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# SOCIALIST REVIEW

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## SOCIALISM ON THE DEFENSIVE

by Norman Thomas

**T**O THE American Socialist, accustomed to a country where the Socialist and Communist parties are numerically weak and their names suspect, Europe superficially presents an extraordinary contrast. In Great Britain the Labor Party, a member of the Socialist International, is His Majesty's opposition; it controls the principal governing body of London, the world's greatest metropolitan area. Coalition or Popular Front governments are presided over by Socialist prime ministers in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Loyalist Spain. Socialist Ministers sit in the French, Belgian and Czechoslovak Cabinets. The U.S.S.R., covering one-sixth of the land area of the globe, is under absolute Communist rule and boasts definitely that in its borders socialism—which it regards as a stage to communism—has been established.

Nevertheless, despite this brave show of office and political power, European socialism and communism, as I have seen them, are on the defensive. Nowhere, with the possible and partial exception of the Scandinavian countries, did I find socialist parties thinking and planning aggressively for a new society, but at best for preserving, with some improvements, "democracy" against Fascism. George Lansbury told an English audience which I addressed that 90% of the British Labor Party, in America, would have voted for Roosevelt in 1936. The estimate seems to me conservative. Everywhere in socialist circles I heard friendly comparisons of the aims and achievements of Leon Blum, who is a socialist, with those of Franklin Delano Roosevelt who avowedly is not. (Usually they added the admission that American labor is today far more, not less, militant than its brethren in Europe.) European socialism is unquestionably responsible for certain immediate reforms of value to the masses. If a modified capitalism coupled with political democracy could be made to work for any considerable period it would largely be the achievement of social-

ists, mostly professed Marxists of one school or another, whose basic faith has been that such capitalism cannot work. But European socialism's main concern is not these reforms; it is a successful defensive against that development of capitalist nationalism, known as fascism, which dominates Italy and Germany and is responsible for European war in Spain.

This is true not only of socialism, but of communism. Outside of the U.S.S.R. communist parties are more vociferously defending "democracy" than the socialists. In Spain, communists have taken the initiative for a program to make the war one for national independence and democracy, not for social revolutionary ends, which, so far as the communists are concerned, are postponed to an indefinite future.

Now this communist change of line, superficially one of the most astounding in the history of politics, is rationalized by various arguments, supported by Marxist texts as dogmatically as was its opposite. The vital and determining factor is, of course, the international situation and the passionate desire to obtain for the Communist Holy Land, the U.S.S.R., the support of the so-called democratic powers in the struggle against fascist aggression. I do not say this to minimize Russian achievements, to deny the danger of Fascist aggression, or the importance of the escape of the U.S.S.R. from it. But truth compels the statement that even within the U.S.S.R. itself at present the advance toward a genuinely socialist society has been checked; there are evidences of a new social stratification, and there is a reign of terror among the politically articulate which is wholly incompatible with the achievement of socialist ideals.

I am not, in this article, discussing Russia at length. I can only say that in Russia I felt, along with my great admiration for great social achievements, a pall of fear almost as if it were a tangible thing. I saw many evi-

dences of it in the daily life of inconspicuous folk. The whole world has the evidence of five blood "purges" within less than a year: the two Moscow trials, the wholesale executions in the Far East, the executions in Tiflis, and the executions of eight of the most prominent and heretofore trusted generals of the great red army. The bitter discussion of guilt or innocence in these affairs, more particularly of Trotsky's guilt or innocence, has tended to obscure the fact that to the lover of Socialist progress in Russia it is almost equally disquieting to believe the victims were innocent or guilty. What sort of society produces these conditions of intrigue and terror? What must be thought of political arrangements which give to all political controversy an aspect of plot answered by execution?

These things in the U.S.S.R. have happened at a time when externally its strength seemed securely established; when its Communist dictatorship had been in full control of education and communication for at least half a generation; when the second Five Year Plan had been heralded as successfully accomplished, and Stalin himself had proclaimed his establishment of the Socialist Society. Moreover they happened at a time when economic and social conditions in Germany, Italy and Japan did nothing to commend their policies to any other land. Under these circumstances, Russia today is not an exception to my statement that socialism is on the defensive.

This summary survey of the European scene, were I to close it here, would be unfair. It is not a negative or unimportant thing to wage even defensive war against Fascism. That defensive struggle has been waged with some success, and for that success socialism is largely responsible.

Had I written this article, let us say on May Day, I should have been more emphatic about the success of the tactics of European socialism in its defensive struggle against Fascism. As I write, the increasing difficulties of the Popular Front government in France, the astounding shake-up in the Russian army, and the fall of brave Bilbao, with its consequent stimulus to flagging Fascist hopes, must moderate any optimism concerning the defensive against Fascism. Even so, I do not think Bilbao's fall will now precipitate general war in Europe, or do worse than postpone the victory of the Spanish Loyalists.

Any further great success of fascism is more likely to mean long night for Europe and the world than a speedy socialist reaction. The Spanish crisis illustrates the point. A socialist may be critical of the length to which the present Spanish Cabinet has swung to the right (very largely, as I observed, to conciliate British opinion). Yet he must recognize that to carry criticism now to the point of sabotage or open revolt, from whatever motives, cannot but play into the hands of Franco. And Franco's triumph may well be the end of hope of escaping worldwide war of fascist aggression. Any socialist group, however sincere and intelligent its theory, which alienates itself from the masses in the struggle against fascism will be rejected as futile or positively dangerous.

But even if the defense against fascism rapidly achieves new successes, the essential problem remains: how shall socialism press to the aggressive upon which the hope of the good society depends—unless, indeed, socialism is tacitly to repudiate its whole analysis of capitalism as incompatible with plenty, peace and freedom! In the long run, socialist defense against war and fascism, for its real success, requires an aggressive attack upon capitalism and its Siamese twin, our present chauvinistic nationalism. For it is from these that fascism itself springs—not from the diabolism of a few wicked men. And it is from these that modern wars have sprung and will spring again even if the German Nazis and Italian Fascists should miraculously disappear or be reduced to impotence. The present comparative success of anti-fascist coalitions is based on a temporary recovery of capitalist prosperity which cannot last.

Here I content myself with stating these facts as axiomatic—as indeed, they should be to socialists of any shade of real socialism. They can only be denied by a refutation of the whole socialist analysis of capitalism; rather, by a refutation of the whole socialist theory of historic development.

Only by a dangerously loose and inaccurate use of the word can British or American capitalism *as yet* be called fascist in outlook and desire. (Fascist is not a mere synonym for reactionary or imperialist.) But capitalism in these countries is thoroughly untrustworthy for the preservation of peace. Nevertheless there is a strong tendency, not always frankly acknowledged, in certain socialist and communist circles to place all their hope on a "collective security" of which the active participation of capitalist Britain and capitalist America in the defense of "democracy" is an essential condition. One European socialist of some importance told me that socialist support of Roosevelt in Europe was not based so much on his domestic policies, of which socialists knew little, but their belief that of all American political leaders he was the most likely to join some new crusade to "save Europe." That meant a naive belief that Roosevelt in 1937 or 1938 can and will do for "democracy" what Wilson could not in 1917-1919. It is a dangerous hope for socialists.

It is equally dangerous to believe that the British ruling class responsible for Britain's undemocratic rule in India, will suddenly do for "democracy" or fair play or even the most moderate socialism what it emphatically did not do for Ethiopia or for Spain. On the contrary, British benevolence to Franco was second only to Hitler's and Mussolini's intervention in making possible the long struggle in Spain, and it is generally understood today in Spain that the hope of British favor for the Loyalist cause depends upon guarantees that the Loyalists will be as respectful to British capital as would Franco.

If these facts are correct—and I saw and heard nothing in Europe to make them even debatable—it behooves us to ask why socialists found themselves in this defensive role with so little plan for recovering the aggressive. An adequate answer would require a book, not an article. It would, of course, take account of

specific failures of socialist and communist leadership from the beginning of the World War until today, notably in Great Britain, and Germany, and, from another angle, in Russia. It would raise questions concerning the proper organization of labor parties, and the brake which the British system of the bloc voting of trade union strength in the party clamps upon Socialist progress. But I think all of us, of all factions, when we engage in controversy, are too willing to find easy scapegoats in the groups responsible for the policies which we dislike. Maybe the workers or the masses, or if you like the "revolutionary masses," have been at one time or another "betrayed" in Germany, Great Britain, France—and now in Russia and Spain—but most of them were at least acquiescent in that betrayal. The theory of betrayal is a little too easy unless at least it tells us why that betrayal was possible.

The answer to our problem seems to me plain: Socialist propaganda, education and organization has not yet won the masses away from their dependence, ideologically and practically, upon capitalism and nationalism. In many respects the Great War, which sprang out of them served to perpetuate and intensify them. It is true, as the history of fascism shows, that socialists underestimated the actual and potential strength of the middle class under demagogic manipulation. But that error in judgment was itself part of that larger failure to which I have referred.

"If religion is the opiate of the peoples," said a wise Austrian Socialist to me, "the worst form of that religion in our day is nationalism." It is both an opiate to reason and a stimulus to madness. Perhaps the historian some hundreds of years hence will record the phenomena of our time as the death throes of nationalism. Certainly in its absolutist form it is completely at variance with an intelligent use of our machinery to destroy exploitation and conquer poverty. But there it is, to be seen at its most absurd worst in Central and South-eastern Europe. And however our future historian may philosophize about it, the death throes of nationalism—if death throes they are—are likely to carry our generation and our children's down to destruction.

One trouble is that even the most internationally-minded must continually work within the framework of nationalism. Social reforms for labor are national reforms. Even social revolution in the U.S.R.R. has, in the event, been national revolution. Germany and Italy have given all too convincing proof that a dictator who feeds the national ego may in comparative safety keep the masses hungry. Once the logic of absolute nationalism is accepted, especially in a warlike world, it is entirely reasonable that the nations which accept should submit to the chains which militarization and economic nationalism put upon them.

Nationalism is closely allied, of course, with capitalism. Capitalism is obviously not a static thing. The fascist world has departed almost as far from laissez-faire capitalism as Socialism itself. Nevertheless the profit system continues, and capitalism is still capitalism, whether under fascist control, or the more democratic control that

Roosevelt, Blum, and others have sought to set up. Men who have wildly cheered denunciations of capitalism as capitalism have to live and to support their children. It is natural, therefore, that their tendency is to seek remedies which seem to be immediately practicable, as revolution usually does not. Therefore the labor struggle is a struggle for better conditions for labor within the capitalist framework without much regard for what may ultimately happen. This kind of thing can go on as long as capitalism maintains any sort of vitality. Even when capitalism has been in one of its periodic crises fear of even greater suffering has heretofore tended to hold the masses in check.

This statement is, of course, not an adequate discussion of capitalist nationalism, but it will serve to call attention to the fact that it is not merely the blunders of leaders, or the quarrels of factions, but the actual nature of the situation which puts difficulties in the way of socialist reorganization. These difficulties, however, afford no excuse for ignoring them; still less for acting as if capitalism *a la* Roosevelt or Blum could save the day. European socialists would, I suppose, deny that they have any such opinion and their denial would be theoretically correct. But certainly *in action* from London to Prague I saw little or no sign or any aggressive attempt to deal in a *socialist fashion* with the problem which I have outlined. I got the impression, which with all my heart I hope is mistaken, that there were important elements and individuals in the British Labor Party who could be very easily persuaded under certain circumstances that Briain's one hope was in a new *national* coalition which would include them with politicians much to the right of David Lloyd George or Archie Sinclair.

In the U.S.S.R., of course, the problem of capitalism and nationalism does not exist in the form which I have stated it for the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, when Stalin made the choice of Socialism in one country—a choice which I believe circumstances made necessary—he had to pay the price of building up a Russian nationalism. The internationalism of communism has been steadily interpreted in terms of Russian needs or alleged needs. Socialism also had to do business with a world still capitalist. Later on, this capitalism in Germany became fascist, avowedly dedicated to fighting a Bolshevism which it did not trouble to analyze critically.

This circumstance has forced a militarization on Russia which under the most favorable circumstances retarded the growth of socialism, the improvement of economic conditions, and the facing of other problems than the problems of national defense. Actually, this militarism under communist dictatorship has now been marked either by one of the most outrageously traitorous military plots in history, or by so bad a case of the jitters on the part of the government as to produce charges of such a plot. For this there is no one explanation; but one element in this tragedy, as in other tragedies of our modern world, is our dependence on the method of war both for defense against fascism and for revolutionary change. I do not believe that any political party

today can be pacifist in other than relative terms—certainly no revolutionary party can make pacifism its chief commandment. Pacifism must be an absolute ethical, or rather a religious, movement. Nevertheless, the uncritical acceptance of the method of war by socialists and the notion which still persists in some places not merely that socialists should try to turn wars into social revolutions, as they should, but that war will easily lead to desirable social revolution needs searching re-examination. The workers have everything to win by substituting other methods than war wherever possible in the class conflict. At least they should think in terms of a *coup d'etat* rather than war. The militarization which modern war requires is always the enemy of a democratic socialism.

There is no formula which I or anybody else has discovered perfectly to answer the problems which this examination of European socialism reveals. Some principles clearly stand out. Socialism needs a rebirth of aggressive vigor in working for socialism. That rebirth cannot be achieved by groups, however sound their reasoning, which by their psychology and methods of organization alienate themselves from the masses and become sects. The problem of socialism is to achieve the maximum unity in the struggle against fascism without losing sight of the socialist analysis of capitalism and the socialist goal.

