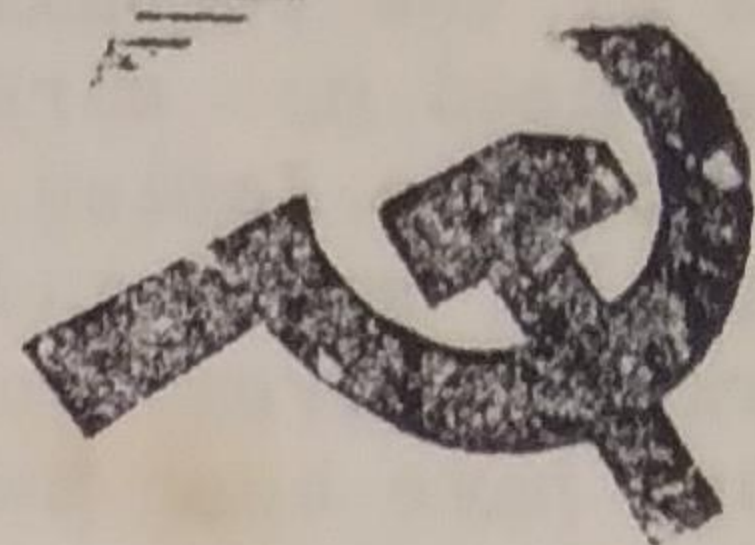


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THE SPARK



ORGAN OF THE WORKERS' PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Vol. 4 No. 12 (45)

DECEMBER 1938

Price 1d.

PALESTINE, ZIONISM, AND THE JEWISH PROBLEM

For over two and a half years there has been war in Palestine, a war waged by an imperialist oppressor against a colonial people. All the devastating measures employed by British Imperialism, the aerial bombardments, the razing of villages to the ground, the imposition of fines, the taking of hostages, the enactment of martial law, the establishment of concentration camps, along with the old time methods of bribery, intrigues, corruption, all these failed to break the determined will of a united people to attain national liberation. After two and a half years of this oppression Imperialism finds the Arab people more united and more determined in the fight than ever before. And all the indications go to show that this time British Imperialism will have to give in to the Arab demands, will have to agree to a compromise. It should be kept in mind that the demands of the Arab bourgeoisie were very modest. They did not even ask for complete national and political independence. All they asked was: (a) that immigration should be stopped; (b) that further sale of Arab land should be prohibited; and (c) that there should be established a National Government responsible to a representative Legislative Assembly.

And yet for more than two and a half years British Imperialism waged war against the whole people, refusing to extend to them the principle of self-determination. This is the very principle which Britain the other day so joyfully proclaimed for Czecho-slovakia (Imperialism has different standards for "colonial" countries), and, what is more, so readily promised to the Arabs in 1915. Two years ago British Imperialism tried to frustrate the national aspirations of the Arabs by the partition scheme of the Peel Commission -- a most ingenious and deceitful scheme. But it did not succeed, and now another Commission has come to the conclusion that the acceptance of partition by British Imperialism and the Zionist leaders is not enough, that the scheme will not work because of its indignant rejection and condemnation by the whole Arab population. In spite of the fact that British Imperialism would greatly like to have in Palestine a strong outpost in the form of a Jewish State and has done everything possible to facilitate it during the twenty-one years of the "Mandate", nevertheless the present war and the determination of the Arabs to fight it to a finish, the support the Arab cause is receiving from all the near East, the unwillingness of British Imperialism to antagonise these Arabian countries in view of the present precarious world situation, all these considerations have forced British Imperialism to drop the old partition plan and through the recommendations of a new Commission (the Woodhead Commission) to arrange a compromise.

From the short summary of the Woodhead Commission Report and from the vague declaration of the new British policy in Palestine and the press comments thereon, it seems that this compromise will not give the Arabs national and political independence, but will retain for British Imperialism the military, political and economic grip on the country. It will, however, meet the Arab demands concerning immigration and land. It seems that Britain has definitely had to give up the cherished idea of a Jewish National Home as her safest outpost. The Mandate will be "modified" and the Balfour Declaration will receive a "new interpretation".

This incidentally puts an end to the Zionist dream of a Jewish State in Palestine. Zionism stands or falls by these two conditions: (a) unrestricted Jewish immigration leading to an eventual Jewish majority, and (b) unrestricted Jewish land buying. No duping of the Jewish petty bourgeois masses all over the world, no collection of tribute

from them and maintenance of a huge world-wide parasitic bureaucracy would be possible if these two conditions disappeared. And those who have put their faith in the Imperialist "solution" of the Jewish question would be bitterly disillusioned to see this part of the Versailles system disappear together with the rest. That the Reformists, who have always supported the colonial policy of Imperialism and who have no become the most ardent champions of the Versailles Treaty, should use all the arguments of the Zionists against the Arabs, need not surprise us. That Sir Stafford Cripps should employ the imperialistic pleas of the Jewish Fascist Jabotinsky is not at all astonishing. But it is very regrettable that some confusion has also crept into the ranks of Marxists. From their casual remarks and even from their articles in the Revolutionary press it is evident that the authors have been swept off their feet by the widespread anti-Semitic wave and have fallen victims to Nationalism. A clear, unambiguous stand in support of the colonial people in their struggle against Imperialism is the first duty of Revolutionary Socialism. We must not be parties to Imperialist machinations, to Versailles, to Mandates. We must strongly demarcate ourselves from the Stalinists, who have betrayed the colonial people for the sake of People's Fronts, for the sake of placating Imperialism in France and Britain. Let them, if they will, throw spanners into the wheels of the Arab revolt and advocate moderation and a compromise that would leave British Imperialism and Zionism masters of Palestine.

So far as we are concerned, we have made quite clear our position in regard to the struggle in Palestine. (See "Spark", No. 16, 33, 41). Nothing will blind us or distract us from the fundamental issue, namely, the progressive Revolutionary struggle of a colonial people against Imperialism. We had and we have no illusions concerning this struggle whatever the outcome of the present political manoeuvres in Palestine may be. Whether British Imperialism will succeed by its new move for a round-table conference in breaking the Arab United Front (as it succeeded before by a similar move in India) and by corruption succeed in side-tracking the national movement, or whether the present struggle will go on, we are under no illusions, we have no doubt that, so long as the national movement is led and dominated by the Arab national bourgeoisie and clergy, the struggle for liberation cannot be crowned with success. It will terminate in a foul compromise between the National bourgeoisie and Imperialism. Time and again this has been proved by history. But, so long as the fight is progressive, we have to support it, while at the same time warning the Arab workers of their treacherous bourgeoisie.

