

The New
INTERNATIONAL

***FACT OR FICTION
ON LENIN'S ROLE***

**A Letter from David Shub
A Reply by Max Shachtman**



The Politics of Incineration

By R. Fahan



Viewing British Elections

By Emanuel Garrett



Four Portraits of Stalinism—

Critique of Wolfe's Book



In a Time of Duplicity

From Victor Serge's Diary

35¢

March-April, 1950

MEMO

We have received a number of compliments on the new format of the *N.I.* Most of our readers seem to like it. They find it handier and easier to read than it used to be.

With this issue we have been able to pick up almost a full month in time. We hope, in the very near future, to be able to appear at the beginning of the two-month publication date.

Just a word about the price of the magazine, as that has aroused some comment. We would like to draw to the attention of our readers that despite its smaller format, the present *N.I.* contains quite a bit more printed matter than the old one did. It is also printed on much better paper. We know that these things aren't of first-rate importance to our readers. But the better quality of the paper means that the magazine will last much longer in files without deterioration. As the *N.I.* is the kind of magazine people find useful for reference purposes years after publication, this has some importance.

Another price factor: We send hundreds of *N.I.s* abroad with each issue. The vast majority of our foreign subscribers cannot pay for the magazine. In many cases they simply haven't the means. But in most cases it is impossible for them to pay us due to the exchange restrictions in the country in which they live.

We are happy to send them the magazine whether they can pay for it or not. We are proud to be able to furnish thinking radicals in a dozen countries with a publication which, by their own testimony, is the most important printed matter they get in their hands. We are sure you don't begrudge the extra few cents this adds to the unit cost of the magazine.

One more thing. Let us know what you think of the magazine. Any suggestions about the format, the type of articles, etc., will be given careful consideration.

L. G. SMITH

Business Manager

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

An Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Vol. XVI, No. 2

Whole No. 141

March-April 1950

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial:

\$500,000 MARKED VOID 67

Articles:

VIEWING THE BRITISH ELECTIONS 69

By Emanuel Garrett

THE POLITICS OF INCINERATION 75

By R. Fahan

FACT OR FICTION ON LENIN'S ROLE

A Letter from David Shub 86

A Reply by Max Shachtman 91

FOUR PORTRAITS OF STALINISM—III.....105

By Max Shachtman

IN A TIME OF DUPLICITY115

From the Diary of Victor Serge

—III

Books in Review:

JOHN L. LEWIS122

By Walter Jason

BURNHAM RIDES AGAIN123

By Peter Loumos

KEY TO ASIA125

By Jack Brad

SUB-CONTINENT127

By H. J.

Published bi-monthly by the New International Publishing Co. at 114 West 14th Street, New York 11, N. Y. Re-entered as second-class matter March 8, 1950, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription rates: \$2.00 per year; bundles, 25c each for five copies and up. Foreign, \$2.50 per year; bundles, 30c each for five and up.

Address all editorial and business communications either to The New International, 114 West 14th Street, New York 11, N. Y., or to The New International, 4 Court Square, Long Island City 1, N. Y. Telephone: IRonsides 6-5117.

MAX SHACHTMAN, *Editor*

EMANUEL GARRETT, *Managing Editor*

Editorial Board

JAMES M. FENWICK

ALBERT GATES

BEN HALL

HENRY JUDD

L. G. SMITH, *Business Manager*

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

An Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Vol. XVI, No. 2

MARCH-APRIL 1950

Whole No. 141

EDITORIAL

\$500,000 Marked Void

When the half million dollar check was returned to the United Steel Workers, "properly marked void" by the United Mine Workers, it avoided bank clearing houses and consequently never had to get political clearance. As Lewis wrote: circumstances made it impossible to use the generous contribution. Not unnecessary but impossible. Fortunately, the long mine strike was successfully concluded shortly after the check arrived; but had the drawn-out battle continued, "void" might very well have been scrawled in Truman's handwriting and not in Lewis'. For what Murray donates from his treasury is canceled by what comes out of his Political Action Committee; so that the word "void" is stamped more properly over the Steel Workers political policy than on its checks.

RECENT ANNALS OF AMERICAN LABOR record no other case when so many blows from so many directions rained on the heads of a single group of striking workers. Playing upon the fears of the aged and maimed, coal operators withheld payments to the pension fund; behind them stood the big steel monopolies closely interlinked financially and commercially and when their combined power failed to break the spirit of the traditionally militant miners, the government reached for its Taft-Hartley stick.

Truman hesitated, but not for long. Unfair labor practice charges were threatened against the three-day work week; the union was compelled to reopen negotiations at judicial gunpoint on terms it had already rejected; government interdiction wiped out a closed shop clause in the old contract, hacked at the "able and willing" clause, and cut away at union controls over the pension fund. While cords were tied around the union at hearings in one chamber, legal processes were initiated simultaneously in another, culminating in an injunction ordering the United Mine Workers to discontinue its strike.

And finally, when the miners showed no inclination to obey, contempt charges were preferred, aiming to duplicate the infamous fines of Judge Goldsborough. Busy days for process servers and court clerks.

ONLY A DEEPLY INGRAINED CLASS SOLIDARITY, a fierce militancy and a jealous determination to defend every hard-won gain could hold out in this single-handed struggle against a monopoly-government combine. And such are the noble qualities of the miners. If they were successful, it was not with the Truman administration but against it; against an administration which did everything realistically within its power at the moment to press them back to work.

The speedy captulation of the mine owners, once Judge Keech failed to cite the union for contempt, showed clearly that their previous stubborn refusal to come to terms flowed from an expectation that Truman would do their dirty work for them. They surrendered only when Truman failed.

The union correctly hailed the court decision as a great victory. But in previous cases, under almost identical circumstances Judge Goldsborough ruled against the union. The fate of powerful unions and of hundreds of thousands of strikers is allowed to hinge on judicial caprice. Despite the miners' victory, a dangerous sword still hangs over the union movement; for the owners may be served by a more compliant judge, or one less disturbed by the catastrophic consequences of his possible decisions, on the next occasion.

BUT TO RETURN TO THE UNCASHED CHECK. By action of Truman's Attorney General, the United Mine Workers was forbidden to sustain and support a strike that continued nevertheless. If the stoppage had persisted, therefore, the very act of cashing the check, and certainly any distribution of the funds it provided to striking coal diggers would have been eagerly seized upon by eager prosecutors to prove that the union was in contempt. Such were the circumstances which made it impossible to turn it into ready cash. Thus Truman wrote "void" long before Lewis.

This is not to say that Truman rendered the Steel Workers' contribution totally useless. It still might have served as small part payment on any fine levied against the miners' union, in which case it would be recorded as a credit in government balances together with the \$2,000,000 already exacted from the union and as a debit in the Steel Workers' ledger, only not as a strike donation but in the same columns which registered its PAC contributions for the re-election of Harry Truman.

AS A DEMONSTRATION OF SOLIDARITY with the embattled miners, the action of the Steel Workers Union gave positive moral support to their struggle and was a factor in the final victory, although financially its contribution could not weigh in the scales. Under onerous legal circumstances, it may have proved necessary to find other channels to give financial and material assistance to needy miners; but one action could have been nullified by no court order, by no legal dictum . . . a powerful political demonstration by the whole labor movement against the vicious strikebreaking policies of Truman's administration, an action whose electrifying effects would be far more potent than any unusable checks.

But exactly this was prohibited by the political policy of the Steel Workers Union which spinelessly cringes before its "Fair Deal" Democratic allies. Faced by the same enemies as the miners during its own strike last fall, it carefully adjusted its tactics to avoid embarrassing Truman, even though to do so necessitated dropping important demands. Above all, the miners' triumph proves that a united labor movement independent of the Democratic Party can fight its way through to victory against the combined assaults of industry-monopoly and government-injunction. If this is true in the case of the United Mine Workers Union, which vacillates between the two old parties without a clear, class political policy of its own, how much more true can it become if the labor movement forges its own independent political party.

Viewing the British Elections

What Course for the Labor Party Government?

From any point of view, the victory of British labor in 1945 was an event of rare interest. The British *people* expressed their lack of confidence in capitalism. Where it wasn't an outright affirmation of the wish for socialism, it was at the very least a declaration of willingness to experiment along socialist paths. Thus, the evident bankruptcy of British capitalism, and the restiveness of the British masses combined in the victory of the British Labor Party to recredit reformism both as a system of theory and as an instrument of action. By its victory and in its accomplishments, the British Labor government raised issues of profound importance for the socialist movement, and for the capitalist world as well.

Whatever the conclusions one might arrive at, the rule of the British Labor Party certainly elevated into the area of discussion a variety of questions settled in historical experience many times before; notably, the reformist or revolutionary road to power. Here was no MacDonald government of unlamented and shameful memory. Here was a government that had pledged itself to certain aims, and actually carried them through. The aims were limited, but the record of accomplishment was unprecedented.

The years clearly had wrought almost as many changes in the Labor Party as it had in the British Empire. As types, Attlee and Bevin may have represented little advance over MacDonald; they were pressed in the same mold. As leaders, they were inept where they were not criminal, insensitive where they were not bureaucratic, diffident where they were not

cowardly. Still no socialist could fail to recognize that changes had been effected in the Labor Party and by the Labor Party. *Above all could he not fail to appreciate that this was the party of the British working class and that this working class had resisted both political dispersion and Stalinization.*

No amount of underscoring could do this justice. Against an almost universal trend toward the atomization of the socialist movement, the British working class strengthened its cohesion as a political class unit, and gave ample evidence that it expected socialist results. This obviously dictated a course of action to revolutionary socialists; it meant that they could not hope to advance their ideas and organization save by joining with the masses in the party of their socialist (albeit Fabian-reformist) allegiance, and there acting as the leaven for the leftward elements. Even the most unimaginative sectarians had to succumb to this reality.

* * *

All the more reason then to assess the recent election most carefully, and with that to weigh the past and future course of the Labor Party. In the election, the Labor Party majority was reduced from overwhelming superiority to a bare majority of six against the combined totals of the Conservatives and Liberals. Was this, then, a defeat for British labor? To answer "Yes" is much too simple. That is the first point that must be made in analyzing the elections.

To be sure, it was generally reported as a defeat in the press. The bourgeoisie the world over was im-

mensely relieved by the revival of the Conservatives. They know that the Labor Party leaders are socialists of an exceedingly mild and tractable disposition. Yet any kind of socialism is to them nightmarish for the times are so uncertain that even a Bevin cannot be relied on to leave private property intact. It is, of course, understandable that the bourgeoisie should seek maximum consolation in the election results. But for the Labor Party leaders to tread timorously in accepting the verdict of "defeat" is quite another matter and only reflects their own political nature.

The working class in its virtual entirety voted Labor. That seems to us a central fact uncontested save in labored reference to random individuals. Moreover, the Labor Party vote increased by roughly a million over the 1945 election; and it would appear reasonable to account for this vote by the adherence of new young voters. In any country, such a vote would be of unsurpassable significance: the whole working class casting a class vote! Think of what this would mean for the United States. And consider its particular meaning for England where the working class is probably closer to being an absolute majority of the population than in any country of the world. The key class of modern society, on whose dynamic strivings rests social progress, registers its conviction. To speak of that as a defeat is ludicrous in the extreme.

* * *

But the Tories also increased their vote—and by some two million. We are not trying to minimize any part of the facts. Quite the contrary. If we insist upon the significance of the working class vote, it is precisely because we wish to appraise it in relation to those elements in the situation

which impede the progression and consolidation of working-class victory, which undermine the intentions of the working-class electorate. The Tories have reestablished themselves beyond the expectation of any sober analyst, let us say a year ago. To which, we must add: they reestablished themselves beyond any limit that need have been allowable given better (socialist) Labor Party policy and leadership.

If a couple of years ago the bourgeoisie in England was a frightened, spiritually splintered class, incapable of defending itself seriously, and certainly incapable of holding its lower middle-class sections in line, today they have undoubtedly regained a considerable measure of confidence and class adhesion. In part, this is inherent in the very situation itself. Fabians notwithstanding, it was certainly unreasonable to expect that the bourgeoisie would not at some time flock to its colors in defense of its basic property positions. With ruin rampant, one section would be played against the other in a limited program of nationalization—20 per cent said the Labor Party in 1945. But social impulsions are not arrested because a Herbert Morrison fixes a 20 per cent limit.

Nationalization, so to speak, breeds nationalization. There is no justifying the nationalization of railroads, and not of steel; there is no justifying the nationalization of steel and not of chemicals. Not to the working class anyway; nor to the pressures of economic growth. And beyond the simple legislation of nationalization lies a truly "appalling menace" from which there is no hope of retreat: the pressure to democratize that nationalization. It is grist to the socialist mill if the bourgeoisie lies down and permits

itself to be walked over; it is criminal irresponsibility to rest a policy on their never rising to give whatever battle they can.

The very stabilization effected by the Labor government served to encourage the aggressiveness of the bourgeoisie. However, there is no justifying, in socialist terms, the degree of recovery managed by the Tories. (We omit special reference to the Liberal Party, which commands an important position parliamentary-wise because its eight votes can have balance-of-power effectiveness, but which is otherwise of scanty consequence. An anachronism of little social import, it is essentially no different from the Tories on the basic issues, though its representatives can be expected to vote with Labor on some issues. A feeble remnant of a once-powerful party, it literally has to apologize for its existence. The bourgeoisie is unable to afford the luxury of two parties.) Many of the votes added by the Tories may have come from those who were too apathetic or too paralyzed to get out and vote in 1945. This time, the Tories with their hard-driving campaign, did presumably succeed in getting these people to vote. If so, it still remains to be asked why the Labor government could not have neutralized or won these people over.

* * *

In a very true sense, the election was a contest for the middle class—revealing the strength of the Tories and the weakness of the Laborites. In its halcyon period, the Labor government attached to itself sections of the bourgeoisie trying to ride—or, perhaps, control—the wave of the future. Generals, admirals, even some industrialists hopped on the wagon. But the upper reaches of the capitalist class could naturally be expected to stand fast on

their Tory principles and organization. Similarly there was no real contest for the working class. Who could even imagine that workers would vote Tory? The Tory party? Impossible. They may be (and are) dissatisfied with Labor Party policy, but they know the Tories; and they know on which side their class bread is buttered.

There is no way to dissect the vote in such a way that its class components are unmistakable. However, we can draw on the evidence of the pre-election campaign, and from the general evidence of observable trends. Actively or passively, the middle class had little alternative but to go along with Labor in 1945, and a large section of it did. The Tories offered nothing but total doom. As the Labor government initiated its reforms in social services, housing and industry, the middle class went along, and, it would appear, with a fair amount of enthusiasm. However, a point was reached where the best achievements of the Labor government were of only limited value to the middle class. Obviously free medical services mean more to the low-paid proletarian than to the shopkeeper. With the hobgoblins of utter economic collapse chased, the irksomeness of austerity and regimentation could be exploited as an inequitable and unprofitable burden on the middle class unless—unless they had before them a social view so compelling and dynamic in its richness that it would override the irritations.

Attlee did indeed make a conscious play for the middle-class vote. But nothing could have been better calculated than that to lose it. Some left-wingers in the Labor Party emphasized the socialistic aspects of the Labor Party program, but they were

not the real voice of the Labor Party officialdom which ignored whatever was socialistic in the formal election platform, and emphasized the moderation of the party, its caution. Attlee presented a true enough picture of himself and his policies. The working class had to stomach it, for the real alternative was unthinkable. The middle class could choose Churchill who at least had the gift of imagination. The Tory program, except in so far as it promised an end to socialistic innovations, was as devoid of specific content as any program could be. Yet its rhetoric was apparently sufficient to captivate a large part of the rural and middle class electorate.

* * *

How value any particular act or statement in an election campaign? There is no standard of judgment. However, Churchill's carefully timed call for a meeting of the Western Powers with Stalin undoubtedly had its effect. It was hypocritical and meaningless, but it was at least a proposition aimed at a region of vital sensitivity—the longing for peace. It was effective the more so as Bevin and Attlee had nothing, absolutely nothing, to say in reply. They called him a blatherskite and his proposition a fraud, neither of which was news. But they had no proposition of their own.

The inability of the Labor Party leadership to propose anything that contains the promise of peace, touches on the core of domestic and foreign policy. By and large the issues of overriding interest in Britain these past four years have been domestic. What progress the government made in the handling of these problems, it contradicted and undermined with a foreign policy as abysmal and indefensible as any that could have been conceived. It is inconceivable that the people

responsible for it should have had even a nodding acquaintance with socialist principles. If the government loosened the Indian jewel in His Majesty's crown, it was a matter of unavoidable necessity, and hardly a gesture of fraternity. The government's unspeakable policy with respect to Palestine is too raw and recent to require repetition. Give a point or take one, its behavior in international relations has not been radically distinguishable from that of any imperialist government. Whether with respect to Germany, or the Atlantic Pact, or Truman-sponsored Council of Europe, the record is a damning one.

(During the campaign, the leftist *Tribune* group, of which Health Minister Aneurin Bevan is the most prominent spokesmen, made journalistic reference to the ECA report which pictured the utter futility of capitalism in Germany, its dependence on the U. S., and so forth. The party could scarcely exploit this point. For what could one say about the role of the British government in the Ruhr, in the occupation of Germany—in the encouragement of socialist victory in Germany through the action of the German people? What, indeed!)

At its best, Labor Party international policy is manipulative, bureaucratic, "diplomatic" as imperialism values diplomacy. Yet it is here that the most digestible intentions of the Labor government must ultimately founder, even did it envisage uninterrupted rule in the British Isles. International policy cannot be divorced from domestic policy. A socialist policy at home, such as it is, cannot—if only in self-defense!—be separated from a socialist policy abroad. England cannot stand alone, not with twenty, fifty or one hundred and fifty per cent of socialism at home. Social-

ism in one country is no more tenable an illusion for England than it was for Russia, or would be for the United States—less so. When repulsion is not overwhelming, one can sympathize with the travail of the British representatives in the councils of diplomacy. They maneuver, they try to keep themselves from being entangled in the decrepit economies of Europe, from being vassalized by the United States. Maneuver will not do it, any more than necessary or unnecessary manipulations of the pound sterling will do it.

What possible hope for survival can the British Laborites have economically, what possible vision of peace can they offer—except as they make effort to cement the economic energies of the Western European people, independent of the capitalist colossus overseas and the bureaucratic-collectivist colossus on the continent? How disengage themselves from U. S. talons except by sponsoring a mass, democratic movement for Western European unity, acting in it as the representative of a socialist working class, and thereby breathing into it a democratic, socialist content? How else provide the European masses with an effective instrument to withstand the ravages of Stalinism?

* * *

The Labor Party position is indeed a troubled one. Six votes are not enough to maintain a stable government. A new election will likely come in a short time. It is difficult at this time to see exactly what Conservative policy is. There were indications that the Tories did not intend to provoke a new election too soon. (They would have no easier time governing with the tiny majority which is the best they could hope for.) However, they have at this writing challenged the

government on two issues—steel, after Attlee had been stung by Tory pressure into mumbling that his government would effect the laws of Parliament (namely, nationalization), and housing. It may be that the Tories merely wanted to test their strength, and caution the government, rather than actually upset it. In any case, whether the Tories decide it is expedient to force a new election or not, is of relatively small consequence. What is of consequence is that the government pursue such a policy as it has been mandated to by the working class, and which alone can gain ground for Labor should a new election come soon.

It is reported that Richard Crossman, presumably Aneurin Bevan, and a few other prominent Laborites have called for fulfillment of the party's platform. This seems to us the only defensible policy, although it is one that the party leadership will effect only under the greatest pressure. There is no other way in which the wish of the electorate can be realized (Labor does have a majority in Parliament!) and there is no other way in which the issues can be gainfully posed should a new election be necessary.

It is not a question of imposing socialism by a 51 per cent parliamentary ballot. Socialism cannot be imposed on a people at all. If socialism rests on the class vitality of the proletariat, it also requires for its success the attraction of the great body of the farming and middle class population. The working class of England wants socialism. That much it has made clear. It has repudiated the perversion of socialism that is Stalinism. (The Stalinists were beaten in every contest, even in those few areas where they had previously been able to re-

turn candidates.) It has, generally, a gradualistic conception of the road to socialism. All right. But it does want advances towards socialism—and so it has mandated its party. Only as its enthusiasm, its *creative example*, infects the middle class, can the middle class be won to solid support of Labor.

The danger is not that the working class will cease to want socialism. Or that it will succumb to the gibberish that things will be the same under the Tories, and that the Tories will not do away with any of the accomplishments of the last four years. Nor is it the greatest danger that they will lose the election when next it comes. (The Australian Labor Party, which is a pretty poor excuse for a working-class party even by comparison with the British Labor Party, lost an election recently. While the bourgeoisie is licking its chops over what it can accomplish while its party reigns, everyone—bourgeoisie included—fully expects a labor victory in the next election.) The danger is that the enthusiasm of British labor, the will to promote its convictions, will be dissipated.

British labor voted for the Labor Party. But not one informed observer has failed to note its disgust. We lack the space to detail its grievances—on wages, prices, a list too large to record. The enthusiasm which characterized Labor's victory in 1945 is absent in 1949. Austerity and regimentation are tolerable so long as they pay off . . . in less regimentation, in an *improving* standard of living, in democratic involvement of the masses in socialist construction. And that has not been the direction of Labor Party policy.