There is no rule for doing this which is the same yesterday, today and forever, or which can be imposed without variation upon every nation, regardless of its particular condition. We can affirm definitely that no union of capitalist states, whether they are still allegedly democratic in government or not, can be the basis of a collective security which will meet the socialist test, or indeed, the conditions of true peace. It is in the co-operation of the workers of different lands that we must find our hope. I believe that in substance the American Socialist Party at its recent conventions and in its last campaign took the proper theoretical positions. It remains for us to make them effective.

This task cannot be done by an uncritical acceptance of, and enthusiasm for, such slogans as the "Popular Front" or the "United Front." Neither on the other hand can it be done by joining some of the left-wing socialist movements which in spite of themselves are and will remain mere sects.

This statement must be amplified. First, then, as to the Popular Front. That at best can only be justified by a very grave emergency, and it is the fault of misfortune of socialism when an emergency arises which permits no better answer. That is an objective deduction from the recent history both of Spain and France. In the United States of America there is no emergency to justify a Popular Front, and talk of a Popular Front is more likely to lead to support of something like the Democratic Party under Roosevelt than of any real Farmer-Labor Party which is a conscious expression of the needs and demands of workers with hand and brain. To such a labor party the Socialist Party of America is rightly committed. Even so, it cannot take the place

of the Socialist Party. That party must be continued and strengthened, maintaining its own identity for all purposes except actual election campaigns. In those campaigns socialists should participate as loyal members of a democratically organized Farmer-Labor Party.

As for a united front, in the sense of close union, perhaps organic union, between Socialists and Communists, I saw nothing in Europe, as I have seen nothing in America, to make me favor it. I saw plenty to make me favor carefully worked out plans for joint action on issues on which a common agreement can be reached. That joint action might well extend to some agreement between the Second and Third Internationals on the Spanish situation. But a blanket agreement for joint action or organic union, open or tacit, would, I think, today be disastrous to socialism. For this there are two reasons: First, the Communist Party in practice has made Jesuitism a virtue. This attitude has probably been modified for the better under the new communist line. Nevertheless one has to be an expert casuist to reconcile, as all communists must, their advocacy of democracy and reformism outside of Russia and their denial of what the world understands as democracy in Russia.

The second reason is stronger. Communism and communist tactics achieved great things in Russia. But they did it at the price of establishing not a dictatorship of the proletariat which might be interpreted as a democracy of workers, but a dictatorship of a party over the proletariat. Some of the fruits of that dictatorship are now bitterly apparent. They must be avoided. Socialists could learn from Russian failures as well as Russian successes, and communism will admit no Russian failures.

There is a brand of Communism, Trotskyism, of which the foregoing statement is not true. Indeed, some Trotskyites go to the extraordinary length of saying that there is an end of all Socialism in Russia. I believe that many of the positions, especially the critical position of Trotsky and other extreme left-wing communists and socialists, are worthy of careful examination. In terms of pure theory it might easily be possible for the Fourth International to evolve a position superior to that of either the Second or Third International. Nevertheless, inevitably such a Fourth International is and will be sectarian. It is cut off from the masses, if for no other reason than it is rooted in the bitter quarrel between Stalin and Trotsky and, to a certain extent, the peculiarities of the Russian situation. However important is that controversy to mankind, it is hopeless, and worse, to try to build an aggressive socialism on the basis of extreme preoccupation with it. It was the communist tactics and doctrines concerning party organization and methods which made it logically inevitable that there should not be room in the party for both Stalin and Trotsky. There is little reason to believe that if Trotsky had won instead of Stalin there would have been an end of intrigue, plots, and the reign of fear in Russia.

The condition of Socialist vigor and vitality; yes, the condition of Socialist participation in wide joint action, is the integrity of the Socialist organization. That in-

# BALANCE SHEET OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

by Liston M. Oak

IN THE microcosm of Spain are reflected all the political problems of the world. Spain is the battleground, not only of the international class war, but of the first phase of the imperialist war. In the Iberian peninsula the masses of workers and peasants are facing the most basic political questions which Europe generally will face tomorrow and America the day after. Not merely a struggle between "democracy and fascism"; that is a misleading statement of the main issue. The Spanish masses are fighting for national independence and democracy; but far more important, they are fighting for socialism, and under the most difficult circumstances.

The fact that is concealed by the coalition of the Spanish Communist Party with the left Republicans and right wing Socialists, is that there has been a successful social revolution in half of Spain. Successful, that is, in the collectivization of factories and farms which are operated under trade union control, and operated quite efficiently. During the three months that I was director of propaganda for the United States and England under Alvarez del Vayo, then Foreign Minister for the Valencia Government, I was instructed not to send out one word about this revolution in the economic system of loyalist Spain. Nor are any foreign correspondents in Valencia permitted to write freely of the revolution that has taken place.

The battle for socialism—or libertarian communism as the Anarchists prefer to call it—is as important for the future of Spain and the world as the battles on the Madrid front. The Stalinist argument that first the fascists must be defeated, their attempt to separate the war and the revolution, is spurious and opposite to the stand of Lenin under parallel circumstances in 1917. The Spanish Anarchists, P.O.U.M. Communists and left Socialists declare, as the Bolsheviks did in Russia when faced with similar problems, that the war and the revolution are indivisible, that only a revolutionary workers and peasants government and army backed by the mobilization of all industry and agriculture on a socialist basis, can successfully wage the war against counter-revolutionary forces, including foreign intervention. In 1917 to 1921 in Russia the enemy was the counter-revolutionary forces under Wrangel, Kornilov, Denikin, Kolchak, backed by foreign imperialist armies of intervention sent into Russia by nearly all capitalist powers. In 1936-37 the main enemy is the force under Franco backed by Germany and Italy. But there is another enemy, Anglo-

French imperialism, intervening secretly in Spain and utilizing as an instrument of its policy the reactionary coalition now dominating the Spanish People's Front,, just as in 1917 the Kerensky government was the instrument which the reaction sought to use.

Despite differences the parallel is striking and the problems faced by Spanish revolutionists are essentially those faced by Russian revolutionists from 1917 to 1921. Both countries were backward agricultural countries where feudal institutions and social relations persisted and the bourgeois revolution had not been completed. In neither was there a strong middle class nor a powerful group of finance capitalists. And most interesting is the fact that precisely the same arguments used now by Stalinists and right Socialists like Prieto, were used in 1917 against Lenin's revolutionary program by the Russian reformists and even by many Bolsheviks such as Stalin, Zinoviev and Kameniev. They argued for entrance into the Provisional Government headed by Kerensky which was very similar to the People's Front today. They argued that the bourgeois revolution must first be completed and the White Guards and imperialist interventionists defeated. They argued that Lenin's ideas would be ruinous, that they were mad, and would play into the hands of the counter-revolution. The Mensheviks spread the rumor that Lenin and Trotsky were agents of German imperialism.

On April 29, 1917, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers Deputies, then under reformist, right wing control, issued this statement: "Upon considering reports of our comrades concerning the spread of subversive propaganda carried on under revolutionary and social democratic cover, and particularly that engaged in by the so-called Leninists, and believing that propaganda to be no less harmful than any other counter-revolutionary propaganda proceeding from the right. . . ."

Do you remember the Sisson Documents, published by the United States Government, "proving" that Lenin and Trotsky were German agents? These forgeries were only a part of a world-wide campaign against the Bolsheviks, to show that they advanced their political line only to weaken and undermine the revolutionary forces so that Germany would march into Russia and conquer. This sounds like charges against "Trotskyist agents of the Gestapo" today. Just so the Stalinists seek to "prove" that Andres Nin, recently assassinated leader of the P.O.U.M., and other P.O.U.M. Communists, Anarchists and left Socialists in Spain, are agents of Franco trying



to weaken the People's Front, organizing revolts against it to permit the fascists to conquer.

It is amazing how political history repeats itself, although always with variations; how few political tricks there are and how they are always used, and with some success—and the Stalinists know them all.

The basic reasons for the charges against Lenin and Trotsky in 1917 and the charges against the P.O.U.M. and Anarchist C.N.T.-F.A.I. in 1937, are identical. Although the P.O.U.M. and C.N.T.-F.A.I. are not Bolshevik organizations, they are revolutionary organizations opposing a revolutionary program to a reformist, social democratic one. They believe fascism can only be defeated by socialism, and they think bourgeois democracy under the name of the People's Front is no guarantee against fascism, and against reaction and counter-revolution generally. They maintain that the war and the revolution are indivisible; that industry and agriculture must remain collectivized and, like the army and the police force, must be under workers' control. The P.O.U.M., C.N.T.-F.A.I. and left S.P. and U.G.T. balk at the immediate seizure of power, but with that basic difference these organizations *approximate* a revolutionary position. This is not an apology for the numerous and serious errors that the Spanish revolutionists made, but it is rather a defense of their position insofar as it is revolutionary and in opposition to People's Front opportunism.

On August 31, 1917, Lenin wrote:

"Must we fight against Kornilov? Of course we must! . . . We will fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, even as Kerensky's troops do, but we do not support Kerensky. On the contrary we expose his weakness. There is the difference. . . . Without in the least relaxing our hostility toward Kerensky . . . without renouncing the task of overthrowing Kerensky, we say we must take into account the present moment; we shall not overthrow Kerensky *right now*—we shall approach the task of struggling against him in a different way . . . the main thing now is to intensify our propaganda in favor of some kind of partial demands to be presented to Kerensky, demands saying . . . arm the Petrograd workers, disperse the State Duma; legalize the transfer of landowners' land to the peasants; introduce workers' control over bread factories, etc. . . ."

Substitute in the above quotation Azana for Kerensky, Franco for Kornilov, Cortes for Duma, People's Front for Provisional Government, and you have the substance of numerous editorials that have been printed time after time by the newspapers of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., and the P.O.U.M. before its suppression. There is this very important difference—the Spanish revolutionists made the grave mistake of entering the People's Front Government (for the sake of anti-fascist unity, from which they have subsequently been ousted along with the Caballero Socialists. But the essential point to be made here is this—the Anarchists, P.O.U.M. Communists and left Socialists in Spain today take the same attitude toward the Valencia Government as the Bolsheviks toward the Kerensky Government: "We will continue to fight with all our forces against fascism, without supporting the re-

actionary measures of the People's Front Government, and we demand that the government shall not carry out its announced policy of disarming the workers and removing the workers' committees from control of the collectivized factories and farms, the army and the police. We demand a new government exclusively of proletarian and peasant organizations." This is a general statement of their attitude.

After the defeat of the Kornilov counter-revolutionary revolt, Lenin wrote, in September, 1917:

"Either you are a revolutionary democrat in deeds and then you do not have to be afraid of steps leading towards Socialism—or you are afraid of steps leading toward Socialism and then you must unavoidably sink to the level of Kerensky . . . that is to the position of suppressing in a reactionary bureaucratic manner the revolutionary democratic tendencies of the worker and peasant masses.

"*There is no middle course.* And therein lies the fundamental contradiction of our revolution. It is impossible to stand still in history generally, *in wartime particularly.* One must either go forward or backward. It is impossible to go forward in Russia (read Spain—L.M.O.) of the 20th Century, a Russia that has won a Republic, and democracy in a revolutionary way, *without going toward Socialism . . .* if you are afraid to go forward, that means you are going backward. . . ."

If Lenin's words were true in Russia in 1917 they are doubly true in Spain in 1937. Either Spain will go forward toward Socialism, or it will go backward toward capitalism, toward a military dictatorship, and toward a regime that will increasingly use fascist methods to suppress revolutionists, as the People's Front is already doing. There is no middle course. Spain has gone much farther toward Socialism than had Russia when Lenin wrote these words, and a retreat would be disastrous. The Parisian workers of 1871 could not retreat from revolutionary positions won, as Marx pointed out, and the Spanish workers of 1937 cannot retreat—if they are forced to do so it means the defeat of the Spanish Revolution. Stalinist policies are leading toward exactly that.

Perhaps I should remark parenthetically that I do not quote Lenin or Marx as a Christian quotes the Bible. A revolutionist today must be willing to admit the many mistakes these great revolutionists made, as well as to reassert their far more important contributions, the revolutionary principles they taught and which are abandoned by the Stalinists. Again I assert with all possible emphasis, the Spanish Anarchists, P.O.U.M. Communists, and left Socialists are closer to the correct application to conditions in Spain of basic Marxist and Leninist principles, despite all their mistakes, despite their entrance for a time into the People's Front, than are the Stalinists. But that is a gross understatement—*the Stalinists in fact are today the foremost revisionists of Marx and Lenin—Bernstein did not dare go half as far as Stalin in revising Marx.*

In his work "On the Problems of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution," Lenin declared: "Not a parlia-



mentary republic—a return to it would constitute a step backward—but a republic of Soviets of workers, agricultural laborers, and peasants' deputies throughout the land from below upward." In Spain a progressive democratic republic, which the Stalinists advocate, is not only an impossible outcome of the civil war but even if it were historically possible it would be a big step backward. Spain must go forward to a republic of Soviets or backward to capitalism and a military dictatorship.

Lenin repeatedly affirmed his opposition to a regular army: "Prevent the establishment of a standing army separated from the people, which constitutes a most certain generator of all manner of attempts to take away freedom," he wrote in his "The Assembly of Peasant Deputies." And again "The army and the people must merge into one—therein lies the triumph of liberty! Everyone must be in possession of arms. To retain freedom, a universal arming of the people is indispensable," he wrote in his "Report on the Political Situation." And in "Letters from Afar": "Do not permit the re-establishment of the police. Do not let go of the local government organs. Create a really universal militia, led by the proletariat. . . . Following a very brief revolutionary period, *all* the bourgeois and bourgeois-democratic republics organized or re-established precisely that kind of police—a special organization of armed men, separated from and opposed to the people, and in one way or another subordinated to the bourgeoisie."