The two years of struggle has not been in vain. It has weakened British Imperialism, it has weakened the Imperialist grip upon Palestine. It has also shown to the Orient and to all the colonial people that British Imperialism is not so all-powerful as they thought. The fact that after twenty years of rule in Palestine British Imperialism has to re-conquer the country is of great importance. This vulnerability and weakness must give tremendous encouragement to all the colonial people. Of special importance is this lesson of Palestine to the National Liberation Movement in India, showing that the way is not in Gandhi-ism and passive resistance, but in active Revolutionary mass struggle. This lesson will not be in vain.

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Let us now turn to the other contributory element of the struggle in Palestine, namely, Zionism.

It was the precarious position of the Jewish masses, the petty bourgeois, the handicraftsmen, the declassed elements, in Eastern Europe during the second half of last century that drove the Jewish intelligentsia to all kinds of Utopias and fantastic schemes. Except for the small section that turned to Socialism and Marxism, the favourite dream of the majority was territorialism. Later this found expression in the colonial schemes of Baron Hirsch and of Baron Rothschild, in the Angola and Uganda projects. Zionism eventually amalgamated all the various territorialist tendencies in one political movement.

It was by no means a coincidence that the Zionist movement should appear on the scene at the time when Africa, Polynesia and the Near East were being carved up among the Great Powers and the world was divided into spheres of influence among the great monopoly trusts. Zionism was a direct product of Imperialism and logically became a playball in the hands of Imperialism. The end of the World War, the redistribution of the colonial world at Versailles gave the opportunity for Zionism to step in and demand its promised share. British Imperialism, which had made the promise for financial and military services rendered during the war, would not hesitate a moment to forget this promise, as it forgot so many others, if the fulfilment did not suit her own interests and schemes. British Imperialism realised the great strategic value of Palestine for the Empire, beside its economic value for trade and investments. It came in most conveniently for Britain to acquire a strong outpost in the Near East in the form of the Jewish National Home. Such a community or State would always serve as a policeman for British interests.

simply because, surrounded by a hostile Arab world, it would always have to look to Britain for protection. British Imperialism took up the Zionist cause and Zionism became a servant of British Imperialism.

To blame British Imperialism now for the present state of affairs in Palestine (as Comrade Rock has done in a recent article in the "New International"), to accuse the British of sinister machinations and of the intentional sowing of hostility between Arab and Jew, is both futile and incorrect. Firstly, because one does not blame the shark for having the characteristics of a shark. To expect British Imperialism to act as a peace-maker, bringing the two peoples together and laying the foundation of co-operation and peace and mutual respect for each other's rights, is more than simple foolishness. It is a complete misunderstanding of Imperialism, as well as of the Zionist aim -- a Jewish State in Palestine. And, secondly, it is incorrect. For British Imperialism did everything it could to bring about a Jewish State. The fact that, in spite of Arab opposition, protest, revolts, Britain fostered and encouraged Jewish immigration, the fact that there are already today 400,000 Jews in Palestine, goes to prove that Britain was just as interested in a Jewish State as Zionism was, even if Britain's interest was for the furtherance of her own ends.

It is convenient to blame British Imperialism for the present state of affairs. But this means closing our eyes to the actions of Zionism during these eighteen years. Is it not more appropriate to turn and see what the Jewish leaders did in Palestine, and whether the fault does not lie more with Zionism and its aim than with the machinations of British Imperialism, which were, after all, only means for the carrying out of this aim? It must be admitted that International Socialism did not wait for the Zionist methods to reveal themselves before condemning the whole scheme. For we knew that an imperialist aim necessitates imperialist methods. And we were not mistaken.

From the day of the Zionist rejoicing over San Remo, the day of proclamation of a Jewish National Home, Revolutionary Socialists all over the world have declared open hostility towards this scheme as an imperialist venture. We have warned the Jewish workers against the great Zionist bluff of the solution of the Jewish problem, against their unity with Capitalism and Imperialism, and have warned them of the bitter disillusionment that is in store for them. From the beginning it was clear to us that Zionism meant not a National Home in Palestine, not a place of refuge, not an outlet for emigration on a small scale, not the building up of some agricultural communes, but that it meant a Jewish Capitalist State as a part of British Imperialism. It was clear to us that any such scheme must be at the expense of the native Arab population. For there are no empty spaces in the world today, and any colonial development under Imperialism means the enslavement, oppression and exploitation of the native population. No camouflage, no ingenious device on the part of the Jewish bourgeoisie and their chauvinistic petty bourgeois supporters can suppress this basic fact. The imperialist invaders everywhere find hundreds of good excuses for plunder and robbery and then cover up this with the most "noble" ideals and motives imaginable. The Jewish bourgeoisie moreover was not slow to find such ideals and motives.

We need not waste time and space in refuting the commonplace argument of the historic "right" of the Jews to Palestine by reference to the similar "historic" right of the Roman Empire to the British Isles. We turn rather to the "moral" right of the suffering Jews to a State. This has been one of the main planks of Zionist propaganda all along, but since Hitler has let loose his bestial, sadistic persecution of the Jews in Germany and Mussolini has followed suit, this argument has taken the dominant place. Zionism is trying to cash in on the sufferings of the persecuted Jews in Europe. Zionism is endeavouring to exploit the natural and world-wide sympathy of every decent man for the oppressed German and Italian Jews, in order to further its own predatory aims in Palestine. But these two things have no connection whatsoever. Sympathy for an oppressed minority has nothing to do with the cravings of a bourgeoisie for a State wherein they themselves shall be able to exploit their own workers and still more the Arabs, the cheap native labour and the land. The sufferings of oppressed and exploited Jewish minorities stand in no connection with the Jewish bourgeoisie, with Zionism in Palestine, with the oppressors, exploiters, plunderers.

Zionist writers and journalists, apologists for Imperialism, have been telling the world for the last twenty-five years that "a Jewish State will be something different, that it will be a model to the world. No classes, all for the welfare of the community, for the 'Jewish' ideal of righteousness and justice". What Jewish petty-bourgeois heart did not throb before this picture of "hope and beauty"? Now for eighteen years these fools have had the chance of seeing this hope and beauty at work. Indeed, the paws and claws of the Jewish bourgeoisie were not in any way inferior to the same weapons wielded by any greedy bourgeoisie. There was the same policy of grabbing, of squeezing out the

native population from the land, and so the production of a landless peasantry as a reservoir of cheap labour. The same speculation in land, the same over-capitalisation, polarisation of wealth and poverty, pauperisation. The same greed for more territory -- Transjordan. The same chauvinism in language and persecution of the language of the bulk of the Jewish workers -- Yiddish. And the same arguments: The Arabs are inherently lazy; the Arabs can go somewhere else; the Arabs are on a lower level of civilisation. The same arrogance on the part of the invaders: We have brought you culture, social services; we, of a higher civilisation, have made the waste land fertile; we must have a higher standard of living. And even the same white, civilised labour policy as in South Africa! Oh, no! The Jewish bourgeoisie has not produced anything different from what any other bourgeoisie produces. Even in producing a Jewish Fascism in Palestine they were not original; they were only imitating the bourgeoisie in other parts of the world.

