers, bringing one's major forces to bear on the decisive area of the battlefield or on that part of the enemy lines which it is important to overwhelm;
4. Arranging matters in such fashion that these masses of men not only be brought to bear at the decisive place, but that they be put into action speedily and together, so that they may make "a simultaneous effort."

Of course, these essentially sound rules—for that's what strategic principles are—were developed and employed by Napoleon to the highest degree possible at that time (they did not, however, win the last battle, or the war). With some improvement, these "principles" are to be found in the field manuals today, be they Russian, German, American, or Japanese. Hannibal had used the right combination—the decisive element—of these rules to win the classic battle of the ancient world, Cannae. Jomini hoped to find the secret of success in method: strategy and tactics. Today Hitler and the German general staff can remind him that these are not enough. Foch and the other Allied generals blundered similarly in the First World War.

This dream, an almost inevitable one in the military mind, of finding the key to success in *method*, was exploded, above all, in the one war which has served as a model, along with the Napoleonic campaigns, for a study in strategy and tactics. This war was the American Civil War. Unquestionably

in all military matters—leadership, strategy and tactics—the chief representatives of the South, Generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, were far superior to anything the North produced. Victory was achieved elsewhere: in political aim and in the superiority of the social system of the North, combatting the decadent semi-feudal South. This is the lesson from the facts, from the theories expounded by Clausewitz and brilliantly exposed by Engels, with certain correction from Marx.

### Clausewitz and Engels

Clausewitz's basic theoretical views on the political interpretation of war (a significant contribution to military theory) are stated succinctly: "War is nothing else than a continuation of political transactions intermingled with different means. We say intermingled with different means in order to state at the same time that these political transactions are not stopped by the war itself, are not changed into something totally different but substantially continue, whatever the means applied may be. . . . How could it be otherwise? Do political relations between different peoples and governments cease when the exchange of diplomatic notes has ceased? Is not war only a different method of expressing their thoughts, different in writing and language? War admittedly has its own grammar, but not its own logic." State policy is "the womb in which war develops."

The bitter experience of every war, before and since these profound yet simple truths were written, has verified to the hilt this fundamental approach. Clausewitz brought a wealth of examples from exhaustive studies to illustrate his theory. Yet today there are many so-called military leaders, not to speak of countless civilians, who seek to "keep politics out of war."

Clausewitz understood the relationship between the means and the end. It is evident in his discussion of "wars of coalition." It is illustrated in his definition of strategy and tactics: "Tactics is the theory of the use of military forces in combat; strategy is the theory of the use of combats for the object of the war."

In writing on the advantages of defense (not to be confused with the theory that defensive warfare is advantageous over offensive warfare) he points out that these advantages are counterbalanced by a dialectic relationship.

It is with this comprehensive scope of thought that Clausewitz made his mark in military theory. His reputation rests solidly on that and not on the merits of the question of his interpretation of Napoleonic "principles" versus those of Jomini, or his "glorification of war."

Marx and Engels, in particular the latter, come next in line of original thinkers whose ideas added to an understanding of the nature of war and modern military theory. Many people know about Engels' articles on the American Civil War and the fact that Marx's timely corrections on evaluating the economic factors therein, helped "The General," as Engels was known, to write some of the most brilliant articles to appear on this struggle, both in its military and political phases.

Engels did more. His place in his contemporary society is indicated best by the fact that his articles on the Crimean war in the *New York Tribune* were attributed to General Winfield Scott, the Mexican war hero. His pamphlet, *Po and Rhine*, was considered to be the work of the Prussian, General Pfuell. His blistering criticism of the general staffs and their strategy stands on a plane by itself.

In his remarks on Clausewitz, he not only gives a sound judgment of the man's work, but settled, once and for all, we believe, the question of a "military science." Among other things, I am now reading Clausewitz's *On War*. A strange way of philosophizing, but very good on his subject. To the question whether war should be called an art or a science, the answer given is that war is most like trade. Fighting is to war what cash payment is to trade, for, however rarely it may be necessary for it actually to occur, everything is directed toward it, and eventually it must take place all the same and must be decisive. (The post-October Revolution dispute among the Red Army leaders centered around this issue, and we will refer to it again.)

Engels and Marx brought the best method of investigation yet devised, that of historical materialism, to the study of military theory. It enabled them to have a more rounded-out view of the war. It polished up the rough spots in Clausewitz. It added the decisive element of the class struggle as an integral factor in all military conflicts. It saw nations, not as "entities," but nations as reflections of capitalist society, thereby giving them a deeper insight into all the social and political forces which are reflected in war.

### Warfare and Decay Capitalism

Until the October Revolution, and the Nazi counter-revolution, little of significance was contributed to the theory of war or warfare. Moltke and Schlieffen were great craftsmen in their trade. They did a good job of building a military machine. But they were not theorists.

The French Revolution, as indicated, shattered, among other things, the military theory and practice of the day. New forms of organization, new tactical and strategical devices and a new appreciation of the "imponderables," especially of the morale of the army, were forthcoming. The sum total was an increase in mobility (as transportation developed, particularly railroads, this was further increased). A nation in arms inevitably developed. The October Revolution occurred, marking the end of this cycle of capitalist growth. Henceforth, stagnation is the rule.

The Red Army was born in struggle during this later epoch. For its organizational, technical and political basis a whole set of fundamentally new things existed. In particular, after the brief period of the civil war in Russia, a host of new technical factors were introduced into the problems of strategy and tactics. American ingenuity had developed, but did not fully utilize, among other things, such important inventions as the rifle with interchangeable parts, the machine gun, the balloon, the parachute, the plane, the first dive bomber and the submarine. Only the German and Russian armies took full advantage, in so far as their national economies permitted, of these significant technological advances in the methods of war.

The history of the Red Army is significant, for one thing, because it throws much light on the basic problems ever discussed by military theoreticians. In view of the veil of obscurity thrown over its early history, let us quote some of the significant statements made by Professor Earle.

"Seen in retrospect, Trotsky's work of organizing, supplying, officering and even personally commanding the Red Army is one of the outstanding achievements of modern military history," he points out.

"Leon Trotsky was the living refutation of Karl Kautsky's statement that warfare is not the strong point of the proletariat. Trotsky was the father of the Red Army, the organizer

of the victory during the civil war, and the author of much of the doctrine upon which Soviet military policy is founded."

### New Theories and the Red Army

Inevitably, after the victory of the Red Army, came the debate over the lessons of the civil war ("the small war was a big school," wrote Trotsky), the future form of the army, its rôle, its strategy and tactics. Interwoven with these questions were the emerging political disputes between the "Troika" (Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev) and Trotsky. Confining ourselves, as far as possible, to the "purely" military questions (as against the political and theoretical differences between Trotsky and the Troika, which utilized the dispute in its campaign against Trotsky), the basic question in military theory was whether a Marxian military theory existed. Trotsky demolished this view.

"The Marxist method is a method of historical and social science. There is no 'science' of war, and there never will be any. There are many sciences war is concerned with. But war itself is not a science; war is a practical art and skill. How could it be possible to shape principles of military art with the help of the Marxian method? It is as impossible as it is impossible to create a theory of architecture or to write a veterinary handbook with the help of Marxism." In saying this, Trotsky stood on the ground of Marx, Engels and of Clausewitz. The opposition, which included, to one degree or another, Frunze, Gussev, Voroshilov and Tukhachevsky, sought to develop both a doctrine and a special theory of "offensive."

### "The Military Opposition"

Earle indicates that Trotsky wrote objectively when he presented the position of the military opposition as follows: "The opposition tried to find some general theoretical formula for their stand. They insisted that a centralized army was a characteristic of a capitalist state; revolution had to blot out not only positional war, but a centralized army as well. The very essence of the revolution was its ability to move about, to deliver swift attacks, and to carry out maneuvers; its fighting force was embodied in a small, independent detachment made up of various arms; it was not bound to a base; in its operations it relied wholly on the support of a sympathetic populace; it could emerge freely in the enemy's rear." Of course, this is an idealization of guerrilla warfare.

One of the professors at the Red Army staff college put the matter this way: "For each war it is necessary to develop a special line of strategic behavior; each war represents a particular case, which calls for the establishments of its own peculiar logic. . . . In the broad framework of the general theory of contemporary warfare, dialectics permits a clearer characterization of the line of strategic conduct which should be chosen in a given instance than could be achieved even in a theory specially formed to cover that specific instance."

The question of a professional versus a militia type of army was another disputed point, with Tukhachevsky taking the independent position of being for a professional army and Trotsky remaining open-minded on the question (depending on political and military needs of the Soviet state). Events proved once again that elasticity in military thought, Trotsky's strongest point, conformed closer to the realities than any preconceived notions or dogmatic "principles." For the Soviet army combined features of both the professional and militia type of armies.

Many valuable books and documents on the military dispute in the Red Army are not available, so final judgment is not possible. This much is positive: The Red Army began

its career unhampered by the dead hand of the army bureaucracy of a decadent Czarist régime. Its program and teachings were in a state of flux and experimentation. Tukhachevsky, the dominating influence in military matters for a long time (basic field service manuals as late as 1936 bore his imprint and many of the present officers learned under his tutelage), sought to prepare the Russian army for this war. The only other army which did likewise was the German army. As a matter of fact, both armies learned much from each other.

Tukhachevsky's works were published in Germany, and German military thought was very influential in the Soviet Union. Under the secret provisions of the Treaty of Rappallo, "military coöperation" was practiced, under which Red Army officers studied in German military schools, and the German staff tested its theories in Russia, since the small German forces were hardly sufficient for that purpose.\*

"A word needs to be said, too," writes Prof. Earle in relation to the Russian armies' battles today against the Nazi forces, "about the exiled, discredited and murdered Trotsky. He had always warned against a dogmatic view of strategy, which sought to be all things for all occasions. He had advocated adaptability and elasticity as being more suited for a revolutionary society and more in accord with sound military principles. This has vindicated Trotsky's judgment."