That's exactly what happened in Spain. The workers militias, organized and responsible to the revolutionary organizations, and the workers' police patrols, have been abolished and replaced by a regular republican bourgeois army and police force, *separated from the people and opposed to the workers' interests.*

Lenin's position differed from Kerensky's on three points: "1. On the question of the land. We demand that the peasants, by the decision of the majority of the peasants themselves, in each locality, take over the *entire* land immediately, thus increasing the output of bread and meat for the soldiers. The Provisional Government favors an 'agreement' between peasants and landowners, i.e., an 'agreement' of 300 peasants with one landowner. . . . 2. We favor that type of republic where, from top to bottom, there is no police, on standing (instead of a standing army we believe there should be a general arming of the people) no officialdom enjoying in fact the privileges of irremovability and high bourgeois salaries. . . ." The third point was on the immediate cessation of the imperialist war and the abrogation of treaties.

"In France," Engel observes, the workers were armed after every revolution and therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for whatever bourgeois was at the helm of the state. Hence, after each revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers." (From Lenin's preface to Marx's "The Civil War in France.")

Spain was an exception—the first duty of the reaction was to disarm the workers, and this task has been carried out efficiently by the Stalinists at the behest of the

Spanish bourgeoisie and the British and French Governments, from whom Russia seeks military aid in the coming war against fascist powers, Germany, Italy and Japan.

The Spanish Soviets need not necessarily follow exactly the Russian pattern, but the workers' committees, workers' alliance, workers' anti-fascist defense committees, etc., which were a dual power in Spain for nearly a year until suppressed by the People's Front, were embryonic Soviets which should have been built up and strengthened in preparation for a favorable opportunity to seize all power. Whether or not the workers' committees could or should have seized power a year ago, or in May, or, as the C.N.T.-F.A.I. and P.O.U.M. leaders believed, were compelled by circumstances to postpone seizure of power until after the fascists are defeated, is a separate question—a question of proper timing which is of decisive importance. The Spanish Trotskyists call the leaders of the P.O.U.M. and C.N.T.-F.A.I. "betrayers" precisely because they hesitated and were afraid of seizing power when, on May 7, the revolutionary Barcelona workers defeated the Stalinist attempt to disarm them and end workers' control of industry and of the police force

That the opportunity to take over power was offered the revolutionists is indisputable. Why didn't they do so? The main reasons are that they were sure of winning over the reactionaries only in Catalonia; that such an armed insurrection would have meant a disastrous weakening of the anti-fascist front and Franco would have marched into Madrid; that even if they won decisively throughout loyalist Spain against the right wing of the People's Front the British and French imperialists would certainly have sent in armies of intervention to crush the revolution; that they would have received no aid from Soviet Russia, France, or the Comintern, aid that was so essential to hold back the fascist forces; that no effective aid from any quarter to fight against counter-revolution and imperialist intervention could be expected because both the Second and Third Internationals have degenerated and abandoned the principles of revolutionary Marxism.

In addition, it must be said that there was no great revolutionary leader comparable to Lenin in Spain; and that the forces of the revolution were hopelessly divided between the C.N.T.-F.A.I., the P.O.U.M. and the left Socialists. There was no large disciplined capable group in Spain comparable to the Russian Bolsheviks, able to command a mass following. The P.O.U.M. failed to form even an effective defensive alliance with the other two revolutionary organizations. On the other hand the reactionary forces, or if you prefer, the social democratic, reformist forces, consisting of the left Republicans, the Spanish Communist Party, and the Prieto Socialists, were better organized and provided with more ample funds, arms, and other material aid from abroad.

The Stalinists threw their membership books wide open and recruited hundreds of thousands of members among the middle class. Their membership grew from almost nothing to 250,000 in the first six months of the civil

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# SOCIALISM AND WAR

by Theodore Dan

SOCIALISTS fight for peace. They refuse to plot a war, by which they could advance their policies. On the contrary, they do all in their power to prevent the outbreak of a war. Under the conditions of our epoch (it was quite different in the era of Marx!) probably all Socialists and most likely all Communists agree in one thing: the period in which the Russian Bolsheviks thought it possible "to carry socialism into other nations a the point of the bayonets" seems to have passed forever. Socialists are against war as much as the overwhelming majority of mankind. And yet war might be forced upon mankind by the struggle for self-preservation—for our epoch it will be more logical to say "by the death-throes of our capitalist system." Right at the present time, the war danger is growing with every hour. What will be and what should be the attitude of socialists in case of a war forced upon them?

One answer would be (and some comrades argue thus) that, since we are supposed to war, we must try to forestall war by a proletarian revolution, if not in the entire world than at least in all war-raging nations. Such an answer possesses the *basic* value, as it gives a definite direction to the socialist struggle for peace and against war. It does not offer a *practical political* solution of the problem.

Certainly, the proletarian revolution, the victory of socialism—not in "one country only," but at least in the decisive countries of the capitalistic world—is the only means to put a final stop to the barbarism of war. Therefore the socialist struggle for peace must closely be tied together with the fight for the overthrow of the capitalist world and for the triumph of the socialist order. But the revolution is a stormy affair, breaking out with elementary impetus—resulting from numberless and incalculable factors—and cannot be ordered according to model, in advance. If it were possible to order revolution with all its measures prescribed in advance, then all socialists would prefer to "make" it today rather than tomorrow. The working class indeed has enough reasons—quite apart from a war—to wish for the earliest deliverance from its capitalistic misery! The real problem which socialism is confronted with is not whether it should prefer peace and revolution to war, but what political attitude socialism, as the advance guard of its class-conscious proletariat, should take under the most probable circumstances, *if the proletarian revolution should fail to take place* or to stop the war after its outbreak. This question has been raised theoretically over a year ago within the public opinion of the Socialist International, first the Bauer-Dan-Zyromski thesis and then by thesis of the Russian Social-Democrats. And *practically* this question came to the fore as a result of

the *Italo-Ethiopian War* and the *Spanish events* threw the question with a gigantic stimulus upon the conscience of the international proletariat. Its hardly possible any longer to evade it or to answer it by stereotyped phrases and slogans: it is *all too clear* that this is a question of the very existence, not alone of the Spanish Republic, but of the entire working class movement of the world. For the Socialist movement not to penetrate through all this complexity to a clear understanding of its tasks and of its role in the threatening European and World War, would mean walking blindly into the greatest danger.

I cannot, of course, within this restricted space review again all these thesis. Let me, however, recapitulate their main characteristics. Both theses are based on the fact that the attitude of Marxian socialism towards war has never been *dogmatic* and never should be dogmatic. This attitude; always has been and also for the future shall not be decided by an abstract and "*eternal principle*," but by a concrete analysis of the continuously changing historical conditions. The socialist position must be *dialectic*. On the dawn of the organized class movement of the proletariat in the 50's-60's of the last century Marx was able to endorse certain wars (in particular a war of Germany against Czarist Russia) by which he saw the way to victory of democracy in Europe through the necessary prerequisite for the development and the ultimate victory of the socialist working class movement. In the great war of 1914-18 it was not permissible for Marxian socialists just to "repeat" Marx, though Czarist Russia stood in one camp of the warring nations and Germany in the other. The analyses of these terrible events which caused this war, proved conclusively that the historical basic cause of this war laid not in the struggle between democracy and Czarism, but represented solely the fight between different capitalist nations for the domination of markets. In such a situation, undoubtedly Marx would have taken another position than the one he maintained 50 years earlier. The logical conclusion from this altered circumstances—in regard to a war was represented by the revolutionary and international socialism (Zimmerwald) which formulated the slogans of a "neutrality" opposed to every warring nation, the demand for peace "at any price" and finally "neither victors not losers." But also this attitude of revolutionary Marxism from 1914-18 must not be looked upon as an infallible remedy for all times and for all wars. Simply to repeat this again, would be only justified in the case where these historical conditions and the historical basis of the threatening war were the same of two decades ago. The Marxian analysis discovers fundamental difference of both the epochs, though they are separated from each other by relatively short periods.

This analysis convinces one that the war of 1914-18 left a deep cleavage in the development of capitalism, hampered its vitality, and marks the approach of its inevitable decay—where every activity of the ruling classes has more and more as its leitmotif to maintain the dominating social economic position, even at the price of economic, political and cultural degeneration of society. *Fascism* becomes the ideological and political exponent of these regressive tendencies of the ruling class. Fascist sentiments become more and more the symptoms of the bourgeoisie of all countries, but in certain countries, fascism an account of the particular development, succeeds in bringing into its camp large groups of the petty bourgeoisie and then attains complete totalitarian power. In other countries the more or less developed forms of democracy are strong enough to withstand the fascist attack, but everywhere they are only able to maintain their position on the basis of a more or less durable "alliance" between the petty bourgeois strata and the working class—be this alliance in the form of a political conservative government coalition (Scandinavia) or a pre-revolution people's front (France) or finally a united open revolutionary war against fascism (Spain). What is characteristic for our epoch is the fact that political democracy can only maintain itself by binding itself to the elements of proletarian socialism and becoming imbued with their ideology. The same Marxian logic uncovers the special role which has to be played, under such circumstances, within the system of the world powers by the Soviet Union, which in spite of all defects and dangers of its tyrannizing and perverse bolshevistic distatorship still is the land of the revolution that has smashed the domination of the capitalistic class. In such a historical situation, the motives of *social order* are attaining a continuously growing and finally dominant importance over the purely *economic* ("imperialistic") order within the framework or foreign and ergo also of the war policies of the decaying capitalist society. As the basic content, the impending war—whatever might be its immediate causes—will unavoidably crystallize the *DECISIVE BATTLE* between fascism as the last bulwark of capitalism and *socialist democracy* as the first step to victorious socialism. In such a battle between fascism and socialist democracy, between capitalism and socialism the class-conscious proletariat cannot remain neutral. It cannot demand "peace at any price" nor make a slogan "neither victors or losers." No! Interest of the entire working population of the world demands imperatively that fascism which has provoked this world conflagration must be *beaten and destroyed* and insofar as Hitler-Germany, the country of the highest level of capitalism and of the ne plus ultra totalitarian fascist dictatorship has become in our epoch the vital rallying point of world fascism—as in Marx's time Russia played that role for the absolutistic world reaction—the road to the proletarian freedom must lead to the defeat of German fascism. Socialists of our epoch are pacifists most assuredly, but their pacifism must be neither passive nor dogmatic. It must be active and dialectic. In a certain sense, one can say that modern

socialism—in its attitude to a possible war returns, by way of historical dialectics, though on a "higher plane" to the position of Marx and the First International. The theoretical predictions of the theses has found manifold practical confirmation in the course of international development. The Italo-Ethiopian War has clearly brought to light two facts. First: against their own imperialistic interests, the ruling class, of the leading capitalistic countries (France and England) have hesitated to counteract effectively the robbery of international fascism. Secondly, the working class of all countries, without exception, which certainly had no special sympathies for the feudal and semi-barbarian absolutism of the Ethiopian Negus, nevertheless did not remain "neutral" in this war, it put itself on the contrary squarely on the side of Ethiopia—active transport boycott; demanding peace—yes, but peace with a victor (Ethiopia) and a loser (Mussolini). A more convincing language is spoken in Spain. The petty bourgeoisie of the towns and of the villages leaned toward the proletariat and even submitted to its leadership. The Civil War soon turned into a genuine international war—into the war of the socialistically influenced Spanish Democracy, against Italo-German, yes, one can correctly state: against world fascism. Because the sympathies of the entire capitalistic bourgeoisie is with the Spanish rebels, including the English and French, though the most elementary and fundamental interests of British as well as French imperialism demand that Italo-German fascism should not be allowed to get a foothold in Spain in the western sphere of the Mediterranean, after Mussolini succeeded through his Ethiopian offensive to maintain himself in the eastern sphere. *Social* motives are simply getting the upper hand over immediate imperialistic "advantages" in the attitude of bourgeoisie. This explains the fatal policies of non-intervention which has been accepted by the conservative English government and which have been forced upon the popular front government in France—just as the idea of intervention that came to the surface in the moment when it became clear that in spite of German-Italian help the rebels were faced with defeat—a result which might have had detrimental results both in Germany and in Italy. The capitalist bourgeoisie of course is scared of nothing so much as of a socialist revolution against Fascism in those countries like Spain—and these fears are overshadowing the disadvantages which Mussolini's and Hitler's aggressive politics might have to their purely materialistic interests. From this viewpoint, *the working class of all countries has adopted the cause of the Spanish republic as its own*. It felt instinctively that not only Spanish workers, peasants and small tradesmen must wage this war but that the international workers, workers themselves, *must be in this war*—and not only a Civil War but a real international war. In the first international war, in which Germany is leading, the entire proletariat was pushed into without its willingness and partly without being conscious of it—as a warring party.