Yet this is quite natural and logical. But the whole hideousness and real harm of Zionism is revealed when we hear the arguments, claims and apologies of the Socialist-Zionists in and out of Palestine. The Poalei-Zion (at one time the main Zionist-Socialist Party) were going to build Socialism in Palestine, "in spite of British Imperialism and Jewish Capitalism". "We", they said, "are going to build a socialist core in this capitalist shell. The main thing is the Kvutzah, the agricultural communes, the kolchozes. This is the real thing". With this idea of building communism in Palestine they seduced and misled thousands upon thousands of boys and girls. This was the mainspring of the "Halutzim" movement, the pioneers for Palestine. With the sweat and blood and bones of these young idealists the agricultural colonisation has been accomplished -- for Capitalism, to be sure, not for Communism. The cemeteries of Palestine are filled with these "Halutzim", these pioneers. But where are the Communist colonies, the Socialist core of Palestine? They have shared the fate of all the other schemes for building Socialism on islands or on chosen spots in South America -- all the Utopian schemes of the last hundred years, beginning with Robert Owen. But even if some Kvutzahs had been nurtured and preserved like a plant in a conservatory, how could this be today a factor in the life of Palestine? So much for the empty talk of the Poalei-Zion outside Palestine.

Within Palestine all the Jewish Labour and Trade Union organisations accepted the political programme of Zionism, that is, Palestine as the Jewish National Home and eventually a Jewish State relying on British Imperialism with its bayonets and power, uncompromising hostility to the national aspiration of the Arabs and their struggle for national independence. Also in the economic sphere an out-and-out imperialist and chauvinistic policy. Laws providing for the eviction of Arab tenants from their land-holdings, and then the barring of these landless peasants from the labour-market in the towns in accordance with the policy of "100% Jewish labour in Jewish enterprises". The speeches of these Labour and Trade Union leaders of the "Histadrut", of the "Hashomir-Hazoir", etc., the speeches of Ben-Gurion and Burgin, make the most shameless reading even in the annals of chauvinistic Labour parties. Their actions correspond with their speeches. During the present ruthless war waged by British Imperialism during two and a half years, in the course of which innocent people are bombed, villages are razed to the ground, families are left destitute and homeless, not a word of protest has been forthcoming from these Labour and "Socialist" organisations. Just the opposite: Support and spurring on of the imperialist oppressors by word and action. Open scabbing and strike-breaking in every political strike declared by the Arabs in protest against British brutality, martial law, cruel humiliations. This is the record of the Jewish Labour and Trade Unions, the Histadrut, who barred Arabs from membership.

And then the apologetic critics of Zionism from the "Left", so-called Socialists and Communists, who are fond of talking about Marx and dialectics, but whose Socialism goes no deeper than their skin, are shocked that the wrath of the Arabs is directed not only against British Imperialism, but also against the Jews in Palestine. These liberals are unable to understand why, on meeting with a United Zionist Front of bourgeoisie and labour, a hostile United Front, siding with their enemy, British Imperialism, and supporting it, the Arabs should come to the conclusion that all Jews in Palestine are Zionists and therefore their enemies. This conclusion is, to be sure, a wrong one, but where are the signs that would make this clear to the Arabs?

The other argument employed by these apologetic critics of Zionism is that the Arabs make use of weapons supplied by Fascist countries. The "moral feelings" of Socialists like Sir Stafford Cripps are shocked by the Arab disregard for their democratic sensibilities and therefore they cannot support the Arab cause. These philistines would like to prescribe special laws and special weapons by means of which the slaves might break their chains! Trotsky has answered these philistines in his article, "Learn to Think" (New International, July, 1938).

But their main and most dangerous argument is that the Jewish immigration into

Palestine is in the interests of the Arabs and therefore should be supported. Such a Marxist writes: "If many Jews have benefited from Zionism, a large number of Arabs have benefited equally and at no expense to themselves. Such momentum as the Jewish revival of Palestine has given renaissance of its Arab population must inevitably continue to revitalize and repopulate this section of the community". ("The Intelligent Man's Guide to Jew-Baiting", p.103), and further: "Palestine has served to absorb refugees from countries unable to absorb them. It will continue to do so, and in this it has justified itself" (Ibid. p.115). Here the usual argument of Imperialism concerning its beneficent work, an argument used by Imperialism in China, India, South Africa and any colonial semi-colonial country, is cleverly connected with the immigration question. Unfortunately the same sort of argument is used by Comrade Rock in his article in "The New International" (Oct., 1938), where he says: "From all this it is evident that the British know full well how to exploit the elementary needs of the Jewish workers, namely, immigration and colonization, neither of which contradicts the real necessities of the Arab masses". Indeed! Mr. Weitzman could not say better. It is the immigration question which is the main cause of the Arab struggle. This point requires careful examination.

International Socialists, beginning with Marx and Engels, were always for free, unrestricted immigration and for complete freedom of movement as a part of our democratic rights. It was the Reformist Labour leaders and the Trade Union bureaucrats who opposed the rights of free immigration for the sake of their narrow craft interests and to the detriment of the interests of the working class as a whole. Now it is Capitalism in decay that is doing away with all the democratic rights that it formerly proclaimed and fought for. In the post-war period all countries, one after another, have closed their doors to immigration. The working class in retreat after the defeats was not in a position to resist this abolition of its democratic rights. And it is precisely for this reason that the fight for democratic rights, as the urgent task of today, stands in the forefront of the programme of International Revolutionary Socialism (Fourth International). It would therefore be ridiculous to assert that we are against free immigration.