Earle adds that he considers "Stalin a titan in his own right." Perhaps in a military sense? Many of the facts are obscured behind the screen of Russian censorship. A year ago a brilliant and devastating criticism of Stalin's strategy appeared in an unsigned but authoritative article in *Foreign Affairs*. We hope to return to this subject on some other occasion. For the purposes of this review, it is sufficient to note that nothing new in military theory or strategy was worked out (or claimed) by Stalin.

### Confusion of Bourgeois Leaders

To the dictum that truth is the first casualty of war should be added the corollary: military theories and reputations are the next casualties... at the cost of many lives. All the debates over questions like mass army versus mechanized army, professional army versus militia, blitzkrieg tactics as the "secret of success," the rôle of guerrilla warfare, planes versus ships, bombers versus fighters, are reduced to their proper proportions, and the experiences of war give the definitive reply.

Each nation is busy getting out as much of all types of military weapons as its socio-economic base, or its allied bases, can assure. Moderation in strategy and tactics, shifts in emphasis on this point or that point, experiments here and there, all testify to the basic fact that in changing conditions the search for an algebraic formula to fit all situations is as fruitless as wishing for a war "according to rules." The totality of war and the totality of the war machine embraces the entire socio-political life of the world to an extent not yet realized by most military leaders. The elementary notion in physics, "to each action there is an opposite and equal reaction," operates with surprising force in the field of war. New tactics

\*The Von Seeckt theory of a small "professional" army was primarily a rationalization of the conditions imposed on the Wehrmacht by the Versailles treaty. Hitler, with a better understanding of the politics of war than the German general staff, changed this and sought to obtain an army as large as possible, equipped as well as possible for the next war. The German army, like the Russian, adapted itself more readily to the new conditions of war imposed by the current technological developments. But Hitler, like so many others, erred fatally when he substituted streamlined tactics ("Blitzkrieg warfare") as his hope for victory, for a more rounded-out strategic concept. For the *Drang nach Osten*—a decisive strategical mistake—the Nazi army had long laid plans. For the counter-attack, the Russian army had been holding field maneuvers for over fifteen years.

by the Nazis—counter-tactics of the Russians; blitzkrieg-blitzgrind. In the air war, the same rule applies. One has only to follow the day-to-day reports of the bombing flights and fighter battles over Europe to see this.

Only one rather raucous school of "independent" thought remains, the "victory through airpower" advocates. It is another example of the "wish-is-father-to-the-thought" type of mentality which has always marked military circles. Like artillery warriors in the old days, the proponents of airpower have fought a long, hard battle to win recognition for this weapon. The story of General Mitchell is familiar to everyone in America. The conservative tendencies always present in bureaucratic armies resisted the development and use of this vital weapon. Exaggerated claims for the airplane were an inevitable reaction.

The war has shown already that the presupposition of "control of the air" is an illusion. Göring's dream was the first to be shattered on this score. Even the enormous difficulties of the historically unprecedented plan for the "second front" have not prevented the general staffs, on both sides, from coldly reckoning that only when land power is employed decisively against Germany, with the coöperation of sea and airpower, will a military conclusion to the war be possible.

Hanson W. Baldwin of the *New York Times* has been one of the few present-day military writers to stand on firm ground on this issue. These basic considerations are not altered by the sudden emphasis that Winston Churchill has given to the rôle of airpower. For he notes that the greatest air offensive ever imagined can serve only as the prelude to the invasion of Festung Europa.

### Political Obstacles Confront Bourgeoisie

Always in history there has been a dream of a small, professional, superior-armed force which could bring victory, for always has there existed a fear of the arming of the vast millions. So it is again today. Dieppe and Anzio stand out sharply in the minds of Churchill and others. And there is the fear of the reaction to terrific losses in a land invasion. The collapse of Italy brought a climax to the European phase of this war, but with Germany in a delicate balance between panic and defeat, the historic opportunity was inevitably muffed. For the nightmare of the revolt of the peoples in Europe loomed over the heads of the Allied statesmen. This was the *political* defeat of the war.

Hitler and his cohorts caught their breaths, and the war goes on. Those significant events of last autumn testified to the fact that in war aims, and therefore in strategy and tactics, the differences between the battling nations were one of degree at best, and not of principle. And the difference in degree was insufficient to bring decisive results. Fighting to preserve a world status quo is hardly an inspiring rallying point, in a changing world. The chief worry over bringing into play the underground forces in Europe is precisely the worry of bringing into action the masses of Europe in a fight for the control of their destinies. Therefore, the main hope of the United Nations rests in economic preponderance. Their hesitancy in hurling large forces against Festung Europa is rationalized as being a "concern over lives," when actually it is concern over the reaction to the loss of lives—something quite different. Pouring vast quantities of equipment into France, for example, would save lives, since a powerful force could arise from within Festung Europa at the right moment. But that again means arming the masses and possibly losing control over them.

In the American Civil War not only did the North have an economic preponderance, but it rested on a superior social order. Even then it took the lives of vast numbers of men. However, these could be justified in the sense that the war could truly be called progressive. Victory meant the destruction of an historically-outmoded social order, based on slavery.

The world statesmen and military leaders know the meaning of the paragraph on war which we quote from the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, published in 1935:

"The World War exhibited a capacity for progressive destructiveness that is felt as a warning to the ruling classes everywhere. Every country that participated in the war issued

from it burdened by a colossal debt and crushing taxes, currency disorders, a hectic economic life declining toward depression and chronic economic disorder. Every country discovered the foundations of civil order were less secure than had been assumed. Whether what is known as modern civilization could survive another war involving the great powers is regarded by most students of society as an open question."

There were neither victors nor losers in the First World War, as far as nations were concerned. Only the beacon light of October, and the threat of its repetition on a world scale, stopped the First World War. No evidence exists that there is any other way out of the Second World War.

WALTER JASON.

## A Totalitarian Fantasy - II

### Technocracy, Fascism, and the War

Just as the technocrats would claim to have nothing to do with economics, so also do they assert that the field of politics is equally "alien" to the "world of thought" of the technocrat. This does not mean that Howard Scott and his friends have no political ideas. Far from it.

The political idea which the technocrats return to most insistently is a thoroughgoing slashing attack on all *democratic* ideas and methods. Do not suppose that they are interested in revealing the fakery of the kind of capitalist "democracy" which we have now and exposing its pretensions to being democratic. Just the contrary: their complaint against the present set-up is that it is *too* democratic. Scott makes it perfectly clear that, when he repudiates democracy in principle, the more real the democracy, the worse it is as far as the technocrats are concerned.

Inherent in any "price system government," he writes, is "the grandiose nonsense that the collective multiplication of human opinion was the nearest possible approach to divine omniscience in the solution of all political problems." (*The Evolution of Society*, page 7.)

America can no longer control its national operation through the obsolete methods of political decision.... The national leaders of yesterday were but the reflectors of public opinion. If this nation continues very much longer under the nominal leadership of the present reflectors of public opinion, America will reach the end of this road in the swamp of mob hysteria.... Political liberty is a dead issue in America today. (Scott: *America Prepares for a Turn in the Road*.)

This and the scores of passages like it are familiar enough nowadays as translations from contemporary German. As an adaptation to circumstances, the Nazis based their anti-democratic propaganda on a mystic "Fuehrer-prinzip," while Scott bases his on "science." No one ever took a vote on the law of gravitation, reasons Scott like a precocious schoolboy; why should we rely on votes to tell us how to engineer society?

The law of gravitation deals with physical matter and with human beings as mere masses of molecules; social laws deal with human beings who are divided by class interests and antagonistic social needs. No matter; the prime principle of technocracy is that people are to be treated in the same way as the chemist deals with microbes, or the biologist with cattle. "The people, sir, are a great monster." When the peo-

ple give voice to their demands against their exploiters, that is "mob hysteria"; and when millions of workers demand a living wage, that is merely an "unscientific opinion."

#### Big Potato in a Small Sack

This technocratic "contribution" to man's thought—which is as ancient as the Pharaohs—does not end with society in general. It necessarily applies with full force to Technocracy, Inc., itself, which of course must also be run "scientifically."

Scott is technocracy's director-in-chief. The organization's by-laws define the functions of numerous officials and units in great detail but contain no reference to No. 1, any definition of his powers, or any provision for his selection. When Scott was asked how then he became the chief, he replied: "*I got here first.*" (*The Nation*, April 4, 1942.) Thus does our man on horseback rudely descend from the language of the scientist to the lingo of the gangster.

Scott's favorite scientific analysis of how Fuehrers come to be is the one about the potatoes:

Pretty soon, you will find all the little potatoes where they apparently want to be. The big ones are at the top, where they belong. That's the way it will be in technocracy." (*New York World-Telegram*, December 20, 1938.)

This principle of physics, of course, applies equally today, since the physical properties of potatoes have remained pretty much unchanged by the ages. The "big potatoes" who are on top today—the capitalist bosses, their political mouthpieces, the whip-wielding fascists—are all there by the grace of the law of gravitation. As scientist, Scott has nothing to complain about. As a small-potato gangster, however, he knows that he who gets there first had better watch out for the fellow who gets there next. Science is a wonderful thing.

The newly discovered potato principle applies not only to society and Scott, but also to the internal organization of the modern corporation, which our spud philosophers cite as a model of how technocratic society would be run. "None of our successfully operated industries today resort to democratic methods for the selection of managers and technicians," argues a technocrat in *America Must Show the Way*, and the workers in said industries, who are the ones successfully operated on, are supposed to applaud.

The *Technocracy Study Course* devotes a section to the running of a technocracy, and it goes about it by using the Bell Telephone Co. (notorious for under-paying its employees) as its model. The main point here is that all decisions, and particularly all selection, is by "appointment from above," which is given as the immutable principle of technocracy. It adds: "Judging from the number of human beings performing quietly within such organizations [as Bell Telephone, that is], it must also be in accordance with the biological nature of the human animal." (Strikes, grievance committees and labor demands in general are, of course, "unscientific" and biologically anomalous.)