The workers of all countries do not at all proclaim disinterest in this war; on the contrary, they protest

against the policies of "neutrality" (non-intervention); announce their readiness to help the Spanish workers with all possible means, including the making and shipping of arms, greets the Soviet Union which furnishes Spain guns, cannons, tanks and airplanes. The working class does not proclaim "Down with war. Peace at any price." On the contrary, it protests against the tactic of a compromise peace (intervention) and sends "International Brigades" to Spain—not in order to pour-parler with Franco, but to smash him. Not only from the French peoples front but also from the recognized capitalist country of England does the working class demand; not that they should keep aloof from this war, for the sake of peace—on the contrary they demand that they shall deliver arms to the Spanish Government, that they shall send out their navy to the Spanish coast and—even under threat of violence—oppose the blockade which has been operated by the rebels and secretly or openly encouraged by their Italian-German "Patrons." The working class demands all that, although from this might emerge an open war of England and France and the Soviet Union against Italy and Germany as a prelude to the great world conflagration.

These facts speak louder than theories. They prove that the character of war itself—whose ghostlike face is raising its ugly head—robs the proletariat of every possibility to "stand aside" and forces upon it imperatively an active participation. It is sufficient to review the instinctive reaction of the socialists as well as the Trades Union International in regard to the Italo-Ethiopian conflict and the Spanish war, in order to record what *change* the war policies of all socialist parties—right as well as left—has been brought about under the pressure of inexorable facts. The old, absolute, *dogmatic* pacifism ("no more war") is dying out—dying, but not dead yet by any means. And so logically do the ruling classes take advantage of this outseasoned ideology which has been the result of the bitter experiences of "Social-Patriotism" during the war of 1914-18—with the aim to save Fascism which is in close kinship with them. The slogan: "Save the peace at any price" served the Lavals, the Hoares, et al., to sabotage the sanctions which the League of Nations imposed upon the nations in Europe for the protection of Ethiopia, and to render them ineffective. And if the French popular front government was forced to accept the fatal non-intervention, the pressure of England and of the French bourgeoisie is not alone responsible for this fiasco: it must be stated openly that the sentiments of farmers, petty traders and even proletarian masses were equally for non-intervention. Especially the opposition of the "leftist" elements of the working class against non-intervention is often paralysed and crippled by the traditional dogmatic fascism—revolutionary on the surface, but "outlined" in reality which causes them to demand intervention in Spain and at the same time emphasized that this shall not result in a war.

Unfortunately, the tanks, airplanes and battleships of Mussolini and Hitler cannot be effectively met and resisted except by similar tanks, airplanes and battleships

of England and France, but never by church sermons, no matter how "revolutionary." To oppose such a viewpoint would mean, under the given historical conditions, not to save peace, but only to postpone the outbreak of the war—and therefore but to make it more unavoidable and crueler. Or we declare our readiness for the sake of the peace, to submit the entire Universe to the Iron Heel of German-Italian Fascism.

As a matter of plain, sober facts, peace without a *war risk* cannot be effectively saved at all. This truth has been stated quite often by the chairman of the International, De Brouckere: "Socialists must hate war, but must not be afraid of it." Socialists are pacifists, they shall not be dogmaticians of pacifism.

The war policies of all socialist parties are going through a slow, but unceasing and firm change since the last year and a half. This change proceeds purely empirically in the succession of the treatment of single problems of international or innerpolitical nature (armament problems), which succeed each other continuously. Ideologically, the Socialist International is still living in the old-fashioned and historically outlived traditions and imaginations and cannot bestir itself to take up the *question of the War Policies of Socialism* in its full importance, namely, in the realm of theory. Post-war socialism indeed did pay for their little attention to theory. Elected especially for that purpose the Commission has, after its first session, gone to sleep. Empiricism in the question of war is full of perils for socialism. Practically all parties of the international are already anticipating their active participation in the eventual war, in some form or other. Practically they already give up "neutrality" and absolute pacifism. Practically they are already now altering their position to the problem of armament and the defense of the country, and the old slogan "not one man and not one penny" is disappearing. Practically they are already to accept the "war risk" under certain conditions. And this sums up their reasoning.

The conscious or half-conscious break with the ideology of dogmatic pacifism does not cover the war question thoroughly. Not a smaller, but a greater importance must be attached to the other side of the problem—that specific *social* character of possible future wars which alone justifies the changes in our attitude and which must decide the tactics in the course of the war. True, all agree more or less on one point, that socialism shall be firmly opposed to fascism, but at the same time the rejection of the "War of Ideologies" or "The Crusade Against Fascism" which is still worrying many comrades, gives us something to ponder upon. In any case this orientation explains little about the ways and means, how the actual participation of socialists in the eventual war will take place. On the other side the general slogan might well play the same pitiful role as their predecessors in the last war. "Against Czarism" or "against Prussian Militarism." The Capitalists will very much want to sing these tunes so as to lead astray the masses and by this method—not to smash fascism but to transfer its axis. Under the guise of the world wide war

aims of the proletariat to realize the national demands of the bourgeoisie of each country—and with the destruction of German fascism also destroy Germany, and instead of bringing about a social change, have as its final result nothing more than the victory of one country over the other. It would be just another “Burgfrieden” and another “union sacre,” if socialists neglect to completely clarify the *socialist* task for the proletariat during the war and principally the *complicated* problems of the proletarian fight for power in the course of the war. And the peculiar nature of this threatening war—as characterized above—could make such policies in our time much more fatal than two decades ago. The inexorable contradictions within the capitalist system can and must in the long run, break up the ties of “fascist sentiments” which makes allies of all the ruling classes of the capitalist nations and embroil the individual national capitalisms into a bloody butchery against each other. In the proportion that their real social foundation is being recognized more and more, the sooner will the instinct for self-preservation, which is a common denominator for national bourgeoisies, gain the supremacy in their general and their war policies. For the present historical situation, the “Burgfrieden” slogan could have but one result; that the proletariat with its own hands supports a dying capitalism in keeping its existence—and then no longer in the dress of a more or less free democracy, but as a fascist slavedom. By its own efforts it might have assisted in transferring the “life-center” of fascism from Germany and Italy to England and France, and at the same time to make the entire world fascist. With its own hands the proletariat would have destroyed every possibility for its own social deliverance for decades.

It is not possible for me, within the framework of this article, to go into details about the complicated

problems of the proletarian *struggle for power in the course of the war*, and the role that the Soviet Union can and shall play under certain conditions. For a beginning, I must refer the reader to the above quoted “thesis,” with just a few words. The struggle for power within the war can be waged two-fold: by fighting against the war with the practice of “defeatism” or—by doing just the opposite—in trying to energetically grasp for the leadership in the management of the war. The example of a successful fight of the first sort was demonstrated by the Russian Bolsheviks—of the second one, the French Jacobins: the Jacobins were opposed to the war which was advocated by the Girondists; but after the war broke out in spite of their opposition, then they put themselves the task—and solved it successfully—in order to guarantee the victorious management of the war, which constituted a threat of the feudal monarchistic restoration against revolutionary France—to seize the power and with the power, of course, the direction of the war in their own hands.

As is well known the “thesis” anticipates *both methods of the conquests of power during the war* according to the groupings of the warring nations.

But again it must never be forgotten: neither the “defeatist” method in the countries of the “German” coalition for the road to power, nor the “Jacobinary” method will simply copy what the bolsheviks did twenty years ago or what the French Jacobins did 150 years ago. Also here, the “repetition” can only be “dialectic”—only repetition “on a higher level.”

All these difficult and complicated problems have to be analysed and searched again many times, if international socialism really wants to approach in their full scope all these truly vital questions of the war policies of socialism in the Era of Decay of Capitalism and its Fascist Degeneration.

# NO SUPPORT TO IMPERIALISM!

by Herbert Zam

**T**HE essential fallacy of peoples frontism is that it endeavors to substitute the struggle between ideas for the struggle between classes as the motive force in the present era of declining capitalism. The class struggle as Marx and all his followers understand it, aligned people in capitalist society against each other on the basis of their broad economic interests. The capitalists were those who owned and controlled the means of production. The workers were those who owned nothing but their labor power. So long as this condition continued, the workers would be exploited by the capitalists. Therefore, the historic mission of the working class, as Marx understood it, was to take the means of production out of the hands of its owners under capitalist society, thus do away with an owning class altogether, and lay

the basis for socialism. Only when this was done would the class struggle disappear. In the entire theory, there is no room for the opinions of the capitalists. They are members of a class which is an enemy of the working class, not by virtue of their individual dislike of workers, but by virtue of their place in the economic structure of society. The capitalist class may contain within its ranks “good” capitalists, “bad” capitalists, “benevolent” exploiters or “tyrants”; capitalists may have serious differences amongst themselves about various questions, particularly about the way to keep the workers subdued; capitalists may differ about the internal and external policy to be pursued by their country, thus giving rise to political parties representing different sections of the capitalist class. But all these differences and dis-

agreements do not in any way detract from the essential unity of the capitalist class as against the workers, that is, as the class whose historic mission it is to preserve the capitalist system, just as it is the historic mission of the working class to overthrow it.

But peoples frontism changes all that. Society becomes divided not into classes based on economic interest, but into groups based on political theory. The capitalist class itself is broken up. There is a section which is reactionary, which wants fascism, which wants dictatorial means of exploiting the workers, which believes bourgeois democracy has outlived its usefulness. There is another section which is still "democratic"; it does not want fascism (at this time), it wants benevolent means of exploiting the workers; it still the faith in bourgeois democracy. Peoples frontism says in effect: It is necessary to disregard the mutual membership of both these sections in the capitalist class which is the exploiting class; it is necessary to disregard the fact that they both have the common objective of the maintenance of capitalism. It is important only to see that the first section is reactionary, the second democratic. Therefore we call off the class struggle against the democratic section; we prosecute the class struggle even more vigorously against the fascist section. Of course, this theory is not original with its present loud spoken advocates. It has been both championed in theory and applied in practice in the past, under various names. In France it was known as ministerialism; in Germany as coalitionism; in England as MacDonaldism. But at no time was it championed so militantly, so perseveringly and so persistently as the cure-all for all the ills of the labor movement. It also has the added distinction of having originated with a "left" rather than a "right" section of the labor movement, and for that reason is still presented with a coating of "revolutionary" phraseology to make it more palatable to the advanced workers from whom class collaboration in its old forms has long since lost its taste.

In its first stages, peoples frontism, or class collaboration, or coalitionism seems to be very successful. For the capitalists very readily seize the opportunity to parade as friends and allies of the workers, since such a relationship relieves them of the difficult task of preserving capitalist society and places it upon the shoulders of its "allies," the workers, who by entering into such an alliance automatically sign a moratorium on the prosecution of the class struggle. During this period, the workers even "take over" the government through the elevation of their representatives to cabinet posts and even premier-ships. Overalls are exchanged for full-dress suits. A spirit of "peace on earth, good will to men" prevails. Everybody speaks of their country as "happy, peaceful and prosperous." This is the picture of the first days of coalitionist Germany, Labor government England and Peoples Front government France. But this period is usually short-lived. It is merely a honeymoon of an incompatible marriage. Soon the economic laws of capitalist society, which weren't taken into the secret, begin to reassert themselves. The "suspended" class struggle refuses to be suspended. The workers in the factories

of the "democratic" capitalists find "democratic" wage-cuts just as burdensome as the other kind. And in strikes and lock-outs, the strike-breakers do their job with just as much gusto, while the policeman's club feels no softer or lighter for being wielded by a peoples front hand. Because the capitalist class utilizes the honeymoon to entrench itself, to secure its profits and markets, to tighten its grip upon the economic pillars of society, all of which can only be done at the expense of the workers, the class struggle must flare up with greater violence. Then the capitalist class abandons its benevolence. Then it takes off the velvet glove to show the workers its mailed fist. Then the very capitalist class which had been shouting for "democracy" throws to the winds all scruples and resorts to brute force, not only to maintain capitalist society, but even to repress every effort of the working class to improve its position in capitalist society. Democracy becomes transformed into its "opposite"—fascism.

And the working class? Lulled into a false feeling of security by its honeymoon, it is totally unprepared to meet the onslaught for which the capitalists had been preparing carefully and painstakingly. Demoralized, softened, disorganized for fight, it goes down to defeat. Fascism is triumphant, either without a serious struggle or with an insignificant struggle, which is more a demonstration than a real resistance. Is this not the picture of the rise and victory of fascism in every country where it is in power today?

In foreign policy also peoples frontism has its direct and logical application, which must surely lead to disaster for the working class just as in internal policy. Just as peoples frontism discards struggle on the basis of *classes* and substitutes for it struggle on the basis of *ideas*, so in foreign affairs it discards wars fought for economic or imperialist objectives and substitutes wars fought for good or bad ideas. These two conclusions are functions of the same general orientation. There are people who accept peoples frontism for internal affairs but balk at accepting it for foreign affairs. There are also people who accept peoples frontism for foreign affairs who insist on rejecting it for internal matters. These people are illogical. If it is justifiable to make an alliance with good capitalists at home (democrats) against bad capitalists at home—fascists—why is it not justifiable to make an alliance with the same good capitalists at home against bad capitalists abroad? Is it because such an alliance calls for different methods of fighting? Then what if an alliance at home leads to such methods of fighting (as it actually has in Spain). Obviously, the methods of fighting are very secondary, and can be used as consistent arguments only by the thorough pacifists. And vice versa, those people who are ready to accept a policy of an alliance with the capitalists of their own country for internal relations strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. The foregoing article by Theodore Dan, which is an application of peoples frontism to foreign relations, must receive serious consideration. It is an earnest and candid effort to draw conclusions from such an application, in an objective manner, not as an apologist or an agitator, but as a pure "theorist." It



is therefore superior, both to the Bauer-Dan-Zyromski thesis, which in many ways still tried to straddle the issues involved, and to the August Thalheimer thesis which endeavors to defend the idea of "converting an imperialist war into a revolutionary war" by participating actively in it, but at the same time rejects the theory and practice of peoples frontism internally. Bauer, Dan and Zyromski, who all started as proponents of peoples frontism in foreign affairs and either opponents or doubters of peoples frontism in internal affairs, have all solved the contradiction. They are now all proponents of peoples frontism abroad *and* at home. All others with divided loyalties on this matter will have to solve their contradiction. They either abandon all inclinations toward peoples frontism abroad and come into the camp of consistent opponents of peoples frontism and proponents of the revolutionary class struggle, or they will find themselves in the other camp. It is not possible to ride two horses going in different directions, no matter how expert a horseman one may be.