But the Jewish immigration into Palestine is something entirely different. It is an immigration with the avowed aim of trampling upon and destroying the rights of the native population in that country. It is an invasion under the protection of Imperialism and for the strengthening of Imperialism. Zionism -- and by this we mean all the Zionist parties, from the Revisionists to the so-called Socialists -- has openly proclaimed that the aim of this immigration is to attain a majority in Palestine and reduce the Arabs to a minority in a then Jewish State. Against this aim to defeat them politically and economically, the Arab people, the natives in Palestine, have waged this war for two and a half years. The immigration question was and still is the pivotal point in their struggle. Not to support the Arabs in this just, defensive demand means to side with British Imperialism and its tool, Zionism, against a native oppressed people.

Palestine as a solution of the Jewish question was never even a Utopia. It was a big Zionist bluff. Palestine, as a Jewish Capitalist State and outpost of British Imperialism, was a product of Versailles, and it failed together with the rest of Versailles. In so far as Zionism against the express wish of the native population, fostered this imperialist venture, relying on the force of British bayonets, Zionists took the risk and must blame themselves for the failure. The sooner the Jewish people in Palestine realize this, the better. For the continuation of the old Zionist-Imperialist course will drive deeper the wedge of hatred and chauvinism, will widen the gulf between Arab and Jew, and will foster perpetual strife and civil war, endangering the very existence of the Jewish community. And in saying this, it is not the Zionists we have in mind. We mean the great mass of the Jewish workers and small peasants. They can solve the Jewish problem of Palestine very easily. What is needed is solidarity and co-operation of Jewish and Arab workers and peasants, and a united struggle for an independent free Palestine of workers and peasants, liberated from the shackles of Imperialism-Capitalism. But for this they must first break with their chauvinistic leaders, who have chained them to the chariot of Zionism-Imperialism. It will then be easier for the Arab workers to free themselves from the influence and leadership of the equally chauvinistic effendis and mullahs. Once class unity is achieved, the solution of both the Jewish and the Arab question is assured. Any other solution, any solution on imperialist lines, spells war, bloodshed, ruination and disaster for the people of Palestine.

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The same confusion that exists regarding the Jewish problem in Palestine is also evident in connection with the general Jewish question. The anti-Semitic wave and bestial persecution, which is today stronger and more universal than at any other time in modern history, makes the problem more acute and urgent. But its solution cannot be found in any panacea. The solution of the Jewish problem lies in Socialism. Lenin saw

this thirty-five years ago, and history since then has proved it conclusively. The National problem in Russia found its solution through the October Revolution of 1917. If the Thermidorian period has brought retrogression in this sphere, as in any other, such retrogression does not in the least invalidate the fundamental proof of Leninism tested in practical life during the years 1917-1924. At the same time the various solutions offered by the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, including that of Austro-Marxism and that of the Jewish "Bund", proved their bankruptcy under test. Since Versailles, Wilson's self-determination, the minority status of the League of Nations, etc., etc., the position of the national minorities has become intolerable and is going from bad to worse.

Scattered throughout the world there are from sixteen to eighteen million Jews. Everywhere they are a national minority. Everywhere, except for the three million in the Soviet Union, the bulk of them are suffering from oppression and persecution. As a result of the universal cancer of anti-Semitism, fostered by the ruling classes, their suffering is greater than that of any other national minority. Since Hitler's coming to power and the growth of Fascism in every country, their sufferings and anxieties have enormously increased. For Fascism, crushing the working class wherever it advances, destroying the workers' organisations, crushes the Jews at the same time. This proves again Lenin's truism, that the fate of the Jews in every country is intrinsically bound up with the fate of the working class. Even in the Soviet Union their fate is bound up with the victory or defeat of Socialism. Restoration of private ownership of the means of production as a result of external defeat in war, which would mean of course a Fascist regime, would bring in its wake massacres of Jews by the "White" bandits.

As has been proved by the latest events in Germany and Italy, Capitalism in decay has become cannibalistic. In any case, there is no longer any place for liberalism and bourgeois democracy, to which the Jewish petty bourgeoisie along with Reformism might look for salvation. The sole form of rule for decaying Capitalism is Fascism. Just as there is no special remedy to bring about the deliverance of the working class from under the iron heel of Fascism, except the road of Revolution, so for the Jews there is no special remedy except the advance in union with the working class along the Revolutionary Road. Only the emancipation of the working class from the yoke of Capital, only Socialism, can bring emancipation to the Jews.

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THE VOORTREKKERS

There is nothing unusual in the celebration of historical anniversaries. It is done all the world over, and as a rule it calls for no special comment from revolutionary Marxists. Independence Day in America, and the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille in France, are simply public holidays, and if various public ceremonies are thrown in, they have little living significance for the masses. The victories celebrated on those occasions were won by the workers, but their fruits are enjoyed by the bourgeoisie. The ceremonies are therefore meaningless to the workers. It is a very different matter with the centenary of the Great Trek that is being celebrated in South Africa this year, and is now approaching its climax. This anniversary has a profound and bitter significance for the majority of the South African population, for it marks the culmination of a movement to enslave the Native peoples of this country.

At the same time, the Trek celebrations have another, but secondary meaning, and it is necessary to understand that before the full significance of the centenary for the Bantu people can be grasped. For this secondary meaning, which is expressed in the various squabbles that have taken place between the organisers of the Trek and various people who would have liked to play a leading part in the ceremonies, is liable to obscure the true meaning. We shall therefore deal with the secondary meaning first.

The first step towards an understanding of the celebrations is to ask who are its organisers, and whom do they represent. The organisers are almost without exception "purified" nationalists, and they therefore represent the reactionary feudal landowners, that is, a large proportion of the Dutch farmers, with a sprinkling of English farmers. The virtual exclusion from the celebrations of Afrikaners who adhere to the United Party (even Hertzog has been told that his presence at the unveiling of the memorial is not desired) suggests that the movement has its origin in the profound antagonism between the feudalists and the bourgeoisie, an antagonism arising out of the struggle between these two classes for the right to unrestricted exploitation of the Natives.

The agreement between Hertzog and the Chamber of Mines, which led to the formation

of the United Party, gave a large share of the booty to the feudalists, at the expense of the industrialists, but a section of the farmers were not satisfied. The decay of capitalism, with the consequent restriction of markets, has made it difficult for the farmers to dispose of their produce profitably, and for them therefore the only way of escape seemed to lie in still more ruthless exploitation of the Natives. But the Chamber of Mines can offer much higher wages than the farmers can, because the market for their product is still firm. The farmers bitterly resent this successful competition, and all the more so as it is carried on in the Transvaal, the very province where they established a republic at the end of the Great Trek, thinking to rid themselves forever of the overlordship of Britain. For such people therefore the Voortrekker celebrations symbolise the struggle against the invading capitalists who succeeded in exploiting the most valuable resources of "their" land.