The Labor Party accomplished far more than anyone believed it would. That much must be admitted. Very few believed that the Labor govern-

ment of Attlee-Bevin-Morrison-Cripps would actually nationalize the 20 per cent it promised to in its 1949 platform. Yet it did. One ingredient was lacking, and the working class soon detected it, consciously or otherwise. The Labor leadership was willing, up to a point, to attack the basis of capitalism, that is, private property. It was unwilling to loose the creative energy of the people, to mobilize them for democratic control of industry and the nation. It preserved British democracy, but let it go no further than it ever had—that is, kept it out of production.

What bungling idiocy! The unwillingness of the Labor Party bureaucracy to democratize its nationalization program is understandable, if indefensible. But not even bureaucratic self-interest or reformist timidity can justify their total lack of imagination. There is the example of nationalization of coal, achieved after so many, many years. Were huge celebrations arranged, ceremonies to make the miner feel that this had become his property, that something big had happened? No, the whole thing was handled on a bureaucratic level: a coal owner and a retired admiral were placed in charge and that was that.

Having gone so far, the British worker cannot be content to let it rest there. In 1945, nationalization *per se*, a moderate housing program, a spectacular health program were in themselves sufficient goals. They are, however, sufficient only to whet his socialist appetite. Reformist or revolutionist, he can see that without his intervention in the direction of the nationalized industry, nationalization is an inadequate accomplishment. Hence the increasing demand for workers' control of the nationalized industries (not to speak of the univer-

sal demand for a check on price rises, and for better wages). By itself nationalization undermines the capitalist social structure. *Where it goes from there is decisive for the working class.* It cannot go towards socialism unless the dynamism of the proletariat propels it forward. And that dynamism cannot flourish where it is stifled, restricted, regimented by the Labor bureaucracy.

The problems facing British labor are truly immense. Even with the best and most democratic nationalization program, it would be a long time before productive efficiency would be developed to a level surpassing need. Nor can socialist productivity be imagined on an insular basis, without the collaboration of the people of Europe at the very least. Austerity is perhaps

indicated in the nature of the situation. Nevertheless, it is an austerity that can be borne as a trifle if with it there is the promise of greater achievement—by burdening the rich, by increasing the welfare of the poor, by further nationalization, by *democratization*, by leading the peoples of Western Europe towards independent union, by opening a vista that will inspire the greatest sacrifices and the greatest inventiveness.

So we read the election returns, and there seems to us no other way in which they can be properly read. The vote mandated advance, not retreat. There is no legitimate course open for the Labor Party but to advance.

EMANUEL GARRETT

The Politics of Incineration

Notes on Bombs, Men and Ideas

I

Question: What is morality?

Answer: Morality is that which liberals accuse Lenin of rejecting, and in the name of which they find it possible to support the construction of the H-bomb.

II

The root of the crisis is political. If Western capitalism had a dynamic program with which to win the confidence of the masses of people in Europe and Asia, it would not be catapulting down the bomb alphabet.

Perhaps the most important political statement made since the war was Churchill's remark in Boston last spring that only the atom bomb stood between Western Europe and the fate of Russian "communizing." No capitalist spokesman has ever made a more total admission of the political,

intellectual and moral bankruptcy of the system he defends; a more complete acknowledgment that its essential means of existence is sheer force. Churchill was saying what has since become quite clear: the capitalist West has no means short of war with which to stop the growth of Stalinism; it can contain here, suppress there, but Stalinism, with its usurped "revolutionary" dynamic, has the distinct political advantage. The more H-bombs the West builds, the more will Stalinism thrive politically.

What has failed is not some vague thing publicists like to call the "conscience of humanity" but the specific anti-Stalinist policy of the bourgeois powers. By dint of a tremendous effort, they temporarily stopped the Russians in Berlin—only to have China conquered by Mao. The expansive possibilities for Stalinism in Asia are

at the moment very great: it is bleeding French imperialism to prostration in Indo-China, it is creating havoc in Burma, it is badly disrupting Malaya, Britain's last Pacific base. In the meantime, Stalinist strength in Western Europe, while possibly in decline, is not decisively less than two or three years ago. It still has the support, albeit less active, of great sections of the French and Italian workers, and though it cannot now take power in these countries, it could fatally disrupt them in case of war. In Germany the Stalinists are beginning to regain strength through a demagogic campaign for national unity. The rest of the world? A headline in the *New York Times* tells the story: "*Brazil Reds Busy, Though Outlawed—Social Conditions, High Living Costs Seen as Fertilizer for Underground Movement.*" Only in the United States have the Stalinists taken a serious beating—and great consolation indeed it must be to the State Department that Eugene Dennis will sit in jail while Mao rules China.

In their muddled and inarticulate way, the workers of Europe and the masses of Asia are determined never to accept the old world. Stalinism they take to be a new world, or perhaps a slightly tarnished version of it. So long as there seems no dynamic alternative, they will continue to accept Stalinism. It is a fact completely damning to the "official" anti-Stalinists that they have not succeeded in breaking the Stalinists' hold on any large section of their followers, and that the Stalinists have lost support among the masses only as a result of their own policies in Eastern Europe.

The bourgeois world is trapped in the insoluble contradiction that its inability to win enthusiastic, devoted political support in Europe and Asia, which is quite a different thing from

accepting U.S. dollars, drives it to relying ever more heavily on the techniques of military domination, which in turn alienate the masses of Europe and Asia even more. For remember: thus far the only nation that has used the A-bomb and announced the intended manufacture of the H-bomb is the U.S. This is the dialectic of disintegration in which Western capitalism is trapped; and from it there are only two ways out: a surrender to socialism, to conceive which is preposterous; or war, to conceive which is not at all preposterous. The decision to manufacture the H-bomb signifies, above all, the failure of a society. For a society that can survive only by reliance on weapons of mass incineration will not survive.

III

What is so curious, and so nauseating, about the discussion whether the H-bomb should be made or used is that to all practical purposes the A-bomb is now regarded as quite "normal." But we do not propose to accept any such notion nor do we propose to forget the fact that an official body of the U.S. government has itself declared the use of the A-bomb unjustified by military requirements.

President Truman, by comparison with whom Nero seems conscience-stricken, has said: "I made that decision [to use the A-bomb] because I thought 200,000 of our young men would be saved by making that decision and some three or four hundred thousands of the enemy would be saved. . . ."

This commendable humanitarianism is first called into question by the fact that 125,000 people *were* killed by the A-bomb. To slaughter so many people because others *might* in the future be killed if they were not slaughtered, is in itself a pretty dubious

piece of morality. (I constantly refer to morality in this article because I have recently been reading the works of David Shub.) But suppose it can be shown that there was no military need for dropping the A-bomb—what then becomes of the humanitarianism of our drowsy leader?

We are indebted to Jack Brad in *Labor Action* for publicizing a little-known report of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, an official government commission. The reader will understand why I reprint some of the excerpts from that report.

The survey, extraordinarily sober in language, reports that invasion was not the military alternative to atomic bombing of Japan.

By destroying his [the worker's] dwelling, by causing him and his family to evacuate burned-out cities, by disrupting and overtaxing transportation facilities, by arousing his fear to report to a place of work which he knew was a bombing target, by making his purchase of food and daily necessities more difficult and finally by lowering his "morale" — in other words *by employing the methods of the Wehrmacht over Coventry, of incendiary indiscriminate bombing, such a condition of general paralysis had been wrought that the economy was grinding to a standstill.* (My italics—R. F.) The responsible leaders in power read correctly the true situation and *embraced surrender well before invasion was expected.* (My emphasis—R. F.)

By "early 1945 . . . the enemy's principal problem was to give expression to its political decision to end the war." In May, 1945, the Japanese approached the "neutral" Russians, asking them for "Russian intercession to end the war." Whether the Russians communicated this proposal to the U.S. is not known, but it is almost inconceivable that they did not. (If the Russians did not, incidentally, the U.S. would have a tremendous propaganda point against them, for their possible failure to do so resulted in

the murder of 125,000 people; but then the fact that the U.S. has not even tried to make this point suggests that it *was* aware of the Japanese feeler.) The Russians turned down the Japanese proposal for reasons that are obvious: they were not yet in the Pacific war, and a too-hasty peace treaty would have excluded them from the spoils.

With a frankness exceeding the requirements of official morality, the Strategic Bombing Survey continues:

The Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs did not defeat Japan, nor by the testimony of the enemy leaders who ended the war did they persuade Japan to accept unconditional surrender. The emperor, the lord privy seal, the prime minister, the foreign minister and the navy minister had decided as early as May of 1945 that the war should be ended even if it meant acceptance of defeat on Allied terms.

And further:

Based on a detailed investigation of all the facts and supported by the testimony of the surviving Japanese leaders involved, it is the survey's opinion that certainly prior to 31 December 1945, and in all probability prior to November 1, 1945, *Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated.* (My emphasis—R.F.)

Every decent human being should engrave these words in this mind: they show that the U.S. stands guilty of having been the first power to use the atom bomb at a time when there was no military justification for doing so.

A footnote: it may be asked whether the U.S. was aware of these facts at the time. The overwhelming probability is that it was: Did not the Russians receive peace proposals from Japan? Was not the famous Sorge spy ring, by American boast, privy to the innermost political circles of Tokyo? Was U.S. Intelligence so inept as not

to know the dominant political temper of the Japanese leaders? Will the defenders of Truman plead ignorance as an excuse for mass murder?

IV

The liberal mind is a beautifully compartmentalized affair: it admires morality and lives by expediency. All too many liberals have no conception of the relation of an abstract moral standard to what is felt to be the press of necessity; they do not understand that precisely when necessity is invoked must it be most thoroughly measured against the larger moral standard. In their discussions of whether to manufacture the bomb, they first weep over the moral horror of it, and then pass to that compartment of immediacy where they sadly urge that more and larger bombs be made. Consequently, they implicitly confess that there is really no moral consideration involved in the actual decision: there is only preliminary moral dismay. But this puts them in the position which Richard Shufflebarger of Martinsville, Ind., a private citizen of admirable intelligence, has neatly pointed out in a letter recently printed in the *New York Times*:

Some have suggested that in this course [making the bomb] we have no freedom of choice, therefore no moral responsibility. If we have no moral responsibility for our actions, then by what right do we pass moral judgments on Stalin?

This strikes one as the most interesting question of the year.

V

The problem that haunts the popular mind is this: "To manufacture the H-bomb is terrible, to conceive of its use is even more terrible. but if 'we' do not make it and then the Russians do, they will have the world at their mercy; but since we do not want the Russians to have the world at their

mercy, we must ourselves make the bomb."

Aside from the fact that this argument ignores the distasteful consequences of "we" having the world at "our" mercy, it actually does pose the dilemma of those who think in terms of identification with the U.S. government. If one's thinking is circumscribed by the power struggle between the U.S. and Russia, and if one supports the U.S. in that struggle, then clearly one must regretfully conclude that the U.S. should make the bomb. (However, the argument cuts two ways, and one wonders whether the tyros of "orthodox Trotskyism" on the lower-right-hand corner of whose program there is still inscribed in 3-point type "the defense of the Soviet Union" will urge Stalin to manufacture the H-bomb to prevent capitalist encirclement—with the proviso of course that they could defend the workers' fatherland more effectively than the so-evidently "timid" Stalin. . . .)

That support of the U.S. *vis-à-vis* Russia, in however critical form, must logically lead to support of making the H-bomb (a conclusion from which the consistent *New Leader* does not hesitate), shows to what an extremity of political bankruptcy and moral desperation any involvement with status quo politics reduces one. If one accepts the dilemma as real, then one must choose between two courses, both of which will probably lead to the mass destruction of humanity.

The greatest crime of the bourgeois and Stalinist worlds is that they prevent political solutions to political problems: ultimately both rely on force or the threat of force in their struggle with each other, though the Stalinists, through their usurpation and corruption of the socialist dynamic, have also at their disposal power-

ful political weapons. This is the dead-end of the "lesser evil" policy—not only to face the prospect of mass murder but also to approve the preparations for it. The H-bomb makes ridiculous all talk of socialist "critical support" of the U.S., for it clearly shows that the only outcome of a new war would be the extermination of populations and the death of modern civilization.

To those who say that the H-bomb must be built because the survival of the American nation is as much a moral problem as the survival of humanity, Max Lerner has replied: "I do not deny that there is the moral problem of American national survival. Of course there is. But the whole point is that in a world where either we or the Russians would be willing to use instruments of mass extermination, neither could survive morally; and in the end neither could survive physically."

I predict that when the Last Judgment comes and the prosecuting attorney reads off the long, long list of Lerner's political stupidities, someone will offer this above paragraph and the celestial jury will say, "All right, for that let him sneak into heaven."

VI

What then of the advocates of "preventive war"? One can readily picture the brass in the Pentagon who curse the course of history and mutter to each other: "We should have dropped the bomb before the Russians got it; that would have been the clean and easy way of doing it. Now we're stuck." But these minds, which cannot be said to be superior to that of James Burnham, have never been able to understand the *consequence* of a "preventive war"—that it would rally Europe solidly behind Stalin; that it would drive the Russian masses into

the hands of Stalin; and that it would antagonize large sections of U.S. public opinion. Thus, in an odd way, politics does take its revenge on mere force, for it forces the advocates of force to rely on politics, which they rightly suspect and for which they know, and again rightly, that they have no true vocation. In a world of horror there are still a few minor compensations of observation.

VII

The only political response from bourgeois circles to the H-bomb that even shows an effort to think is the speech of Senator McMahon of Connecticut. It is a speech of evident sincerity, and his phrase that the U.S. would be "incinerated" in the case of a new war is worth remembering. And he at least understands what the pathetic mediocrity who sits in the White House serenely pronouncing his faith in "man's higher nature," does not understand: that the solution to the crisis can only be political. "Let me warn," says McMahon, "that building hydrogen bombs does not promise positive security for the United States; it only promises the negative result of averting for a few months or years, well-nigh certain catastrophe."

So far as it goes, we must support any proposal to use American resources to reconstruct devastated areas of the world, while insisting that national sovereignty in those areas not be threatened. But the ultimate emptiness of McMahon's proposal is that it has no *political* content. The world shall be reconstructed with U.S. aid—good. But under whose control? Who shall rule this world? Shall the Chinese Stalinists be allowed or helped to consolidate their power? Who shall control Germany? Indo-China? These are the real problems

of the struggle between the U.S. and Russia, and even if the McMahon plan were carried through with maximum effectiveness, it would not in the slightest solve these problems.

VIII

But there is one point in McMahon's speech that is of great importance. Even, he says, if the "cold war" continues indefinitely without erupting into a hot one,

. . . it would undermine and corrupt that which we prize more highly even than the absence of hostilities: I refer to liberty. How is it possible for free institutions to flourish or even to maintain themselves in a situation where defenses, civil and military, must be ceaselessly poised to meet an attack that might incinerate fifty million Americans? . . . Consider, too, the restrictions on freedom already brought about by the atomic bomb and by its pressure upon us to accept loyalty checks, espionage counter-measures, and widening areas of official secrecy. . . . *To stay alive we will find ourselves more and more compelled to imitate the totalitarian rival.* (My emphasis—R.F.)

This is a passage that might well be pondered by those theoreticians of the "new liberalism," such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who see a gradual unfoldment of one New Deal euphoria into another, as well as by those who look to a passage into the liberal paradise greased by the lubricants of "mixed economy." We even go so far as to call it to the attention of Walter Reuther whose response to the H-bomb has been to suggest that we adhere to the Christian way of life. The Christian way of life having been defined by the Vatican as support of the H-bomb, we suggest that Reuther, as a self-proclaimed architect of the future, try again.

IX

In the meantime, the scientists mourn. They are the most conspicu-

ous and pathetic victims of that process of mental atomization that has inflicted American intellectual life. For decades they have been notoriously indifferent to politics, notoriously and proudly confined to their "specialty." Now their specialty has erupted into their faces, leaving them with the sour splatter of guilt. But it should not be imagined that this guilt has produced very much heroism.

What shall the scientists do? We leave aside for the moment the question of what they should do as human beings, though they are now belatedly recognizing that they *are* human beings. What shall they do as scientists in relation to their scientific work? And here one hears a variety of conscience rumblings, but with little effect.

One scientist, Norbert Wiener, has offered a consistent answer: the use of the atom bomb, he has said, is unjustified in any terms; he refuses to have anything to do with the manufacture of such weapons; and he will not place his very great talents at the disposal of those who make the bombs. Harold Urey, in the *New Leader* of February 11, says simply: "The H-bomb must be built." He regrets it, of course, as who does not, but . . .

Then the 12 leading atomic scientists who published a statement after the H-bomb was announced, have this to say:

Few of the men who publicly urged the President to make this decision can have realized its full import. . . . No nation has the right to use such a bomb, no matter how righteous its cause. This bomb is no longer a weapon of war but a means of extermination of whole populations. Its use would be a betrayal of all standards of morality. . . . To create such an ever present peril for all the nations in the world is against the vital interests of both Russia and the United States.

I think all the data necessary for

determining what should be the course of the individual scientist is available in the above statement: if the H-bomb should not be used in no matter how righteous a cause; if it can no longer even be called a weapon of war; if it betrays all standards of morality; and if (precipitous anticlimax) it is even against the interests of the powers that will manufacture it—then by what conceivable argument can the scientists say that Norbert Wiener's stand is incorrect. How can they justify their continued participation in the manufacture of such weapons?

To this view I may anticipate two objections:

1. *It is impossible to distinguish between scientific work dedicated to the H-bomb and scientific work of a general theoretical nature, for the latter is the basis of the former.* This is partly true, and it would be quixotic to urge scientists to cease being scientists. So long as they do their work, their discoveries can be used for destruction or creation. But there is clearly a distinction between a scientist whose theoretical discoveries, perhaps in the form of mathematical notations, make possible the H-bomb, and the scientist who then uses these notations to make the bomb.

2. *The problem of what the individual scientist should do is not a political problem, but a personal one; your proposal verges on conscientious objection; the scientist would do best by becoming a socialist.* That scientists should become socialists goes without saying, but that they should do as men; what should they do as scientists? I am not at all frightened by the accusation of pacifism, which at the moment seems to me one of the few conceivably honorable positions. But I am greatly concerned with the kind of argument that says the course of action for an individual is not the con-

cern of a political movement. We are not called upon to give advice to scientists, and it would be absurd for us to issue slogans telling them what to do; but we have every right, and in fact every obligation, to have firm opinions on the question. In the present world, as of course in every other, what is important is not merely what one says or believes, but also what one does. The position of Norbert Wiener makes clear that he at least refuses to invent devices that are "no longer a weapon of war but a means of extermination of whole populations." As such, he is performing what I take to be a highly moral act—and I see no reason (at least I hope I don't) for the suspicion with which some socialists view the word "moral." To say that atomic energy can be used for either good or bad purposes is true; but in question is what the scientist should do when it is used for bad purposes. And in such a situation, *merely* to say that he should become a socialist is, I think, sheer cant.

A footnote: The United Press of February 16 reports:

"Explosion of the first hydrogen bomb might cause the world and all in it to disintegrate in less than a minute," Dr. Allan Munn, one of Canada's foremost physicists, said today. He continued: "I would have preferred to see nobody make the H-bomb. . . . My sympathy, however, is with the U. S. in its decision to go ahead with production."

If what Dr. Munn says is true, then there is not even the "if-we-don't-do-it-first-Stalin-will" justification for the H-bomb, for while it is conceivable that Stalin wants to rule the world there is no particular reason to suppose he wants to blow it up; consequently, no reason to suppose that he, or anyone else, would employ the H-bomb. Hence, why make it? Unless it is that the moral superiority of "our" blowing up the world first is self-evi-

dent . . . Dr. Munn qualifies as one of the great political realists of the age, the James Burnham of the atomic scientists.

X

The mindless prattle for "world government" continues. What is so false about the Federalist movement is not that it seems far from achieving its aims (an objection that would hardly be tasteful for socialists to make), but that its aims are, by their very nature, impossible of realization and internally contradictory. A world government, we are told, would eliminate the danger of atomic war. Perhaps. But which of the two contending power blocs will dominate that world government? Is there any reason to suppose that one side will voluntarily surrender its sovereignty to the other, and in the absence of such a surrender would not world government be little more than (a) a mere consolidation of one side, or (b) a joke? The World Federalist movement is a mere expression of good wishes, which would not necessarily, in this grim moment, be so bad were it not thoroughly committed to persuading and cajoling the governments in power, were it not thoroughly permeated with the psychology of accepting the status quo. It is here that the important difference between the U. S. World Federalist movement and the French movement symbolized by Garry Davis is seen: the former is committed to the cementing of the governments in power, the latter, however confusedly, to resisting the governments in power. In that distinction is the essence of politics.

XI

A new alignment, it seems to me, is being enforced in politics. On the one side stand all those who, for whatever reason, favor the politics and the pro-

duction of the H-bomb: it would be idle to deny the many different motivations behind their agreement, but it would be naive to deny that what binds them—acquiescence in the means of mass incineration—must ultimately overwhelm their differences. On the other side stand all those who, for whatever reason, oppose the manufacture and the politics of the H-bomb: the independent socialists, the pacifists, and the scattered handful of radicals who have not become Social-Democrats. I believe that this is the fundamental political alignment of the day, that the H-bomb has become the fundamental touchstone of one's political position and human qualification. This—and not one's theoretical views about the nature of the state or the role of Bolshevism, or the permissibility of violence or the "dictatorship of the proletariat"—is what splits the world in two: politically, intellectually, morally. And if we socialists, handful that we are, must stand alone with another handful of pacifists and radicals, so be it. The general theoretical differences between ourselves and the pacifists remain; in other circumstances those differences will seem more significant than they do today. But now the central fact is that only we and they have spoken out against this means of mass incineration; and I propose that, so far as is practically possible and without blurring our differences in motivation, we should speak together.