Comrade Dan is dissatisfied with the pragmatic opportunism of present-day reformism. He wants it to shed its empiricism and take on the dignity of a theory. While it is questionable whether Dan is performing any service for opportunism, he is certainly performing one for revolutionary socialism. It has always been easier to fight revisionism when it became a developed theory than when it confined itself to revisionism in practice. The most successful revisionists are the ones who disclaim all thought of revision. All the most ardent revisionists (in practice) in German Social Democracy were indignant at Bernstein because he dared put their practice into the form of a theory whose non-Marxian character could be recognized, indeed whose non-Marxism was proclaimed. Bernstein spoiled their game. He made it difficult for them to continue their dual role—lecture on the class struggle to Socialist audiences, and practice class collaboration as members of the Reichstag and leaders of the Party. Bernstein performed a service for the true Marxists, and Dan is performing one today. But the Marxists of today must avoid the mistakes of the Marxists of yesterday, who fought vigorously against Bernstein, but overlooked his allies, the revisionists in practice. Opportunism, in its most virile form today, peoples frontism, must be rooted out in theory *and* practice.

Dan is correct when he declares "the attitude of Marxists toward war has never been dogmatic and never should be dogmatic." By leaving this quotation as it is however, the Marxian position is distorted almost beyond recognition. Dan quotes it on behalf of his theory that "social order" motives are replacing imperialist motives in capitalist wars; that is, that wars for ideas have taken the place of wars for economic interests. To use that quotation in defence of such a theory is like trying to justify class collaboration by saying that "the attitude of Marxists toward the class struggle has never been dogmatic and never should be dogmatic." But Marxists, in order not to be dogmatic, also analyzed every war, as they analyzed every class war, to determine what economic interests were at stake, what classes were involved,

and what historic role was being played. They never analyzed a war to determine which side has the better ideas, so that that side might be supported. Such a conception is suitable to Wilsonian politics, not to Marxian dialectics. When Marx supported the war of Germany against Russia in 50-60, of Germany against France in 70, of the North against the South in the American Civil War, he did it on the basis of class relations, on the basis of the struggle of a rising capitalism against a dying feudalism, whose dead hand was an obstacle to the further development of society, including a working class to overthrow the already exploiting capitalist society. But Marx fought vigorously and bitterly against the notion of supporting one capitalist country against another in wars amongst themselves. Even in the Franco-Prussian war he turned against Germany, when, its first victories having guaranteed its national independence and unification, it continued the war for purpose of capitalist conquest. Wars for democracy in the period of rising capitalism were progressive, because democracy still represented society's future. But today, in the period of declining and decaying capitalism, democracy represents its past; wars for democracy are reactionary, not progressive, are imperialistic, not liberating. Dan, who was opposed to supporting any capitalist country in the World War of 1914-18, declares that it was not "permissible" for Marxian Socialists just to "repeat" Marx. But wasn't it done? Didn't those German, French, British, yes, even Russian "Marxists" who wanted justification for their capitulation to their own bourgeoisie "repeat" Marx? Dan is indignant at quoting Marx for 1914, because he wants to reserve such quoting for himself in 1937. When he says that "modern socialism, in its attitude toward a possible war returns by way of historical dialectics, though on a 'higher plane' to the position of Marx and the First International" he is merely paraphrasing Plekhanov of 1914, whose position he condemned then and condemns today. Indeed, it is Plekhanov who could claim Marx for an ally with greater justification, for he saw a capitalist, and therefore "progressive" Russia emerging out of the war in place of the feudal and therefore "reactionary" czarist Russia. Dan condemned Plekhanov in 1914 because Plekhanov did not see that feudal Russia had already become an imperialist power and therefore its war was not a progressive war for national liberation or unification, but a reactionary war for conquest and imperialist gain. Is any other kind of war possible among capitalist countries today when they have all become imperialist?

Dan today rejects "revolutionary defeatism" to which he partially subscribed in 1914 and adopts the theory that the working class, during the next war, should "seize the management of the war." He has to go back to the Jacobins and the French wars of liberation for precedent and justification. He need not have gone that far back into history, for Clemenceau in 1914 pursued precisely that policy. The Jacobins took over a war which they had originally opposed because it was objectively a war in the interests of the rising capitalist society of which they were historic representatives. Clem-

*(Continued on Page 25)*



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## DISCUSSION SECTION

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### For A Party With Mass Contacts

By HARRY W. LAIDLER

THE Socialist Party of the United States was organized to do everything within its power to bring about a Socialist America, a cooperative social order wherein security, freedom, peace and abundance would be the heritage of all.

From its very beginning, it dedicated itself to the mobilization of the workers on the political field for the attainment of the Socialist goal, giving, at the same time, every possible aid to labor organization on the economic, the cooperative and the educational fields.

During more than a decade, the party has sought to stimulate the development of a mass farmer-labor party, of which it would be an integral and influential part. In the twenties, many of us thought that the Conference for Progressive Political Action would lead to such a party. Labor was not politically ripe for such a party, nor was it economically strong, and the labor party movement temporarily subsided.

During recent years, the beginnings of independent political action have been witnessed in several parts of the nation. The Socialist Party has thrown its support on the side of this movement. At the Chicago convention of the party in March, it declared: "The great awakening of workers requires as its logical next step the definite development of independent working class political action. The Socialist Party, therefore, renews its advocacy and support of a genuine farmer-labor party. It instructs its members in labor unions, farm associations and other mass organizations to give all possible support to the proper formation of such a party on a national scale."

In New York State, we have the beginnings of a state labor party in the American Labor Party. It does not fulfill our conception of a hundred per cent labor party. It still endorses some candidates on old party tickets. It has undemocratic features. It is not yet a federated party. It has the definite support of important sections of organized labor. It is controlled and financed by labor. It is formulating its own program. It is setting up branch, local and state organizations separate and part for the old parties. It is nominating in this campaign a number of independent candidates not candidates of the old parties. Its development during the past year has been in the direction of the kind of labor party we have urged. With its large affiliated and individual membership, and its human and financial resources, it has before it important possibilities in the field of labor political action. Within the A.L.P. there are a number of elements desirous of making it the mouthpiece of a few labor leaders. There are likewise large elements desirous of committing

the party to independent political action and of making it a federated and thoroughly democratic organization. It is the duty of the Socialist Party to encourage all trends within the labor party in the latter direction.

To prove an effective force in that direction, we must establish friendly relations with the A.L.P. and cooperate with it in every way consistent with our program and principles. We cannot prove such a force by isolating ourselves from the political party of labor, presenting a holier-than-thou attitude and acting the part of the carping critics. In this campaign we can cooperate, consistently with Socialist principles, in connection with the candidacy of certain labor party candidates not candidates of the old parties. There is little dispute about this.

There is also the question of the Mayor. Labor is taking the initiative in renominating Mayor La Guardia. He may or may not be nominated in the Republican primaries. He is not the choice of the Republican machine. He has shown his sympathies for a labor party and has done little, while in office, to strengthen the Republican machine.

#### THE PROBABLE RESULTS

If Socialists keep their own candidate in the field for Mayor, a number of things are likely to happen. The Socialist candidate, despite the most vigorous possible campaign, is likely to get a comparatively small vote. Much of the vote that the Socialists in former years were able to muster came from the trade unions now most interested in building the A.L.P., and most of that vote would go to the candidate of the A.L.P. The smallness of the vote would be likely to have a dampening effect on the Socialist movement throughout the country. As the campaign progressed, the Socialists would be compelled by the logic of warfare to concentrate most of their verbal guns against the A.L.P. and its candidates, with the result that and increasing bitterness would be engendered between Socialists and rank and filers and leaders of the A.L.P. and an ever-widening gulf be created between these two parties of the workers. This bitterness might well last for a long time after the close of the campaign, with the result that Socialists would be isolated increasingly from this form of mass political action. Even though the Socialist vote were comparatively small, it might be large enough to defeat the A.L.P. candidate for Mayor. If this happened, the bitterness between the groups would be intensified. A final result might be that little fruitful co-operation might be possible in the campaign for the election of independent legislative, council and other offices.

On the other hand, a withdrawal of our candidate for Mayor might open the way for effective cooperation be-

tween these two labor parties in the campaign for numerous independent labor candidates on the A.L.P. and Socialist tickets. It might bring about invaluable contacts between the two parties; give Socialists an entree to numerous labor audiences, and lay the foundation for vital cooperation in the future between the S.P. and the A.L.P. in building the type of national farmer-labor party which Socialists have long urged.

If, in the course of the Summer or early Fall, the withdrawal of our candidate for Mayor would seem to our City Central to have some such result, and, in general, to advance the cause of labor and of a genuine labor party on a national scale, the Central Committee resolution asks that it be given the privilege of withdrawing the Mayoralty candidate.

In so doing, it asks that it be given power thoroughly consistent not only with the spirit but with the letter of the resolutions of the national party. There is nothing in the party resolutions against the refusal of the party to run certain candidates for office.

#### SEVERAL OBJECTIONS

A number of arguments, however, have been used against giving any power of withdrawal to the Central Committee.

1. It is said that, if the party withdrew its candidates, that would be tantamount to a positive endorsement of La Guardia. This is not true. An endorsement of a candidate of another party commits the party to the policies of a candidate and places members of the party under an obligation to support the endorsed candidate. Failure to nominate one's own candidate creates no such obligation to vote for another candidate and in no way commits the party to the program of such other candidate or candidates.

2. It is said that the withdrawal of our Mayoralty candidate would take Socialists and the Socialist platform out of the campaign. There is no justification for this statement. We will have a Socialist platform as in former years. Our candidates will present the positive demands of Socialists on labor, transit, taxation, electrical power, relief, public works, housing, health, recreation, education, etc., as they have done in the past. They will present the ideals of Socialism and of labor political action. This presentation will show how much more adequate is the Socialist program than is that of any other party. The campaign will not be an anti-Tammany campaign nor an anti-La Guardia campaign, nor an anti-A.L.P. campaign. It will be a Socialist campaign in which the Socialist philosophy will be brought to bear upon the problems affecting labor here in New York as well as in other parts of the world.

3. It is said that the proposed step would have a bad effect on the party throughout the country. On the contrary, the party nationally would be discouraged if, as a result of a vigorous campaign for Mayor, Comrade Thomas obtained a small vote. It would be encouraged if Socialists were able, through co-operation with labor to elect one or more Councilmen to office and put Socialism for the first time in years on the legislative map of

New York. And the effect of such a victory would be cumulative as the months went on.

#### A CONSISTENT SOCIALIST LINE

4. It is said that the course suggested in the resolution of the City Central is inconsistent with that adopted during the Presidential campaign of 1936 when the A.L.P. endorsed Roosevelt and Lehman and when we Socialists ran candidates of our own. We believed it essential to run candidates in 1936 to advance the cause of Socialism and peace, to present the Socialist program as contrasted with that of the New Deal and to strengthen the movement for independent political action. In New York State the running of a gubernatorial candidate was also imperative if the party was to remain on the ballot.

The situation in the city campaign is different than that in the state and nation last year. Different tactics might therefore be necessary to advance the same ideals. Last year in the nation there was no labor party. In the state the A.L.P. was largely the tail of the kite of the Democratic party. It nominated no independent labor candidates and made the support of the Democratic candidates the necessary condition of membership. Co-operation with it was impossible. Whether it would survive the campaign was difficult to tell. This year, as I said before, the A.L.P. gives promise of more permanency and has made considerable strides in the direction of an independent labor party.

In the nation, the primary issue of our last campaign was socialism versus capitalism. It is of course essential in this campaign to emphasize on every opportunity the need for Socialism. But it is impossible to realize socialism in a municipality alone and the main issues are those of the increase in the power of labor in politics and industry, and such municipal issues as public ownership, taxation, relief, public works, housing, recreation, education, etc.

Last year the candidates endorsed by the A.L.P. were regular Democrats, nominated by the Democratic machine, running on a platform of the Democratic party. Their election was regarded as a victory for the Democratic party and everything was done after the election to use this victory to strengthen the Democratic machine.

The present Mayor is far closer to the A.L.P. in his point of view than he is to the Republican machine and voted under the A.L.P. emblem last year. He did little to strengthen the Republican party or even the Fusionists while in office. If he is nominated in the Republican primaries it will probably be in spite of the opposition of most of the machine. The chances are that he will not run on any platform adopted by the Republican party and, if elected, that he will help to strengthen labor political and economic action in this city. This does not justify Socialists in endorsing him, but it does explain the attitude of the A.L.P. which makes it necessary for us to consider carefully the wisdom from the standpoint of our usefulness to the labor party movement of running a candidate against him.

Every logical argument is in favor of giving to the Central Committee power of withdrawal of the Mayoralty

candidate, should it seem that such withdrawal would strengthen the labor movement and advance the usefulness of the Socialist Party in the building of a national farmer labor party. No valid argument exists against this course. Let us in this campaign give not mere lip service, but actual, tangible service to the concept of a mass labor party and let us help to place ourselves in a position so

that we may guide that party toward the Socialist goal.