This meaning of the celebrations is further clarified by the association of the Dutch Reformed Church with the movement. The chief function of this thoroughly reactionary organisation is to supply an ideology that will protect the feudal class against the attacks of bourgeois ideas and bourgeois modes of living. It is not because dancing is "sinful" that the Dutch Reformers are against it, because it is a convenient symbol of the disruptive influences of the town which tend to weaken the struggle of the feudal class against the town. It is therefore quite logical that the Church should use the Trek celebrations as an occasion for pumping new life into its dying ideology.

Let us look for a moment at some of the means used by the church to achieve this end. In the first place it has been trying to revive the old doctrine of a "chosen people". The Afrikaner people, it claims, were specially chosen by God to colonise South Africa. They are therefore a people apart, and should have nothing to do with the godless foreigners who have butted in and deprived them of their most valuable assets. Of course the conclusion is not stated in this form, but when the covering of theological verbiage is removed, it is not difficult to see that this is what is meant. Behind the absurd phrases about God speaking to his people through his ox-wagon one can detect the uneasiness of the feudalist in face of the bourgeois power against which he can no longer struggle effectively.

From the Cape Argus (8/11/38) we learn that "the 'Broederkringe' (brother circles) of the Cape Town and Stellenbosch presbyteries of the Dutch Reformed Church....hope to use the Voortrekker centenary to re-establish the old custom of daily family prayers", which are to be recited between the hours of 7 and 8 p.m. That is to say, they would like the farmers to keep their sons and daughters under closer supervision, and prevent them from being "led astray" by the ways of the town. In other words, the Dutch Reformed Church is playing its part in whipping up Afrikaner nationalist sentiment against British imperialism, and for this purpose is exploiting the centenary to the full.

This then is the secondary meaning of the Voortrekker celebrations. It is secondary not because it plays a minor part in the intentions of the organisers, but because the struggle of Afrikaner feudalism against British imperialism is utterly futile. That struggle was decided as soon as British capitalists began to exploit the gold deposits of the Witwatersrand, and any hope that the "purified" nationalists may still entertain of driving out foreign capital is foredoomed to be disappointed. For them the Trek celebrations represent a last defiant declaration of independence, and that is why the joy-ride of the wagons has been punctuated by so many outbursts of racial animosity.

But it is not only the die-hard nationalists who are singing hymns of praise to the "heroes" of 1838. Day after day the press reports nauseating speeches by Hertzog and Smuts, and other leaders of the United Party, pointing out the "sacred" significance of the Trek for the South African "nation", that is, of course, for the white ruling class. And although a great deal of their talk is just pious rubbish that must inevitably be forgotten almost as soon as it is uttered, the true meaning of the centenary is brought out clearly enough.

However, it is not necessary to wade through reports of speeches in order to get at the primary significance of the celebrations. That is unmistakably revealed by the final event towards which the ceremonies are moving -- the mock battle of Blood River. It was not by accident that the day chosen as a national holiday in commemoration of the Voortrekkers was not the day on which the first wagon started on its journey to the north, but the day on which the military power of the Natives was smashed at Blood River, and Dingaan and his army were wiped out. It is precisely because that event marked the beginning of the process that has now culminated in the total enslavement of the Bantu that the centenary has a significance not only for the discontented Boers, but for white South Africa as a whole. The nationalists can celebrate the Trek because it symbolises their revolt against the alien robbers, but nationalists and fusionists alike can rejoice

in the subjugation of the Bantu.

This then is the true "sacred" meaning of the Trek centenary. It is not an act of thanksgiving for the welding of the white races of South Africa of criminals who have had the satisfaction of having their crimes recognised as deeds of heroism. By representing the Natives as untutored savages and treacherous barbarians, who would have blotted out the "superior" white race if they had not been severely handled, the rulers of South Africa seek to justify their inhuman treatment of the Bantu, and this they can very conveniently do by recalling at regular intervals the "treachery" of Dingaan towards Piet Retief, and the "just" punishment that was meted out to him on December 16th, 1838.

It is very convenient that the Trek centenary should have come so soon after the legalised crime embodied in the three Native Acts. And we may be sure that the opportunities afforded by the celebrations for justifying that crime will not be missed. We shall be reminded that the Native was a menace to white "civilisation" a hundred years ago, and that he is still capable of being a menace if he is not firmly kept in "his place". Dingaan's act of self defence in 1838 will be made an excuse for the infinitely greater crimes committed against the Natives in 1938. Just as in the U.S.S.R. the murder of one official served as the excuse for the judicial murder of hundreds of revolutionaries, so in South Africa the corpse of Piet Retief is periodically exposed to public view in order to justify judicial crimes against millions of Natives who have never even heard of Piet Retief.

What should be the attitude of the workers towards these "celebrations"? Obviously the Bantu workers should have nothing to do with them, and should miss no opportunity to obstruct them. But what of the white workers? At present many of them occupy privileged positions precisely because the oppression of the black workers makes it possible for the capitalists to offer them relatively good wages. And that is why some of the white trade unions have actually organised processions to welcome the wagons. At present the subjugation of the Bantu involves economic advantages for them, and they can therefore join in the general jubilation. But their attitude, understandable as it is, is nevertheless fundamentally wrong. They must realise that the motives behind the celebrations are economic, and that the appeals to racial and patriotic sentiment, the speeches extolling the virtues of the "heroes" of a century ago, the beards and Voortrekker costumes, are nothing but camouflage to hide the true motives. It is time for the white workers to realise that the whip-lash that is now directed against the Natives will one day be applied to their own backs. The fact that they have so far escaped is no guarantee that they will always be so fortunate; it merely shows that the decay of world capitalism has not yet profoundly affected South Africa. But the decay has begun to affect South African economy -- the squabbles to which we referred above are one of the symptoms -- and as it deepens, the competition for cheap Native labour will inevitably result in the screw being applied to the white workers. Their interests are ultimately identical with those of the Natives, and that is why their participation in the Voortrekker ceremonials must be condemned as a counter-revolutionary act, strengthening the hands of their own exploiters.

Finally, what can we say of the Bantu workers? It is painful to have to record that in face of the organised campaign of hatred against them which the centenary celebrations represent, they have done absolutely nothing. They have not organised a general strike to paralyse the country when the final orgies are about to begin. They have not organised local obstructions at places through which the wagons have passed. They have not even uttered any protest through their miserable Native Representative Council.