One of the things we socialists must say, I am convinced, is that under no conceivable circumstances would a socialist society, even if locked in struggle with a capitalist or Stalinist enemy, use H-bombs. We are not pacifists and we recognize, for example, that if a socialist government were attacked by a counter-revolutionary reaction, that government would have the right to

use force in self-defense. (Incidentally, how one must restrain oneself on this question of force: consider the sheer ugliness of the spectacle of people who denounce the almost bloodless assumption of power by the Bolsheviks and yet approve the murder of 125,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.) But while recognizing the permissibility of force in certain circumstances of self-defense, one cannot conceive that a socialist government could condemn the population of an enemy city, say, to total extermination: such methods would only besmirch its claim to political and moral superiority. Force used in self-defense by a socialist government would, in any case, be a mere last resort and by no means a major one; for we are convinced that such a society would have its program, its ethos, its achievement as a major rallying point.

In the absence of such an unqualified declaration, we would be in no moral position to condemn the H-bomb: we could still condemn the society that leads to its use, but not the use of this particular weapon. Yet everyone feels, and rightly, that there is something "different" about atomic weapons, and surely this common feeling is not without foundation. The objective of war is, or until recently has been, to destroy the enemy's army; the only *possible* objective of atomic bombing is to destroy populations. Admittedly, there are intermediary means of warfare which tend to combine the two, but there is a clear difference in consequence between a rifle or machine-gun which kills the soldier of an invading army trying to destroy a socialist state and the atom bomb which destroys a city. The former socialists may, at times, find themselves forced to use; the latter, they never should.

But is this distinction valid in

theory? One can readily imagine a pacifist saying: "How absurd. Do you really think that in principle there is any difference between one man killing another with a rifle bullet on the battlefield and an H-bomb killing 250,000 people in a city? On what moral ground can you claim the latter to be 'worse' than the former?" There is much point to this argument, I think, and we must grant that in terms of that general moral standard by which we should like to be able to live and by which we hope to mold the society of the future, the atom bomb is not morally superior to the rifle bullet. But the distinction holds nonetheless. Pacifism is based on an absolute standard of values to which socialists adhere: our vision of the good society is one as committed to non-violence as that of the pacifists. However, we do not believe, as do the pacifists, that the means to achieve this end can be qualitatively equivalent to the end itself: were that possible, there would be no distinction between means and end, there would be no need to move *towards* the end, for the end would already exist in the means employed. The means is a tense connective between the undesired present and the desired end: it must be realistic enough to make possible effective action within the present, but it must be sufficiently tinged with the ideal qualities of the end to make certain that, in fact, the end is reached. This, I think, is the general justification for the possible use of force in certain sharply delimited situations: it cannot be a justification for the use of atomic weapons, for these weapons destroy not a demarcated enemy, but humanity itself.

XII

Are there at present any proposals or slogans that socialists might propose or support *vis-à-vis* the H-bomb?

I would suggest two, but with the preliminary warning that their possible effectiveness is highly limited. The major criterion for such proposals is simply this: do they direct the masses of people against the two power blocs that threaten human incineration? If they do, then they are desirable, regardless of their limitations, their "impracticability," or their departure from "traditional" socialist slogans.

I think we should support the demand put forward by the atomic scientists that the U. S. government issue a statement declaring that it will not be the first to use the H-bomb. The utility of such a demand, or for that matter such a promise, is obviously limited; but the fact that the U. S. might not adhere to such a promise should be no deterrent to raising the demand. On the contrary; for even as the demand is raised, it should be pointed out that the U. S. bears a heavy responsibility for having been the first to drop the A-bomb. The only known instance of both sides in a war agreeing not to use a weapon is with regard to poison gas, and that for the obvious reason that poison gas may be as harmful to those who employ it on a battlefield as to those against whom it is directed. At the same time, it should be noted that poison gas was not used in bombing raids against cities, where it would certainly have been extremely "effective." If then, in case of another war, there were a covenant not to use atomic weapons, for reasons similar to the agreement not to use poison gas, that would surely be a valuable thing for humanity—though it is admittedly difficult to imagine such a situation. In the interim, the demand for a government declaration not to drop the H-bomb may become a popular one; we should propose its extension to all atomic weapons; and so

long as it results in the slightest flicker of revolt against the war-makers, we should support it.

In Europe particularly and perhaps too in the United States, socialists should consider the advisability of raising the following demand: that all nations simultaneously engage in atomic disarmament and that this disarmament be checked, not by the UN which is nothing more than a grouping of the nations themselves, but by representatives of the mass popular organizations, such as the free trade unions, helped by scientific specialists able to provide the information these representatives are not likely to have themselves.

To some people, concerned with piety rather than politics, this may seem a retreat to the slogan of "disarmament" which the movement has always rejected. But it is necessary to think of these things in some sort of context. When Lenin rejected the slogan of disarmament in the years after the first world war, he did so, among other reasons, because it would breed "pacifist illusions" among the masses and because, he said, it was necessary to prepare for the assumption of socialist power. But that situation does not exist today: there is nowhere in the world the slightest immediate possibility for the assumption of socialist power, as there was in 1920, and the existence of "pacifist illusions" among the European masses would today hardly be a catastrophe. Lenin feared "pacifist illusions" at a time when they might be counterposed to mass revolutionary activity, at a time when the bourgeois governments were themselves talking a good deal about disarmament.

But today the great danger in Europe is, not the illusion of pacifism, but the illusion of passivity. The great danger is that the masses of Euro-

peans will feel themselves helpless and hopeless victims of a war they never made, and will relapse into fatalism, as in part they have. Therefore, today to raise a slogan such as the one I have suggested might perhaps be a means of stirring them from passivity. That is the significance of the Garry Davis movement. People who take a totally negative attitude toward the Garry Davis movement because Davis is not a socialist or because of his alleged intellectual insufficiency, show that they understand absolutely nothing about politics. The significant question is: does Davis' movement cause discomfort to both groups of warmakers? does it attack both sides? does it represent a stirring among people who begin to feel that perhaps they may yet determine their own fate? That is the way to judge such movements, and correspondingly such slogans as I have proposed. Today the pacifism of the masses, to the degree that it exists, is a healthy instinctive reaction against the murder-plans of the rulers. We must work with such tendencies, encourage them, educate them—and *learn from them*. I italicize this last phrase because all too often the assumption of many Marxists has been that they can learn from no one but themselves. The events of the past two decades, among them the collapse of the large, or-

ganized Marxist movement, should teach us otherwise.

XIII

Even at their best, even if greeted enthusiastically by large numbers of people, such slogans are only of limited significance. For it is possible that we are entering a period beyond slogans, a period in which the fundamental social responses are merely acquiescence or resistance. The Marxist movement has always been susceptible to a fetishism of slogans, an assumption that if only the "correct" slogans were put in the editorial box of a well- or badly-written newspaper, then all would be on the way to being well. In any case, as we approach the ultimate convulsion of modern society, "slogans" are of increasingly minor significance. For society drives humanity to some situations that cannot be remedied by partial actions, and in which it is necessary to say: our only solution is to change the world.

And why not? What else is there? It is very possible that there will be no way of preventing the powers from beginning the war toward which they move; but if that is so, let it be said that there were some men who, in the sea of blood, did not acquiesce. More than personal honor and integrity are at stake, but if that were all it would surely be enough.

R. FAHAN

Subscribe now to **THE NEW INTERNATIONAL**

4 Court Square, Long Island City 1, N. Y.

Rates: \$2.00 per year, \$1.00 for six months

Name.....

Address.....

City..... Zone..... State.....

A Letter From David Shub

Defending His Biography of Lenin

To the Editors of
THE NEW INTERNATIONAL:

My attention has been called to Mr. Max Shachtman's article on my book *Lenin, A Biography* in your December 1949 issue. I am sufficiently familiar with the tradition of Bolshevik polemics not to be surprised by the abusive and defamatory character of Mr. Shachtman's review. I reply in your columns only because I believe I am entitled to keep the record clear on the facts upon which Mr. Shachtman rests his case. (I am quite prepared to believe, unless the contrary is proved, that many of Mr. Shachtman's errors are the product of inadequate grounding in the source materials rather than of deliberate malice.)

1. Mr. Shachtman questions the authenticity of my Lenin quotation on the role of a dictator in the Soviet state. Says Mr. Shachtman, after quoting from the *English* edition of Lenin's *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 334: "Nothing else that even faintly resembles Shub's quotation can be found in this article." Had Mr. Shachtman turned to the first *Russian* edition of Lenin's *Collected Works* (Vol. 17, pp. 133, 89), published in Moscow in 1923, and the second *Russian* edition (Vol. 25, p. 144, Moscow, 1928), he would have found the passages cited in my book.

My paragraph summarizing Lenin's utterances on the role of the dictators in a Soviet state are taken from the following sources:

(a) "Classes are led by parties, and parties are led by individuals who are called leaders. . . ." "Left-Wing Com-

munist, an Infantile Disorder" (April 1920), to be found in first Russian edition of Lenin's *Collected Works* of 1923, edited by Kamenev. Vol. 17, p. 133.

(b) "The will of a class is sometimes fulfilled by a dictator. . . . Soviet socialist democracy is not in the least incompatible with individual rule and dictatorship. . . ."—from the speech "Economic Development" before the Ninth Communist Party Congress delivered March 31, 1920, to be found in the first Russian edition of Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 89.

(c) "What is necessary is individual rule, the recognition of the dictatorial powers of one man. . . . All phrases about equal rights are nonsense."—from a speech before the Third All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions on April 7, 1920, to be found in the *second* Russian edition of Lenin's *Collected Works*, 1928, edited by Bukharin, Molotov and Stepanov-Skvortsov, Vol. 25, p. 144.

There is an error in the book attributing these statements to Lenin in 1918; all of them were made by him in 1920. This of course is irrelevant. The last phrase (about equal rights) was omitted in the first Russian edition of the *Collected Works*, which was taken by the editor, Kamenev, from the *Pravda* rather than from a stenographic account of the meeting. It does appear, however, in the second Russian edition of the *Collected Works*.

What I attempted to do on page 68 of my book was to give a quick preview of Lenin's views when *in power*,

as contrasted with what he was writing in the 1904 period. This is obvious by reading the paragraph in its context. *In extenso* quotations of this and similar character are to be found elsewhere in the book, and in the appendix ("Essentials of Leninism").

2. Mr. Shachtman finds it impossible to believe that when Martov, the veteran Russian Socialist leader—addressing the German Independent Socialist Party Congress in Halle in 1920—spoke of the wholesale terror which Gregory Zinoviev had conducted in Petrograd, there were outcries in the hall of "Hangman" and "Bandit" directed at Zinoviev. Because these words do not appear in the published minutes, he claims they are a forgery. Mr. Shachtman goes on to charge that I invented the speech by Rudolf Hilferding, leader of the German Independent Socialists, which is quoted in the book. "*It does not exist!*" Mr. Shachtman proclaims in italics. Had Mr. Shachtman pursued his research beyond the minutes to the Berlin *Freiheit*, official organ of the Independent Socialist Party (editor-in-chief, Rudolf Hilferding), he would have found the epithets "hangman" and "bandit" hurled at Zinoviev, as well as the Hilferding speech—including Hilferding's words, quoted in my book, which remain a classic Socialist indictment of Bolshevism.

Between us and the Bolsheviks there is not only a wide theoretical difference, but an impassable moral gulf. We realize that they are people with quite a different morality and ethics.

I must confess that I am partly responsible for Mr. Shachtman's error with regard to Zinoviev. In Note 22 of Chapter 18 of my book, I refer to the minutes of the Halle Congress where the words "hangman" and "bandit" were omitted. But this oversight is corrected by Note 13 of Chap-

ter 19, which refers to the more complete account published in the *Freiheit* at the time.

What occurred at Halle was that after the decision of the pro-Moscow wing to unite with the Communists and to join the Third International, the Hilferding forces walked out and reassembled in another auditorium, retaining their identity as the Independent Socialist Party. It was here that Hilferding delivered his fine speech, published in the *Freiheit*, which Mr. Shachtman kindly credits me with inventing.

The Martov and Hilferding addresses were carried not only in the *Freiheit* but in other Socialist publications in Europe (including the *Volia Rossii* of November 1, 1920, published in Prague under the editorship of Victor Chernov, chairman of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly which Lenin dissolved in January 1918).

3. Mr. Shachtman cannot believe former Bolshevik Alexander Naglovsky's testimony as to the ruthless measures taken against lax Communist officials by War Commissar Trotsky when Petrograd was threatened by White General Yudenich. I see no particular reason to doubt Naglovsky's word. His reputation for veracity was high among such socialists as Boris Nicolaevsky and George Denicke, who knew him personally. He withdrew from the Bolshevik movement between the two revolutions—as did Leonid Krassin and others—but later rejoined it. At the time of Yudenich's attack, he was transport commissar of the Northern Commune, which included Petrograd.

If Mr. Shachtman were to turn to pp. 467-469 of Trotsky's *My Life*, he would find that Trotsky makes a special point of emphasizing the blanket

powers of life and death delegated to him by Lenin during the civil war. I quote from Trotsky:

In circumstances as serious as those of civil war, with its necessity of making hasty and irrevocable decisions, some of which might have been mistaken, Lenin gave his signature in advance to any decision that I might consider necessary in the future. And these were decisions that carried life or death with them.

There is no suggestion in my book that Trotsky's summary measures to restore Bolshevik discipline in Petrograd were prompted by his "lusting for blood," as Mr. Shachtman would have the reader believe.

Here Mr. Shachtman seems to underrate the late War Commissar's role as the main organizer of Bolshevik victory in the civil war, by refusing to credit him with the iron tenacity of purpose which so many Soviet documents from 1917 through the Kronstadt uprising amply illustrate. Since I was writing a biography of Lenin, not of Trotsky, I saw no need to belabor the point.

4. My chapter on Kronstadt causes Mr. Shachtman particular discomfort, apparently because of Trotsky's leading part in the suppression of the uprising. One would assume from reading Mr. Shachtman's article that my account of what happened in Kronstadt between March 1 and March 17, 1921 is derived solely from Roman Goul's book on Tukhachevsky. (Mr. Shachtman's major indictment against Roman Goul—who is now editor of the excellent Russian periodical, *Narodnaya Pravda*—is that during World War I he was an officer in the Russian army and—horror of horrors!—that in 1918 he served in the army which fought the Bolsheviks and the Germans in southern Russia. I, for one, do not believe that that is sufficient evidence to discredit a man's writings

and label him a liar and "nonentity" as Mr. Shachtman does.)

But the evidence on Kronstadt does not rest on Goul's testimony, as Mr. Shachtman implies. The chapter is based on many other sources, including the newspaper of the revolting sailors, the *Izvestia of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of the Sailors, Red Army Men, and Workers of the City of Kronstadt* (which incidentally referred to Trotsky as "the bloody Field Marshal"). These documents, namely the testimony of the sailors themselves, were published in photostat form in a book entitled *The Truth About Kronstadt*, which appeared in Prague in 1921 (see Note 4, Chapter 20, of my book).

I would also commend to Mr. Shachtman's attention the memoirs of Alexander Berkman, the noted American radical who was in Russia at the time. Berkman wrote:

March 17—Kronstadt has fallen today. Thousands of sailors and workers lie dead in the streets. Summary execution of prisoners and hostages continues.

Or does Mr. Shachtman seriously dispute Trotsky's role in the suppression of the Kronstadt revolt? Does he prefer the version given by the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, Moscow, 1945, p. 250:

Against the Kronstadt mutineers the party sent its finest sons—delegates to the Tenth Congress, headed by Comrade Voroshilov.

5. At this late date, Mr. Shachtman still cannot reconcile himself to the simple fact that the German General Staff was instrumental in Lenin's return to Russia in April 1917 ("Our government, in sending Lenin to Russia took upon itself a tremendous responsibility," wrote General Ludendorff in his memoirs. "From a military point of view, his journey was justifi-

fied, for it was imperative that Russia should fall.")

Still less can he face the fact that Lenin had no compunctions about accepting German financial help to pay for the Bolshevik propaganda drive among soldiers, workers and peasants that preceded the overthrow of the provisional government. In my book, I pointed out that in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky dodged this subject by ridiculing the "minor intelligence service agents and rumors published in the reactionary press in 1917," without answering the documented charges.

Mr. Shachtman does much the same. He writes:

A little closer, the most the "evidence" [in my book—D. S.] indicates is that Lenin in Petrograd received "2000 (rubles? marks? crowns?) from a Bolshevik in Stockholm. Koslovsky, who had business dealings with another Bolshevik there, Ganetsky, who in turn was connected commercially with Parvus, the former Russo-German revolutionist who had turned German imperial propagandist in the First World War."

If the reader turns to pp. 211-216 of my book, he will discover a great deal more. He will learn of financial transactions between Berlin, Stockholm and Petrograd revealed through the interception of 29 telegrams exchanged between the Bolshevik intermediaries who handled the transfer of funds for the party. Instead of the nebulous "2000" at which Mr. Shachtman tilts, we find that 800,000 rubles were withdrawn from the Siberian Bank in Petrograd within two months by a confessed Bolshevik go-between. We find an admission by the same individual (who handled funds which reached the Siberian Bank from the Disconto Gesellschaft in Berlin via the Nea Bank of Stockholm) that she had instructions "to give Koslovsky, then a Bolshevik member of the So-

viet Executive Committee, any sum of money he demanded; some of these payments amounted to 100,000 rubles."

We find Mr. Shachtman ignoring the evidence on German-Bolshevik financial dealings in 1917 supplied by Thomas Masaryk, as well as the correspondence between Jacques Sadoul, then French military attaché in Petrograd and later a Communist, and French Socialist Minister Albert Thomas, which provided further corroboration on the transfer of German money to the Bolshevik Party treasury. We find Mr. Shachtman ignoring the revealing admission made by Ganetsky in the Soviet press on April 15, 1937 (see p. 213 of my book).

Mr. Shachtman's crowning dialectic feat is his "refutation" of the testimony of Eduard Bernstein published in the Berlin *Vorwaerts* on January 14, 1921, by referring to a Social-Democratic pamphlet issued two years earlier whose contents were, of course, known to Bernstein.

"When the German Communists," writes Mr. Shachtman, "challenged Bernstein for proof, for his evidence, for his witnesses, he blustered a feeble reply but did not produce anything—neither then nor any other time."

How feeble was Bernstein's reply? Six days after his first article—on January 20, 1921,—he wrote:

My reply can be very short. . . . As author of the article I am responsible for its assertions and am therefore entirely ready to support them before a court. The *Rote Fahne* (German Communist organ) need not set in motion its alarm-and-cudgel guards against me. Let it bring charges against me, or let it get a legal representative of Lenin's to do this, and it may rest assured that I will do my best to dispose of all the difficulties that might stand in the way of a thorough-going investigation of this affair.

The Communist press preferred not

to accept Bernstein's challenge. That the evidence was not aired in open court was certainly not Eduard Bernstein's fault.

As for Alexinsky, he was *never* a member of the Central Committee, nor do I ever suggest that he was. Shachtman erects a straw-man by making it appear that Alexinsky is the "member of the Bolshevik Central Committee" referred to by Pereverzev, the Socialist Minister of Justice. Pereverzev did not name his informant, and I do not pretend to know whom he had in mind. Moreover, this point is completely irrelevant, since it was only the original tip-off that was supplied by the unnamed "member of the Bolshevik Central Committee."

I answer further only because of Alexinsky's connection with the story of Elizapeth K. (see note 11, page 403 of my book) to which Shachtman also takes violent exception. Gregory Alexinsky split with Lenin in about 1909 to form an independent Left-Bolshevik group that included Bogdanov, Lunacharsky, Maxim Gorky, and Menzhinsky. Following the outbreak of World War I, Alexinsky collaborated with Plekhanov on Socialist publications which supported the war, and conducted an active campaign not only against Lenin, but against Trotsky and against the internationalist Mensheviks who followed the defeatist line. He did charge fairly early that Lenin's propaganda, as well as that of Rakovsky in Rumania, was financed by the Germans. For this he was pounced on by the Bolsheviks and "internationalists" and labeled a "slanderer" (the term "psychopathic personality" was unknown at the time). The most virulent assaults on Alexinsky emanated from Trotsky and and it is probably these that Shacht-

man picked up. Despite these attacks, Alexinsky continued to work with Plekhanov until the latter's death in 1918. As a matter of fact, Irakli Tseretelli, the Menshevik spokesman in the Soviet and himself an "internationalist," has told me that Plekhanov refused to join the Executive of the Soviet as long as Alexinsky was excluded. In the elections to the Constituent Assembly, Alexinsky ran on the Plekhanov ticket. Following his departure from Russia, Alexinsky advocated a united front of all anti-Bolshevik forces, from Right Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries to Monarchists. I have read most of what Alexinsky has written since his departure from Russia. I found nothing indicating that he is either "an extreme reactionary" or an "outright anti-Semite" as Shachtman suggests. As recently as 1947, Alexinsky's *La Russie Révolutionnaire* was published by the Librairie Armand Colin in Paris.

6. It remains for Professor Kinsey to determine why Mr. Shachtman blushes at the account of Lenin's relationship with Elizabeth K. I find nothing in it derogatory to Lenin. On the contrary, it belongs among those pages which Shachtman generously admits, present the human side of the man. Moreover, in Note 11 on p. 403 of my book, I go to considerable length to indicate the source of the evidence on the relationship, and the credence given by me to the various details. On this subject, Paul Berline, an early Russian Marxist, contemporary of Lenin, and author of the first Russian biography of Karl Marx (republished in the Soviet Union while Lenin was alive), wrote not long ago:

In David Shub's excellent biography of Lenin, where all the facts are carefully checked on the basis not only of a detailed study of the entire literature on

Lenin, but also on conversations about him with people who knew him intimately, the author devotes attention to the memoirs of Elizabeth K., and he has taken from them several episodes which characterize Lenin.