Let us orient ourselves so that, when the workers of the world finally meet the challenge of Marx and *unite*, the Socialists will not be on the outside looking at the great working class movement, but on the inside looking out, and selflessly serving that movement on its march toward power and international socialism.

## For A Clean Socialist Campaign

by Max Delson and Herbert Zam

In the presidential campaign of 1936, when "revolutionary heroes" and great "progressive" labor leaders were toppling from their pedestals and falling into the dust at the feet of Roosevelt, the then editor of the *Socialist Call*, Aaron Levenstein, wrote a stinging piece in criticism of these weak men:

"Everywhere men are in flight," he wrote. "Principles are tossed aside as cumbersome baggage. Ideals are dropped as if they had suddenly become glowing coals.

"Take, for example, those progressive labor leaders, who for years have warned their followers to lay no trust in the goodness of men's hearts. . . . And after all these years, they have forgotten their own contempt for the 'good man' theory of social development, throwing themselves into the hands of the 'great humanitarian.'"

These were sharp words that Comrade Levenstein flung at those who were turning traitors to Socialism. One wonders what words are befitting for those men who in 1936 spat anger at deserters from the ranks of the Socialist workers, but who in 1937 are likewise taking to "flight," are likewise tossing aside principles which have become "cumbersome baggage," who are urging the Socialist Party to turn traitor to Socialism, who refuse to enter the mayoralty struggle in New York City against the capitalist candidate, La Guardia.

In 1936, Norman Thomas referred to Earl Browder as the "apologetic candidate for president." What Thomas meant was that Browder said he was not backing Roosevelt, but really was.

But what right would we have to lampoon the Communists for an underhanded endorsement of Roosevelt, were we to give similar support to La Guardia, by making Thomas "conditional candidate for Mayor"? To claim that we are "not supporting" La Guardia when we withdraw our candidate from running against him is just as hypocritical as the Communist claim that they were not backing Roosevelt. If anything, it is more hypocritical—because Communists could vote for Browder but Socialists will not be able to vote for Thomas.

### Is the A.L.P. a Labor Party?

The latest argument for supporting La Guardia is that he is receiving the support of the American Labor Party, which is a "labor party of a sort," and which is "moving in the direction of a Labor Party."

On September 8, in the campaign of 1936, Norman

Thomas outlined what he considered to be the minimum requirements for a Labor Party. By no means did these minimum requirements constitute a "perfect" labor party. These minimum requirements made up an "imperfect" labor party. But at least, they served to differentiate a labor party from a Permanent Committee for the Endorsement of Good Men.

What were these minimum requirements:

1. "It should be more than a reform party. . . . It should at least acknowledge as a beginning the need of a new society based on the principle of production for use."

2. "It should from the outset have mass support."

3. "The farmer-labor party, to be acceptable to Socialists, must have room in it for the Socialist Party as an organized group."

4. "The party must be nation-wide in organization or at least in its intention."

5. "Must be democratic in structure, not the creature of powerful labor bureaucrats."

How many of these minimum conditions laid down by Thomas does the A.L.P. meet? At the best, one and a half.

It is not democratic; it is bureaucratic. It is completely a reform party. It does not admit the Socialist Party as a party; it does not even permit members to be members of the Socialist Party. It is not nation-wide; nor is there the likelihood that in the near future it will become nation-wide. It does have mass support; and that's all.

Comrade Thomas realizes that the A.L.P. does not meet even his own minimum requirements, so he refers to the movement as "a labor party of a sort." Which reminds us of the hapless maiden who would cover her sin by pointing out that as yet she was only a "little bit" pregnant.

### Is the A.L.P. Moving in the Direction of a Labor Party?

In the 1936 campaign the Socialist Party said that the A.L.P. was not moving in the direction of becoming a Labor Party. We proved that by pointing out that the philosophy of the A.L.P. instead of leading it to break from capitalist politicians would cause it to endorse one capitalist politician after another.

We said then that the A.L.P. was not moving in the direction of a labor party because after it finished the national campaign it would proceed to endorse La Guardia and then Wagner.

Those comrades who claim that they have changed their minds about the A.L.P. because the A.L.P. has changed its philosophy are either trying to fool the party or are fooling themselves. The A.L.P. has not come over to us; it is following the same class collaborationist policy as it did in 1936—as we predicted it would do today. Those who have changed are the comrades who would have us surrender to the pressure of the A.L.P. bureaucracy to withdraw our candidate for La Guardia.

The American Labor Party is not advancing the working class toward a Labor Party; the A.L.P. is hindering the movement toward independent working class political action by decoying the traditional independent labor vote into support of capitalist candidates.

#### **Why Is the A.L.P. Unable to Move in the Direction of a Labor Party?**

Strange as it seems, the present leadership of the A.L.P., anxious as it may be to see a real labor party, is unable to bring a labor party into being.

The American Labor Party has come into being in the era of capitalist decline, marked by quickly recurring economic crises, each of which brings with it the increased threat of dictatorial reaction. The philosophy of reformism—unlike the philosophy of the Socialists—is to fight reaction by compromise, by the policy of the Popular Front, by seeking refuge under the wing of the "lesser capitalist evil." In America, this policy makes it impossible for the reformists to launch an independent party.

The longer labor delays in launching a labor party the more difficult will it be for the reformist leaders to bring themselves around to breaking from the capitalist politicians. Time will not bring greater democracy and liberalism to the ruling class. Time will bring greater suppression to the workers. Time will bring stronger fascist movements. Time will weaken the reformists in their will to break loose from the "lesser evil." As reaction grows, the labor leaders will lean more and more on the "liberal capitalist" politician.

Yesterday, they leaned to Roosevelt. Today they fall at the feet of La Guardia. Tomorrow it will be Wagner in New York, Murphy in Michigan, Earle in Pennsylvania. And the greater the danger of reaction, the less discriminating the A.L.P. shall become in aligning itself with the "lesser evil."

In this period of capitalism, the reformists are not only incapable of getting Socialism, but are equally incapable of fighting aggressively for the formation of a Labor Party—an independent Labor Party.

#### **The Reformist Line Is Against An Independent Party**

A conscious reformist such as Earl Browder realizes where his political line leads him. And in the light of present developments Browder foresees that the type of Farmer-Labor Party he wants can only be a Popular Front, which will express itself organizationally through the OLD parties. Thus writes Browder in the July *Communist*:

"The Farmer-Labor Party conceived as the American equivalent of the People's Front in France, is

taking shape and growing within the womb of the disintegrating two old parties. It will be born as a national party at the moment when it already replaces in the main one of the old traditional parties, contesting and possibly winning control of the federal government from the hour of its birth. What particular name the caprice of history may baptize it with is immaterial to us. This new party that is beginning to take shape before our eyes, involving a majority of the population, is what we Communists have in mind when we speak of a national Farmer-Labor Party, the American expression of the People's Front. . . .

"Where the progressive forces (of the old parties) gain the nomination of candidates and determine their platforms, there the Farmer-Labor Party minority forces, including the Communists and other Left-wing elements, can and must support such candidates in the elections."

Browder, it is obvious, sees the Farmer-Labor Party, for the moment, as non-existent except as movements around and within the old parties. He hopes that later there will be such a revamping of the old parties as to make an American Front, in reality a liberal CAPITALIST party with a labor left-wing in it.

#### **The Socialist Policy As Stated in Convention**

Some comrades attempt to create the impression that the municipal problem before New York Socialists is something unforeseen; and, if foreseen, has an official decision to settle the outcome. This is untrue. At the last national convention of the Socialist Party it was clearly foreseen that the reformist leaders would attempt to pervert the labor party movement into capitalist channels. The convention declared:

"The labor party movement of the progressive workers meets opposition not only from the reactionary labor leaders and traditions (reward your friends and punish your enemies) but also from the LIBERAL LABOR LEADERS and the Communist Party who are orientated toward an American People's Front in the form of an alliance with the liberal capitalist parties and politicians, with some attempt at work from within the Democratic Party.

"In the present struggle inside the trade union movement between the progressive workers, who seek an independent Labor Party, and the reformist forces, WHO SEEK A PEOPLE'S FRONT, Socialists stand with the pro-labor party forces. The strengthening of the movement toward an independent Labor Party within the trade union movement is one of the chief means of breaking class conscious workers away from the idea of a People's Front."

This resolution was aimed directly at the A.L.P., whose popular front character arose from its alliance with Roosevelt. This resolution is aimed directly at the A.L.P. today, whose popular front character is patent from its alliance with La Guardia.

In the campaign of 1936 the Socialist Party rejected class collaboration and conducted a campaign of class struggle. *At the convention which followed the party membership almost unanimously reaffirmed this position*

and worked out resolutions to guide the party in its day by day struggle against the popular front notion of a labor party.

In dealing with local labor parties the resolution declared:

"The Socialist Party shall, therefore, as a general policy, not support or urge the formation of local or state parties. Where the party is satisfied that such working class parties are based upon the broadest strata of the organized working class, are completely independent of old capitalist parties and politicians, have a working class program, and are sufficiently stable to serve as a means of promoting a national Labor Party movement, these parties may be supported and joined."

This statement is clear as crystal. And it clearly rules out any support to the A.L.P.!

### "We Must Not Antagonize Labor"

In every argument, there are "real" reasons and "good" reasons. The real reasons are stated in off moments only. The "good" reasons are the ones put forward to cover up the real reasons.

The real reason for the pro-La Guardia move is contained in the few words declaring that opposition to La Guardia "would embitter our relations with labor for an indefinite period."

This argument sounds strange coming from the lips of Norman Thomas, for if anything "embittered our relations" it was the presidential campaign of 1936. If we are guided in our policy by the likes and dislikes of the labor bureaucracy, then we should have thought of that before now. Many comrades made great sacrifices—losing jobs and positions—to buck the labor bureaucracy in 1936. Would Thomas now tell them to go back and apologize for their foolhardiness?

Socialists do not fear, although they certainly do not *desire* to develop "bitter relations" of the labor bureaucracy. The National Convention of the Socialist Party realized and stated that the struggle for a labor party in America would have to be a struggle against the labor bureaucracy—reactionary and progressive labor leaders. We knew then that such a struggle against the popular front notions of the labor bureaucracy would "embitter relations." To give up this struggle now, because it would win the enmity of the labor leaders is tantamount to calling upon the party to surrender to the trade union bureaucrats because they demand it.

It is no accident that the group in the Socialist Party pressing most vigorously for the capitulatory proposal is drafted from the sector of petty-trade-union office holders. This group is our new "Old Guard," which identifies the labor bureaucracy with "labor" and refuses to fight the momentary or inherent mistakes of either.

### The Struggle Against Reaction

This is the period of capitalism when liberal politicians discredit themselves very quickly.

Capitalism is no longer expanding, thereby giving liberal capitalist parties the opportunity to boast of the concessions it is increasingly making to the masses. Capital-

ism is now contracting, compelling even the liberals to attack the standards of labor. Every liberal is guilty of this—and La Guardia is no exception. The liberal La Guardia is guilty of cutting the wages of civil servants, of imposing a cruel sales tax, of slashing jobless relief, of breaking up unemployed demonstrations, of opposing improved conditions for teachers, of preparing to charge a seven-cent instead of a five-cent fare, of being the first mayor to oust sit-down strikers, of employing the police against strikers.

The ever recurrent and worsening crises of capitalism put the liberal to the test and quickly mark him as—"lousy." Liberal capitalist politicians, in a time of capitalist crisis, lose the support of workers, jobless, and middle class. The distressed and protesting elements of the population turn against the unbearable status quo, and against the parties and politicians who support the status quo. These same elements turn to the parties of opposition for leadership. They turn either to the Fascists or to those working class elements who would have nothing to do with electing the liberal capitalist politicians, who maintained a policy of intransigent opposition to all capitalist parties.

If the Socialists fail to act as the party of intractable opposition for leadership. They turn either to the faggots. The essential task of the Socialist Party in the struggle against reaction is to give open, visible and broad public opposition to the liberal capitalists, in anticipation of the time when the masses will turn away from the latter in search of stern opposition leadership. To delay this task, to obscure, to minimize it, means not only to surrender the class basis of our party, but to prepare the groundwork for Fascism. The slogan of Socialism versus Capitalism does not mean that we merely point out that the basic solution to the evils that curse the world today is a cooperative commonwealth. It means that we refuse to identify ourselves in any way with the politicians of capitalism and shall oppose them with our own candidates, everywhere. The slogan of Socialism versus capitalism means that we have absolutely no faith in the politicians of the old parties as means for the abolition of our present day evils, as a means for fighting reaction. We therefore call upon the masses to vote for Socialist candidates, who alone can combat the immediate and imminent dangers of a decadent capitalism.

This policy guided us in 1936. It should guide us in 1937—and in the days to come.

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[In accordance with the decisions of the Chicago Convention and the Philadelphia meeting of the National Executive Committee, these pages of the SOCIALIST REVIEW are devoted to inner-party DISCUSSION. The views expressed by the authors are their own, and do not necessarily represent either the official position of the SOCIALIST PARTY or of the SOCIALIST REVIEW.]

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# Against La Guardia Socialism!