The lesson of the Voortrekker celebrations for the Bantu workers is that only nation-wide organisation of their forces will serve to end their present slavery. Only such organisation could have stopped the triumphant progress of the modern Voortrekkers, and only that will put an end to the continuous oppression which is visibly symbolised in the celebrations. But to achieve that organisation they must first throw off their allegiance to their treacherous "leaders" who sit in council with their oppressors, and then ally themselves to a revolutionary party that is prepared to fight to the bitter end for the rights of all the oppressed. There is only one such party. It is the Workers Party of South Africa.

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THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

September 3rd, 1938 will be remembered as one of the most important days in the history of the working class. For on that day the World Congress that raised the banner of the Fourth International met in the strictest illegality, "somewhere in Switzerland". The Fourth International has been founded. Its banner is unfurled, its programme launched.

Actually represented by delegates were the U.S.A., France, Great Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union, Latin America, Poland, Belgium, Holland and Greece. Unable to send delegates for reasons of illegality, distance and other adverse factors were organisations numbering and representing more than 15 countries. These organisations had already signified in advance their adherence to the new banner. The Fourth International, the central coordinating body of the international revolutionary working class is at least a fact. The best elements in the labour movements the world over are united through the Fourth International into strong and unrelenting vanguards of the working class of the world.

To us in South Africa where the growing poison of nationalism and chauvinism be-fouls the air with the passing of every day, the formation of the Fourth International is an important event. Here at last we have an organisation which stands for the essential solidarity of the vast majority of mankind. Barriers of colour, sex, race and artificially imposed nationality do not exist in real socialist theory and practice. Capitalist and imperialist imposed national boundaries, exploitation of man by man, hunger, unemployment and the misery of war and depressions -- it is these enemies, enemies created by capitalism against which the Fourth International, based on the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, wages a day to day relentless struggle. For only by the overthrow of now decaying capitalism can humanity be saved. And it is only under the leadership of the Fourth International, that the overthrow of capitalism can be achieved.

When Marx advised to dissolve the First International to prevent the canker of anarchism taking hold of it he stressed, as one of the founders, the absolute imperative necessity of a working class international organisation. Only his death prevented him from participating in the founding and organisation of a Second International. For the necessity of an international workingmens organisation, an organisation of the oppressed and exploited, was realised by him and Engels as a fundamental for achieving socialism. Justice and freedom, the traditional abstract slogans of liberals and professional politicians of all shades from Fascist to Stalinist, have no place in the theory and practice of revolutionary marxism. But justice for the workers and peasants; freedom for those oppressed and exploited by the chains of capitalism -- those are the slogans of revolutionary Marxism. And it is on that basis, on class solidarity of the workers all over the world that the Internationals were built.

The Second International founded towards the end of the last century and since completely degenerated into an instrument for perpetuating class rule, owed a good deal in its foundation to the strikes in America including the Haymarket affair. It was this organisation which, as one of its first actions, instituted the First of May as the day for the workers the world over to commemorate the martyrs of the Haymarket frame-up. During its early days such outstanding revolutionaries as Plekhanov, the early Kautsky, Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht, all gave it support and allegiance. Its betrayal of the working class which it was alleged to represent, culminated in 1914. Then each affiliated party German, French and English, in spite of previous protestations of solidarity and unity rushed to vote war credits and rallied to the defence of "their" country. The working man has no country! But these professional betrayers rushed to support the fight of their oppressors. There would have been no war to "save democracy" had the Second International stood firm on its stated principles. It was Lenin who first put forth the necessity of founding a Third International owing to the complete bankruptcy of the Second.

Having its roots in the small congresses held during the war in Zimmerwald and Kienthal, the Third International was officially founded in March 1919. The prime mover was Lenin. Its headquarters situate in Moscow, the Third International or Comintern almost immediately after Lenin's death became the international instrument for Stalinism. Stalin's enormous influence as Secretary of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. enabled him and his then ever-changing clique, to dictate and bend the policy of the Comintern according to their ideas of maintaining the ill-fated theory of "Socialism in one country". Swinging from right to ultra left, the policy of the Comintern since Lenin's death has been that of the butcher of the international working class. From defeat to defeat with a certainty and regularity guaranteed in advance, the Third International marched the working class of country after country. Beginning with the Anglo-Russian Committee and the sell-out of the British General strike in 1926, Stalinism proceeded, in spite of protests on the part of the Left Opposition, to betray the Chinese Revolution

and deliver the Chinese working class into the hands of Chiang-kai-chek for easy slaughter. It was at that time the Left Opposition of the Comintern was expelled and Trotsky exiled.

The ebb of the world revolution continued through into the notorious Third Period, the period of Social-Fascism, culminating in the triumph of Hitler in Germany. To this defeat of the working class the policy of the Third International was the decisive factor. Stalinism had hammered one more nail into the coffin of the World Revolution. It was then that the Left Opposition which hitherto had still considered itself a constituent of the Comintern decisively broke away and came out for the Fourth International. But it was still too weak, its forces spread and its propaganda balked at every turn by the force and prestige of the Stalintern. It was only during the last five years that the one-time Left opposition drew to itself, as every revolutionary marxist party must and will, the best elements from other working class parties, consolidated its forces and in September this year officially and formally launched the Fourth International.

An international is not formed by one or two people meeting and deciding by resolution to "create" a workers international organisation. An enormous amount of preparatory work has to be done. The forming of national parties adhering to revolutionary marxism, their consolidation and the firm planting of their roots in the masses and the trade unions, the establishment of cadres and newspapers, the linking up of various small national organisations, the excretion of the "lunatic fringe" which always attaches itself to small left wing parties -- all these are serious and important preconditions to the launching of an international organisation. And for the last five years this work has had to be done. And done it was. A few comrades in South Africa know something of the difficulties which had to be overcome by the small group here. In other countries the splits and the cleaning up were bigger and more difficult. And always, while internally everything had to be put in order, the ordinary every day propagandist and agitational work had to continue.

Our comrades in America were the first group and remain the strongest to this day. On the expulsion of Trotsky, ten years ago, a few of the honest members of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. were also expelled for daring to question the decision. With the Criticism of the Draft Programme of the Comintern by Trotsky which had been smuggled out of the U.S.S.R. as the basis around which the group by study and discussion consolidated itself, the few comrades were subjected to the campaign of lies and vilification, to hooliganism and burglary, to libel and slanders by the monolithic Stalinist organisation. But slowly they established contacts national and international, established a press and gathered force. It is they, now strong and growing in force and in numbers, who were the spearhead of articulate revolutionary marxism. And it is largely to them that groups in English speaking countries are indebted for the publication of "un-edited" versions of the marxist classics including those of Lenin and Trotsky.