There is not the slightest doubt [writes Berline] that the story is based on original letters of Lenin and on the authentic memoirs of Elizabeth. This may be seen from the many details that only a person who knew Lenin intimately could have known.

By way of conclusion I should like to say that I understand why the Lenin book wounded Mr. Shachtman so

deeply that he had to find release in the defamation of its author. I do not for a moment question the ardor of Mr. Shachtman's Bolshevism and his profound emotional ties with two of its main architects—Lenin and Trotsky. But the record which my book tries to spell out was not written by me, but by these very men and their successors. And only by facing that record squarely and fearlessly can Mr. Shachtman hope to emerge from his present psychological No Man's Land.

DAVID SHUB

A Reply by Max Shachtman

Reiterating His Accusations Against Shub

Mr. Shub, familiar with the tradition of Bolshevik polemics, is not surprised that I abused, libeled and defamed him in my review of his book. He asks for space in our pages only because his claimed devotion to facts entitles him to it. That he should make this claim is not surprising either. But what is really impressive is the unselfishness he showed in denying himself the pleasures of this devotion to facts wherever it interfered with devotion to his opinions. Whether he has modified this unselfishness by so much as a hair in his reply to my review, the reader will judge. I will deal with Shub's letter point by point.

1. In his first point, Shub suggests that my "error" comes from checking his version of what Lenin wrote with an English edition of Lenin's writings, whereas I should have gone, as he went, to the original Russian editions of Lenin's works, where I would have found Shub's quotations from Lenin which are not to be found in the British edition. By this suggestion, Shub evidently feels that he has suc-

ceeded in mitigating his first fraud by substituting another.

In his book (p. 68), Shub quotes what Lenin wrote "with remarkable frankness," as soon as "power was in his hands," that is, "in 1918." In checking the passage, I was under no greater obligation than to reread everything written by Lenin in that year. This obligation I fulfilled. As I wrote, the closest I could come to anything resembling what Shub quotes from Lenin, was the latter's *Izvestia* article of April 28, 1918. I simply used the British edition because it was handy and obviated the need of another translation. The suggestion that the British edition is somehow deficient is quite groundless, at least with regard to the passages I cited—they are the same in the British, Russian, French, German or Greek editions.

And the Russian editions referred to by Shub? They cover the speeches and writings of Lenin in 1920! Shub now admits that the error in date in his book is his own, and not "the product of [Shachtman's] inadequate grounding in the source materials."

That would already weaken the effect he seeks to convey by his quotations of what Lenin said "in 1918." What effect? That while Lenin was cunning enough not to say in so many words that he saw himself as "a future dictator" before the 1917 revolution; that while he came forward as a freedom-fighter before then; he put his real dictator's cards on the table when "power was in his hands," right after the revolution, "in 1918" (or as it is now, in 1920). Which goes to prove what point? That Lenin was, at bottom, not different from Stalin. That Lenin, unscrupulous demagogue that he was, tricked the Russian people into letting him impose his despotism over the nation.

But isn't the change in date a small matter, after all? Aren't the quotations from Lenin—be they from 1918 or from 1920—the important matter?

All right, just bear in mind what Shub is trying to prove by the quotations: Lenin, once in power, began to justify, "with remarkable frankness," his rule as dictator. Shub means it in the same sense that Stalin is the dictator in Russia today, or Hitler in Germany yesterday. Now let us look at the 1920 quotations, and in the unexceptionable original Russian editions, at that.

Shub quotes six sentences from Lenin. Upon checking, we find:

The first two sentences, from which Shub cavalierly omits entire phrases, are part of a polemic against some German ultra-lefts in Lenin's "*Left-Wing*" *Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, written on April 27, 1920.

The next two sentences have absolutely no connection with the first two, either in time, space or circumstance (apart from the fact that in the original Russian the order of the phrases is the reverse of the one given

by Shub). They are part of Lenin's speech on economic construction delivered on March 31, 1920, to the Ninth Congress of the Bolshevik party.

The last two sentences, finally, have absolutely no connection with the four preceding them. Rather, the only connection is made by periods, dots, which Shub keeps handy in a tray and with which he intersperses all his quotations, not only here but time and again. These two sentences are part of Lenin's speech on April 7, 1920 before the Third All-Russian Trade Union Congress.

This method of tearing quotations out of their context, or out of several different contexts, then combining them with dots and presenting them as though they represented the straight-line thought of their author, is a familiar device of every yellow journalist and literary fraud. In countless instances, it has been used to twist and distort the true views of a person, to make him appear responsible for the very opposite of what he really stands for. Take anyone who often writes and speaks publicly—let us say, Norman Thomas, or Dwight Macdonald. By ingeniously cutting up their various public utterances and stringing the bleeding fragments together with the necessary dots, they could be made out to be apologists for Fascism or, heaven forbid, for Bolshevism itself. What would they call such an artist if they caught him red-handed? Or, suppose they could find an instance in Lenin's writings where he could be convicted of quoting this way from a political adversary—just one single instance. What an occasion that would be for outraged outpourings on the morality (immorality) and ethics (unethicalness) of Bolshevism! The fact that Shub resorts to

this method of quotation is enough to give us his measure and to establish the value of his book.

What did Shub string together in his sentences? The first two simply state a commonplace view held not only by Bolsheviks but by any number of bourgeois sociologists: "classes are led by parties" and "parties are led by leaders." Shub tries to make that sound sinister by tacking on a few more sentences which deal with the question of "individual rule" and the "dictatorial powers of one man." Shub quotes these phrases to show that Lenin was defending a concept of dictatorship like that of Hitler-Stalin, with himself as the dictator. What is Lenin talking about? I already indicated Lenin's views on that subject in my review in the December, 1949, issue. In 1920, that is still what Lenin is talking about, namely, the necessity of investing individuals with "dictatorial" powers *in the process of production, but always under the control of Soviet democracy*. In the very speeches from which Shub carves out his quotations, Lenin refers to this again and again, so that there cannot possibly be any mistake about it. Lenin is arguing for individual administration and, above all, responsibility, and against "collegial" (board) administration and responsibility in factories and industries. Shub himself, for example, may favor the idea of the *Daily Forward* printing-plant being managed by a board of five foremen instead of one foreman with plenary powers. Lenin himself may be right or wrong on this score, but what he is advocating is clear as day and has nothing—*nothing at all or in any sense*—to do with what Shub is trying to make him advocate. Thus:

But regardless of that, the *unconditional subordination* to a united will is an absolute necessity for the success of

the labor processes which are organized after the type of big machine industry. For the railroads it is doubly and trebly necessary. (Speech at the 9th Congress.)

[Again] And our whole task, the task of the party of the Communists (Bolsheviks) who give conscious expression to the aspirations of the exploited for emancipation, consists in recognizing this turn, to grasp the necessity for it, to stand at the head of the exhausted mass which seeks a way out, to lead them along the right road, the road of objective discipline, of composing the holding of meetings on working conditions with unconditional subordination to the will of the Soviet director [i.e., industry managers], of the dictator *during work*. (*Ibid.*, emphasis in original.)

[And again] We must learn to combine the stormy, overflowing, democratic meeting-life of the toiling masses with *iron discipline during work*, with *unconditional subordination* to the will of one person, the Soviet director, during working time. (*Ibid.*, emphasis in original.)

And because Shub *knows* the context, and because he *knows and cannot but know* that Lenin's talk about "dictatorial powers of one man"—in 1918 or in 1920, in original Russian editions or in translations—has nothing whatever to do with the views he attributes to Lenin, I say again what I said with such restraint in December: Shub's quotations are a fraud and so are their perpetrator.

2. I note, as a reminder to the reader, that Shub's reply contains no reference to his quotations from Lenin's *State and Revolution*. As is his custom, he bowdlerized the quotation, salted it with the inevitable dots, strung together into one passage two dissociated thoughts that are *twenty-five pages apart* in Lenin's original text, and perverted these thoughts to make them fit his own twisted views of Lenin as a political monster. In my review, I proved this falsification to be what it was. Since Shub has nothing more to say about it, I can content myself with saying that, on this point,

he is prudent. I employ this mild word only to please those delicate moral stomachs which so calmly digest any literary frame-up against Lenin but which burst with dispeptic rage when a conscienceless perpetrator is branded for what he is.

3. Again, a small point. Shub wrote that Martov was interrupted at the 1920 Halle Congress of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD) by cries of "Hangman! Bandit!" directed by delegates against Zinoviev, the representative of the Comintern. For reference, he gave the official minutes of the Congress, including page numbers. I denied that there were such outcries. For reference, I too gave the official minutes of the Congress. Who, then, is in the right? I am. Why? Because I read the minutes before referring to them, and Shub referred to them without reading either the text or the page numbers, which might be said to place Mr. Shub at a certain disadvantage. He does not have the good grace to admit that he never read the minutes which he gives as his authority, and that the reference in his chapter notes is an imposition on the reader, but limpingly says that he is "partly responsible" for my error! What he really referred to, you see, was "the more complete account published in the *Freiheit* at the time," and if I had "pursued [my] research" beyond the minutes (i.e., ignored them, as Shub did), I would have found the outcries in the *Freiheit* account.

The official minutes, not summarized but stenogrammed in full, were published in Berlin by the *Verlags-gesellschaft "Freiheit."* I have never seen their authenticity challenged, certainly not in Shub's book, and they have been used unquestioningly by historians and students for about

thirty years now. What makes the newspaper account in *Freiheit*, then the organ of the right-wingers, more authentic? I don't know. Nor do I know why I was under any obligation, either to Shub or to the readers, to "pursue" my researches beyond the minutes to which Shub himself referred so inappropriately.

The official minutes are available to me, and without much difficulty to anyone else. *Freiheit* files are not to be found in any of the important libraries in New York, as I found out in my un-obligatory "pursuit." If I am to be chided for not having checked a newspaper account of the USPD Congress, I would rather it not be by one who described the Congress without even checking the official and up-to-this-morning-highly-regarded minutes.

Shub wrote, with that fine feeling for the dramatic that is but one of his gifts, that Hilferding rose after Martov to speak of him with moving eloquence. I remarked that that was quite an exploit, even for Hilferding, since the latter spoke in the morning session and the former in the afternoon. It turns out that Hilferding had nothing to do with that chronological somersault that even the Fratellini Brothers might have envied. It was Shub's and Shub's alone. How did he manage it? In his book, he had Hilferding breathing lightning and hurling thunderbolts of defiance on the floor of the Congress (with non-existent pages of the Congress minutes given as reference) and right to Zinoviev's face.

In his reply to my review, it turns out that, just as I had claimed in my review, the speech was not made at the Congress after all. It was made (or so Shub now says) before another assembly at another time. The right-

wingers met separately, after splitting away from the Congress where they had been voted down by the majority of the delegates. It was at this USPD-rump meeting that Hilferding "delivered his fine speech," according to Shub No. 2, and not at all at the Congress, where he "followed" Martov, according to Shub No. 1. I must add that since my first appraisal of Mr. Shub as a responsible scholar and painstaking research-worker was close enough to zero to be its equivalent, his standing cannot be reduced much further by the additional evidence he now offers of the shoddiness and sloppiness of his work.

What Hilferding said at the rump meeting I do not know and I have no reason to take Shub's word for it. But I do know, and it is not too hard for anyone else to find out, what he did say at the Congress itself, after Zinoviev and before Martov.

That he was not a communist is so well known that Shub was wasting space if that was all he intended to prove. What is interesting for an objective historian, however, is what even the non-communist Hilferding said then about the vital political problems of the day. Not only did Hilferding vehemently proclaim his support of the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and indignantly deny that he dreamed of reforming capitalism, but he went out of his way to emphasize that it was not the German communists, but he, Hilferding, and his comrades who had followed in Germany of 1919 the wise revolutionary policies that Lenin and his comrades had followed in Russia of 1917!

These passages from Hilferding make such interesting and significant reading that they would find their place in any worthwhile, objective

biography of Lenin, especially one that goes out of its way to mention the name of Hilferding. Which is precisely why they do not find their way into Shub's biography of Lenin.

4. I reproduced, in my review, the "evidence" on Trotsky during the defense of Petrograd from Yudenich which Shub adduced with a straight face from the memoirs of the "former Bolshevik Alexander Naglovsky." After all, it is hardly a trifle that is involved. Trotsky arrives in Zinoviev's Petrograd office, summons the party military leaders before him and his Cheka aide, shouts a few wild questions at them, and then, because he is not satisfied with the situation, and because these are Zinoviev's men, and because he hates Zinoviev personally, for the two are rivals for Lenin's succession, he summarily orders his Chekist "to arrest immediately and shoot the entire staff for the defense of Petrograd!" That very night, sure enough, they are all shot, down to the last man. In his letter to the editors, Mr. Shub has noted his dislike of abuse, libel and defamation. He should have added that his dislike is not immoderate. In any case it is not the consuming passion of his life. He prints the blood-curdling yarn about Trotsky with the same indifference with which he would write up yesterday's weather report for his paper.

Since I also dislike abuse, libel and defamation, especially when directed at the dead who can no longer defend themselves, I simply asked: "Who is the peddler of this story—Naglovsky? What makes him an authority? Did he witness this melodramatic episode? From whom did he hear about it? Nobody knows." Now we have the rebuttal of Mr. Shub, who dislikes defamation, and after reading it, I repeat: "Nobody knows." All we

learn from Shub is that Trotsky himself emphasized the blanket powers of life and death Lenin gave him during the civil war and that Trotsky had iron tenacity which (this with irony as subtle as a steamshovel) "Mr. Shachtman seems to underrate."

This is highly interesting, but it is not what was asked. That Trotsky had great powers during the civil war has been recorded, as I recall, a few hundred times in a few hundred places. His role as organizer of the victory in that war is familiar even to sparrows and does not need Shub's belated revelation. What I asked, however, was: what makes Naglovsky an acceptable authority on the events he describes and which Shub reproduces without blinking? Was he present at this shooting spree? Who that was present told him about it?

Suppose I write a book. In it I describe a visit by General Eisenhower to the front headquarters of some subordinate officers. I quote what happened there, according to the memoirs sent me by some army lieutenant or other. He writes that Eisenhower, furious at the situation which his subordinates had allowed to develop, turned to his aide, ordered him to arrest the whole staff at the front and have them shot that evening. Suppose Mr. Shub flatters me by reviewing my book and asks: "But what makes your Lieutenant Smith-or-Jones an authority for this story? Was he present?" And so on and on. And suppose that in reply I write airily: "This Smith-or-Jones was an army officer. As for Eisenhower, Mr. Shub ought to know that he was the main organizer of the victory over the Germans; he had iron tenacity; he had powers of life and death; and besides, it is well known that it is under his orders that thousands were killed." How would Shub

have the right to characterize me under such circumstances? Well, that's how I characterize Shub.

I claim that the whole Naglovsky story is a vicious fable, and for this claim there is, it seems to me, evidence of a kind which is most significant and conclusive in a case where *what did not happen* has to be demonstrated.

Trotsky himself has written about this sort of story during the civil war. He cites but one example: In December, 1918, he ordered the execution of the commander and the communist commissar of the 2nd Petrograd Regiment, which abandoned a crucial front, seized a steamer and sailed away down the Volga. The communist, Panteleyev, was shot, after a trial, for deserting his post. Important is this fact: when the fight was launched against Trotskyism in 1923 by Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin, the story about Panteleyev, distorted, of course, was made the subject of more-or-less open attack upon Trotsky for "having good communists shot" or for having them shot "without a trial," even though an official party commission, set up on Trotsky's demand, had cleared him of all accusations on this score as early as 1919. In one form or another, the Panteleyev story is to be found running for years in the Russian anti-Trotskyist press.

Now, is it conceivable that if there were an ounce of truth in the Naglovsky-Shub story about Trotsky's summary execution of the "*entire staff for the defense of Petrograd*"—Zinoviev's own staff, so to speak—the story would not have been made public during the big anti-Trotsky campaign in Russia? Zinoviev stopped at very little in his fight against Trotsky; Stalin stopped at nothing: truth (a few grains), half-truths, half-lies and out-

and-out lies. Would they have told the "Panteleyev story" and remained strictly silent about the "Petrograd story"? I claim that such a conclusion is inconceivable. I claim further that anyone who is even moderately familiar with what was done in the anti-Trotsky campaign, as Shub is, must also find such a conclusion inconceivable.

The trouble is that when I say "anyone" I mean, of course, anyone who is honest and objective.

5. The way Shub answers the point I made in my review about his chapter on the Kronstadt uprising is typical of both his book and his reply. It shows that I am not dealing with an honest critic, that's all. Did I deny that there was an uprising in Kronstadt? Did I deny that Tukhachevsky or Trotsky or Lenin or any other Bolshevik took full political responsibility for quelling the uprising? Did I deny that many men—just how many, I do not know and Shub does not know—were killed in the conflict? Of course not. I asked just one simple question: Who is this Roman Goul from whom Shub quoted what Tukhachevsky said to Trotsky about the blood-horrors of Kronstadt and what Trotsky said about shooting the Kronstadters man by man "like ducks in a pond"?

What does Shub have to say about Goul now, since he said nothing about him in his book? He squeezes himself up to his full height and says that Goul's fight against the Bolsheviks is not sufficient evidence to discredit his writings and label him a liar and nonentity. At any rate, he, for one, doesn't believe it is. Shub, for one, is not going to convict anyone of anything unless the evidence is overwhelmingly conclusive—not in the case of Lenin or Trotsky, to be

sure, but at least in the case of Roman Goul. Now, that's genuine dignity and human decency for you. But while it is very moving, it is not enough to move my question out of the way.

That Goul is a nonentity is wrong, and I penitently retreat. It is now clear that he is one of the distinguished men of our time, for who else would be the editor of a Russian periodical, and an excellent one to boot? It is true that it is his only claim to distinction, yet if that one is enough for Shub it will have to do. *But* what makes him an authority-beyond-question on the passages quoted from his book by Shub? Goul quotes a conversation by Tukhachevsky that he could not have heard if he were living in Moscow at the time, let alone Berlin, where he actually lived. All I said was that this nonentity (there! it slipped out again!) invented the conversation, and could not but have invented it, in order to make the Bolsheviks look like bloody monsters. All I suggested was that Shub, who read Goul's book (this is a daring assumption, but I make it nevertheless), saw and could not but have seen that Goul invented the conversation, as anyone who reads a single one of its lurid pages can see immediately.

Then why did Shub quote from Goul, without giving the slightest indication that his authority's only claim to credibility was a diseased imagination? Only one answer is possible: because to print between impressive quotation marks what was said about Kronstadt by a Bolshevik who actually led the troops against it would convey to the defenseless reader a horror against Bolshevik bloodthirstiness which a quotation from a Kronstadter or a Berkman could not convey. What other conceivable point would there

be to the quotations from Tukhachevsky and Trotsky?

But what if there are no such quotations? Hmm! that's a problem, but only for an ordinary historian. The extraordinary historian, who is "sufficiently familiar with the tradition of Bolshevik polemics," solves it with a twist of the wrist: he takes the quotations from another extraordinary historian, who is not a legally certified liar, but only a mediocre inventor, and reprints them as if they were well authenticated.

But what if a reader looks in back of the book to see what his references are? Nothing to worry about! The reader does not know who the distinguished men of our time are, and when he reads that the quotations come right out of a book by Roman Goul, he will immediately assume that Goul was not a nonentity but must have been, at the very least, the bosom friend of Tukhachevsky's up-to-now-completely-unknown mistress—another Elizabeth K., as it were—or perhaps even Tukhachevsky's adjutant in the Red Army.

But what if another reader proves that Goul cannot possibly be regarded as any kind of authority for the Tukhachevsky - Trotsky "conversation"? Nothing to worry about! Just repress your embarrassment, assuming you feel any, and reply—with dignity—that Goul's fighting in the war against the Soviets is not enough evidence to prove him a liar and, besides, he is editor of an excellent Russian periodical.

And Shub did all that? Yes.

But a man who would do that is—

You needn't say it. That is my opinion exactly.

6. Shub says something about Goul, but he has nothing to say now about Balabanova, who is not a nonentity,

and who figured in his book as a star witness to prove the casualness with which Lenin had people shot—even his own comrades—for the least of their deficiencies. I did not merely assert that the "Lenin letter" to Balabanova was a forgery, I proved it. Shub owes his readers an apology, or at least an explanation. But instead of paying the debt, he is silent. Did he compare the second, "improved" version of Balabanova's memoirs with the first version? Silence.

I, a reviewer of a book, am called upon to check jumbled-up quotations from Lenin with non-existent Russian volumes and quotations from Hilferding with unavailable newspaper files. Isn't Shub, the author of the book, a man of high (i.e., anti-Bolshevik) morals, called upon to check with Balabanova's first version of a letter which, the way he prints it, is so damaging to the name of the man whose biography he is writing? Silence.

Is it outrageous to call Shub's Mr. Nonentity a nonentity on the basis of more-than-sufficient evidence, but perfectly proper to brand Lenin a light-minded killer of his own comrades on the basis of fraudulent evidence? Silence.

Even in the second version of her memoirs, Balabanova says many things which give a true picture of Lenin. Why did this objective historian ignore them all and pick out the one "letter" which "reveals" Lenin as a despot who uses the firing squad like a village teacher the birch rod? Silence. Is Shub's silence dictated by a sense of honor or a sense of prudence?