By MAX SHACHTMAN

THE warning repeatedly given by the left wing in the past few months about the plan of the New York right wing to liquidate the Socialist Party into the La Guardia movement after the indispensable preliminary step of expelling all the revolutionists, has now passed from the field of prediction to that of reality. It is not merely a question of the Altman-Thomas-Gross motion "permitting" the withdrawal of the party candidate in favor of La Guardia, which was carried by a majority vote in the hand-picked and quite unrepresentative Central Committee of Local New York. Without waiting for the approval of the National Executive Committee (required by Sec. 9, Art. 10 of the party constitution), or of the New York party membership (the majority of whose active membership would decisively defeat the proposal in the referendum, unless the Altman machine can dig more votes out of "grave-yard socialists" than is expected), the New York party administration, represented by Altman, Thomas, Laidler and Gross, has already proceeded to announce the decision publicly in the capitalist press and to dicker with the A.L.P. bureaucracy and Mr. La Guardia over the price for the Socialist Party's support in the coming election for mayor. As an inseparable complement of this course, more than 100 left wing members have been brought up for expulsion by Altman and associates who have not attempted to conceal their determination to expel every "Trotskyist" (that is, every left winger) from the party, regardless of the pretext—a procedure which, in New York alone, means the expulsion of well over 400 comrades.

Just what the National Executive Committee will do in this case, is not very decisive. The repeated collapse of this allegedly "left wing" N.E.C. of Clarity persuasion to the pressure of the right wing every time it has been exerted in the past several months, gives no ground for any hope from that source. Quite the contrary. There is every chance but one that the N.E.C. will capitulate as usual the minute the right wing puts its fist on the table. But, we repeat, its decision is not decisive: The right wing in New York, and its colleagues elsewhere, are determined to go through with their decision to support La Guardia regardless of what happens or what anybody else says. And their course inevitably means, to all but the blind, a split in the party, the main conclusive steps towards which Thomas and Altman have already taken in their expulsion drive against the left wing.

It would be a painful superfluity to discuss the admissibility of the pro-La Guardia position inside of a genuinely revolutionary socialist party. The only arguments that can (and have) been adduced in its favor are the time-dishonored arguments of the opportunists and reformists in the world labor movement which have, time and again, led to the most disastrous consequences for the socialist and communist movements in one coun-

try after another. In the United States, they are the arguments advanced by the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Federation for the respective ways in which they each supported Roosevelt and Lehman during the last presidential and gubernatorial campaigns.

1. "The masses are for it and we must not isolate ourselves from the masses, like a sect, and antagonize the trade union movement." It *would* be exact to say: A large section of the masses has been misled by the trade union bureaucracy and the bourgeois politicians; it is moving in the *wrong* direction; it is our job to fight the capitalist politicians and their associates in the labor movement for the minds and hearts of the masses. By a vigorous socialist fight, we will, it is true, antagonize the labor bureaucrats, but we will win increasing sections of the workers to the socialist banner. More often than not, the revolutionary socialist must swim against the stream, even if the masses are being swept along by it. Otherwise, what shall we do tomorrow, when an imperialist war breaks out, and the A.L.P. and A.F.L. and C.I.O. leadership whips the mass into the line that leads to the trenches?

2. "But isn't it the duty of vanguard socialists to go along with a Labor Party, however imperfect, since the Labor Party helps break the masses from their ties to the capitalist parties?" The A.L.P. is as much a "labor party" as was the La Follette movement in 1924, support for which the Socialist Party continues to rue to this very day. It is a petty bourgeois party, a third capitalist party, tied by a thousand strings and combinations with the old capitalist parties. Roosevelt's New York politics cannot be understood unless it is realized that he rests on two pillars: Tammany Hall and the A.L.P. Roosevelt continues to be the national leader of the A.L.P., as its spokesmen continually remind us. In New York, its mayoralty candidate will run on the ticket of such avowedly capitalist parties as the Fusion Party and (in all likelihood) the Republicans. The A.L.P. was created for the purpose of keeping the radical New York workers tied to an old capitalist political machine; it still fulfills this function—with the aid of the Communist Party, the Social Democratic Federation, and the prospective aid of the Thomas-Altman group. The C. P. is quite correct in considering it a People's Front movement, for so it is in all essentials.

3. "The party nationally," argues Laidler, "would be discouraged if, as a result of a vigorous campaign for Mayor, Comrade Thomas obtained a small vote." Here is the voice of the faint-hearted opportunist and defeatist. You can always get a "big vote" by supporting a popular bourgeois candidate—but that means no vote at all for socialism. It is on the basis of the same argument that Browder claimed the tremendous victory of the C.P. in the last election: he had elected Roosevelt, you see! Had the S.P. acted likewise last November, it would have carried every state in the Union except Vermont and New Hampshire—for Roosevelt.



4. "But didn't the Trotskyists in the S.P. of Minnesota support the Farmer-Labor Party candidate in the last elections?" There is no comparison in the two cases. Leaving aside the differences between the F.L.P. and the Minnesota situation and the A.L.P. and the New York situation, the fact remains that the Socialist Party in Minneapolis *ran its own candidate on its own platform* in the so-called non-partisan primaries. Only when this candidate was defeated, and only two candidates remained to be voted on in the final elections, the S.P. gave critical support to the official F.L.P. candidate as against the reactionary Republican, Leach.

A few words on the Clarity group and its position in this matter. In the statement issued by the minority of the New York Municipal Campaign Committee, Delson and Zam (whom Altman and Thomas unceremoniously kicked out of the committee which is negotiating the horse-trade with the A.L.P.), they have some not very complimentary descriptions of the Altman-Thomas combination. The latter's support of La Guardia is "hidden and cowardly support, even more cowardly than that given by the C.P. to Roosevelt last year." It means that "the S.P. will be making a shameful, a disgraceful alliance which will destroy the good name of Socialism in the country." The Clarity minority in New York says: "Capitulation to the backwardness of the workers, or of the trade unions can only give us another German Social Democratic Party, never a revolutionary Marxist Party." The Altman-Thomas position, it continues, "IS A CAPITULATION TO THE C.P. AND TO PEOPLE'S FRONTISM," and the statement issued by Local New York to the press "is a betrayal of the Socialist Party."

As may be seen, the Clarity leadership is not behind-hand in sharp (and, moreover, entirely warranted) *words* to characterize this betrayal of socialism. But, as in the past, there is little or no correspondence between its words and its deeds. It would seem that if what it says about the Altman-Thomas leadership is correct (and it most certainly is!), a definite course of *action* would have to follow, to say nothing of precede, these words. But it is precisely the action that is missing. The present N.E.C. came about as a result of the negotiations between the Clarity group and the Altman-Thomas Wisconsin right wing at the convention, so that while the right wing was over-represented, the left wing (Appeal group) was completely excluded from the leadership. The first important political resolution of the new N.E.C.—on Spain, adopted at the Philadelphia meeting—was the joint product of the Clarity and right wing factions, directed at the left wing and its position. The second important resolution of the N.E.C.—the gag law (McDowell called it "martial law") resolution against the left wing—was adopted unanimously by the Clarity and right wing leaders. The editorial board of the *Socialist Call* was constituted by the N.E.C. out of a combination of Clarity and the right wing, to the complete exclusion of the left. The question of *just how* to expel the left wing from the party and Y.P.S.L. is discussed, in closed sessions, jointly by the Clarity and Altman-Thomas groups. The Clarity leaders condoned the course

of the Wisconsin right wing in doing exactly the same thing on the question of Governor that Thomas is doing on the question of Mayor.

The brave words of the Centrist leadership of the Clarity group scarcely conceal their actions which, at every decisive moment, are directed towards conciliation with the right wing on the latter's terms and bureaucratic measures against the left wing. The La Guardia case is characteristic. It is impossible to fight the "La Guardia socialists," who aim to dissolve the S.P. into a helpless educational sect divorced from the active class struggle, without fighting their campaign to split the party by expelling the left wing. The Clarity leadership has given ample evidence that it will not really stand in the way of the expulsions. It takes very little foresight to see that tomorrow the Clarity spokesmen will become the most violent executors of the expulsions throughout the country. In point of fact, they have already taken the initiative against the left wing in the Y.P.S.L. of New York and against the left wing party organization in California.

Without the left wing in the party, the latter is at the mercy of the unprincipled liquidators of the Thomas-Biemiller-Allen-Lewis camp. Unreserved solidarity with the left wing, including those expelled by the party bureaucracy, is a pre-condition in the struggle to preserve and build the revolutionary socialist movement in the United States. Any other position means, in the not so long run, a capitulation to "La Guardia Socialism" and a betrayal of revolutionary principle. The left wing (and, for that matter, the right wing too) has made its choice and taken its stand. There is no room for fence-straddling.

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tegrity is, I think, fully consistent with the building of an inclusive democratic Socialist Party, with room for considerable variations of opinion. It is wholly inconsistent with building a party, some groups in which owe their real loyalty to one or another of the communist factions.

If this article seems to the reader negative rather than positive it is because I am now concerned primarily with an analysis of European socialism as I saw it. It may be that we are going through a stage not unprecedented in history, and that the turn will come sooner than we think. New crisis of war or economic disaster may mean a new birth for socialism. At any rate, never was I surer that socialism is the one hope of the world, and the socialism which is that hope must be socialism with a new program and attitude. It cannot be a repetition with small differences of the German Social-Democratic policies which failed or the British Labor policies which lay behind the MacDonald fiasco. Netither, if it is to meet the deep desires of men, can it be under the control of a dictatorial bureaucracy which, as events have shown in Russia, does not "wither away." To revive this great socialist hope, to give it a new program for the times and an organization worthy of it, this is our supreme task.



# Socialist Discipline and Action!

By GUS TYLER

THE decision of the National Executive Committee of the party, affecting internal party rules and regulations in this period, was not only intended to establish some order out of our party chaos, but was also calculated to test the sincerity of all groups which boasted of their loyalty to the organization. Since the N.E.C. meeting, this decision has accomplished its *second purpose* even better than it has the first. Since the N.E.C. the various party groups have revealed themselves for what they really are. And instead of analyzing the causes of the party crisis in terms of petty rumor and personal incompatibilities, we are in a position to make a cold objective analysis in terms of the political line and the perspectives of the various tendencies.

## The Right Wing

The first thing that has become clear during the last two months is that the "right wing" of the party is really a right wing. In a showdown it acts along the lines of a Popular Front. This group may, in part, object to a People's Front in Europe or in the abstract; but in the concrete, in the City of New York, it is pro-People's Front in practice. Its social root is the new layer of trade union petty bureaucrats in the party. Comrade Altman may be their head and organizer. They may hide behind the personal prestige of Comrade Thomas. But they are the intransigent pressure group for a reformist line of practice in America. Their immediate tactic in the party is to decapitate and break the back of the irreconcilable anti-Popular Frontists within the party. This is to be carried through by a mass expulsion of the Trotskyites—"the more, the merrier"—followed by a removal of all left-wingers from positions of party importance.

The right wing understands perfectly well that such a move would tear the party to pieces, would leave it weak and emasculated, would leave a New York organization, plus the municipal Socialists of Milwaukee, with a Massachusetts satellite, and that's all. But to the right wing—which clamors for a big party—this is all inconsequential. The right wing sees its future in the A.L.P., a big party ready made. Hence, this group proceeds ruthlessly with its campaign of expulsions, disorganization, and surrender to the trade union bureaucracy.

Part of this right wing is consistent, knows what it wants, and has systematically conducted its campaign. This consistent group, headed by Comrade Altman, represents the real leadership. Another section is inconsistent—is revolutionary in general matters but reformist in regard to the immediate American situation. This sector—such as Comrade Thomas—did not become expulsionist toward the Trotskyites, until it had decided upon its A.L.P. perspective. Since the N.E.C., there has been a crystallization in the views and tactics of the

whole right wing bloc. It stands as a political and organizational danger to the party.

## Trotskyites

At the other extreme of the party stand the Trotskyites. What has been, and what is, their political perspective?

The Trotskyites have been wrestling with a sectarian past—and have been conquered by it. Their affiliation with the American Socialist Party is the local reflection of the famous "French-turn" of Leon Trotsky. This French-turn was based upon the belief that out of them would be crystallized the revolutionary parties of the world. During the last year, and most especially during the last months the French-turn has been unturned.

First, the French Socialist Party, which entered into the Popular Front, was soon deserted by the Trotskyites—despite the presence of numerous and still advancing left-wing forces within the Socialist Party. So soon as the Trotskyites split from the French Party, they began to do it everywhere. From the I.L.P. in England; from the P.O.U.M. in Spain.

Second, the Moscow Trials, instead of weakening Trotsky internationally, strengthened him by identifying him with anti-Stalinism in the radical labor movement. The Trotskyites correctly concluded from their sectarian viewpoint, that by making the Moscow Trials the most important event in the world labor movement, they could build the most influence of their group. To conduct such a campaign, the Trotskyites need a party of their own, since no other sane working class party could possibly made the trials its most important activity.

Third, the Trotskyites are of the opinion that the Spanish events point the need of a Fourth International. But the workers will not see this need unless the Trotskyites have independent parties which can openly and publicly agitate for the Fourth International.

These forces would alone have led the Trotskyites to the perspective of an independent existence. The addition of another factor, however, goads the Trotskyites incessantly in the direction of an independent party. This is the fear of the Trotskyites that the left-wing moving workers, whom they hope to corral in the Fourth International, may decide upon the new international contemplated by the Spanish P.O.U.M., the British I.L.P., and the international Brandler-Thalheimer groups, as a stopping off place. This fear compels the Trotskyites to put in their international bid quickly, before their revolutionary business competitors.