The founding of the Fourth International marks also a struggle of ten years on the part of the American group of left-oppositionists against the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union and their American agents. To them we give our greetings and thanks. For them this event is the culmination of direct and triumphant struggle.

No longer are we "for" the Fourth International. That was the measure of our weakness. We are now of the Fourth International one of the many affiliated bodies. Our victory, the victory of Socialism is not as remote as it might seem. In the face of capitalist war and its threat to the whole of humanity we pose the programme of the Fourth International, the programme of revolutionary marxism. In that lies the hope of the working class, the hope of the world. And by the launching of the Fourth International, the opposition to international capital with its robberies and slaughters is consolidated and strengthened. There is our banner. Workers of the world, unite. The flag of your International is unfurled.

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AFRIKAANS TRANSLATION OF

"THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO" By MARX and ENGELS

"DIE KOMMUNISTE-MANIFES"

With an Introduction by Leon Trotsky

TROTSKY REITERATES MISSION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

(Following is the text of the electrically transcribed speech delivered by Leon Trotsky to the mass meeting held in New York on October 28 to celebrate the founding of the Fourth International and the tenth anniversary of the Trotskyist movement in America.)

Dear Comrades and Friends:

I hope that ~~this~~ time my voice will reach you and that I will be permitted in this way to participate in your double celebration. Both events -- the tenth anniversary of our American organisation as well as the foundation congress of the Fourth International deserve the attention of the workers incomparably more than the war-like gestures of the totalitarian chiefs, the diplomatic intrigues, or the pacifist congresses.

Both events will enter history as important milestones. No one has now the right to doubt that.

It is necessary to remark that the birth of the American group of Bolshevik-Leninists, thanks to the courageous initiative of Comrades Cannon, Shachtman and Abern, didn't stand alone. It approximately coincided with the beginning of the systematic international work of the Left Opposition. It is true that the Left Opposition arose in Russia in 1923, but regular work on an international scale began with the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

WORK BEGAN IN 1928

Without a personal meeting we reached an agreement with the American pioneers of the Fourth International, before all, on the criticism of the programme of the Communist International. Then, in 1928, began that collective work which after ten years led to the elaboration of our own programme recently adopted by our International Conference. We have the right to say that the work of this decade was not only persistent and patient, but also honest. The Bolshevik-Leninists, the international pioneers, our comrades across the world, searched the way of the revolution as genuine Marxists, not in their feelings and wishes, but in the analysis of the objective march of events. Above all were we guided by the preoccupation not to deceive others nor ourselves. We searched seriously and honestly. And some important things were found by us. The events confirmed our analysis as well as our prognosis. Nobody can deny it. Now it is necessary that we remain true to ourselves and to our programme. It is not easy to do so. The tasks are tremendous, the enemies - innumerable. We have the right to spend our time and our attention on the jubilee celebration only insofar as from the lessons of the past we can prepare ourselves for the future.

OUR HISTORIC TASK

Dear friends, we are not a party as other parties. Our ambition is not only to have more members, more papers, more money in the treasury, more deputies. All that is necessary, but only as a means. Our aim is the full material and spiritual liberation of the toilers and exploited through the socialist revolution. Nobody will prepare it and nobody will guide it but ourselves. The old Internationals -- the Second, the Third, that of Amsterdam, we will add to them also the London Bureau -- are rotten through and through.

The great events which rush upon mankind will not leave of these outlived organisations one stone upon another. Only the Fourth International looks with confidence at the future. It is the world party of Socialist Revolution! There never was a greater task on the earth. Upon every one of us rests a tremendous historical responsibility.

THE DEMANDS UPON US

Our party demands each of us, totally and completely. Let the philistines hunt their own individuality in empty space. For a revolutionary to give himself entirely to the party signifies finding himself.

Yes, our party takes each one of us wholly. But in return it gives to every one of us the highest happiness: the consciousness that one participates in the building of a better future, that one carries on his shoulders a particle of the fate of mankind, and that one's life will not have been lived in vain.

The fidelity to the cause of the toilers requires from us the highest devotion to our international party. The party, of course, can also be mistaken. By common effort we will correct its mistakes. In its ranks can penetrate unworthy elements. By common

effort we will eliminate them. New thousands who will enter its ranks tomorrow will probably be deprived of necessary education. By common effort we will elevate their revolutionary level. But we will never forget that our party is now the greatest lever of history. Separated from this lever, everyone of us is nothing. With this lever in hand, we are all.

WE KNOW NO FEAR

We aren't a party as other parties. It is not in vain that the imperialist reaction persecutes us madly, following furiously at our heels. The assassins at its services are the agents of the Moscow Bonapartistic clique. Our young International already knows many victims. In the Soviet Union they number by thousands. In Spain by dozens. In other countries by units. With gratitude and love we remember them all in these moments. Their spirits continue to fight in our ranks.

The hangmen think in their obtuseness and cynicism that it is possible to frighten us. They err! Under blows we become stronger. The bestial politics of Stalin are only politics of despair. It is possible to kill individual soldiers of our army, but not to frighten them. Friends, we will repeat again in this day of celebration.....IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO FRIGHTEN US.

Ten years were necessary for the Kremlin clique in order to strangle the Bolshevik party and to transform the first Workers' State into a sinister caricature. Ten years were necessary for the Third International in order to stamp into the mire their own programme and to transform themselves into a stinking cadaver. Ten years! Only ten years! Permit me to finish with a prediction: During the next ten years the programme of the Fourth International will become the guide of millions and these revolutionary millions will know how to storm earth and heaven.

LONG LIVE THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES!

LONG LIVE THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

Coyacan, D.F.
October 18, 1938.

LEON TROTSKY.

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"THE TRAGEDY OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION"

In his Introduction to H. R. Isaacs' "The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution", Trotsky says:

"First of all, the mere fact that the author of the book belongs to the school of historical materialism would be entirely insufficient in our eyes to win approval for his work. In present-day conditions the Marxist label would predispose us to mistrust rather than to acceptance. In close connection with the degeneration of the Soviet State, Marxism has in the past fifteen years passed through an unprecedented period of decline and debasement. From an instrument of analysis and criticism, it has been turned into an instrument of cheap apologetics. Instead of analysing facts, it occupies itself with selecting sophisms in the interests of exalted clients".