### Techno-Autocracy

In a technocracy, as described in the organization's official textbook, each industrial and social function would have at its head a director, whose tenure is for life and whose powers are unlimited, subject only to the top council of all the directors which has appointed him in the first place. So it goes all the way down the line. At the head of the top council is the continental director. Here Scott's blueprinting faced the same difficulty with his rigid system of appointment-from-above that theologians come to with respect to the origin of God. A rotten compromise is the result: the continental director is actually elected... by the members of the top council only—but to counterbalance this unprincipled concession to democracy, he then becomes all-powerful. He can, however, be removed by a two-thirds vote of the top council—provided that the all-powerful continental dictator doesn't get wind of this unscientific opinion too soon.

The best that might be said of this brave new world ruled by a self-perpetuating élite is that it is another proposal for a benevolent despotism. Scott, however, would resent the "benevolent" part of this description as having nothing to do with the case. "Technocrats," he explains toughly, "are not filled with any love of humanity or influenced by any ethical idea, but are primarily concerned with function."

*Technocracy in Plain Terms* poses the question: "Will it [technocracy] be satisfactory to all concerned?" and answers (pages 8-9):

This question, as it involves the tastes, opinions, habits, emotions, idiosyncrasies, etc., of people, no two alike, is the hardest to deal with. But even the most hard-boiled and hardest to suit would probably come to like living under a Technate. At any rate it is quite possible that you would have to take it whether you liked it or not.

Then, with the nearest approach to the famous "strawberries and cream" gag ever made with completely humorless intentions, it continues: "The only way to avoid enjoying all these things... would be to commit suicide or leave the country permanently."

And you had better not ask: For whom?

**Get this fact firmly: Technocracy is not advocated because it may be desirable... For technocracy, the only test is: Will it function?**

Fanciful stories have been published describing the dark future in caricature as a straight-jacketed robot-like society of rigid, bureaucratized regimentation. It has remained for Howard Scott to adopt this caricatured horror as a program.

### In the Fascist Groove

Howard Scott—ex-engineer (without an engineering degree), ex-Greenwich Village habitué, ex-floor wax manufacturer, ex-graph and chart fancier—has smartened up a lot since 1933.

In those years, he posed for the newspapermen as the un-

recognized scholar-genius, looking up from his academic labors to let the world know what was the matter with it. Technocracy, he said, was not a movement; it was merely a research organization.

Scott's research, however, turned out to be on the latest-model fascist techniques. In 1939 the organization adopted a uniform: not a colored shirt, but (characteristic of the element it appealed to) a gray business suit with standardized accessories. Technocratic meetings use the gigantic backdrop effect, uniformed color guard, pomp and ritual worked out by the Nazis. The backdrop bears the organization symbol, the monad, upon it. Scott is "The Chief" to his followers (American translation of *Der Fuehrer*); he shows himself in public or at interviews flanked by uniformed guards, who salute him; the salute is used also as part of the ritual at technocratic meetings; the technocratic magazines refer to him in idolatrous terms and describe the "rapt" audiences at his meetings, where he has taken to injecting some manly cuss words into his talk as befits a hard man; his photographs show him doing his best to look grimly determined.

More distinctive even than these fascistic trappings is the fact that technocratic propaganda makes a systematic effort to appeal to as many rooted American prejudices as possible. Membership in Technocracy, Inc., is denied by their by-laws to "aliens and Asiatics," and Negroes are admitted if at all only on a Jim Crow basis. Nationalism, anti-foreignism and the cult of American superiority is as dominant a note in technocracy as the Aryan myth in Hitlerism.

### America Incommunicado

Technocracy, in Scott's doctrine, is for America and Americans only. All other peoples are "unsuited" for it, being on a lower technological level. The rest of the world can go hang. And indeed the rest of the world is doomed to go smash. But technocracy is to rope off America as an autarchic island of bliss and security in the midst of the world shambles.

"When European problems are solved, they will be solved by Europeans," writes Scott, professing no interest in the subject. Technocracy is not what is ordinarily called isolationism. It is *literal* isolationism carried through to every extreme implication of that term.

Scott's roping-off, however, is done with a large hand. He has the inevitable map showing the boundaries of the "American Technate." It is the North American Continent—but the lines are drawn far enough west to include most of the Pacific Ocean and far enough south to take in all of Central America and a northern slice of South America, as part of the Technocratic Empire.

This is not done because the darker-skinned peoples so included are considered "suitable," unlike the benighted Europeans. On the contrary, for some obscure reason, Scott reserves the bitterest vials of vituperation precisely for the South Americans.

"The South American nations are by language, culture and race fundamentally fascist in their program of social action," writes this quack "scientist" in his national magazine (*Technocracy*, Nos. A-19 and A-20), and he recurs to a denunciation of the Roosevelt "good neighbor" policy. This social, economic and political ignoramus presents this policy as if it were nothing but a soft-headed, idealistic attempt to bring sweetness and light to South America by taking the shirt off Uncle Sam's back for the unselfish uplifting of the poor natives—and he denounces it on this basis. The South Americans "do not respect us," he complains, because we are too

soft with them. "The only action from the Continent they will respect is that of force—force powerful enough to be utterly ruthless and so efficacious in the swiftness of its execution that it will brook no opposition." Speak loudly and carry a big stick with knobs on it.

"European culture and traditions have nothing of worthwhile importance to offer America," he writes in the *Introduction*, in the rampant chauvinist vein of a backwoods tub-thumping flag-waver—but we must exclude from this condemnation the contemporary Nazi "traditions" from which Scott has learned his "social engineering" ABC's.

This chauvinistic ranting is reactionary enough when directed against the world across the borders, but it becomes doubly vicious in its application within the United States.

Scott wishes to see all "alien cultural intrusions annihilated" in this country. A scientist (not a technocratic medicine-man) would point out that this fair country in particular is nothing if not a more or less integrated mosaic of "alien cultural intrusions." But Scott is reading his "science" from Alfred Rosenberg and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and comes out of it with the same "scientific" program as the Silver Shirts and the Knights of the White Camellia.

The current program of the technocrats demands that the government, "as a measure of national safety and national welfare, shall abolish all foreign-language periodical publications, foreign-language advertising and foreign-language radio programs for American consumption," together with "all foreign-language and hyphenated American organizations, associations and fraternal societies, regardless of whether they have been formed to promote political, commercial, cultural, educational, linguistic, artistic or other relationships."

### Technocrats and the War

A sketch of technocracy's political ideas, such as they are, must divide into two parts—before and after Pearl Harbor. On December 8, 1941, the technocrats made as neck-breaking a flip-flop as did the Communist Party after the Stalin-Hitler pact or the German invasion of Russia, and with even less rationalization. They did not even invoke a law of physics to explain the number of degrees of arc in their somersault.

Before Pearl Harbor, technocracy of course was completely isolationist, with strong pro-German overtones. A pamphlet by Scott, published soon after the war broke out in 1939, played the familiar lying tune:

Technocracy would like to point out that regardless of how we regard Herr Hitler and the Nazi régime of Germany, they are the embodiment of the expression of the will of the German people. (*Pax Americana*, page 11.)

Scott says the same for Stalin (then Hitler's partner) and also for Mussolini, and praises the increased efficiency brought about by their régimes (this for Scott being the highest meed of praise).

In the same pamphlet Scott makes one of his predictions—all of which, the reader may remember from Part I of this article, "are made with almost the same mathematical and scientific exactitude as astronomers' predictions of the next solar eclipse." This prediction is that Hitler's victory is inevitable:

The imperialism of a far-flung empire of trade will go down to defeat beneath the technological advance of a contiguous continental order. ... The handwriting is on the wall. (*Ibidem*, page 15.)

After Pearl Harbor, the vital difference between German fascism and American democracy became the fact that Ger-

man production is "chiefly by human toil and *handtools*," but before Pearl Harbor it was indeed the "technological advance" of Hitler's New Order which made the defeat of the decadent democracy a certainty! Technocratic science is flexible.

In those days, then, Scott and his technocrats were as "anti-war" as the Nazi Bund. The demagogic phrases rolled off his pen:

The idiocy of the propaganda that America has to stop Hitler in Germany. ... Those Americans who conspire to make war off this continent are guilty of continental treason. ... The Futility of Intervention. ... England expects every American to do his duty and die for dear old Britain. ...

The content of this fake anti-war agitation may be seen from the following passage, introduced by Scott as "Technocracy's Declaration":

Technocracy, Inc., is for Asiatics in Asia, Europeans in Europe, and is for America for Americans. Technocracy, Inc., is opposed to Americans participating in any war of any kind anywhere off this continent. ...

Technocracy has no objections to Europeans killing off Europeans. Technocracy has no objections to Asiatics eliminating their fellow Asiatics. Technocracy is opposed, however, to Asiatics and Europeans killing North Americans for any reason. When the people of other continents kill citizens of those continents in warfare, it is their business. ...

All men die and death is the end of life. ... Technocracy is opposed to the high cost and inconvenience of Americans dying en masse in a foreign country. Technocracy contends that Americans should die at home. It is cheaper, and it is preferable that the dead of America should rest only in America. They would never rest beneath the soil of an alien country. (*Pax Americana*, pages 7-13 passim.)

Enough. This master mind of technocracy, high priest of science, grand lama of technology, and author of several pamphlets claiming that the root of all political evil is democracy, after December 8 announced that the "American way of life" was at stake and that "freedom" must be preserved. Everything was swallowed from lend-lease to the Four Freedoms, and the technocratic magazines stopped quoting Charles A. Lindbergh. Scott placed the "entire research organization of technocracy" (non-existent) at the government's disposal and also let it be known that he was willing to assume the burden as the country's "director-general of defense."