Viewed basically, this is a reaffirmation of the Trotskyite theory of the revolutionary party: *Trotskyite monolithism*. The Trotskyites are, in practice as well as theory, reasserting the view that a revolutionary party cannot exist—except momentarily—unless it has *only one current in it*; namely, the Trotskyite current. And this flows from the Trotskyite belief that all non-Trotskyites are also non-revolutionists.

How do the Trotskyites aim to engineer the split that will give them the freedom to set up a new party? That is interesting but secondary. In part, we can say; in part, we must guess. So far, the Trotskyite method has been to make minor differences with other revolutionists appear as major differences, to raise every tactical difference into a principled difference, to use untruthful, exaggerated, and provocative language and political characterizations; to concentrate on doing what they like and to sabotage what they don't like. (In other documents I have written, "Who Are the Wreckers," and "Systematic Falsification," I have gone into the details.) For the present article details are far less important than fundamental political perspectives.

### The Split

The clash of these two forces—Trotskyites and right-wing—before the convention foreshadowed a split, and since the convention has put the question of a split on the order of the day. This split was halted at the convention by the vigorous presence of the group gathered around the program of the magazine—*Clarity*. This group held the decisive position at the convention. It holds the decisive position on the N.E.C. In the face of an imminent split, the N.E.C. passed a resolution on inner party affairs during the period of reorganization. This decision also springs from a profound political perspective. *Revolutionary Socialists, ever since the German catastrophe, have been fighting a battle on two fronts: first, against the reformist program of the social-democracy; second, against the futile sectarianism of the German Communists.* These tasks went hand in hand: to liquidate the political domination of the Socialist Party by reformists; to destroy the basis for the existence of numerous revolutionary sects by making the Socialist Party a united revolutionary party. Revolutionary Socialists, unlike the Trotskyite leadership, recognize the possibility—and the present existence—of several currents within the labor movement, *all of which are essentially revolutionary despite disagreements on numerous questions.* Their agreements, however, on the fundamental revolutionary questions make it possible to be in one party, while disagreeing on Thermidor, the colonial revolution, the Fourth International, Socialism in One Country, etc. The N.E.C. decision flows from this perspective. It was calculated to give the party a chance to do mass work in line with the decisions made at Chicago, to establish *a period of welding together* through action, rather than to maintain mass inaction and internal warfare.

Put succinctly, this decision calls for the following:

1. The cessation of **ORGANIZED WARFARE** during the present period of reorganization.
2. The carrying on of activity in accordance with central directives.
3. General discussion **ON AN EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**, with **VARIOUS POINTS OF VIEW** represented.
4. The establishment of a definite time before the convention **RESERVED FOR SHARP FAC-TIONAL WARS.**

**These rules are the rules of ANY DISCIPLINED revolutionary party, made especially urgent by the present party conditions.**

By a strange twist of events, this resolution was opposed by Altman and approved by Burnham, while in the making. Since then, Altman approves of it *in theory* while opposing it in practice; while the Trotskyites reject it in theory and practice. When passed, Altman called it a "slap in the face to Local New York," because it did not permit a mass expulsion of the Trotskyites. He even halted a campaign in that direction. Since the N.E.C., Altman has violated the spirit and the letter of the N.E.C. decision by going through with a mass expulsion in Local New York, and by openly agitating for it. Although Burnham approved of the resolution at the N.E.C., his followers since have denounced the resolution as a "gag rule." According to them (Spector and Weber specifically) such a resolution has a place *only in a 'bolshevik,' a truly revolutionary party.* In other words such a resolution, enabling the party to act as a disciplined unit, is only in order when the Trotskyites have a majority; otherwise it is out of order.

What is the present right-wing practice? Unquestionably to prepare for a split—and to make it as extensive as possible. The right wing admits that the Trotskyite leadership wants to leave. Instead of permitting them, however, to do so of their own accord, thus isolating them and minimizing the split, the right wing proclaims its expulsionist purposes—*in order to consolidate the ranks of the Trotskyites, to give them other left wing, uninformed sympathizers, in order to get rid of as many left wingers as possible.*

What is the Trotskyite practice today? To utilize Altman's strategy in order to consolidate as many as possible around them when he split comes.

These two groups have entered into the conspiracy that is so often tacitly arranged between extremists. They come to the party and declare: "We demand a split. Line up with us or—them."

The N.E.C. calls upon the party membership to reject both demands, and to act sternly against all groups whether they be Fourth Internationalists or A.L.P., whether their campaign by mass expulsion or mass provocation, whether they be motivated by a desire to reformism or sectarianism.

### The Task Ahead

It is not sufficient, however, for the party membership merely to give allegiance to the N.E.C. decision, by passing resolutions reaffirming it. Nor is it sufficient even to carry it out in practice. The party membership must collectively clarify itself on the party's perspective in this present period in America.

Internationally, the working class revolutionary movement has during the last ten years gone from defeat to defeat. The spirit of defeatism has penetrated every corner of the workers' political movement. And this spirit of defeatism has given rise to two diverse and equally dangerous tendencies: reformism and sectarianism. The bulk of the movement, under the pressure

of these defeats, has, for the moment, postponed its aggressive struggle for Socialism. It confines itself to reforms, to compromise, to a depoliticalization of the entire moment. Instead of attempting to lift the masses to its level, a large section of the revolutionary movement retreats to the degraded level of the momentarily defeated masses.

The momentary upswing of the American workers does not offset this tendency; it strengthens it. For while international events discourage the one time revolutionists and beat them down to the level of reformism, the positive gains won by the present, still vigorous reform movements in America give these defeatists a movement in which they can be swallowed up.

While the great retreat goes on, a sector of the revolutionists continue to hold their ground. But in such a period the tendency toward sectarianism is great, especially among those revolutionists who have likewise been affected by the spirit of defeatism. They see the great retreat around them—and see nothing else. They do not see the leftward moving workers; they do not see the potentialities of the still throbbing mass movements. These defeatist revolutionaries lose faith in everyone and everything, except their pure selves. They do not think in terms of what is to be done with the masses *now* to move them along the road to power—since they have no faith in what the masses can do now; they think only in terms of what the perfect program is, what the gloriously correct slogans are, which will rally the masses in the hour of despair—later. It is not at all inconsistent for such sectarians to have a mystical faith in the masses—of the future. They must have such faith. The only rationalization they have for their present splits, and further splits,

for their present weakness, is the mystical notion that the masses will unquestionably flock to them at the right time, if they have the perfect program. Perfection in program becomes their immediate task. Every impurity must be discovered and cleared away. Their main activity is to—split.

In the light of these trends it becomes the task of consistent Marxists *to combat right wing capitulation and left sectarianism with equal vigor.*

**Programmatically this means: NO RETURN OF REFORMISM IN THE S.P.**

**Organizationally this means: A UNITED REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, INSTEAD OF A SECT.**

This line is not only the only basis for building a revolutionary party of any meaning in America. This line alone can attract real revolutionists.

Those revolutionists who fall into the reformist morass of a present day A.L.P. will soon become disgusted and turn elsewhere.

Those revolutionists who go with a Trotskyite sect will soon turn away in disgust, their belly full of unprincipled factionalism. They will want a party, not a church.

Comrades, such a party must be the Socialist Party. The way is clear, but we must have the strength to cut through the heavy underbrush, we must have the singleness of purpose to avoid the easy paths that seem to live before us. There is only one way, a hard way. But the reward will be great.

*(End of Discussion Section)*

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## IMPERIALISM AND WAR

*(Continued from Page 15)*

enceau overthrew a government in the midst of the war so as to conduct the war more vigorously and effectively because he was a better representative of the war-conducting capitalists than his predecessors. The working class can have the perspective of taking the conduct of the war into its own hands only if it makes the war its war, that is, if it approves of the objectives of that war. But this is what Dan steers clear of. He knows quite well that any war conducted by imperialist nations, no matter what the form of their internal organization may be, must be an imperialist war. The imperialists will have not the slightest objection to taking the working class in as a partner in the conduct of that war, as they did in 1914 in England and France and Germany. But when the working class binds itself in this way to the imperialists, it ceases to fight its own battles and instead fights those of the imperialists.

The only other alternative is to refuse to become part of the imperialist war machine, to continue the class struggle, to oppose the war and its consequences, and to continue organizing for the overthrow of capitalism. This

is the meaning of the decision of the Socialist Convention of Chicago to "make the war an occasion for social revolution." This is the meaning of the slogan "revolutionary defeatism." For the working class can benefit from war only by taking advantage of the economic break-down, the social misery, and the political tyranny which are concomitants of war. If it fails to do so, as it did in Germany and in Austria and in Italy, it is merely speeding the day when a fascist totalitarian state will clamp down on it, when its erstwhile "ally," democratic capitalism throws into the historic garbage heap where it belongs, that fetish of modern-day revisionism—"political democracy." The capitalist class knows well that modern, declining capitalism, can be maintained as a paying, profit-making concern, only by depriving the workers of those concessions and liberties which it was able to afford in its days of youth and growth. The workers must learn, and it is the duty of Socialists to teach them, that they can avoid fascism not by alliances with imperialists, no matter what their views on democracy, but by vigorous, unrelenting war against them for the establishment of a Socialist Society.

## SPANISH REVOLUTION

(Continued from Page 9)

war. Communists flocked in from every section of the Comintern throughout the world. The Third International is a powerful apparatus and Soviet Russia is a powerful nation with vast resources. With such backing the Spanish Stalinists were in a position to blackmail the other anti-fascist organizations. "If you don't follow the People's Front line you will get no aid."

The Anarchists of Catalonia have confessed that they agreed to the expulsion of the P.O.U.M. from the Generalitat because it made made the price of Russian aid, at a very critical period when they feared Madrid would fall if no further help was received. Faced with this threat, and with the virtual certainty of intervention on the part of Anglo-French imperialism if they carried the revolution to its logical conclusion with the seizure of power and the destruction of the whole structure of the capitalist state, the revolutionary forces agreed to the maintenance of the People's Front as a front to the outside capitalist world, while meantime they proceeded to make the revolution from below by collectivizing the factories and farms against the will of the left Republicans, the Stalinists and the Prieto Socialists.

Today there is this basic inner contradiction in Spain—a collective economy still largely controlled by the trade unions led by revolutionists, and a government, police and army dominated completely by the reactionaries. You get on a railroad train at the Spanish border which is collectivized; when you get to the station at Barcelona you ride to a collectivized hotel in a collectivized taxi; you eat at collectivized restaurants and drink at collectivized cafes; you have your hair cut in collectivized barber shops; you buy your clothing at a collectivized shop, or, if it is too small, at a shop regulated by the workers who share in the profits. The food served you is grown on collectivized farms, the fish is caught by fishermen who belong to a collective. And these collectives, while not yet completely socialized and coordinated under scientific socialist planning of the economy as a whole, are operated with an astonishing degree of efficiency. There was very little compulsory collectivization of farms, and no sabotage and wholesale slaughtering of cattle as in Russia.

The Stalinist-left Republican-Prieto Socialist coalition has successfully resisted collectivization in some areas, and have prevented it from reaching 100 per cent anywhere. They seek to change collective ownership and trade union operation into municipal or state ownership and operation, and are utilizing their control of government and finance to break down collectives in many cases. They advocate cooperative marketing among small peasant proprietors rather than socialization. They are vigorously defending the interests of small business men. They are pledged to return all the industries owned by foreign

## BOOKS

"History of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen," by Walter F. McCaleb. (Albert and Charles Boni, New York, 1936, 273 pp., \$2.50.)

The publisher's blurb promises an indispensable addition to labor history in this volume. McCaleb, whose previous published works included a volume on the Aaron Burr conspiracy and a biography of Theodore Roosevelt, is "the organizer who placed on the map labor banks . . . from New York to Los Angeles" and was the manager of the Locomotive Engineers' Bank.

First as to the contents of the book: there is an account of the great Railway Strike of 1877, largely taken from Yellen's "Labor Struggles"; then an interruption for the early life of A. F. Whitney, now President of the Railroad Trainmen and an active national official for the past thirty years; then an account of the early beginnings of the Brotherhood which contains reference of acknowledgement of thanks to Eugene V. Debs, still in the ranks of the railway brotherhoods in 1884. The discussion of the turbulent days of the 90's is taken largely from Beard and from Commons. The balance of the book deals with Whitney's career in the Brotherhood and as one of the chief spokesmen of the Railway Labor Executives. There is scattered throughout a discussion of the role of the railway brotherhoods during the World War, of the "outlaw" yardmen's strike which Whitney, then a vice-president, ruthlessly suppressed; of the campaign for La Follette in which Whitney participated although his fellow officials, W. G. Lee and W. N. Doak rallied to Coolidge's banner; of Doak's betrayal of labor in his infamous career as Secretary of Labor, of the problems of unemployment and wage cuts facing railway labor in the 1930's.

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capital, which means almost all large-scale industry, to the former owners who have been expropriated.

This is the balance sheet of the Spanish Revolution. On the credit side there are the collectivized farms and factories (all employing more than 100 workers), and controlled by the two trade unions which are still mighty and still in a revolutionary mood; on the debit side there is the fact that political power is now completely in the hands of the reaction which is using it ruthlessly to crush all revolutionary organizations, and that control of the army and the police has passed out of the workers' hands.

Which of the opposing forces will win? Temporarily the reactionary side has all the advantage and will continue to gain; but in the event of an anti-fascist victory there will be a tremendous resurgence of revolutionary fervor. It will be exceedingly difficult for either the Stalinists or the fascists to completely destroy the revolutionary gains already made, return lands and factories to their former owners, and restore capitalism—even state capitalism. After a serious temporary setback, it is still probable that the revolution will ultimately win in Spain.

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