8. Shub is not prudent enough to remain equally silent about his titillating story about "Lenin's Romance with Elizabeth K." I quoted his proud observation that "Their [Elizabeth K.'s and Lenin's] relationship was so

discreet and so outside the normal orbit of Lenin's life that it has heretofore completely escaped the notice of his biographers." Lenin's biographers number dozens upon dozens: personal acquaintances and strangers; Russians and non-Russians; friends and enemies; Bolsheviks, anti-Bolsheviks, non-Bolsheviks, Stalinists. It should, then, be perfectly clear that if this story "completely escaped" the notice of all of them, that was because of one of two considerations: either there never was such a relationship, or else *all* of Lenin's biographers felt that there was some other good reason for ignoring it.

But there was at least one person who would not be effected by such considerations, and that was the one who first published the story: Alexinsky. His utter unscrupulousness and leprous morality were so notorious that he was shunned and damned not only by the Bolsheviks, but by the Mensheviks and SRs as well. The man who helped forge the accusation of "German agents" against the Bolsheviks in 1917 would hesitate even less to forge the piece of gutter-journalism about "Elizabeth K." That's why no serious writer would touch the story with a barge pole.

Bertram Wolfe, who has not only devoted himself to an extensive and critical study of Lenin's life and work, but who had the advantage of working and living in Russia among Lenin's closest personal acquaintances for years, disposes of the story in a contemptuous footnote, which is what it merits:

This same Alexinsky later invented the legend of a love affair of Lenin with a mysterious Elizabeth K. and even offered the world a poem which Lenin is alleged to have written in 1907. This poem Lenin is supposed to have written after a comrade, whom Alexinsky leaves

nameless, told Lenin that it was harder to write poetry than prose. It comes from Alexinsky's hitherto unpublished papers and bears the marks of his own vulgar boulevard style rather than of Lenin's. . . all the available evidence on the love affair can be found in David Shub: *Lenin, a Biography*.

That is, Shub is worthy of his Alexinsky. Now he authenticates the story with a new witness, Paul Berline. And, if I may repeat my now tiresome question, what makes this new witness an authority? Was he a friend of Elizabeth K.? Was he at least a friend or intimate of Lenin? No, but he has five other outstanding qualifications: He lived at the same time Lenin did; he wrote a biography—not the third, nor the second, but the first—of Marx; he is or was a Marxist; he is a Russian; and above all, he considers Shub's biography excellent. All this is very pleasant news, but even if Shub had added that Berline used to write somewhat academical treatises on economics in the old, old Russia, what would it all have to do with the matter in hand? What makes him an authority on the Elizabeth K. story?

We read his statement and we have the answer: he knows no less about it than Shub does, and also no more. Alexinsky is an authority because Shub has no doubt about him. Shub is an authority because Berline has no doubt about him; and Berline is an authority because he liked Shub's book.

There remains the perplexing reference to Professor Kinsey. Is he, too, an authority on Lenin's discreet romance? Apart from the fact that he did not write the first Russian biography of Marx, I see no special reason why the professor is less qualified to speak on the subject than Mr. Berline.

As for my blushes, I was unaware of them, but even so Mr. Shub mis-

reads them. They obviously rise from the thought that our human race, which produces so much nobleness and integrity, can also produce Alexinskys.

9. I blush, this time not with shame but with fury, at the thought that more than thirty years after the Russian Revolution it seems still to be necessary to deal with the venomous old calumny about the Bolsheviks and the Kaiser's gold. And deal with it against whom? Against a smug little man, a "socialist," who will have nothing, absolutely and positively nothing, to do with the "Bolshevik tradition" of defamatory and abusive polemics; and against score-card philistines whose stomachs are so much sturdier than their vaunted morality that they can read this calumny today without turning sick. But evidently it must be gone into again, if only because this generation did not live through the early days of the Great Slander against the Bolsheviks which no clean person, and certainly no clean socialist of whatever tendency, would touch lest he foul himself from toe to crown.

a) The interested reader is referred, first of all, not only to Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, but especially to his autobiography (*My Life*) in which he devotes an entire chapter ("Concerning Slanderers," which is unmentioned by Shub, of course) to a shattering attack on Kerensky's "proof" of the "German gold" slander against the Bolsheviks. Kerensky's proof is, substantially, Shub's proof. Only Kerensky finds himself obliged to conclude with dismay that, "We, the Provisional Government, in this way lost forever [!] the possibility of proving Lenin's treason decisively, and on the basis of documentary material." This star-

ling statement by Kerensky is *not* quoted by Shub, even though it is enough by itself to dispose of the whole matter.

b) That the Hohenzollerns let Lenin go through Germany in a sealed train is not news, nor is it in dispute here. Since Shub mentions it, two things should be added: 1. What the Hohenzollern clique (like Ludendorff) wrote *afterward*, when Lenin and the Bolsheviks helped overturn the German imperial regime, which would indicate who made the best of the "sealed train" deal but about which Shub is also silent; and 2. that Martov, the Menshevik leader, and other Mensheviks, also used the German sealed-train method—it was the *only* one available to the Russian exiles in Switzerland—to get back to Russia, to find themselves subjected to the same slanderous accusations, based on the same forged documents, that were hurled at Lenin and Zinoviev, about which Shub, the Menshevik, is likewise conveniently silent.

c) Shub squirms about what I proved against him with regard to Alexinsky, who presented the forged "German gold" and "German spy" documents against the Bolsheviks to Pereverzev, the Kerensky Minister of Justice. In Shub's book, this provocateur—no "other" member of the Bolshevik CC could *conceivably* be involved—is described as "a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee," which is, if I may use a scientific term, a contemptible lie. Shub *knows* that it was Alexinsky who gave Pereverzev the documents, just as it was Alexinsky who immediately rushed the documents to the famous Preobrazhensky regiment to inflame the troops against the Bolsheviks. If Shub now says that he does "not pretend to know" whom Pereverzev had in mind, I say: He is

not a liar—not at all! He is "simply" pretending ignorance. *Everyone* knew it was Alexinsky; Alexinsky himself did not hide it; and Shub *knows* this as well as anyone else who is even slightly familiar with the Russian events of 1917. Shub knows that Alexinsky was a rabid anti-internationalist from 1914 onward. And he knows, likewise, that during the war, before the revolution, Alexinsky had charged practically *every* Russian internationalist—not only the Bolsheviks—with being German agents. And this entitles me to repeat that Shub is worthy of Alexinsky.*

d) I, too, ask the reader to turn to pages 211-216 of Shub's book to see what the "great deal more" amounts to. There are three pieces of "evidence" worth the paper they are written on. Here they are in full:

In one letter to Ganetsky (in Stockholm), Lenin wrote on March 30, 1917, "In maintaining relations between Petrograd and Stockholm do not spare funds." In another letter to the same Ganetsky, dated June 12, 1917, that is, ten weeks later, Lenin wrote, "Until today we have received nothing, literally nothing from you, neither letters nor packets *nor money*." (This was precisely the period when the Germans were supposed to be pouring hundreds of thousands of rubles or marks, and in Bernstein's version, more than fifty million gold marks, into the Bolshevik propaganda

*Shub does not know that Alexinsky was an extreme reactionary. He was merely for an anti-Bolshevik front reaching to the monarchists—that's all. As for his anti-Semitism, I need only refer the reader to page 469 of Bertram Wolfe's recent book, where he says: "In passing we might note that Alexinsky . . . did eventually become a full-fledged anti-Semite." As against that, Shub impresses the reader with the meaningless information that in 1947 a French publisher issued Alexinsky's book. Just what is that supposed to signify?

fund!) And in the last letter, a few days later, Lenin wrote: "The money (2000) from Koslovsky received." Two thousand—rubles, marks, kronen, dollars or yen, it doesn't really matter—that is all Lenin received from his comrades in Stockholm, Ganetsky and Koslovsky, out of the income they derived from the business enterprise in which they were engaged with Parvus, the ex-revolutionist who was indeed pro-German at that time, but nevertheless an extremely sharp entrepreneur.

A *conscientious* writer would at least make an attempt to reconcile the trivial "2000" contribution which Lenin received from a couple of comrades engaged in some risky business venture (smuggling? "black market"? I don't know and there is no record of its exact nature anywhere) with the tens of thousands of tens of millions he is supposed to have received through these same two individuals as alleged intermediaries of the Kaiser's government.

Even a village justice of the peace would demand of a prosecutor that he endeavor to make his charges fit together just a little bit before sentencing a man to thirty days. It is only in the big Stalinist frame-up trials that such crying disparities are ignored by the court, although even there the GPU at least made *some* effort to make the more violently jogged edges match up a little. Shub makes none.

The three sentences from Lenin are Shub's *only* evidence that Lenin received *any* contributions from that suspect center, Stockholm. In the rest of the five pages, there is nothing but notorious, long-ago-discredited forgeries which were proved to be forgeries by internal evidence alone, plus the blandest assumptions and the dir-

tiest insinuations — that is all and nothing more.

e) The whole story about the mysterious Mme. Sumenson, or as some of the forgeries have it, Mme. Soumentay (that is the version of the high-born Princess Catherine Radziwill, who did not like Bolsheviks, i.e., Jews) or Mme. Simmons (that is the version for which Masaryk paid out good Czech, or American, money to illiterate Russian forgers) and about the Nea (or Nia, or Nya) Bank which “transmitted” the German money to the Bolsheviks, was given its widest publicity in the notorious Sisson Documents in 1918. Why doesn’t Shub mention them? They have everything that Shub has in his five pages and much, much more. Is it because the very words “Sisson Documents” make everyone who remembers them turn his face away? Is it because Dr. Bischoff, sponsored by the German Social-Democratic leader, Philip Scheidemann, collected the materials for a complete explosion of these preposterous and rotten forgeries three decades ago—which makes the name of Bischoff *taboo* to our objective author?

Everything is there: the “intercepted” telegrams that were also bought by French Intelligence in Moscow; the “evidence” that Czech Intelligence probably also bought from the same forgers and which Masaryk repeats: the Nia Bank; Mme. Sumenson; the “opening of accounts for Messrs. Lenin, Sumenson, Koslovsky, Trotsky and other active workers on the peace propaganda” as early as *March 2, 1917*, when Lenin was still in Zurich and Trotsky was still in the United States, not yet a Bolshevik (the clever Germans knew he would become one!); the “order” from the Germans to the Commissar for Foreign

Affairs, on January 12, 1918, notifying him that the German General Staff “insists on” the election to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets not only of Trotsky, Lenin and other Bolsheviks, but also of Martov (the Hohenzollerns were clearly opposed to a “one-party dictatorship”!); the letter of August 25, 1917, which presents Maxim Gorky, too, as a German agent; and three-score more of the same sort.

Edgard Sisson, at any rate, made no secret about how he got them: his Russian agents made a secret raid on Bolshevik headquarters in Smolny Institute in Moscow, found the stuff lying around there, and took it to Sisson—or so they told him, or so he told us. What could be simpler? Or cheaper? For this whole pile of documents Sisson tells us he had to lay out only \$7500, which is a ridiculous trifle compared with the tens of millions of gold marks the Hohenzollerns spent to set up a Bolshevik regime which double-crossed them by overturning the Kaiser.

e) Again the inevitable Mme Soumenson-Soumentay-Simmons. Watch carefully now, because Shub’s hand is quicker than your eye. He says in his letter that his book contains her admission that she had instructions—and then he quotes—“to give Koslovsky, then a Bolshevik member of the Soviet Executive Committee, any sum of money he demanded; some of these payments amount to 100,000 rubles.” The defenseless reader—the only kind Shub counts on—must imagine that Shub is quoting here from a statement made by Soumenson. Not at all! The twenty-six words between quotation marks are taken from what *Shub* says in his own book (p. 213)! He verifies his assertions by the wonderfully simple device of . . . quoting them!

f) The “evidence supplied by” Jacques Sadoul is another hoax. Read the two quotations from Sadoul’s letters in Shub’s book. What is the “evidence” of Lenin receiving German gold? One sentence: “*Our Intelligence Service has reported* that Ashberg [the director of the Nea Bank] is serving as the go-between in the transfer of German money to the Bolshevik treasury.” (My emphasis—M. S.) That is, the same Intelligence Service which Shub quotes separately on another page as “additional” evidence, and whose evidence was the “intercepted” forgeries for which good French taxpayers’ money was thrown away, for which Mr. Sisson threw away 7500 good American dollars.

g) The “revealing admission made by Ganetsky” in 1937. Sounds ominous, doesn’t it? Twenty years later even Ganetsky confessed! I will reproduce the “admission” just the way Shub has it, and let the reader—who will not see one word about Germany or German gold or any other kind of gold in it—judge for himself the kind of “evidence” that Shub compiles and takes seriously, or rather expects others to take seriously:

I made use of the diplomatic mail privileges of the government. The old Russian Ambassador, trying to demonstrate his loyalty to the Revolution, turned very liberal and began to express his sympathetic concern with the political émigrés. I made use of it and kept on sending sealed envelopes to the Petrograd Soviet through the embassy. I succeeded in convincing the ambassador that the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies wields as much power as the government. The ambassador was compelled to acquiesce and I used to wire instructions to Petrograd to visit the Foreign Ministry in due time in order to ascertain whether or not my seals had been broken.

The “revealing admission” obviously is that Ganetsky was an incurable idiot. He sent Lenin millions (2, 10,

50?) of German marks in sealed envelopes to the Foreign Office of the Kerensky Government! And suppose some Kerenskyite clerk, not drawing full pay from the Germans, had accidentally broken a seal before Lenin (or Trotsky? or Zinoviev? or Martov? or Gorky?) got there? That would have been infernally unpleasant. Lenin would have had to manage somehow on Koslovsky’s 2000, which is a devilishly small subsidy in any currency.

h) And lastly, poor Bernstein. The enormity of his conduct is matched only by the effrontery of Shub’s. Just think of it:

Bernstein declares in public that he has “learned from reliable sources” that Lenin was bought by Imperial Germany to the tune of “more than 50 million gold marks” (same figure as in the Sisson Documents, which were bought a lot cheaper). The German communists call on him to make public his “sources” and his evidence or be branded as a “shameless and unscrupulous slanderer.” Bernstein refuses, reiterates his charges and challenges the communists to hale him before a court, which the communists fail to do. Says Shub: “That the evidence was not aired in open court was certainly not Eduard Bernstein’s fault.”

Imagine, if you can, anything more fantastic! Bernstein, called upon for evidence to support the gravest charges that could be made against revolutionists or a revolutionary government—that they were agents in the pay of a reactionary regime—simply refuses to present any evidence! Let us suppose that the reasons why the German communists did not take him to court were bad reasons. How in the world could that absolve Bernstein of the elementary duty to publish evidence of such tremendous historical,

not to say international political, importance—a duty he did not fulfill to his dying day?

Let us forget the German communists. Shub does not tell us that in the German Reichstag Bernstein called for a commission to investigate his charges; that there, too, he failed to present a shred of evidence; and that the Reichstag therefore rejected his proposal. Perhaps the Reichstag was controlled by deputies who shrank from an exposure of their old government's dealings with the Bolsheviks? All the more reason, you would think, why Bernstein should have turned in disgust from the Reichstag and produced his witnesses and evidence through the medium of the same public press in which he originally published his charges. But he did nothing of the sort. The names with which the German communists branded him in 1921 were not undeserved.

Just suppose that during the First World War, I made the public statement that the anti-war internationalist, Eugene Debs, was in the pay of the German imperial government in the amount of, say, 10,000,000 marks. Suppose the infuriated socialist press called upon me to submit the evidence for this monstrous accusation against a prominent socialist and public figure. I reply: take me to court,

then I'll talk. Suppose that, for good reasons or bad ones, wise or stupid, the socialist press does not take me to court, but keeps insisting that I make public the evidence I loudly proclaim I have in my pocket. For reasons best known to myself, I keep my evidence hidden and continue to repeat, wherever I go, that Debs is a bought-and-paid-for agent of the Hohenzollerns. Would not "mountebank" and "calumniator" be the mildest names that every decent person would rightfully apply to me?

And finally, suppose Shub were to write a biography of Debs many years later, stating it as a "fact" (as he does about Lenin) that during the war Debs was in the hire of the Germans who thus financed his revolutionary propaganda. Suppose he referred, for proof, to the "unchallenged" statements made in 1917 by Shachtman, who was not called into court by James Oneal or other editors of the old socialist *Call*. And suppose that he quoted, for corroborating proof, from the (truly) revealing memoirs of Captain von Rintelen, who was indeed in charge of German espionage and subsidization in this country during the war; and from a few unsavory insinuations by renegade socialists (there were plenty then, too) and even "documents" that appeared in the chauvinistic press about the link between the anti-war socialists and "other" pro-German elements.

Now I ask, what would any decent person say about him? What—just as an example—would Norman Thomas say about him, and with how much delicacy of language would he say it? How would such a "biographer" of Debs be stigmatized?

That is how I stigmatize such a biographer of Lenin.

MAX SHACHTMAN

Four Portraits of Stalinism

On the Books of Duranty, Shub, Wolfe and Deutscher

(Continued from last issue)

We have already considered the first of the three elements in Wolfe's explanation of the rise of Stalinism: Lenin's prediction of what would happen to the Russian Revolution if Trotsky's conception of it were followed. There remain the other two "brilliant examples of foresight and forewarning": Plekhanov on Lenin's program for the nationalization of the land and Trotsky on Lenin's conceptions of party organization.*

Plekhanov had the "truly brilliant premonition," writes Wolfe, "that nationalization of the land would bind the peasant to the state afresh, to any state that might hold in its hands the weapon of overlordship of the soil, thus continuing the age-old servile 'Asiatic' tradition which had always bound the rural masses to the ruling power. And if the peasant majority were bound, could the urban population be free?" This somewhat dramatic disclosure suffers from no less than three defects, any one of which is fatal to the significance that Wolfe attaches to it:

First, in so far as it is Wolfe's formulation, it is decidedly *not* the one Plekhanov put forward, nor the thought that he could possibly have

*An apology is in order for a disconcerting typographical error in the preceding article in this series. In the January-February issue, an entire quotation from Wolfe's book is misplaced. It is to be found at the bottom of page 21, running to the top of page 22. Because it is so central to Wolfe's views, it should be read in its proper context. It belongs at the end of the quotation from Plekhanov's speech at the 1906 Congress which is reproduced in the second column of page 20. The passage is, of course, Wolfe's comment on what Plekhanov (and Lenin and Trotsky) "foresaw" before the revolution.

had in mind. Second, in so far as it is Plekhanov's formulation, it has nothing whatever to do with the Bolshevik revolution itself. And third, in so far as it is called upon to explain how Stalinism arose, it is, to say the best about it, worthless.

Plekhanov did indeed argue against Lenin's proposal in 1906 that the Russian Social Democracy adopt the program of nationalization of the land, and warn that its realization might bring about a new kind of subjugation of the peasantry to the state. But his argument was not related to "any state." The credit for this belated "premonition" belongs entirely to Wolfe. It should not be foisted upon Plekhanov, who did not and could not speak of "any" state at that time, or even think in such terms. Let us briefly reconstruct the discussion of 1906.

After the defeated revolution of 1905, the Bolsheviks felt confirmed in their view that in the coming democratic revolution, the proletariat would play the leading role; the peasantry, allied with it, would play a revolutionary role, but the Russian bourgeoisie would not and could not play a revolutionary role, even though the revolution was regarded by all as bourgeois-democratic in character. The Mensheviks, on the other hand, while acknowledging the revolutionary role that the working class was called upon to play, insisted that the leadership of the democratic revolution would have to be in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This viewpoint, despite occasional lapses, was shared by Plekhanov. To him,

Build Your Marxist Library!

We can supply any book in
print and many that are out
of print. Write for free book
list—today!

Labor Action Book Service
4 Court Sq., Long Isl. City 1, N. Y.

therefore, the revolution to end czarism would establish and consolidate a *bourgeois state*. His warnings were therefore directed against a nationalization of the land carried out under the rule of the bourgeoisie, and nothing else.

It is only on the grounds of this perspective that Plekhanov made his argument. If it is the bourgeoisie that is to come to power, we must guarantee ourselves against its acquisition of too much centralized or centralizing power. Nationalization of the land would not only contribute to such centralization of power but, given the traditions of our country, it would facilitate (that is what Plekhanov's references to the history of France meant) the triumph of the anti-democratic, Bonapartist, tendencies in bourgeois society. It is therefore better to advocate the division of the land among the peasants as a lesser evil, or in any case to counterpose the idea of "municipalization," that is, the transfer of the large estates to the "democratic organs of local self-government," to the idea of nationalization which would be, in the words of Martov, a suitable basis for fettering the peasant masses to every attempt at restoration of the old order. That is how Plekhanov's argument ran. What does that have to do with the nationalization of the land that finally did take place—not under bourgeois but under proletarian rule—or with the danger of restoration of the old order which was not and, it is now plain enough, will not be restored?

Lenin argued that nationalization of the land would most thoroughly undermine if not destroy the old ruling classes and the last remnant of feudalism, even though it was not, in itself, incompatible with the development of capitalist economy. Neverthe-

less, he was fully aware of the validity, not of Plekhanov's conclusions, but of the question he raised. That is why he spoke of the nationalization of the land representing a huge step forward only in connection with the most thoroughgoing democratization of the coming regime. He connected his agrarian program with such basic demands as the establishment of a republic, popular election of all officials by universal suffrage, abolition of the standing army, and the like. He added that the program of municipalization would be harmful if such a consistently democratic state did not exist. It is interesting to note what Plekhanov replied in his concluding speech at the Congress.