Then in March, 1942, appeared the series of nation-wide advertisements in more than thirty newspapers launching the campaign for "Total conscription of men, machines, material and money" which became and remains the present stalking-horse of the technocrats.

### "Total Conscription"

This slogan was seized upon by the technocrats as perfectly suited to their needs. The bare slogan of total conscription is a catch-all into which quite different contents can be poured. It can be given the democratic content of a real equality of sacrifice through the expropriation of the capitalists' wealth to bear the war burden; or it can have the totalitarian meaning of a complete regimentation of society, and of labor in the first place.

Which of these two it means to technocracy should be clear enough from the foregoing. But the popular acceptance of the slogan expressed a deep desire of the people with which the technocrats attempt to conjure.

The technocrats' proposal has three planks:

1. Conscription of all men and women, 18 to 65, with all workers placed under a militarily-organized "technological command" coordinate with the Army and Navy.

2. "National direction" of all industrial and commercial facilities.

3. Suspension of all corporate and "ordinary" commercial operations, including the suspension of dividends, profits, taxes, etc.

Point 1 is clear enough. It has teeth in it. What does technocracy's touted "conscription of business and wealth" add up to, according to its own explanation in its pamphlet, *Total Conscription—Your Questions Answered*.

To begin with, an obeisance is made in the direction of ... "free enterprise"! This from the cynical Mr. Scott is only another indication of the new leaf they have turned over, and it is not the only similarity we shall find with the National Association of Manufacturers. "Free enterprise," they write, is "motivated by the highest patriotism"—sure enough, but the trouble with it is that it just isn't the most effective way to carry on the war. Conscription is necessary.

And what is this "conscription of industry" they propose? Is it nationalization of the war industries?

Not at all. The term "conscription" appears in sloganized statements, but it is explained to mean merely the "freezing" of corporate facilities for the duration of the war, and the "national direction" of them during that period. The private capitalists retain ownership. Six months after the war, all "conscripted" wealth reverts back to the pre-war status. No one's monetary wealth—in the form of bank deposits, for example—may be touched or used by the government; it too is "frozen," not taken over.

The government then is taking over "control" only of the industrial facilities—the factories, shipyards, mines, etc. *Who will run them?* The technocrats answer: they will continue to be run, "not under a political bureaucrat, but *under the operating heads of the industry itself.*"

The "conscripted" industries, then, are still owned by their capitalist masters, and are still run and operated by them—under a government coördinator. What the technocrats are proposing, even if we believe what they say, is *the same fake nationalization which the government announced over the mines and plants closed by strikes. It is the same set-up which the Wilson government in World War I introduced in the railroad industry. This was nothing more than an attempt to save the capitalist system from the worst effects of its anarchy and planlessness and to nurse it through its war crisis in order to insure its continued existence after the "emergency," with the incidental result of handing back to private exploiters a greatly strengthened and improved railroad industry.*

Would it be "different" under technocracy's proposal? Not possibly, since part of technocracy's proposal is that all this is proposed for action by the present dollar-a-year-man government of Franklin D. Roosevelt, "the Commander-in-Chief" (page 6). This requirement is made part of the plan, write the technocrats, who have poured out reams of words in scorn and vituperation of the Roosevelt régime, in order "to preserve national unity and stability."

Does Howard Scott really believe that through pressure or otherwise the Washington agency of big business, including its stooge Congress, will "conscript business and wealth" in any way as to eliminate the enrichment of the class in whose interests this war is being fought? Perish the thought. Scott has not become so soft-headed as a result of his Pearl Harbor flip-flop. The demagoguery of the entire plan and its slogan is only underlined.

## Threatening Words

The technocratic program is vehement enough in its protestations that it does *not* propose the elimination of the capitalist profit system or the expropriation of the capitalists' means of production and wealth. It is vehement enough in its denial of any democratic control by the working masses over the nation's resources. Vehement enough to make clear to its money masters and angels that there is nothing to be feared in its threatening words.

When it comes to the other half of the program—that which hits at labor—the technocrats' platform becomes more concrete and realistic. This is right up its alley.

There is no shilly-shallying with respect to what *labor* must give up. "Americans must inevitably surrender certain liberties for the duration of the war," we read in the program, and these principled opponents of democratic processes and popular freedom add: "in order that we may retain our greater liberties in the future," with tongue in cheek.

All species of "voluntary participation" must be replaced by "compulsory national service" (page 5) and "technocracy contends that such national service must become the *permanent* national duty of all Americans" (page 13)—except, of course, for the "conscription of business and wealth," which is *not* permanent but specified only for the duration.

Nor are the technocrats too vague about what liberties must be given up. Specifically included is "their right to collective bargaining," which "the people of America must freely [*sic*] surrender for the duration" (page 12). At the same time, the payment of all dues to trade unions is also particularly listed for suspension (page 8).

This then is the very modest proposal of Technocracy, Inc.—that the organized trade union movement be abolished ... "for the duration," as if after its disappearance from the scene, the trade unions could automatically snap back to pre-total conscription status, with the same facility as the railroads snapped back to their private corporations after World War II

Throughout the program, the twin evils which are bracketed together are "war profits, war wages," in the best style of the anti-labor demagogues, lumping the workers together with the war profiteers. Naturally nothing is said in this connection about the miserably illusory character of these "war wages" in the light of rising prices, the black market, taxes, compulsory deductions, etc. Indeed, while mentioning (elsewhere) that there is "price inflation," the technocratic program has only kind words for the OPA and the "gallant efforts" (page 11) of its business-man control.

## The Payoff—\$50 a Month

The solution? "*A national scale of pay.*"

And what is the scale? *All wages shall be no higher than that of the Army and Navy.*

Total conscription provides that all citizens shall serve on the same basis or scale of pay as the armed forces. ... The same scale of pay which applies to the armed forces will apply to civilians alike. ... *Technocracy takes the position that if it is good enough for the armed forces it is good enough for the rest of us!* (Page 13.)

IS \$50 a month good enough for the servicemen? That is not questioned. The idea is to tear wage standards down to the pittance allowed by the military machine—and then let the (non-existent) trade unions raise them back again when the returning soldiers put their overalls on again!

And so these graph-and-chart experts, who have made such a hullabaloo about proving over again the socialist contention



that this country is rich enough to provide plenty for all, who used to promise a technocratic paradise of equal compensation of \$5,000 a year and over—now entice us with “compulsory national service” and \$50 a month, with the well known Rickenbacker chatter about the foxholes!

This then is the technocratic program of “totalitarian conscription”:

—A fake “conscription of wealth” by the same political fakers who are busy fooling some of the people some of the time today;

—The present exploiting system to be maintained in the interests of “national unity”;

—The destruction of the trade union movement;

—Tearing wage standards down to the “national scale of pay” now doled out to the Army and Navy.

### The Political Perspective of Technocracy

An attractive picture, is it not? As attractive as the technocratic prison-world painted by Howard Scott, to which it is a none too subtle approach. The two pictures have something else in common. Both express, in its most *reactionary* form, the desperate cry for security of the small middle class seeking to wrench itself free from the crushing control of big capital above by trampling on the working class below. Technocracy—as delineated by the planned direction of its propaganda appeals as well as by the composition of its membership, confirmed by the nature of its expressed program—is one of the most conscious and explicit political movements of the middle class in the United States. Once again, it is identical in this respect with the Hitler movement under the German republic.

But as in Hitler's case, demagogic success in mobilizing middle-class discontent and disorientation only produces a more suitable candidate for the rôle of tool of big business, by securing a mass following which the lords of finance cannot gain on the basis of their own naked program. And Howard Scott himself is under no illusions as to his own class rôle.

Scott—who rejects the ballot, or any other form of expression of the popular will, as the means of instituting technocracy—clearly expects to be “authorized” to step in and “take over” by the present masters. This is the meaning of his cautiously worded statement in his *Introduction to Technocracy*:

Around us we hear the rumbling of discontent that voices itself in Marxian philosophies... Bolshevism, communism, fascism and democracy are utterly impotent to deal with the advanced technological situation in which we, of the North American continent, find ourselves placed. *None of these systems of thought and action will be given the mandate when the present system fails to function.* (Page 27.)

“Given the mandate”... by whom? The expression recurs in the only other passage in technocratic literature which says anything illuminating on their ideas of how technocracy is to come about. (In general, this interesting question is most intensively ignored.)

Technocracy, Inc., may take political action, but it would only do so when the organization is sufficiently trained, disciplined and widespread to permit the simultaneous execution of that action in all parts of one of this continent's principal national entities. If Technocracy, Inc., takes political action it will be the last political action, as such action would be taken solely for the abolition of the price system and its accompanying political administration, and the transition into the functional mechanism of a technate.

At this stage, therefore, the objectives of Technocracy, Inc., are, first, the education of the people of North America to a realization of the conditions behind the social crisis and, second, the organization of all those willing to investigate and interest themselves into an informed, disci-

plined and functionally capable body whose knowledge and ability can be called upon to prevent chaos in North America at the time, now imminent, when the price system can no longer be made to operate. (Back cover of *Introduction*.)

Meanwhile technocracy does not believe in “trying to make present conditions any better, or to obtain any concessions...” (*Technocracy in Plain Terms*, page 17.)

That technocracy does not want “to make present conditions any better” we can enthusiastically accept as the truth in understatement, after reading its program for totalitarian conscription. What Scott is aiming at, however, is the same promise of a cataclysmic change which Hitler used to capture the imagination of people fed up with compromise and half-measures.

There is no doubt that the heart of technocracy's appeal lies in its pseudo-socialism, its “black socialism,” its promise of a “scientific” collectivism—if only the people will kneel to an uncontrolled bureaucracy. The gulf between this proposal for a national bureaucratic collectivism on the one hand and proletarian socialism on the other, is clear today. It was clear to Gene Debs, who defined socialism as “government ownership of industry, *plus people's ownership of government.*”

There is a common characteristic of the demagogues who take the name or ideas of socialism in vain—from the Stalin Communists who palm off the Russian bureaucratic prison-world as “socialism,” to the Hitlers and Scotts, who promise to hand down plenty and security to the people on condition that they be first gagged and bound. It is the common thesis that on no account must the masses of working people take their fate into their *own* hands, achieve their emancipation by their *own* power, guarantee their freedom and abundance by their *own* independent self-activity, and set up a government under their *own* control.

But without this condition, pseudo-socialist phrases are fascist demagogy, just as without it Stalin's state control over industry is bureaucratic tyranny. Socialist plenty for all requires the democratic masses in control of their state, a workers' government. This is the gulf between the technocratic nightmare and the socialist commonwealth.

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# In Stalin's Prisons - IV

## A Record of Terrorism and Oppression

[Continued from last issue]

But let us return to our subject.

The two other categories of condemned to whom the title of "political" is denied are that of the "religious" and that of the national oppositions. The "religious" include priests, active members of religious communities, votaries of all kinds. There were a good hundred thousand of them during the Five-Year Plan, perhaps even several hundred thousand, for they were often deported on pretexts other than religion.

It must not be forgotten that there are three organized social forces in Russia today: (1) the communist bureaucracy, which has the state, the military apparatus and the so-called workers' organizations at its disposal; (2) the "ITR" or "engineering and technical workers," in other words, the autonomous corporative sections which take in the non-party intellectuals; (3) the church and the sects. As for the workers and peasants, they have no free and independent organization of their own. Once this is said, the importance of the church in the social struggle will be easily understood. I have already mentioned above the efforts that Stalin exerts to assure himself of the secret collaboration of the Orthodox Church.\* The "engineers," when they were still anticipating the fall of the Stalinist régime, did likewise. One of the heads of the Orthodox Church, who belonged to the new generation, had served in the ranks of the Red Army in 1919 and had just missed, by his own admission, joining the Communist Party, told me in exile that one of the intimates of Professor Kondriatev had tried to approach him in order to feel out the ecclesiastical terrain. "He failed, because we have no intention whatsoever of putting the church at the service of any possible restoration of the bourgeoisie."

The same cleric narrated an interesting episode of the struggle that the church had to undergo in Moscow. During the Five-Year Plan, the church, in order to answer the suddenly augmented persecutions, mobilized all the faithful for prayers that lasted whole days and brought together an impressive mass of believers. The authorities understood the meaning of this peaceful manifestation and held back from the persecutions. Immediately, the church called off the mass services to return to the regular, less ostentatious, services.

### A Catastrophe for the People

The Five-Year Plan was a national catastrophe for a certain number of the retarded peoples of the USSR: for the Bashkirs, the Kirghis, etc., and brought to the brink of the abyss the peasant peoples: the Ukrainians, the White Russians, the Azerbaidjan Turks. The most celebrated of the protests against this catastrophe was the suicide of the head of the Ukrainian communists, Skrypnik, an Old Bolshevik and founder of the Comintern. But there were also collective protests. Whole groups of democrats, socialists and communists belonging to these nationalities dared question openly the official policy of the All-Russian party. All these groups were crushed and deported, certain of their members were

\*This was written in 1937, before the régime proclaimed that "complete freedom of religion" and of the Russian Church which barely concealed the incorporation of this ecclesiastical machine into the ruling bureaucracy itself and into its police service.—Translator.

shot. The condemned demanded that they be accorded the treatment of political prisoners, but the GPU refused and would not yield even to hunger strikes, which sometimes ended with fatal results.

The avowed counter-revolutionists and the monarchists—few in number, by the way—did not of course enjoy the privileges of political prisoners. Those among them who had shown any activity were shot without mercy, their "sympathizers" were condemned on all sorts of pretexts. From 1928 to 1934, at least a million persons were sent to concentration camps or into exile, accused of speculation, of illicit trade, etc. They were above all handicraftsmen, small traders—the whole petty bourgeoisie, in a word. But there were among them also workers, peasants, employees, especially employees of the coöperatives and of the state commercial enterprises.

In the Verkhne-Uralsk prison, we tried on various occasions to calculate the number of people turned over to the despotism of the GPU. Our estimates were very approximate. At the end of 1932, a recently-arrived Trotskyist told us that, according to an important official of the GPU, sentenced for a mistake in the conduct of his office, the number of arrests, the statistics of the GPU showed, reached the figure of 37,000,000 for the period of the last five years. Even admitting that a good part of those detained had been arrested several times in succession, the figure appeared to us to be incredibly exaggerated. Our own estimates varied from five to fifteen millions. I must add that when I was set free and found myself exiled in Siberia, I was able to observe the exactitude of many of the affirmations that had seemed exaggerated and fantastic to me in prison. It was thus that I was able to verify the exactitude of what was said about the horrors of the famine of 1932, including the cases of cannibalism. After what I was able to see in Siberia, I consider the figure of five million condemned to be much too small; the figure of ten million comes closer to the reality.

Westerners [of Europe], accustomed to relatively small territories, to dense populations and stable economic structures, will find it hard to believe that such a human mass can be deported so rapidly. The vast spaces of Russia do not appear to be explanation enough. It is by observing with your own eyes the tumultuous ocean of Russia in the time of the Five-Year Plan that you begin to conceive that these forced migrations are possible, that they are even in harmony with the events. The gigantic accomplishments of the Five-Year Plan were the work of slave labor. The situation of the theoretically free workers was no different essentially from that of workers who were not free. What was different was the degree of enslavement.

### Slave Labor

Millions of exiles worked all over the country, but above all in the remote regions of the North, which were colonized for the first time, crushed by the harshest privations, which they would never have accepted freely. Not only were they exploited, but they were exploited in the most total fashion, without regard for the "human capital" they represented. From 1929 to 1934, the average lifespan of most of the exiles

in the extreme North did not exceed one or two years. But if the exiles died, what they built remained standing.

Imagine a territory 10,000 kilometers [approximately 6,213 miles] long by 500 to 2,000 kilometers wide, from Solovki and the Baltic Canal to the White Sea up to the coast of the Pacific Ocean and down to Kamchatka and Vladivostok. This territory, as well as all of Central Asia, is sown at every crossroads with concentration camps and "labor colonies" (that is what the camps assigned to specific labors are called), as well as with compulsory exile centers. Out of every two or three persons you cross in the street in Siberia, meet in an office, in the factory, at the "Sovkhoz," there is one exile.

The colonization of the North is certainly a work of world importance, but its methods recall the colonizations of old, in America and elsewhere; it is mainly the work of slave laborers. The lumber industry of North Russia and Siberia employs slave labor, the gold mines employ it in large part. The same with the coal mines of Kuznetsk and Karagand. The copper industry of Balmash, the electrical plants of Central Asia, are the work of prisoners in the "labor colonies." Even in the Ukraine, the agricultural tractor plant was built in part by slave labor. In the heart of European Russia, the digging of the Moscow-Volga Canal is done with the aid of slaves. As for the enormous military and economic development of the Far East, with its railroads, its automobile highways, its line of fortification all along the Manchurian frontier, that is the work of an immense, constantly renewed, army of condemned men. I think it is not exaggerated to claim that a third of the working class in Russia is composed of slaves. This subjugated labor, barely paid, makes it easier to keep the wages of the theoretically free workers at a very low rate.

That is the real foundation of the economic victories of the Soviets, that is the secret of the "miracle" of the technical revolution effected by the first Five-Year Plan. The working class of Europe and America has the duty of obtaining the emancipation of these millions of workers and enslaved in the USSR. . . .

\* \* \*

The decisive date in the history of political repression in the USSR, as I have already said, is the establishment of the NEP in 1921. Beginning with this date, no opposition was any longer tolerated out of principle and the treatment of prisoners went from bad to worse. Previously, the intensity of the repression varied constantly and the existence of certain parties was tolerated. The socialists and the anarchists participated in the Congresses of the Soviets and succeeded in publishing certain of their books and their periodicals. The dates when this tolerance toward the socialists and the anarchists was most marked are very interesting to recall: November, 1918, when the revolution in Germany seemed to open the perspective of a European revolution in a short time; October, 1919, when General Denikin camped under the walls of Orel; the summer of 1920, the Polono-Soviet war. When Denikin was approaching Moscow, the Bolshevik government granted complete freedom to the socialists and the anarchists, allied itself with Makhno's irregulars and allowed the mobilization of Mensheviks into the Red Army.

But by April, 1924, the promise to free the social-democrats imprisoned in Butirky, for the purposes of the elections to the Moscow Soviet, was violated; after they were beaten in an inhuman manner, they were transferred to provincial prisons. It is at this time that the first cases of outrages committed against women imprisoned for political reasons took place: a year later, they began beating socialists for the first time in the

prison of Yaroslavl. The same year, 1922, saw the establishment of the first concentration camp at Kholmogori, on the White Sea, where a group of anarchists was sent.

At the beginning of 1923, this camp was transferred to Peretominsk, and various groups of socialists were interned there. The régime of this camp was so humiliating that on May 22 the anarchists tried to commit suicide in a group as a protest. After sprinkling themselves with oil, they tried to put fire to it, which the socialists prevented them from doing only with the greatest difficulty. Then five hundred prisoners declared a hunger strike that lasted seventeen days. The GPU promised to free them, to transfer them to the Solovki Islands and to set up there a sort of "Northern paradise" for political prisoners. The promise was kept in July, but the "paradise" proved to be a veritable Guiana. The GPU tried to take the last liberty from the prisoners, that of circulating inside the camp. The prisoners having protested, the camp director, on December 19, 1923, sent armed guards, who beat them while they were walking peacefully in front of their barracks. Seven prisoners—two or three of them women—were killed on the spot, others were wounded. An inquiry commission coming from Moscow led to nothing. It was only in the autumn of 1924 that the Solovki concentration camp was temporarily abolished, following a new hunger strike and above all following a big protest campaign conducted by the Second International in Western Europe. As for the prisoners, they were transferred to prison or to exile on the continent.