Granted that the objection which he [Lenin] raised against Maslov [the advocate of municipalization] is warranted, then . . . Lenin's own draft is good only in case all the "ifs" presented to us are fulfilled. But should these "ifs" not be given, then the realization of his draft would be injurious.

From which it should be clear that Plekhanov, far from warning against the nationalization of the land under "any state," rejected it under a bourgeois state only if the conditions attached to it by Lenin were not realized. Otherwise we would have to conclude that the socialist Plekhanov figured on the preservation of private property in land under socialism; or better yet, that he believed the socialist revolution would be guaranteed against capitalist restoration by maintaining private land ownership. Whatever else may be said against Plekhanov, such an accusation is simply too absurd to be entertained. Especially when he made it so perfectly clear, at that very Congress, that his opposition to Lenin's program was based precisely upon his rejection of the idea that the *Russian* proletariat could expect to take power.

Since the impending overturn can only be a petty-bourgeois one, we are obligated to refrain from the seizure of power. . . . But if we reject the seizure of power as impossible, the question arises of what must be our attitude toward a program-draft which is bound up with the seizure of power. If we reject the seizure of power, then we must also reject this program. Those of you who stand on the standpoint of Marxism must decisively reject the draft of Comrade Lenin. It falls together with the conspiratorial idea of the seizure of power.

Plekhanov's "prevision" is therefore worth discussing at this late date only in the terms to which he so rightly boiled down his point of view, namely, not whether the Bolsheviks should have nationalized the land, and not whether this nationalization produced Stalinism, but simply this: *should the Russian proletariat have taken power in 1917?* For, implicit in Plekhanov's position is the view that if it were correct for the proletariat to take power in the coming revolution, then the nationalization of the land would unquestionably be high on its agenda. It is to be feared that all of Wolfe's studies have brought him to the conclusion that the "tragic problem" of the Russian Revolution is to be traced to the fact that it took place. The conclusion does not gleam with originality. The Russian people were warned against the Bolshevik idea of taking power as early as 1917. However, in the most democratic way imaginable, they did not heed the warnings of Kerensky, the Mensheviks, right-wing SRs and Plekhanov.

There are two other reasons why Wolfe's discovery of land nationalization as a cause of Stalinism is, so to say, startling.

First, Wolfe is familiar with the writings of Rosa Luxemburg, whom he calls the "outstanding advocate of revolutionary policy and the out-

standing defender of democracy within the labor movement." Her posthumous work of criticism of the Bolsheviks dwelled particularly on their land policy. As Wolfe knows, since he edited the American edition of this work, she was steadfastly for the nationalization of the land and reproached the Bolsheviks for not bearing in mind that "the direct seizure of the land by the peasants has in general nothing at all in common with socialist economy"; that "it piles up insurmountable obstacles to the socialist transformation of agrarian relations"; that having seized the land, the Russian peasant "has dug obstinately into his new possessions and abandoned the revolution to its enemies, the state to decay, the urban population to famine."

In his comments on Luxemburg's criticism, Wolfe, writing exactly ten years ago, not only found the nationalization of the land quite unworthy of mention as an error of the Bolsheviks—let alone an error that led to Stalinism—but went out of his way to defend Lenin's policy from Luxemburg:

On the land question, it was Lenin, who despite his previous doctrinaire misgivings, had recourse to the theory of stimulating the initiative of the oppressed peasant masses for the *democratic solution* of Russia's agrarian problem. Thereby he broke down at a single stroke the large-landownership system that oppressed Russia. Thereby he destroyed the power of gentry and czarism. Thereby he bound the peasants to the revolutionary government and even though other measure alienated them, yet in the moments of greatest peril they still defended the government that had helped them take the land *against the danger of landowner restoration*. [And Plekhanov's warning?] She and Lenin were agreed in believing that ultimately large-scale mechanized agriculture was desirable and possible. But Lenin—despite occasional neglect of his principles under pressure of events

—understood what she, in doctrinaire fashion, sought to ignore: that such large-scale socialist agriculture would be possible only after a material base had been created in the form of modern industry, tractor plants, chemical fertilizer plants, and plentiful consumer factory products, and then only by winning the peasants *in democratic fashion* and convincing them through their own observation and experience that the proposed methods were actually superior in technical and cultural advantages and offered a richer and more attractive life. In this field, neither Trotsky nor Stalin has been equal to the “discipleship” to which each of them has pretended. Rather have they departed here from the views of Lenin in the direction of those of Luxemburg. (Our emphasis—M. S.)

It would seem that since he wrote these lines in 1940, Wolfe has modified his opinions of Lenin’s agrarian policy and their kinship to Stalin’s (even if he has not modified his old habit of bracketing as similars the Trotsky and Stalin who were so dissimilar). We will not say that Wolfe has no right to modify his opinions about the Russian Revolution, even to the point of changing them into their opposite. Indeed, he is only one of those who are thereby doing the popular and highly respectable thing. But he does not have the right to change the *facts* on which he bases his opinions. Or does he wish to suggest that Lenin’s “*democratic solution of Russia’s agrarian problem*” led to Stalin’s despotism on the land because Stalin somehow moved toward Luxemburgism? *That* would be a novel viewpoint!

Second, writing about the disputes between the Marxists and the populists in Russia, Wolfe makes the observation:

More than either of the two contestants realized, they were complementary to each other, rather than irreconcilable rivals, since the populists based themselves upon the rural masses, the Social Democrats on the urban. Never could

there be a truly democratic transformation of Russia unless these two classes should join forces in mutual and equal partnership, and without either imposing itself upon the other.

As a formula, this is pretty loose-jointed and a little smug. But in so far as it contains a realistic idea for the achievement of a “truly democratic transformation of Russia,” a better than reasonable facsimile of it was produced precisely by the Bolshevik revolution and its agrarian program. No more legitimate heirs of the old populists existed in Russia in 1917 than the left-wing Social Revolutionists. Together with the Bolsheviks, they represented the decisive majority of the workers and peasants and, above all, the unquestionable aspirations of the overwhelming majority. It was with the support of this majority that the revolution was carried out, and the Soviet regime established and consolidated. Lenin, in order to cement a fraternity between the revolutionary workers and the peasant masses, did not hesitate for a minute to take over, promulgate and carry out the program of the SRs. As far back as 1906, at the founding congress of the SR Party, a program was adopted that *called for the socialization of the soil* (the “maximalist” wing even called for the socialization of all plants and factories). Plekhanov warned against such a program not only in 1906 but also in 1917, and he was not the only one. But that was one of the reasons why the workers *and* the peasants turned their backs upon all these “forewarners” and chose the road of the proletarian revolution. The Bolsheviks made it possible that “these two classes should join forces” by adopting the program of the left SRs, making a coalition with them in the Soviet government, and therewith carrying out the “truly

democratic transformation of Russia” that Wolfe recommends. Therewith Lenin produced “the democratic solution of Russia’s agrarian problem” (despite Plekhanov’s “brilliant prevision”), assured the country “against the danger of landowner restoration” (despite Plekhanov’s “brilliant warning”), and proceeded with the course of “winning the peasants in democratic fashion” (despite Plekhanov’s “brilliant premonition”).

What is there in this well-known record, so much of which is established by Wolfe himself, that was bound to lead to the present totalitarianism? Something must have intervened to lead to it, but it was not the nationalization of the land by the democratic Soviet regime.

That “something else” cannot be found in superficial literary juxtapositions, in quotations from Plekhanov about the danger from land nationalization by a bourgeoisie that never carried it out in a revolution that never took place. It can only be found in the actual course of the social development, of social conflict, and of the fate of political ideas in this conflict.

Reference has been made to the fact that Lenin was not unaware of the danger of restoration following the revolution. He knew that as early as 1906: and after 1917 he spoke and wrote about it dozens of times. In particular, he was aware of the role which the peasantry, in its various strata, might play in the restoration of capitalism. Wolfe’s pious phrase about “mutual and equal partnership” between workers and peasants was as alien to Lenin as it is the glib phrase of foggyheads and demagogues. To Lenin, as to any Marxist, there could be an alliance, even a very close, mutually fruitful and lasting alliance,

between different classes—the proletariat and peasantry represent two different classes—but not equality.

As is fairly well known, the peasants as a whole (even the richer ones), looked with favor on the “Bolsheviks,” because they had given them land and fought the civil war against the landlords to preserve that revolutionary achievement. The same peasants, however, looked upon the “Communists” with uneasiness, suspicion and even hostility, because that term represented the long-range program of the abolition of all private property, including private exploitation of the land. And in this social attitude, historically conditioned and economically sustained by the everyday life of the peasant, Lenin saw one of the most powerful sources for the restoration of the capitalist regime.

Lenin’s fears were “unjustified.” The Napoleon who consolidated his power and almost conquered all of feudal Europe with the support of the “allotment farmer,” the small landed peasant-proprietor of France, was not reproduced in Russia. He was not reproduced, and capitalism was not restored, because there was *no urban bourgeois class* capable of successfully stimulating the property instincts of the Russian peasantry, of organizing them into a political fighting force and leading them to the overturn of the Soviet power. Two such classes were theoretically possible. One in the form of the *Russian bourgeoisie*; but it was wiped out or dispersed to the four corners of the earth during the civil war. The other in the form of the *international bourgeoisie*; but although it attempted to play its role, it failed in the face of the Russian resistance to the interventionist wars, of the disunity which rivalry introduced into its own ranks,

and of the opposition of the working class of the capitalist countries.

In his concluding speech on the agrarian question at the 1906 congress, Lenin discussed Plekhanov's arguments about the danger of restoration in connection with the program of land nationalization in the following terms:

If it is a question of a real and genuine economic guarantee against restoration, i.e., of a guarantee that would create economic conditions under which restoration would become impossible, then one must say that the only guarantee against restoration is a socialist revolution in the West; there can be no other guarantee in the real and full meaning of the term.

A writer who is looking for "brilliant foresight and forewarning" about the Russian Revolution can find an excellent example right there—an example which gives us the whole key to Lenin's outlook! The socialist revolution in the West was not victorious, but neither was the capitalist restorationist struggle in Russia. Yet reaction did triumph. Because it was neither foreseen nor forewarned against does not mean that inappropriate anachronistic quotations relieve us of the task of examining in the concrete its singular character.

Abstractly, the main social reservoir for capitalist restoration in Russia was the peasantry, or rather what may be called the most property-minded strata of the peasantry. However, for this abstraction to become a social reality, this peasantry would have to find an urban counterpart capable of organizing and leading it. By itself, it could not go much further than a series of localized and ineffectual Vendées, such as were, indeed, as much a phenomenon of the Russian Revolution as of the French. But this urban counterpart, the Russian bourgeoisie, was completely wiped out in the

course of the civil war; and among those who helped to wipe it out were the peasants themselves. This was due to the fact that the Russian bourgeoisie appeared before the peasants as the not-at-all accidental allies of the landlords who aimed to recover their lands; and that the Bolsheviks appeared before them as the champions and defenders of the land distribution.

The Bolsheviks had quite deliberately and wisely coupled the actual distribution of the land to the peasants with the "juridical" nationalization of the land. The former not only corresponded to the vehemently avowed demands of the peasantry but won them to the struggle against the restoration of the old landlords and the old bourgeoisie. The latter was aimed not only at preventing the rise of a new large-property-owning class among the peasantry itself, but as the point of departure for the gradual socialization of agriculture which alone can eliminate the "idiocy of rural life." But this process of socialization could unfold only upon the basis of the development of a modern *socialist* industry, at once capable of assuring ample supplies of cheap commodities to the peasantry and of providing agriculture with modern machinery which would release the land population from its sunup-to-sundown slavery to the wooden plow and the ox. A modern socialist industry is precisely what Soviet Russia could not establish by its own forces, but for which it required the coöperation that could be provided only by the working class brought to power by successful revolution in the advanced West. For the benefit of cynics, it might be added that these ABCs were not invented after the fact, so to speak, but were loudly, even anxious-

ly and, in any case, repeatedly proclaimed by the Bolsheviks before, during and after the October revolution.

The principles of Soviet democracy, which were set forth by Lenin in 1917 and 1918, especially in what will long remain the classic work on the subject, *State and Revolution*, remain an unassailable contribution to the socialist struggle for freedom. If the Bolsheviks departed from them, as they undoubtedly did, they were driven to it by conditions imposed upon them by the delay in the world revolution. The Western proletariat could raise the siege of the isolated fortress that the Bolsheviks manned, but meanwhile the latter had to defend it with the best means available to them, also against those on the inside who threatened its defense. Simultaneously with the war to prevent the incursion of a world of enemies from without, the revolution was forced to defend itself from the beginning in one of the fiercest civil wars in history. It is hard to recall another revolution that faced so superhuman a task, and yet managed to acquit itself so well.

But unarmed forces are sometimes harder to cope with than armed forces. The peasants were an unarmed force. Actually, they had gained more from the "Bolshevik" revolution, in material terms, than the workers, and they acted upon an acknowledgment of this fact in the civil war. But their appetite very naturally grew and asserted itself when the civil war ended and the threat of a landlord restoration was pretty conclusively laid. How could this appetite be satisfied, especially when it increased with every improvement in the harvest? The wretched state of Russian industry in general, and of its development as an

efficient *socialist* industry, made it, if not impossible then at least exceedingly difficult, to satisfy the peasantry in a way that would assure a harmonious evolution to socialism. Again, that required the revolution in the West. In its absence, the Bolsheviks were obliged to make great concessions to the peasantry in the form of that controlled "state-capitalism" which was the NEP. It was only a stopgap and that is all it could be. But under it, the peasants, at least relative to the workers, made still more material gains; at any rate, that was true of the better-situated peasants. The appetite of the unarmed force continued to grow, and the development of the socialistic sector of industry did not keep pace with it. In Trotsky's expressive image, the blades of the scissors, representing the prices of industrial and agricultural products, were drawing apart. That only foreshadowed — even accompanied — the political drawing apart of the two classes upon whose alliance the Soviet power reposed.

Tracing the rise of Stalinism, Wolfe asks:

And a police apparatus huge enough to police the planting and harvesting all over vast, rural Russia, would it not tend to spill over into the very organizations of the advanced city workers who had sanctioned it: into their state, their unions and their party?

The implication is clear, but the facts are not. In a certain sense, that process did indeed unfold and it left its mark on other processes. But to say that, is to say something so general as to draw our attention away from the process which was decisive in the rise of Stalinism. The fact is that the end of the civil war and the institution of the NEP, brought to a halt the system of military rule and military requisitioning of peasant

grain which was imperative for the defense of the country during the grim days of War Communism. The fact is that there began an enormous relaxation of state ("police apparatus") controls over the peasantry. And the fact is, further, that as the controls were more and more relaxed over the landed population, they were, in almost the same degree, tightened over the working class and over the Bolshevik party itself. The process that proved to be decisive was almost exactly the opposite from the one Wolfe describes!

That Wolfe did not understand the significance of the struggle when it broke out in the Bolshevik party in 1923, is perhaps understandable. That he should be so far from understanding it a quarter of a century later is inexcusable. Unless we are to descend to the level of the cretinism that is so popular in our day, and repeat that Trotsky and Stalin were fighting each other for personal power, we must assume that the contest involved great social forces and principles. Trotsky based himself upon and fought, well or not so well, for one; Stalin, well or not so well, for another.

Trotsky appealed against the bureaucracy to the workers. Let us allow all the criticisms made of him by those severe ones who are so obsessed with small things that they cannot grasp the big ones. Even with the most generous of such allowances, the big things remain. Trotsky directed himself to the workers, to their democratic traditions, feelings, aspirations to their socialist convictions, ideals, hopes: to their spirit of internationalism; against the growth of bureaucratism and its arbitrariness, its cynicism, its falsifications, its privileges, its conservatism. In other words, he

appealed to those things that make up the socialist consciousness, the self-reliance, the independence of the working class—its emancipating power.

In every respect, the bureaucracy, rallied by Stalin, made the opposite appeal. And this opposite appeal—to which class was it mainly directed, in which class did it find its most favorable response? The one it was calculated to arouse against "Trotskyism," the peasantry, or to be precise, those of its strata who could easily be mobilized behind the most property-minded element, the kulaks.

Trotskyism? asked the bureaucracy. That means, it answered, underestimation of the peasantry; it means "permanent revolution" which will throw us into futile foreign adventures that threaten a repetition of the sufferings endured by the peasants during the intervention days; it means an end to NEP, to free trading on the market by the peasant with his surplus, and the reintroduction of War Communism. The Stalinists openly charged that the Opposition wants to "rob the peasantry"; that it wants to exploit the peasants for socialist accumulation as the bourgeoisie exploited the colonial peoples for capitalist accumulation; that it wants to squeeze the peasants dry for its adventurist "super-industrialization" plans. It was from the Stalinists that came the watchword to the peasants, "Enrich yourselves!" It was Stalin himself who made the first tentative public suggestions, in 1926, for breaching the law on the nationalization of land, and his Georgian commissar of agriculture actually drew up a draft of a law to breach it.

In the Stalinist bureaucracy, the peasants (not they alone, but they above all others in Russia) saw the "continuation of Bolshevism" of 1917-

1918, that is, not only as the defenders of the land they had acquired by the revolution but as the promoters of their property-rights, of their economic rights and their right to expand their economic power. In the Trotskyist Opposition, the same peasants saw "the Communists," the international revolutionists, the "selfish city-men," to say nothing of the "intellectuals" (and in not a few cases, the "Jews"), the "socializers of property," the people who had been in the saddle too long and who had to be pulled up short, so that an honest, hard-working kulak could add to his holdings, could increase the number of his workers, and could sell his growing surpluses to the city at an honest or at any rate a stiff price.

It was on the basis of these social reactions that the bureaucracy was able to win the fight against the Opposition. It was by shrewdly arousing these reactions that it was able to win. It won with the aid of the unarmed force that the huge peasant mass constituted in Russia. And what Wolfe misses completely, it seems, is that only by first mobilizing this unarmed force was the bureaucracy able to establish firmly its rule, the rule of the "police apparatus," over the party, the trade unions, and the working class as a whole. That is how it happened; almost exactly the opposite way, as we noted, from the one Wolfe describes; and its significance altogether escapes him. The original hopes of the Bolsheviks to reduce the disproportionate social weight of the peasantry in order to assure the rule of the working class, by giving the worker five times as high a vote as the peasant, ultimately proved to be vain. In the struggle, it was no longer a question of votes; it was not even any longer a question of the Soviet insti-

undermined. The social weight of the peasantry asserted itself against the revolutionary proletariat in the period of the reaction, and there was not enough strength left to withstand it.

That is how the reaction gained its first and, at bottom, its decisive victory in Russia. There was not in existence a bourgeoisie to serve as the urban counterpart and political leader of the increasingly conservative and property-conscious peasants. Consequently, there was no restoration of capitalism. *But the urban counterpart and leader was found in the form of the Stalinist bureaucracy.* The "alliance" was strong enough, in the general atmosphere of reaction and declining self-confidence of the proletariat, to smash the revolutionary regime, to overturn the workers' power, to crush the Bolshevik party. But it did not follow that a "peasant" regime was established. Once again it was proved—as if it needed another proof!—that the social nature of the peasantry is such that it cannot establish a durable, independent regime of its own, but can only help establish the rule of an urban class. When it supported to power the progressive class in Russian society, it gained materially *even as a peasantry*: The Stalinist bureaucracy was not progressive, but reactionary. When the peasantry helped it to power, the inevitable happened. Once in command of the state, and no longer fearing the socialist proletariat it had crushed and subjected to a police dictatorship, the Stalinist bureaucracy proceeded to extend the police dictatorship over the peasantry. It consolidated its power by reducing the peasant mass to the level of state serfs.

It was not, then, as we read the history of the events, the nationalization of land—aimed at curbing the concen-

tutions which the civil war had deeply tration of land in the hands of agrarian property-holders—that facilitated the rise of Stalinism. If anything, the bureaucracy “emancipated” itself from the revolution with the aid of those who strove for such a concentration. If Wolfe had merely wished to say that the centralization of land ownership in the hands of the state gave Stalinist reaction a tremendous, even unparalleled, economic and therefore political power over the people, *after the reaction succeeded in taking over the state*, he would be saying very little. In the first place, it would apply at least as much to the decisions of the revolution which nationalized all the principal means of production and exchange—factories, plants, mines, banks, mills, railroads, etc. But in that case, it is not Plekhanov’s “brilliant prevision” that would be worth mentioning, not even in a footnote. Wolfe would then be more consistent in referring to the “brilliant premonitions” of every enemy of socialism from Herbert Spencer to Fredrick von Hayek. In the second place, it would be such a commonplace that it would be worth mentioning only in a footnote. Marxist or non-Marxist, no moderately in-

telligent person has ever had the slightest doubt that the centralization of all economic power in the hands of a *reactionary state* can have anything but *reactionary consequences* so long as it remains in the hands of that state.

The only interesting point is the one that Wolfe seeks to suggest, namely, that the very act of nationalizing the land brought Russia (and the Bolsheviks) from democracy to totalitarianism. It is of interest because it is at the heart and core of the whole reactionary struggle against the socialist movement and the socialist ideal today. Only where that struggle is conducted directly and not by indirection, it does not confine its criticism, if we may so call it, to nationalization of land, but extends it, as is only proper, to the whole field of nationalization of the means of production and exchange; and does not stop with Lenin but, as is still proper, goes back to Marx and Engels and the whole idea of socialist freedom. Whether or not the badly mismatched “prevision” of Plekhanov was dug out of historical obscurity, where it was not unjustly lodged, so that it might be used in this struggle, is a question that merits treatment in a political biography of Wolfe, who is himself contributing some not-unexpected chapters to it in the current press, rather than in a political biography of the “three” who made a revolution. If it is used, then the patrons of this struggle have very little to congratulate themselves on in Wolfe’s unsensational disclosure. If it throws some light on the author’s method of historical analysis, and on how superficial and unilluminating it is, it throws none on the Russian revolution itself.