#### The Five Isolators

After the drama of Solovki, five "political isolators" were organized: at Suzdal, Yaroslavl, Tobolsk, Chalyakinsk and Verkhne-Uralsk.

The one at Suzdal is located in the old and famous convent of the same name, near Moscow. That is where the trial of the Mensheviks was "rehearsed" before the final staging in Moscow. During the Five-Year Plan, thirty to forty Trotskyists were interned there, including Lado Dumbadze, former chairman of the Tiflis Soviet, Karpov, former head of the Cheka of the Caucasus, Volkov, the son-in-law of Trotsky, not counting the leader of the "Decists," V. M. Smirnov. This Smirnov, at the head of an artillery group, had dislodged from the Kremlin, in October, 1917, the student-officers who had entrenched themselves in it. He had been the head of the "military opposition" of 1919 against the bureaucratization of the Red Army by Trotsky. In 1935, Smirnov, having served his sentence, was able to live two months "at liberty," that is, in exile at Ulala, near the Chinese frontier; but immediately afterward, he was arrested and sent back to the Suzdal Isolator. . . .

After the killing of Kirov, the doors of this prison closed behind three foreigners, Zinovievists of distinction: the Hungarian, A. Magyar, a collaborator of the magazine, *The Communist International*; the Pole, Domsky, one of the leaders of the Communist Party of Poland, and the Yugoslav, Vuyo Vuyovich, former secretary of the Communist Youth International.

The Isolator at Yaroslavl occupies an old fortress, transformed into a prison before the revolution. It is the worst of the penitentiaries. Three categories of condemned are interned there: the "religious," the politicals, the "solitary confinement" prisoners.

The "religious" are the most numerous. This is the prison especially assigned to them. The Orthodox bishops, the heads of the sects, the Catholic priests from the western fron-

tiers of the USSR are imprisoned there. The sister of Professor Abrikosov, a theosophist, was there for ten years. She was released only when she was dying. There are a hundred political prisoners in Yaroslavl: Zionists, social-revolutionists, social-democrats, oppositional communists, anarchists. During the Five-Year Plan, three members of the Political Bureau of the Hungarian Communist Party were also put there; even though they were supporters of the "general line" in the USSR and in the Comintern, they were opponents of Bela Kun in their own party.

A part of the Yaroslavl prison is strictly isolated and designed for persons "in solitary confinement." They are the ones the GPU wants to "bury alive." They cannot communicate either with each other or with the outside world. Some information has nevertheless filtered out about a few of these unfortunates. The name of the socialist-revolutionist, Volkenstein, former scientific collaborator of the Military Academy, who spent five years here and partly lost her speech, has been mentioned. Another unfortunate is supposed to have been heard crying out: "Tell the Ambassador of Persia in Moscow that I am the Persian Professor Mirza and that I am wrongly accused of espionage!"

### The Case of Mallet

Another particularly tragic case is that of the French radical-socialist, Mallet. Here is his story. He was attached to the embassy of France at Sofia. During the terror that followed the *coup d'état* of Tsankov in 1923, the revolt of September, 1923, and the explosion of the Sofia cathedral in 1925, the Ambassador of France endeavored, as is known, to mitigate the fate of the victims of the terror directed against the Peasant Party and against the communists. Returning to France, Mallet, who had become deeply interested in these efforts, established relations with the MOPR [Labor Defense]. He delivered lectures on the terror in Bulgaria and appeared at meetings of the MOPR. This organization sent him to Russia, where he made a lecture tour. He was so confident that he even had his mother come to the USSR.

Suddenly, they demanded of him that he "testify" that the explosion in the Sofia cathedral was the work of the French authorities. . . . Mallet refused indignantly. The GPU had his mother arrested and he was warned that the fate of both of them depended upon his "confession." Mallet sturdily refused. He was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment in Solovki. He was refused any information on the fate of his mother. But Mallet did not act like a vanquished man; he started a hunger strike and demanded his liberation. Then—he was already weakened and sick—he was put "in solitary confinement" in Yaroslavl. Thanks to his tenacity and a stroke of good luck, he was able, in 1931-32, to inform some other prisoners about his fate.

To understand the Mallet case, it should be known that in this period the Soviet government was accusing its victims (especially at the trial of the "Industrial Party") of preparing armed intervention from abroad in connivance with the French general staff. But for the courage and honesty of Mallet, which probably cost him his life, the world would have "learned" that the Sofia explosion was the work of the police and the French general staff.

The Tobolsk Isolator is none other than the notorious house of correction of the days of the Czars. Dostoyevsky was interned there and described it in his *House of the Dead*.

In the Chelyabinsk Isolator, as in the preceding, it was the Trotskyist prisoners who predominated in 1928-29. The crisis

of the "capitulations" freed about half of them; the others, who did not decide to capitulate, were transferred to the prison of Verkhne-Uralsk.

The crisis split not only the Trotskyist opposition along a line of political demarcation, but also according to the age of the imprisoned. It was the old generation that capitulated, exhausted by the struggle and more attached to the past than to the future. Budi Mdivani, former trade representative of the Soviets in Paris—recently shot for treason!—expressed very well the thought of the "oldsters": "I belong to the Opposition, of course. But if things come to the point of a conclusive break with the Communist Party, I will go back to the party I contributed to creating. I no longer have the strength to begin creating a new party." And it was true: the generation of the Russian revolutionists of 1900, who had made two revolutions, undergone the blows of three reactions, and seen the sinking of two Internationals, were worn to the bone.

### Prison Administration

The members of the Communist Opposition, transferred in 1928 to Verkhne-Uralsk, promptly had quarrels with the administration. The GPU, in order to inculcate into them that they were nothing but common "counter-revolutionists," replied to their demands with beatings and showers administered by fire hose. Then these unfortunates, beaten and drenched, were left to lie for three days on the icy cement, without being fed and even without being allowed to go to the toilet. In February, 1930—that is, in the heart of winter—the case was repeated; many prisoners fell ill; one of them—Andrey Grayev—completely lost his sight.

Inspectors and jailors were recruited then at Verkhne-Uralsk from among the local Cossack population; they mistreated this first group of communists who fell into their hands with visible relish. This was all the more the case because there were many Jews among them. These Cossack inspectors did not constrain themselves and dealt with the prisoners they beat up as "dirty Kikes." The latter returned insult for insult and ended by asking the Cossacks: "You dirty bandits, wouldn't you be beating Stalin himself if he were brought to you?" To which the Cossacks replied in chorus: "Certainly, if we were given the order." This enabled the communist prisoners to send a proper protest to the Central Committee of the party and the supreme authorities of the GPU. Some time later, the Cossacks were removed and replaced by well-behaved Chekists who came from Moscow and were in part of working-class origin.

The GPU liked to boast of the proletarian origin of its myrmidons. One day, at the Tobolsk prison, an inquiry commission replied to the prisoners who complained of being mistreated: "Our inspectors are not hangmen, they are sons of workers and peasants." But a socialist-revolutionist, a former hard-labor prisoner from the days of the Czar, retorted, not without humor: "You are mistaken if you think that in the Czar's days the jailors were recruited from dukes and the hangmen from princes."

In addition, the GPU liked on occasion to picture its quarrels with the opposition as a communist "family broil." When socialists and anarchists protested to Prison Director Bizyukov against the cruelties inflicted upon the Opposition communists, he replied: "You are wrong to mix into an internal party affair which is none of your business."

But there is something even better: there were some mistreated communist prisoners who grumbled against the "lack of tact" of the socialists and anarchists and called their in-

tervention "inopportune"! A man as eminent as V. M. Smirnov, who thought that if the worst came to the worst it was all right to make an alliance with the anarchists, rebelled against the idea of an alliance with the Mensheviks to defend the rights of the prisoners. . . .

In the summer of 1930 the new wave of "capitulation" took away twenty or thirty prisoners from Verkhne-Uralsk. These people, beaten and humiliated a few months earlier by order of Director Bizyukov, left the prison shouting: "Long live Bizyukov! Long live the dictatorship of the proletariat!"

As for myself, with my ideas of a European accustomed to all the left-wing groups fighting in concert against the despotism of the police, I first thought myself in an insane asylum. But good sense won the day in the end. A year later, during our hunger strike, nobody was astonished or indignant to see the socialists and the anarchists protest to the administration out of solidarity. On the other hand, when two anarchists, who had joined in with our strike, were sent into one of our communist halls, there were some disturbances at first. But the ice was broken. At the beginning of 1933, the socialists, the anarchists and the communists reached the point of even declaring a joint hunger strike lasting twenty-four hours to protest against an abuse of the administration.

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Even though the prison inspectors from Moscow were picked on the spot, the GPU had them under surveillance by means of a double system of espionage. One of the branches of the system—"political control"—was under the prison director, the other depended only on Moscow and kept an eye on everybody, the director included: the latter did not even know the persons constituting this secret service. They were *agents provocateurs* recruited from the prisoners and were supposed to watch not only their prison comrades but also their jailors. But in spite of this wealth of precautions, it sometimes happened that the inspectors, by their visits to the prisoners, rendered them some services. To communicate with the outside, however, we avoided as much as possible having anything to do with the inspectors. I give away no secret by describing here one of the means of communication, for it was discovered by the GPU.

The duties in prison were performed by the common criminals. One of them agreed to transmit the mail confided to him by the social-democrats to their contact in Verkhne-Uralsk. The prisoner, sent with his crew to cut wood in the forest, buried the letters in a place agreed upon. The contact had only to come and dig them up.

### The Question of Escape

The eternal dream of prisoners—escape—haunted us as well. But you may well believe that it was absolutely impossible to escape from Verkhne-Uralsk. I know of only one serious attempt at escape. One day the painters were called to touch up a wall in the prison. A prisoner, having hid himself during the walk, stole the shirt of a painter, grabbed the pots and brushes and, thus disguised, walked toward the exit. The first sentinel he met paid no attention to him, but the second asked: "Your pass!" The prisoner did not lose his head. "My pass? Here it is." And he began to feel about in his pockets. "What do you know! I must have forgotten it." "I'm sorry, comrade, my orders are strict. Go back and look for it." The prisoner could do nothing but return to the common hall, where a dozen of his comrades, all anxiety, wondered what would happen when the inspector discovered the escape.

The relations between the administration and the prison-

ers were formally courteous. But in every gesture, in every word, you felt a restrained animosity on the verge of eruption. It did break out from time to time—hunger strikes, obstructions, blows and cruelties, dousings, madness or suicide among the prisoners, firing upon prisoners. After each explosion everyone fell back into silence for a month or two.

In 1928 or 1929, the social-revolutionists resolved to take vengeance upon a prison sub-director named Matveyev who had had socialist prisoners beaten cruelly. This Matveyev made the acquaintance of two little dressmakers he liked. He began to see them often, but one day he was met with revolver shots; wounded in the head, more dead than alive, Matveyev managed to escape the ambush.

In 1932, the oppositional communists who had finished their prison term found themselves handed a supplementary sentence of two years. Nobody could say when this little game would cease; in point of fact, Soviet legislation allows the GPU to renew prison sentences or exiles on its own hook, without any justification. It is hard to believe that such things are possible. Nevertheless they exist, and it is on this very procedure that rests the system of repression existing in Russia for the past seventeen years. The prisoners, worn out, did not resort immediately to a hunger strike. But in May, 1933, it became clear that nobody would escape the renewal of sentences: so the prisoners decided to notify the GPU that they would proclaim a strike if the prisoners who had served their sentences were not freed.

The GPU replied by transferring almost half the prisoners from Verkhne-Uralsk to the Isolators of Suzdal and Yaroslavl. This transfer aimed at breaking their resistance, but before leaving the prisoners agreed to begin the strike on the date set, regardless of where they were incarcerated. This was done and the strike broke out in the three prisons at the same time. On the third day, however, it was broken by force: the strikers were fed artificially and about thirty of them were shifted to other Isolators or concentration camps.

The strike committee, composed of Dingelstedt, Kraskin, Slitinsky and other comrades, was transferred to Solovky. There it found several hundred political prisoners: Georgian social-democrats, Mussulmans from Azerbaidjan, Uzbek and Kirghiz communists who had defended their peasant compatriots during the Five-Year Plan, social-revolutionists, Zionists, anarchists, Trotskyists. All these people were scattered in small groups among the common criminals and were not granted the régime of political prisoners. The Central Asiatic communists, guilty of national opposition, were treated especially badly. The new communists from Verkhne-Uralsk soon took the initiative in the struggle for assembling all the political prisoners together and for obtaining the corresponding régime. Some results were actually obtained.

### A State Within the State

Another group was transferred from Verkhne-Uralsk to the Ukht-Pechersk concentration camp. This camp takes in a vast territory in the Northeast of Russia, as big as half of France. The population of this territory is very small; not more than 150,000 souls, prisoners for the most part. Big works have been undertaken there, coal, gold and oil are sought, the mines are exploited, roads are hewed out, forests are cleared. The Ukht-Pechersk concentration camp has its own automobile service and a river flotilla. It is a state within a state. The slave population is perfectly well aware of this: the prisoners of the region, as well as the free population of the neighboring region of the Zyrians, have given the "com-

mandant" of the concentration camp the nickname of "King of the North." The Ukht-Pechersk camp even has its own papers, as well as a central organ edited by a well known Ukrainian journalist.

The organization of labor is very intense. Each group is subject to a "brigadier." The brigadiers are usually former bandit chiefs and they run their groups exactly like they once ran their gangs. The GPU is interested in but one thing: that the total of the labor demanded be supplied, and it leaves it to the brigadiers to organize the "labor discipline" just as they see fit. The famous "reeducation" of the prisoners is hypocrisy from beginning to end. What is more, from time to time there are scandalous incidents that reveal what this reeducation really is. Here is one that ended badly for the hero: one of the camp heads noticed a young peasant girl deported with her family and had her come to his home on the pretext of taking care of it. Once alone with her, he tried to attack her without further ado. The young girl, frightened to death, created such a tumult that everybody ran over. The camp head got off with three years of concentration camp.

Attempts at escape are frequent but rarely succeed. The region is desert and savage, the first free habitations are too far off. Generally, the escaped, overcome by hunger, are forced to return to camp.

This subjugated population lives in a state of complete isolation. The people know that life is hard outside, that repression and famine prevail, that the ruling class is divided by a thousand intrigues, that the masters of the Kremlin sometimes end in concentration camps. But they are unaware of the meaning of these events, they know only hope and sometimes give credulity to the most fantastic fables.

Here is an example: one of our comrades transferred to the Ukht-Pechersk camp was received at his first stop by a crowd of prisoners who gave him the great news: "The government members, Yenukidze, Ordjonikidze, and Byelov, the commandant of the Leningrad military district, have just arrived in camp; these prominent prisoners are being brought to the center of the camp under heavy escort." Naturally, our comrade was astounded: what is happening in Moscow? Stalin's most intimate friends condemned? The next day, at the following stop, he met a comrade from Verkhne-Uralsk, a certain Shemms, who had preceded him somewhat. He jumped at Shemms: "Do you know anything about the arrival of the government members Yenukidze, Ordjonikidze and Byelov?" The other began to laugh: "Yenukidze, yes, but he's ours, the Trotskyist; and Byelov is also one of ours—he's the Kharkov economist and not the Leningrad military man! But Ordjonikidze?—Well, it looks like Ordjonikidze is me!"

The case was simple. The camp population, seeing three condemned arrive escorted by a dozen guards, which was exceptional, and hearing the name of Yenukidze and Byelov, immediately built up a whole story and imagined that a palace revolution had taken place in Moscow.

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Beginning with 1933, that is, from the time of the second Five-Year Plan, they began sending more and more political prisoners, and especially the oppositional communists, to the concentration camps of Russia, Siberia and Central Asia. The more "socialism" Stalin built, the more prisons there were in Russia and the more the political prisoners suffered in them.

[Continued in next issue]

A. CILIGA.

# China Under the Stalinists - III

## National Revolution and Peasant Revolt

[Continued from last issue]

Ever since the great Russian Revolution of 1917 the Chinese masses have been inspired by the example of the Russian workers and peasants. From 1920 to 1927 they flocked to the banner of the Communist Party so that it grew almost overnight into a mass party. Even after the betrayal by the Stalinists in the 1926-27 revolution, the Red Armies in the interior were able to attract millions of peasants by driving out the landlords and sponsoring the division of the land.

Compromises with rich peasants and isolation from urban workers finally made it impossible for the Soviet districts to resist Chiang Kai-shek's armies, and the Communists migrated to the Northwest. The "Long March" to the Northwest is itself a testimony to the strength of the Chinese masses in their desperation and to the great symbolic hold of the Russian Revolution over their aspirations.

Today there are three main areas either completely or partially under Communist control or influence. These are:

1. *The frontier area, made up of the Northwest provinces of Shensi, Kansu and Ninghsia.*

This area, west of the Yellow River and South of the Great

Wall, is bounded on the north and west by Mongolia and Tibet. It has been one of the most backward sections of China and has a population of only approximately two million. The government of this area is a direct continuation of the Chinese Soviet Republic, formally liquidated when the anti-Japanese United Front was formed, but maintaining complete autonomy from the Chinese National Government.

2. *The "Border Region," made up of the Northeastern provinces of Hopei-Chahar and Shansi.*

This region is completely within Japanese lines, and within it the Communist-influenced governments compete with the Japanese provisional government militarily, economically and politically. The old provincial governments are negligible, functioning only in unoccupied corners of their provinces or in exile. On a smaller scale than Chiang Kai-shek's régime, they are but another variant of that modern phenomenon—the government in exile.

3. *The New Fourth Army zone in the Yangtze Valley, made up of sections of the East Central provinces of Anhwei, Kiangsu, Kiangsi, Fukian and Chekiang.*

In this area the Chinese Soviet Republic functioned before the "Long March" to the Northwest. Although officially abol-

ished by Chiang in January, 1941, the main forces of the New Fourth Army probably continue to function within the Japanese-occupied zones, where Chiang's armies cannot reach them.

While differences exist between these areas in the degree of Communist influence, autonomy, etc., they all exhibit the general pattern of peasant revolt. The most informative and complete study of this pattern in China has been made by George E. Taylor in his book, *The Struggle for North China, dealing with the Border Region*. The latter will therefore be used as an example of the three areas.

The outstanding characteristics of peasant revolts are their local, dispersed and temporary character. Their possibilities and limitations have been classically described by Engels in his study, *The Peasant War in Germany*. The successes and failures of the Chinese Soviets from 1928 to 1934 are a modern instance of the inability of peasant armies to achieve the agrarian revolution on a national and permanent scale without the leadership and coöperation of the proletariat. Today, in occupied China, the temporary character of the successes of the guerrillas against the Japanese may be summarized in the statement that the Japanese rule by day and the Chinese guerrillas by night.

The unsuccessful national revolution of 1900, known as the Boxer Rebellion, had been a Northern movement. The republican revolution of 1911 had developed out of a Southern movement. Northern China, unlike Central and Southern China, barely experienced the revolution of 1926-27. The last orderly government in the experience of the population was the Manchu dynasty. The Kuomintang had never made serious inroads.