Max SHACHTMAN

(Concluded in the next issue)

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

In a Time of Duplicity

From the Diary of Victor Serge—III

The Case of Doriot

February 23, 1945.

The newspapers: Jacques Doriot has just been killed in Germany. His car was strafed on the road. It was expected that he would take in hand what remained of the French Vichy government, for the purpose of the final exploitation of the French interned in Germany.

In 1922, in a small office of *Rote Fahne*¹ in Berlin, Julius Alpari introduced to me a young man wearing glasses, ruddy-faced, sturdy, with a firm mouth and a modest air. . . . I saw him again several times without attaching any importance to him. He was known as an excellent militant of the Young Communists, a good speaker and with plenty of guts. He admired the Russian Revolution, doubtlessly very sincerely, and the fact of traveling illegally, staying in good hotels and of conspiring with Bolsheviks visibly enhanced him in his own eyes.

He left me with an impression only of modesty and firmness. A young person one could have confidence in. He was liked by Zinoviev and the organizers of underground activity, Piatnitzky and Mitskevitch-Kapsukas. . . . He came out of the factory (metal worker). It was the time of struggles against parliamentary corruption and the old reformism. J. D. conducted anti-militarist work in the occupied Ruhr, went to prison, came out of prison a deputy, popular and cutting quite a figure as a leader of the French CP.

1. *Red Banner*, the CP daily newspaper in Germany.

In 1924-25, when the first slanders were directed against Trotsky, the greatest figure of the Revolution after the death of Lenin, J. D. was angered, ready to declare himself for the “new course” which could have checked the precipitate degeneration of Bolshevism. Since the vanquished opposition gave in, J. D. adapted himself and became one of the confidential men of Zinoviev, whose star was rising. . . . The militant was conquered by the apparatus, for the administrative apparatus of the International made and unmade all the leaders, offered or rejected the possibility of serving the revolution and of being at the head of a great idealistic party.

J. D. went on the Political Committee and entered the secret service. It is a path which the most devoted militants commonly follow; the risks taken lead to the secret service, from which one cannot withdraw and which forces one to lead a demoralizing existence. J. D. had an adventurous spirit and a personality; it was not without resistance that he applied a line which he knew was absurd or motivated by interests other than those of the party or the International.

Conflicts. In February-May, '34, following the February 6 riots² before the Palais Bourbon, he broke with the sectarian directives and proposed a united front to the Socialists, denounced the day before as social-fascists. He refused to render an accounting at Moscow, knowing that he might disappear there.

2. Initiated by French fascists.

March-April, 1950

For Books and Pamphlets by

LEON TROTSKY
and
LENIN

Write for book list to

LABOR ACTION BOOK SERVICE

4 Court Sq., Long Island City 1, N. Y.

Deputy mayor of Saint-Denis, he had a fief, a section of the party tied to him by local interests and by genuine admiration. For a few months it was possible to believe that the left French working-class masses were finally going to have a capable leader who would unify them. This was the opinion of Marcel Martinet³—and was mine, with reservation, for I wondered what the psychology could be of a militant leader who had since 1927 swallowed all the lies of the secret service and served it faultlessly.

J. D. was in reality no longer anything but an adventurer skilled in manipulating various social forces. The career which the revolutionary left offered him he rejected, knowing well that without very considerable financial support a new movement could not be born; and a left socialist movement could not find such support. He could have gone to the SP, but it was a party of bourgeois mores, without dynamism, a party which he disdained and in which he could only vegetate; his whole makeup was based upon the anti-socialist mentality of the Comintern.

To return to the Comintern was impossible, since he had lost the confidence of the bureaucrats; they would have tolerated him only in order to force him to submit and to destroy him. Situation of an expendable mercenary.

J. D. got in touch with influential capitalists, who made him offers. That also flowed from his makeup. He had often heard it said that the victory of fascism was inevitable, that only fascism could liquidate the social-democracy, that after a short interval com-

3. Writer, poet, revolutionary-syndicalist, early defender of Trotsky, active in securing Serge's release from imprisonment in Russia.

munist would be the successor and liquidator of fascism.

This ideological schema had been quasi-official behind the scenes in the Comintern following the defeat of the German revolution in '23. J. D. staked all his money on the cards of a militant capitalism. He did not sell himself all at once. He maneuvered, protected refugees expelled from the CI (Ruth Fischer and Maslov) but gradually went over to a "national" politics (*L'Emancipation nationale*).

The unimaginable resentment which had accumulated against the Moscow leaders and their secret bureaus during the years of dissension, decadence and reaction had transformed him into an anti-communist. A socialist humanism he had never possessed; a crude and manipulated Marxism had made him cynical. The deeply ingrained notion of historic automatism, which would doom the parliamentary Third Republic and lead to a controlled economy, prepared him for his complete going over to fascism. This took place during the Spanish events; in possession of inside information, immediately seeing the republic doomed, he denounced the Spanish Revolution as a Moscow enterprise—and demonstratively moved to the right.

The astonishing thing is that throughout this evolution he carried along with him a strong former communist group of Saint-Denis—so many of these militants were ready for the transition from communism to fascism, which seemed stronger to them, promised victory, and was more sound because of its national character. (Here note the disenchantment provoked by the disaster of Bolshevik internationalism.)

A common mentality, totalitarian, has been created, with variants capa-

ble of being interchanged and of succeeding one another. J. D. made a deal with the General Confederation of Manufacturers and probably got in touch with secret Nazi agents. The politician accustomed to secret service work returned to it and found it an advantage.

In '40 he advanced himself as a candidate for the succession to Pétain and celebrated the holiday of Saint Jacques in the same way that the holiday of Saint Philippe (Pétain) was observed.⁴ He advocated the creation of revolutionary committees (of his party, the PPF) to achieve the "national revolution." His contempt for the bourgeoisie put him on the same footing with certain authentic Nazis. His hatred of Stalinism was that of a renegade; it was also the reversal of a completely disappointed and sullied youthful idealism.

His knowledge of the internal weaknesses of the USSR predisposed him for the role of ideologist of a war against the USSR—and he toured the Eastern fronts, encouraging French volunteers in German uniform. . . . He was also an uncultivated person whom the role of leader exalted and a materialist who believed only in brute force.

Killed at 47.

Alexis Tolstoy

February 24, 1945.

Deaths follow one after the other, so many deaths! It is a time of death. This morning, the announcement of the death of Alexei Nicolaievitch Tolstoy, a minute paragraph in microscopic type in *El Popular*.⁵ Orders

4. These were days actually set aside for the glorification of the two indicated persons.

5. A Stalinist-controlled paper published in Mexico and edited throughout the preceding period by Lombardo Toledano.

will come and there will be fine articles.

It was in '23, in Berlin, Tauentzienstrasse, an airy business section, with pretty, green turf growing between the rails of the streetcar track: I saw our handsome Serge Zorin of the dark days in Petrograd coming along the sidewalk, tall, fair-haired, with the air of a Viking. With him a stocky gentleman with a massive head and heavy chin, not a soldier, but a reflective bourgeois, with, I believe, little brown crossed eyes, behind a pince-nez which was askew: Alexis Tolstoy. He was negotiating with Zorin the question of his rallying to the support of the revolution and his return to Moscow.

"How interested he is!" exclaimed Z. "Gosisdat⁶ must put out a complete edition of his works—and the author's rights must be guaranteed to the last kopek!"

All three of us were in a little café when Zorin began to evoke the Chudin affair, concerning which he retained a profound sadness: "In him we shot a very fine fellow, a man of 1905, and he was not guilty, but there was nothing else to do." (It was this conversation which crystallized in my mind the idea for one of the dramas in *Ville Conquise*).⁷

After 1926, in Leningrad, I got to know A. T. better, at first at the sumptuous dinners of the historian Pavel Elisseievitch Shchegolev, to which came Anna Akmatova,⁸ thin, delicate, white as a porcelain statuette, firmly unyielding and very affected (the pose with her long fingers on her shoulders) and her beautiful sad, grey-green eyes; Karl Radek and Larissa Reis-

6. The state publishing trust.

7. One of Serge's novels.

8. A poet, born in 1889. She suddenly reappeared in print in 1940, publishing until 1946, when her writing fell under the official ban.

ner,⁹ amazon and intellectual, an extraordinary human achievement. . . .

All are now dead, even little Pavel Pavlovitch with his childish head like that of a young official out of a comedy by Gogol. T. and Sh. made millions of rubles with melodramas on Rasputin and the Empress. They enjoyed life and believed in a moderate counter-revolution, liberal and agrarian. They called themselves "sympathizers" of the CP, uneasy sympathizers, cynical and inoffensive.

"My office boy at *Byloe* (*The Post*) got drunk," related Sh., "and confessed that he was a stoolpiegon for the Cheka. I said to him: 'I'll not fire you, my friend; I like it this way, now I know where I stand.'"

Sh. detested Trotsky. I remember that he went into a sort of hysteria in front of me in speaking of that "little journalist, that correspondent for reactionary sheets in Kiev"—and that there was an incident, smoothed over by Pilniak.¹⁰ (L. T. had already fallen from power, of course.) A. T., on the contrary, never spoke of T. but with respect and admiration.

A. T. felt himself insecure and he sometimes wrote magnificent pages, a short story on a civil war fighter disoriented by the NEP, for example.

He spoke a magnificent Russian. He was rather proud and reserved in manner but easily became warm, sensitive, moving. With Liuba and Vlad¹¹ we went several times to his home at Dietskoye Selo. His wife was a Russian beauty like those Kustodiev used to paint, plump with clear eyes.

Their traditional household, small white house, garden, birches, Paul I furniture, collections, miniatures, old

9. Active in the civil war, her brilliant literary sketches of which were very popular.

10. Boris Pilniak, author of *The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea*.

11. Serge's first wife and his son.

books, landscapes, great comfort, simple and luxurious. A. T. invited us to hear the first chapters of his *Peter I*. He was greatly influenced at that time by the seventeenth century peasant economist Possoshkov, who died in the Peter-and-Paul fortress. He thought of his novel as an oppositional work which would trumpet the suffering and the power of the peasants. He said: "What we are living through is a return to the revolutionary and autocratic barbarism of Peter the Great. (This was during the farm collectivization period and it seemed probable that Stalin would fall because of the famine and that the "right," Rykov, Tomsky, Bukharin, to which A. T. was friendly, would win on a program of appeasing the peasantry.)

A. T. read in a serious and velvety voice, full of emotion. His first identification of Stalin with Peter I was that of a discreet pamphleteer, for the historical novel was an evasion for him. (All the topflight writers used this evasion: Tynianov with Griboyedov and Pushkin, Kaverin with *Lieutenant Kije*, others with Pugachev or Catherine the Great and even Tausaint L'Ouverture. . . .)

When I became too compromised our relations naturally became less frequent. Tolstoy skirted disgrace, but Boris Andreievitch Pilniak who was incontestably first among the young writers, the leader (along with Vsevolod Ivanov) of Soviet literature, was plunged into disgrace and persecution, rescued by Stalin, then semi-boycotted once again, censured by Yezhov (the future successor of Yagoda in the GPU, the future executioner's victim).

Gorky returned from Italy, but I did not see him again; his secretary Kriutchkov (of the GPU) closed his

door in my face (K. was shot with Yagoda). Furthermore, Gorky was unrecognizable, ascetic and like a skeleton. I happened to meet him on the street and was startled to see the dead man behind the living one.

He wrote official articles, really abominable, justifying the secret trials in the name of culture, proclaiming that "the enemy who does not surrender has to be exterminated" and privately he gave vent to bitter outbursts. He internally resisted this scornful and violent bitterness, he sometimes burst out; he entered into conflict with Stalin. All his old friends such as Julie and Ekaterina Pieshkova¹² broke with him because he let his former collaborators on *Novaya Zhizn*¹³ be imprisoned, Ginsberg and Sukhanov, whose honesty he was aware of; because he refused to offer the slightest objection to the execution of technicians: became the contrary of himself.

It was in this atmosphere that, at a meeting of forty writers at Gorky's home, which Stalin attended, Pasternak¹⁴ and Alexis Tolstoy had the courage to complain of the censorship. Stalin rebuked the secretary general of the Proletarian Writers, Leopold Auerbach, who had immediately attacked their proposals as counter-revolutionary — and left taking Tolstoy in his car. (Auerbach, the nephew of Yagoda, was shot in '37 or '38.)

The personal friendship of A. T. and S. was thus born in an excess of frankness and courage, probably stimulated by vodka. S. was liberal and warm-hearted, as he sometimes sought to be. He granted a passport abroad to the son of Alexis Nicolaievitch.

12. Gorky's first wife, from whom he early separated.

13. Gorky's paper during the period of the Revolution.

14. Boris Pasternak, the poet.

A. T. was seduced. The comparison with Peter I flattered S.—the reforming czar had only to be humanized, and this was an order.

In the same epoch began the disparagement of Pokrovsky's great (Marxist) history of Russia, considered up to then as a fundamental work, but which contained a terrible portrait of Czar Peter. (Pokrovsky was to die in isolation, under the disapprobation of the schools, just in time to escape a worse fate.) A. T. recast his *Peter I*, not without internal struggles, and made a play out of it, which S. came to see, beaming with contentment.

During the height of the famine, A. T. one winter night gave a royal party at Dietskoye Selo, with a buffet which set all Leningrad talking, violin orchestra, troikas for driving the guests through the snow. We said: *Pirremya chumy*,¹⁵ "The feast during the plague."

A. T. was a writer by birth, loving and understanding the human problem, a good psychologist and student of manners, a worshiper of his profession, possessor of a fine feeling for language: everything necessary to make a great writer, if only the despotism and the cowardice which despotism imposes had been absent. He needed a great deal of money and official favor. He feared disgrace, censure, repression, to which his émigré, bourgeois and aristocratic past made him more vulnerable than others. He had the zeal of an apostate, but he probably suffered a great deal, for he was intelligent, liberal, rather good. He probably found an internal justification for his conduct in his love of Russia, a love which embraced the inevitable suffering of the chosen and martyred people, and in his expecta-

15. The title of a play by Pushkin.

tion of a new Russian greatness which he could really envisage only in terms of an empire.

The Ralliers group of 1923, *Smeno-Vekhoutsy* (the "New Orientation"), of which he had been a member, had been decimated—and more than decimated—by the terror, from 1929-30 on.

A member of the Union of Soviet Writers, A. T. had seen his friend, Boris Pilniak, and Tarassov-Rodionov, and Galina Serebriakova, and the stage director Meyerhold, and Babel, and so many others disappear. He saw the old Bolsheviks shot, who had admitted him to their company when they were in power, and whom he had admired. He had a profound knowledge of the totalitarian tragedy.

He never made the slightest protest, he explicitly endorsed—as was requested—all the crimes. It is true that he had described at length the execution of the streltsy¹⁶ under the walls of the Kremlin, at which Czar Peter forced his boyars and his favorites to kill them with their own hands, as he himself did, thereby establishing an obvious and common bond of complicity.

He died at 62, a millionaire in a country of the greatest misery, weighed down with honors, having obstinately suppressed a nameless sorrow.

(I once ran through a historical novel on the civil war, written on request by A. T. at the time, in '35, when the recent past was being violently falsified: in it Lenin was inspired by Stalin, they won the revolutionary war and Trotsky was not mentioned.)

Nicola Bombacci

May 1, 1945. Mussolini shot. The

16. Palace guards who had revolted against Peter.

last fascist government leaders shot, some fifteen people. I felt a satisfaction for having written in 1932 (*Littérature et Révolution*): "The Gramscis and the Terracinis¹⁷ know that they are almost nothing at this moment, that they can be assassinated tomorrow, that they will perhaps never see the light of day again; but they understand the inexorable laws of history, they know where all the parades will end up."

J. Mesnil reproached me for the puerile, dogmatic expression: "The inexorable laws of history. . . ." Do we know if these laws exist? We see necessities and probabilities, we want to believe in Nemesis, the goddess of reward and punishment. (I acknowledged that basically I believed in her, but that it was foolish to arm her with "inexorable laws" and that it could probably be seen where fascism was leading without recourse to such poor words.)

Among those of the last fascist group shot figures an old comrade of the '20s, Nicola Bombacci. An American newspaperman saw his naked body stretched out in a shed with the rest. The newspapers have labeled him an *archtraitor*, as if archtreason existed. This superlative only shows an excess of hate or a lamentable verbal effort to feign an excess of hate. Bombacci had betrayed socialism, obviously, and the Comintern. I tried to understand it. I saw him once again at Petrograd and Moscow (in '20 or '21), tall, thin, sporting a magnificent beard below a bony face, with gentle and lively eyes—enthusiastic, aggressive, cheerful, believing with all his soul in communism. An uncomplicated mind more warm than penetrating, a faith mingled with naïveté.

17. Early Italian communist leaders.

But what in those times foreshadowed the somber, sinister complications of the twenty years to come? He admired everything. I saw him again in Berlin as an émigré in '23 or '24. The first gray hairs were beginning to show in his beard, he retained his good humor but behind a smile touched with discouragement.

Contrary to most of the left politicians, who did not see a long life for Mussolini's adventure, he considered it as very dangerous. "Once power has been seized!" "And Mussolini is clever, demagogic, devoid of scruples, and he has learned a great deal from the Russian Revolution." We were in the upholstered drawing room of Jacques Sadoul¹⁸ at Grünewald. We were in agreement. I asked:

"But since you knew how menacing fascism was and what an important role Mussolini played, why didn't you get rid of him in time, during the destruction of the cooperatives, etc.?"

"Because our most active militants went over to his side."

I saw that it was this that tormented him the most: the attraction that fascism exercised upon the extreme left. He had been a teacher with Mussolini in a little Italian village, he knew him well and even while hating him liked him a little.

Later, disappointed by the stifling atmosphere of the Comintern and doubtless unable to adapt himself to exile, he was offered the chance by Mussolini of returning to the country with the possibility of organizing a legal and loyal "socialist" opposition—capable of nothing. Mussolini was smart enough to present himself to the old militants as remaining some sort of a socialist in spite of every-

18. A French army captain in World War I who played a certain role in the founding of the Comintern.

thing and of preparing a sequel conforming to his half-secret desires.

Henri Guilbeaux—another founder of the Comintern—let himself be hooked and wound up by presenting Mussolini as the genuine successor of Lenin. But H. G. was nothing but a bitter and cowardly imbecile. In the beginning fascism attracted a great many rebels and even revolutionists by its demonstrations of plebian strength and violence. Then it offered them participation in practical work, building schools, draining swamps, industrializing, creating an empire. Finally, the murmured promise of establishing a New Order which would be only a stage on the road to socialism completed the process.

The outrages and the crimes inflicted upon the working-class movement lost their fratricidal meaning once the Russian Revolution had begun the persecution of the socialist and anarchist dissidents. It is impossible to consider the phenomenon of fascism without discovering the importance of its interrelations with the phenomenon of socialist revolution. (An inverted revolution, counter-revolutionary in its immediate political ends?)

The New Order, that war machine of victorious Nazism, was an old slogan for us. In 1920 the Italian Communists (Gramsci, Terracini) published an excellent weekly at Milan and Turin, *L'Ordine Nuovo*; they were the originators of that idea.

Victor SERGE

(Translated and annotated by
James M. Fenwick)

HAVE YOU SEEN THE NEW FORMAT?

Read and Subscribe to
LABOR ACTION
\$1.00 per year

BOOKS IN REVIEW

John L. Lewis

JOHN L. LEWIS, by *Saul Alinsky*. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 387 pp. \$3.00.

The scene is the White House; the time, 1940. Standing before President Roosevelt's bed is John L. Lewis. "If you want the CIO's support, what assurances can you give the CIO?" (Lewis is telling the story.)

"The President became irritated and snapped at me, 'Well, what do you mean, haven't I always been friendly to the CIO?' I didn't answer. He continued and his voice rose angrily. 'Haven't I always been a friend of labor, John?'"

"I said, 'Well, Mr. President, if you are a friend of labor, why is the FBI tapping all my phones, both my home and my office, and why do they have instructions to follow me about?'"

"The President said, 'That's not true!'"

"I said, 'I say it is true!'"

"The President said, 'That's a damn lie.'"

"I got up, looked down at him and said, 'Nobody can call John L. Lewis a liar and least of all Franklin Delano Roosevelt!' Then I started walking out and got my hat and coat. Just as I got to the door, the President called out, 'Come back, John. I want to talk to you.' I walked back and I said, 'My phones are tapped, and they are, and everything I said is true, and whatever I said I know because I can prove it by Frank Murphy, who told me so and who knows about it because he has seen your orders to the FBI to do so . . .'"

Roosevelt changed the subject and the conference ended abruptly. Soon Lewis announced his support of Wendell Willkie and the break between the two pillars of the New Deal was irrevocable. After the 1940 election Lewis resigned as CIO president because the ranks refused to follow him into the Republican camp.

The incident related above dramatizes what Alinsky calls the great tragedy of the labor movement, and he attributes the end of the militant surge of the labor movement, as well as the end of the New Deal, to the split between Lewis and Roosevelt. Actually this judgment com-

pletely misses the whole point of Alinsky's own book.