The cities of the North had remained picturesque souvenirs of ancient feudal China. Peking, for example, had been from 1900 on little more than a garrison for foreign troops and a center for imperialist intrigue. Industrialization in the North had been confined to the communications required by the imperialists to exploit the natural resources of the country. The areas lying between the railroads and roads were a hinterland, partially if not completely self-sufficient. However, relative to Southern and Central China, there is in the North a larger agricultural proletariat because the poor productivity of the land requires farming on a larger scale.\*

### **The Bankruptcy of the Local Gentry**

This economic and political background dictated the possibilities and necessities of Japanese expansion. With very little difficulty they were able to overrun the chief cities and railroads. For the rest, they were compelled and had the opportunity to introduce a new order for the people. The peasants at first put up no resistance "because the invasion directly and immediately threatened the security of the landlords. . . . When the poor peasants witnessed how the landlords were forced to become refugees overnight and to run for their lives, they were not sorry to see their rich oppressors suffer for a change."\*\*

The principles of the Japanese New Order were eradication of the evils of the Kuomintang, eradication of Communism, and the pan-racial unity of Asia. For the San Min Chu I, or Three People's Principles of the Kuomintang, the Japanese substituted the Hsin Min Chu I, or New People's Principles. In reality, the New People's Principles meant that there would be no reduction of land rents, no revision of land

taxation, no regularization of land tenure and no revision of village usury. Hence a fair proportion of the gentry were willing to become allies of the Japanese.

All over the world today, popular sensitivity to collaboration with the invader exists on an unprecedented scale. However, in Asia even more than in Europe, the war brought to a head the social uselessness of the local gentry. In China, where the landlords could not claim any social function as managers, the Japanese found no social force of any consequence to collaborate with them in funding their New Order. If the Quislings stayed in the villages, the guerrillas branded them as traitors and meted out suitable corporal punishment. If they fled to the Japanese-occupied cities, their property at home was confiscated. In the cities, only a few were needed for fronts. The rest actually were competitors of the Japanese second "army" of merchants, officials and administrators. Many of the gentry therefore found it more expedient to remain in or return to the villages and join in the anti-Japanese United Front. This shuttling back and forth did not help the "face" of the would-be Quislings. In some places, to restore their prestige, the landlords called themselves guerrilla commanders whenever they could gather five or ten people together. The landlord forces, in reality, permitted the activities of traitors in their areas, never attacked the Japanese and, instead, harassed the real popular guerrilla forces.

The Japanese occupation was also in the dilemma of encouraging the old classical education for political purposes, although the economic development of occupied China required vocational training of the masses. Without giving this technical training they could neither repair the economic damage they have caused nor promote large-scale development.

### **The Development of Mass Resistance**

The inability of the Japanese to give political, economic and social stability to the occupation tremendously facilitated the tasks of the Communists in rallying the people for resistance. Functioning virtually within a vacuum, the Communists had the opportunity to create a new form of government. Their limitations have been self-imposed in accordance with the Stalintern's policy of a united front against Japan.

The population had been accustomed by many decades of brigand armies to taxes without public services, and forced labor to landlord and warlord. To gain their support in the resistance it was necessary to point out a new road of coöperation between the military and the civilian. As in the days of civil war with Chiang Kai-shek, the Communists have had to depend upon guerrilla tactics; surprise and mobile warfare in small groups, self-reliance of lower officers, and capture of ammunition from the enemy. In the end, however, the basis of guerrilla tactics is the willingness of the population to coöperate.

The ignorant, illiterate and impoverished people had to be given something to fight for at the same time that they were shown an enemy to fight against. This has been achieved by direct but moderate economic reforms, such as suspensions or reduction of rents to landlords and interest to usurers, regulation of share-cropping and lowering of taxes. The property of traitors (comprising ten to twenty per cent of the land in this region) has been confiscated and redistributed, pending the "repentance" of the traitors. Army auxiliaries have been created to assist the peasantry in farming their land and to minimize the burden of supplying the military.

As in some areas of Chiang Kai-shek's China, industrial

\*"Forms of Farm Labor in China," *Agrarian China*, page 69.

\*\*"The Organization of a Typical Guerrilla Area in South Shantung," by Wang Yu-chuan, appendix to *The Chinese Army*, by E. F. Carlson.

coöperatives have been organized to produce the essentials for consumers and for the army.\* Throughout there has been an emphasis on economic self-sufficiency and hence an employment of all hands in productive labor. Since no external trade with the Japanese is permitted, there has been a limitation on such crops as cotton. Production of essentials by simple handicraft has been restored to supply the population and keep labor from migrating to the cities. But economic penetration knows no borders, and despite border government control of trade, smuggling has been widespread.

Politically, the population of the guerrilla areas has been given a new sense of human dignity by its participation in village mobilization committees and county political councils. The principles of universal suffrage and political democracy have been instituted. For this rôle the people have been given education which, while limited mainly to political agitation, has opened up to the masses a whole new world. These are peasants who have depended entirely upon one man in a whole village to read and write their letters, and who have sold their daughters to repay a twenty-dollar debt. Today they grasp at even token recognition of their humanity.

In some places the villagers are so well organized in the anti-Japanese movement that they will evacuate their homes when the Japanese approach, bury food, remove all animals and utensils and retire into the hills.

The Communists, in line with their appeasement of Chiang Kai-shek, have persistently discouraged the increasing class tensions arising between the peasants and the landlords. In the tradition of peasant wars, the victories of the masses are nullified by compromise with the middle class. The Communist Party is pledged not to accept more than one-third of the elected positions in any local or hsien government. In the border region there is a farmers' union in which the landlords are not permitted membership. The efforts of this union to gain economic advantages for the class it represents are discouraged by the United Fronters.

The party itself has admitted that it had difficulties in convincing the ranks of the Eighth Route Army to accept the United Front policy. "... The men do not fully understand the reasons for such actions, some men actually accusing their leaders of 'counter-revolutionary orders.'"

The Communists have sought to remove all obstacles in the way of those gentry who may wish to return from the occupied areas. The border government actually collects rents for absent landlords and holds them in reserve for the prodigals' return. Mao The-tung, the Communist leader, has summarized the compromise policy of the Communists beyond any misunderstanding: "Regarding agrarian problems, on the one hand, we advocate a policy of reducing rents and interests so that the peasants can have clothing and food; on the other hand, we are also carrying out a policy of recognizing the payment of rents and interest as obligatory so that the landlords can also have clothing and food. Regarding the relation between labor and capital, on the one hand, we are realizing the policy of helping the workers so that they may have food and clothing; while on the other hand we are also carrying out a policy of industrial development which will provide the capitalists with profit." There can be no clearer statement of anti-revolutionary policy.

The compromise policy of the Stalinists against the Chi-

\*It is generally agreed by everyone except the enthusiastic sponsors of the Indusco movement that even the very moderate success of the movement is only a temporary phenomenon, possible only because of wartime isolation of various areas from the world and national market. Out of a proposed 30,000 corps, only 2,300 have been established with 80,000 workers. For an uncritical appraisal of Indusco, see *China Shall Rise Again*, by Madame Chiang Kai-shek. For more critical accounts, see Snow, *Battle for Asia*, and Mitchell, *Industrialization in the Western Pacific*.

nese bourgeoisie in 1925-27 brought death, imprisonment and disillusionment to hundreds of thousands of workers in industrialized China. Their compromise policy against the rich peasants in 1933 brought pessimism, mass desertions, and eventually defeat of the agrarian revolutions following in the wake of the proletarian revolution. Their pressure for the release of Chiang from Sian in 1926 produced cynicism and confusion among the soldiers in the Northern armies. Today the threat of the foreign enemy holds the people together in the United Front. As the end of the war approaches, the class tensions will emerge more openly. After the war, the Chinese Communist Party will have more difficulty in imposing the Kremlin's will on masses who have fought, and died by the thousands, in a supposedly revolutionary cause.

### Training for the Social Revolution

Today the peasants are being given invaluable training for the social revolution. They have learned that bona fide national defense depends on them and that there is political meaning to their instinctive rebellion. They have learned that rights must accompany responsibilities and they are learning to enjoy popular government. They are acquiring a modicum of literacy and tools for self-expression and they are also receiving some industrial training through the Indusco movement. They have learned how to deal with the treacherous gentry by assassination and by confiscation of property. They have seen a popular army in the process of development and become part of it, acquiring the consciousness that the sword belongs to the community. Into the backward North there have migrated thousands of peasants and intellectuals from the South, where they have lived in closer contact with the modern world.

Moreover, the Chinese masses in Communist-controlled China have been indoctrinated with an international outlook. The Soviet districts regarded themselves as part of the world proletariat. The course of the civil war and the conquest of Abyssinia were followed with intense interest. In view of this background, it is possible to credit the report of a split in the Chinese Communist Party over the dissolution of the Comintern.

The border region has also stressed solidarity between the Japanese and the Chinese masses against their common enemy, the Japanese militarists and capitalists. The Eighth Route Army especially employs the technique of indoctrinating Japanese prisoners and sending them back to educate their comrades-in-arms.

This training in the techniques of social revolution is constantly on the verge of overflowing into practice. No modern revolution has been able to linger for long at the bourgeois democratic stage. It has either moved forward under the impulsion of the masses or succumbed to bourgeois dictatorship. Hence the intense mutual hostility of the China of Chiang Kai-shek and the China that is Communist-led.\* Ideas and techniques cannot be limited by geographical boundaries, nor hemmed in by mass armies made up of peasants.

As Trotsky said in 1928: "... With a new rising wave of the proletarian movement... one will be able to speak seriously about the perspective of an agrarian revolution."

RIA STONE.

\*The New York Times of September 8, 1943, reports that Communists numbering 10,000 made two unprovoked attacks against the pacification corps in Southwestern Shantung on July 20 and August 6. In the summer of 1943, five divisions of Chiang's best armed and fed troops were moved into the Northwest area away from the Japanese front. At the Plenum of the Kuomintang in September, 1943, a resolution was adopted accusing the Chinese Communist Party of subversive activities and calling upon it to fulfill its promise to abandon the Communist movement, dissolve the Soviet government and disband the Red Army. Only one of seven Communist delegates attended the subsequent session of the People's Political Council. See *Amerasia*, October 1, 1943.