The chief impact of the Lewis story in this official "unofficial" biography, is a powerful indictment of Roosevelt in his relationship to the labor movement.

What were some of the main reasons for the Lewis-Roosevelt break? First, even today no one dares dispute Lewis' version of his argument with Roosevelt during the General Motors strike in 1937. Roosevelt wanted the sit-downers to leave the plants, go back to work and then negotiate. Secondly, as even Philip Murray must remember, Roosevelt refused elementary assistance to the CIO during the little steel strike. Roosevelt publicly rebuked the CIO after the Memorial Day massacre in Chicago in 1937 with his dictum, "a plague on both your houses." And only Lewis of all the CIO leaders dared protest Roosevelt's imperious disregard of the lawlessness of the Chicago police in that brutal murder. Third, does anyone in the top CIO leadership today dare challenge Lewis' acid description of how Roosevelt seduced it into his fold?

One of the interesting by-products of this period and of this book is the story of Murray's shift of allegiance from a subservience to Lewis to subservience to Roosevelt. The whole story that Lewis tells of the New Deal days is how the new labor leadership of the CIO deserted the struggle for the elementary interests of the rank and file in response to Roosevelt's nebulous and unremitted promises.

The tragedy of the split between Lewis and Roosevelt on those issues was not that two great personalities were now apart, but that the CIO leadership did not support Lewis in his opposition to Roosevelt. The tragedy of Lewis, however, was that finding himself isolated he reacted in a manner reminiscent of his days of political bankruptcy during the 1920s when his chief reputation was that of the most belligerent and successful fighter against progressive ideas in the American labor movement.

Perhaps the most intriguing part of Lewis' career consisted of his wavering and toying with new ideas in the sum-

mer of 1940 before he took a political step backward. This writer recalls Lewis' speech at the Townsend convention in St. Louis, Missouri, in the summer of 1940. Lewis made an urgent plea for a new third party based on a coalition of labor, poor farmers and Negroes, dedicated to fighting for the interests of the common people. The next day Lewis appeared before the United Auto Workers convention at St. Louis and made a devastating analysis of how the New Deal had been turned into the War Deal, and he urged labor to back him in fighting against pro-war policies.

Why did Lewis drop all these ideas and turn to Willkie? The explanation given in Alinsky's book that Lewis did not want to help the Communists is, of course, superficial. Building the CIO "helped the Commies," in a sense, but that did not deter Lewis. Even more pertinent, what does Lewis think now after his war experiences and the Taft-Hartley law and the 1950 strike struggle? Surely an authoritative biography should provide a clue to this question. But Alinsky unfortunately leaves the truly important questions unanswered.

Though largely a superficial journalistic book, much of it is very enjoyable reading. The Lewis scorn of the CIO and AFL bureaucrats is here shown in its finest flavor. The cynical character of Washington politics stands exposed. But its virtual whitewash of Lewis' dictatorial methods, his political blindness and the limitations of his whole approach to unionism and to social problems show that Alinsky shares the deficiencies and weaknesses of his subject.

WALTER JASON

Burnham Rides Again

THE COMING DEFEAT OF COMMUNISM, by *James Burnham*. John Day Co. 287 pp. \$3.00.

"The Coming Defeat of Communism" is reminiscent of several books in the depression period. These writings were characterized by their "practicality" and their authors were referred to as "realists" who "didn't mince any words." Casting aside all economic, social and political considerations as meaningless, these writers went directly to the real cause of the depression: the American capitalist had lost his guts! "If the Morgans and the Vanderbilts were around

we wouldn't be having this depression. However, there is still hope. The namby-pamby successors of the giants can still pull the country out of the depression (and without any help from Roosevelt's socialistic government) if they will merely follow the course of the early capitalists, that is, take risk capital, invest it, produce goods and create a market." And since the then crop of capitalists was so dangerously ignorant, the authors usually included in the last three chapters a detailed description of how the early capitalists had taken their risk capital, invested it, produced goods and created a market.

Burnham's book is not about the depression; it deals with the current world crisis. Yet he shows the same hard-headed toughness, the same realism in his solution to the present crisis that his predecessors showed in their approach to the depression.

Burnham's thesis is simple, lucid and not particularly new. The struggle between the United States and Russia presents a world crisis that can end only in the complete defeat of one of these two forces. A total shooting war is not necessary. As a matter of fact, its cause might already be lost. The key to victory lies in the realization that World War III is now going on. The United States should therefore bend all its efforts to fight this "cold" war with all available force and, by defeating communism in the cold war, avoid the necessity of a shooting war. The author has no doubt that the United States can win this cold war and defeat communism if—it will follow the example of the experienced master of the cold war technique, that is, Russia. Burnham traces the activities of the Russians since 1944 in subversive warfare, propaganda, resistance, lies, deceptions, murders, assassination, etc.; and, lest these "ignorant, dangerously ignorant" rulers of the United States still can not see the proper course, he outlines in simple terms a plan for "continuous war of a new kind, a political, subversive, ideological, resistance war . . . which may develop into an unlimited war by arms." Here, indeed, is a practical man.

One wonders at Burnham's blatant oversimplifications and his failure to consider the conclusions inescapable in the course he proposes. He counsels democratic capitalist America to adopt the informal war plan of totalitarian Rus-

sia so that it may defeat Russia at its own game. Burnham realizes that there are some differences between the United States and Russia. Presumably it is because of these differences that he charts the course for the United States' victory. Is it conceivable that he cannot see that it is these very social differences between a democratic capitalist and a totalitarian nation that dictate the differences in their war, hot or cold, techniques? Can he fail to see that when the United States adopts completely the methodology of a totalitarian nation it will be because it has itself become a totalitarian nation? In some places he ignores these considerations completely; in others, unable to ignore them, he dismisses them with a paragraph or a sentence.

Burnham's plan includes making friends with anyone who can help "us." His criterion for a friend is simple: is he a "firm anti-communist"? Burnham scoured Europe for two years gathering material for his opus and he found several such "friends." In France, we should support DeGaulle; in Italy, the Vatican; and in China (hold your hats) Chiang Kai-shek. The effect of such alliances on the world populace that the United States is seeking to influence does not rate even a passing consideration. Burnham hews to his rule: friends should be cultivated "wherever they are to be found, even in places sordid or dirty."

In other places the nature of his plan is so obvious that even he cannot disregard it. He says: "There is one further preliminary point, arising out of a peculiarity of the United States' governmental structure, which should be noted before attempting to draw a positive conclusion." This peculiarity, so casually mentioned, is nothing less than the democratic nature of the United States. He continues: "... many of these operations can only be carried out through a lack of publicity unprecedented in American tradition, with funds 'unvouchered'—not publicly accounted for, and a personnel also largely removed from public scrutiny." How delicately he describes the machinations of an American NKVD! His solution is worthy of his statement of the problem. "For these reasons, and what they may imply, it would seem that the Congress ought to have some special mode of liaison with the direction of the agency which carries on these opera-

tions." Could anything be more consoling?

Burnham again deals with the limitations of American capitalism in the chapter "The Suicidal Mania of American Business". He begins with a panegyric worthy of the National Association of Manufacturers: "Business and businessmen have opened and built this continental nation, on the perspective and scale of Alexander Hamilton's unprecedented vision, and they are to be therefore honored." Politically, however, they are "ignorant, dangerously ignorant" because they are not acting as a monolithic class against the common enemy. Their failure so to act is due, according to Burnham, to "... greed and ignorance and lack of vision."

Any logical analysis from this point would show that until a monolithic capitalist class had been created no monolithic action could be expected from it. Hitler saw this years ago. He drove out the leaders of light industry, rationalized heavy production, integrated the state with the economy and thus eliminated the "dangerous ignorance" of the capitalist class. But why bring forth such unpleasant details? It is simpler, so much simpler, to refer in a footnote to *The Managerial Revolution* and explain that the "New Rulers" can easily carry out the program that the capitalists are too ignorant to follow.

Thus far we have been as charitable as the situation warranted. Burnham ignores the problems arising from the imposition of totalitarian methods and techniques in a democratic country. Suppose, however, that Burnham realizes that a democratic capitalist country cannot conduct an informal war à la Kremlin and still remain a democratic capitalist nation. And realizing this, he still counsels that course. Suppose that Burnham appreciates that indecisiveness is a necessary attribute of all capitalist classes in the framework of a democratic country. And, appreciating this, he still counsels monolithic action. Burnham then stands condemned as one who propounds, and apologizes for, a course that can have no end but totalitarianism.

One is reluctant to brand a person for what he has left unsaid. Suspicion increases, however, when one sees how studiously Burnham avoids these points, and how militantly he insists that the positive considerations of what "we" are

fighting for are unimportant. "It is not true, in the second place, that a war or a social struggle can be successful only if the program and apologetics for it are 'positive' in form. The contrary is more often true. In general, human beings understand much more clearly what they are *against* than what they are *for*." (Italics in original). In short, let us wage totalitarian war against the totalitarians, and let the chips fall where they may. As Burnham himself is quoted on the flyleaf of this book: "*Who says A must say B!*"

PETER LOUMOS

Key to Asia

AGRARIAN UNREST IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA, by *Erich N. Jacoby*. Columbia University Press. \$4.00.

To the growing post-war literature on Asia Dr. Jacoby has added this penetrating study of the effects of imperialism on agriculture among the 150 million people of Southeast Asia. Dr. Jacoby does not pretend to a pioneer work, making due acknowledgment to those scholars who have paved the way. Yet his synthesis is new. No other work, to this reviewer's knowledge, brings together the best results of these studies for the entire area. And the book represents a basic reorientation on the critical position of land and the peasant as the key to the area's nationalism.

The opening general survey is a dissection of the character of colonial economy—the consequences of dependency status. It is not only that local surpluses are drained off by the metropolitan powers—thus restricting local development—but that even what is returned to the area by means of capital investment, engineering works and machinery has no organic relation to a colony's development but serves to strengthen the alienated sector of economy. This is a wider sense of the meaning of imperialism. It gives a broader meaning to national independence which can use very little of the structure bequeathed by the foreign masters regardless of the fact that this is the modernized sector. Such a view gives us a measure of the difficulties of the new nationalisms and the key to their present impasse. Unfortunately, Jacoby does not draw out these implications, being satisfied to present only the current data.

Penetration of money economy destroyed the village handicraftsmen and "the old village economy was brought to a slow death" as its self-sufficiency came to an end. Agriculture was reorganized as auxiliary to European industry. Large-scale agriculture in commercial crops replaced subsistence production of food in important areas. Peasants were increasingly restricted to tiny patches and reduced to chronic undernourishment. This is the reason for the "laziness" or low productivity of native labor. Since the new economy depended on cheap labor rather than mechanization but did not utilize the full labor of the people the result is the general phenomenon of under-employment.

The Southeast Asian colonies became mono-crop producers of oil, rubber, tin, copra, sugar; for here imperialism was able to carry to an extreme what it managed only partially in India and China. Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaya, Burma, Indo-China and Siam were brought under the world markets, suffering all the effects of price fluctuations and the business cycle without any power to control these effects. In this manner capitalism was able to pass off some of the costs of its own distress on the colonial peoples who served as a kind of depressed fourth class to the metropolitan capitalist economy as a whole.

Diversion of all the major factors of production to the needs of alien economy is the basic reason for the failure of local capitalism to emerge. It has never been a matter of legal fiat alone which prevented potent manufactures. Fundamentally, it is a matter of alienation of sovereignty, political and economic. Jacoby states the case adequately: "There is no example in colonial history of a dependent system with a well-rounded economy of its own and a normal social stratification."

In a short section Jacoby disposes easily of liberal theorists of "pluralistic societies" such as J. S. Furnivall. The idea of "indirect rule" became "a kind of mandate on behalf of humanity and of the peoples under Europe's generous tutelage," a sophisticated version of the white man's burden, while the indirect rulers became puppets for a price, sharing as landlords, usurers and bureaucrats. "The political cooperation of landlords who became safely established in the ranks of administration, govern-

March-April, 1950

ment or council, is the last and most adjusted form of indirect rule—it deepens the political crisis within the colonial system as the bulk of the population begins to identify colonial rule with landlord rule.” In this way the agrarian problem became the key to the entire colonial question. It created a booby-trap for bourgeois nationalism. For, so long as the latter fails to destroy the landlord system the national revolution is in jeopardy. This is happening in India right now where the Congress Party is preoccupied with removing the social content of independence.

But in the southeastern countries the rule of imperialism was able to restrict the development of capitalist classes so that today the nationalist leaderships suffer from a spinal weakness in not having any substantial social base. That is why the nationalism of Southeast Asia is so much weaker and more compromised; its own destiny is none too clear, given its lack of independent capitalist development.

While Jacoby fails to give imperialism an historic development related to changes in the nature of capitalism he does appreciate differences in forms of colonial rule as projections of the different characters of the various powers. Thus powerful Britain was able to establish direct rule over large areas, and maintain it for long periods, the colonial state serving as the lever for capitalist penetration. Holland, by contrast a relatively weaker power, could never afford the luxury of direct rule with its enormous armies and bureaucracies and relatively free capitalist development. From the earliest times it established a type of indirect rule; or as Jacoby puts it, Holland “lack[s] the material resources for an energetic colonial government which, like England, can employ a repressive system which consists in intervening only after it is too late, but intervening then with a vengeance. The Netherlands must necessarily practice a preventative policy” which was more intolerant and restrictive on the colonials but operated through maintenance of much of the traditional native structures bent now to new purposes.

One serious flaw is that Jacoby has insufficiently studied the work of native scholars and political leaders. He makes no reference to the increasing studies of the Indian and Chinese schools of agrar-

ian economy, and only casual reference to the programmatic proposals of various colonial political leaders, all of whom have some attitude toward agrarian problems. Only in discussing the Philippines, where Jacoby spent some time with the Hukbalahops, does the living, social breath of rebellion come alive; yet the same is true for the entire area. Actually the book is mistitled since it is an examination of the forces producing unrest rather than a description of its movements. But to return to the initial point, it is no longer “objective” to write about these colonial countries without studying the works of national scholars. It is true that in the countries concerned in this study the intellectuals are rather pitiful and their production is both scarce and poor. But the works of the Chinese agrarian school are basic to the whole region. And even the poor works are important for their place in politics; also they are barometers of the intellectual climate in which the agrarian reform movements are working.

Which brings us to the special thesis offered by Jacoby. His proposition is “that the national idea became a permanent force in Southeast Asia at the moment when the peasants were forced to give up subsistence farming for the cultivation of cash crops or when (as in highly colonized Java) subsistence farming ceased to yield a subsistence” (p. 246). Elsewhere he is more emphatic: “The industrial revolution so essential in the case of Europe, was not the deciding factor for the development of national movements in Southeast Asia.” At this point it might be thought Jacoby is separating this area from the dynamics at work in other colonial countries to describe special local relations, but no! “Only if we abandon the belief that industrial development and nationalism are naturally coordinated can we evaluate rightly the importance of the peasantry as the bearer of the national idea in Asia. The role of the industrialized areas is highly overestimated though in a number of cases [sic!] these areas have supplied the leaders of the national movements.”

That this point of view can be stated so strongly by a serious scholar is indicative of the new feature of the post-war national movements. Everywhere in Asia, social objectives have become blended with political aims, as in the

wake of the war the masses of people have taken the field of action. Current revolutions have seen the peasants of Viet-Nam, the Hukbalahops, the Chinese agrarian revolts, the Javanese peasants—altering the center of political focus. This Jacoby expresses very well.

Agrarian relations contain the nub of the social question in colonial society. The intervention of the peasantry into the post-war movements of nationalism and unrest is the indication of the new social soil of Asiatic nationalism out of which have come for the first time large Social-Democratic, radical democratic and Stalinist parties.

But that is not the same as equating nationalism with the peasant. Without the land question nationalism is sterile, reactionary as in China; but nationalism is a response of all the colonial classes for liberation which antedates the recent social movements of the rural masses.

Nor has it been demonstrated that this village-centered class can rise to the national stage, create great and durable parties of its own, under its own leadership. The Huks of the Philippines perhaps came closest to this, but they are essentially still local and have yet to meet decisive tests. The far more redundant pattern is represented by China, where Stalinism used the peasant revolts as a ladder on which to climb to power; or Indonesia, where the nascent republican bourgeoisie has done the same, though its perch is more precarious.

Contrary to Jacoby, in Asia as in Europe, it is urban culture, politics, leaders and economy that lead the modern movements. Even Stalinism is not an exception to this. In China, it has already acknowledged its shift in base. This is not due to the inferiority of the peasant or the superiority of the workers or bourgeoisie but because the solution to the very agrarian distress lies in modern technological development and the relations of the classes produced by this industrial revolution. The countryside cannot modernize itself. Barring such a transformation the greatest of peasant movements will be reduced to a doomed *Jacquerie*. Is it an accident that not one social theory has come out of the countryside for the alteration of society? Wherever fundamental change has been projected in the direction of a modern solution it has come from the modern classes, of which the usurping Stalinist

bureaucracy must be counted as one. The peasantry in revolt is an archaic depressed group rising out of the stagnant Asiatic rut of two millenia. No observer could fail to be impressed with the enormous potential implicit in this historic awakening.

One other crucial point needs to be made. In his pursuit of the destructive effects of imperialism, Jacoby, like many another, has overlooked the fact that with commercial transformation of agriculture by imperialism “the essential elements of industrialism already have found entrance in the dependencies—not through a busy building of factories and foundries, but through the industrialization of agriculture itself,” as another leading observer, Bruno Lasker, has put it. Lasker has pointed out that “tropical agriculture has already become too highly industrialized to permit of a return to production in small units.”

The movements for national emancipation stand on two legs; the beginnings of modern urban society, and the commercial large-scale and partially mechanized agriculture closely related to industry and the world market. This has developed in spite of the over-all policy of imperialism to suppress modernization in the colonies. Capitalism has brought the colonies into the modern age in spite of itself. This is the meaning of the post-war revolt of Asia.

However, while the choices before the colonial peoples, whether socialism, capitalism or totalitarian bureaucracy, are all urban and industrially based, to a very large extent, the replies they give to the land question will determine which road is taken. That is what makes Jacoby's book so valuable. He has put his finger on the most urgent post-war problem to come to the fore in the colonial world.

JACK BRAD

Sub-Continent

INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND THE WEST,
by Percival Spear, Ph.D. The Home University Library, Oxford University Press, 1949.

In the last century a number of British scholars and historians produced notable works, scholarly and urbane in content and style, describing the vast sub-continent that had fallen into the hands of the Empire. To be sure, these works carefully skirted the manner by

which the conquest had taken place and concerned themselves largely with the complex history of this strange and fascinating land. The purpose of this school of literature was to make India accessible to the Western World in acceptable terms. Not until much later, when the first wave of German specialists began their studies, was it realized that the 6,000-odd years of Indian history and thought had roots not so easily accessible to bourgeois historians.

But the social and national struggle of India, centering around the Congress Party and Gandhi, in turn produced a new type of literature, political and sociological in nature. Problems of economy, irrigation and agriculture, politics and government, were dealt with. Class analysis and class rivalries tended to blot out the traditional approach to Indian affairs. It appeared that broad divisions such as Hindu and Moslem, or Buddhism as opposed to Mohammedanism, were to be erased in the heat of the anti-imperialist and class struggles. The issue of caste faded before that of class.

Unfortunately for India, however, a sharp reversal of the historic trend set in. The reasons for this are well worth a detailed study which has yet to be made. The catastrophic division of India, now an accepted fact, took place. It is only natural under these circumstances that a corresponding reversal of literature dealing with India should accompany this; a throwback to a previous period when English historians objectively described traits of Hindu and Moslem, Hindu theology, Hindu caste and Buddhist doctrine. Such is this recently published work of Percival Spear, a fellow at Cambridge University.

As a historic and fairly illuminating introduction to the religious, communal and social problems of India, no fault can be found with this work. Spear finds that India has "twin souls"—Hindu and Moslem—and it must be admitted that the degree and depth of this distinction was sadly underestimated by socialist and Marxist writers. The main scope of this short book is to trace and outline the nature of this difference. Like English historians of the classic school, the author has an admirable skill in concentrating, digesting and summarizing a great mass of material and presenting it in the cool, somewhat ironical manner associated with such writers. His por-

trait of Hindu and Moslem soul is undoubtedly largely influenced by E. M. Forster's *Passage to India*. There is little economic or social analysis in this work and the influence of such factors is glossed over except for the casual remark (p. 91) that "...most of the industrial resources and nearly all the capital and skill of united India were in the hands of the Hindus."

In the concluding chapter, from page 212 onward, there is an admirable summary of the fantastically difficult problems, in all fields, which confront the ruling Hindu society—the caste problem, now brought to the forefront by the social reform bill proposed by Nehru; the problem of Hindu theology in relation to Western concepts; the problem of historic Hindu culture and its effort to survive. To this must be added, of course, the problem of tightening relations between India and Pakistan which constitute a permanent menace of war between these two areas of the sub-continent. In restating lasting problems in the light of the division of India, this work has perhaps begun a new phase of the vast literature dealing with the most important nation in the Asiatic world.

H. J.

ANVIL AND STUDENT PARTISAN

**NOW OUT
Spring Quarter 1950**

Included in This Issue:

Inside Spain
Juan Andrade

Concept of Imperialism
Professor Burt Hoselitz

An Evaluation of Celine
Irving Howe

in Retrospect: George Orwell
Avel Austin

*and other articles, reviews, poems
by students and guest
contributors*

15 Cents per copy Order from

ANVIL AND STUDENT PARTISAN
247 Lexington Avenue
New York, N. Y.