How true! The unceasing stream of books posing as Marxist studies of Science, Literature, Art, etc., etc., etc., not to mention the bedraggled political essays of "Marxists" of various sorts all go to prove, in their own way, that we are living in a period of blackest reaction, that the Revolution has been strangled and that all Humanity is gasping for air because of this strangulation of the Revolution. Just as the material productive forces of mankind, all technique and invention, are straining to break the bonds of capitalist property relations and are condemned to stagnation and decay as long as Capitalism exists, so the thought of mankind is forced to mark time, to take a holiday, until the problem of the Revolution has been solved.

Since the glorious October of 1917 has anyone added even a comma to Lenin's teachings on the State? Has anyone discovered anything new since Lenin published his booklet on "Imperialism"? Is not Trotsky's slogan of 1914, "For a Socialist United States of Europe", still our slogan today? Of the millions and millions of books and pamphlets published by the Stalinists in all parts of the world only their editions of the "classics", Marx, Engels, and Lenin, where these editions have been unexpurgated, have been

of value.

Again and again, since October 1917, opportunities have been lost and the Revolution defeated. The literature of Stalinism has played no small part in these events, -- it cleared the way for catastrophe. And after each blow Stalinism was either silent or denied that there had been a defeat, that what had happened was really a victory (Germany) and prepared for another catastrophe in the hope that one blow would efface from the memory of the proletariat the blows which preceded it. Stalinism strove to prevent the proletariat from learning by its mistakes. The entire literature of Stalinism was meant to act as a drug. The measure of its success is the position of the working class today.

The only literature of value written since 1917 is the literature dealing with and analysing the reasons for the series of tremendous defeats, a literature rooted in the Marxism of the giants, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky. And this literature, to be of value, has necessarily taken the form of newspaper articles and pamphlets, small and ready arms in the struggle. Of big guns, big books, there have been few and again necessarily so because those few able to write them have been fiercely engaged in a frantic day to day struggle to turn the workers movement on to another road. Our epoch has produced one great book, Trotsky's "History of the Russian Revolution", and this is a happy book. It is the story of how everything went right, and why everything went right. Isaacs' "Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution", worthy of a place alongside of Trotsky's "History", is a tragic book, the story of how everything went wrong: for all those who think both works are indispensable.

Trotsky says in his Introduction:

"In the Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927 the Communist International played a very great role, depicted in this book quite comprehensively. We would, however, seek in vain in the library of the Communist International for a single book which attempts in any way to give a rounded picture of the Chinese revolution. Instead, we find scores of 'conjunctural' works which docilely reflect each zigzag in the politics of the Communist International, or, more correctly, of Soviet diplomacy in China, and subordinating to each zigzag facts as well as general treatment. In contrast to this literature, which cannot arouse anything but mental revulsion, Isaacs' book represents a scientific work from beginning to end. It is based on a conscientious study of a vast number of original sources and supplementary material. Isaacs spent more than three years on this work. It should be added that he had previously passed about five years in China as a journalist and observer of Chinese life....."

To understand the present war between Japan and China one must take the Second Chinese Revolution as a point of departure. In both cases we meet not only identical social forces, but frequently the same personalities. Suffice it to say that the person of Chiang Kai-Shek occupies the central place in this book. As these lines are being written it is still difficult to forecast when and in what manner the Sino-Japanese war will end. But the outcome of the present conflict in the Far East will in any case have a provisional character. The world war which is approaching with irresistible force will review the Chinese problem together with all other problems of colonial domination. For it is in this that the real task of the second world war will consist: to divide the planet anew in accord with the new relationship of imperialist forces. The principal arena of struggle will, of course, not be that Lilliputian bath-tub, the Mediterranean, nor even the Atlantic Ocean, but the basin of the Pacific. The most important object of struggle will be China, embracing about one-fourth of the human race. The fate of the Soviet Union -- the other big stake in the coming war -- will also to a certain degree be decided in the Far East. Preparing for this clash of Titans, Tokyo is attempting today to assure itself of the broadest possible drill-ground on the continent of Asia. Great Britain and the United States are likewise losing no time. It can, however, be predicted with certainty -- and this is in essence acknowledged by the present makers of destiny -- that the world war will not produce the final decision: it will be followed by a new series of revolutions which will review not only the decisions of the war but all those property conditions which give rise to war.

This prospect, it must be confessed, is very far from being an idyll, but Cleo, the muse of History, was never a member of a Ladies' Peace Society. The older generation which passed through the war of 1914-1918 did not discharge a single one of its tasks. It leaves to the new generation as heritage the burden of wars and revolutions. These most important and tragic events in human history have often marched side by side. They will definitely form the background of the coming decades. It remains only to hope that the new generation, which cannot arbitrarily cut loose from the conditions it has inherited, has learned at least to understand better the laws of its epoch. For acquainting itself with the Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927 it will not find today a better guide than this book.....

The author of this book tries to deduce the character of the Chinese Revolution not from a priori definitions and not from historical analogies, but from the living structure of Chinese society and from the dynamics of its inner forces. In this lies the chief methodological value of the book. The reader will carry away not only a better-knit picture of the march of events but -- what is more important -- will learn to understand their social mainsprings. Only on this basis is it possible correctly to appraise political programmes and the slogans of struggling parties -- which, even if neither independent nor in the final analysis the decisive factors in the process, are nevertheless its most manifest signs.

In its immediate aims the incompleting Chinese Revolution is 'bourgeois'. This term, however, which is used as a mere echo of the bourgeois revolutions of the past, actually helps us very little. Lest the historical analogy turn into a trap for the mind, it is necessary to check it in the light of a concrete sociological analysis. What are the classes which are struggling in China? What are the interrelationships of these classes? How, and in what direction, are these relations being transformed? What are the objective tasks of the Chinese Revolution, i.e., those tasks dictated by the course of development? On the shoulders of which classes rests the solution of these tasks? With what methods can they be solved? Isaacs' book gives the answers to precisely these questions.

Colonial and semi-colonial -- and therefore backward -- countries, which embrace by far the greater part of mankind, differ extraordinarily from one another in their degree of backwardness, representing an historical ladder reaching from nomadry, and even cannibalism, up to the most modern industrial culture. The combination of extremes in one degree or another characterises all of the backward countries. However, the hierarchy of backwardness, if one may employ such an expression, is determined by the specific weight of the elements of barbarism and culture in the life of each colonial country. Equatorial Africa lags far behind Algeria, Paraguay behind Mexico, Abyssinia behind India or China. With their common economic dependence upon the imperialist metropoli, their political dependence bears in some instances the character of open colonial slavery (India, Equatorial Africa), while in others it is concealed by the fiction of State independence (China, Latin America).

In agrarian relations backwardness finds its most organic and cruel expression. Not one of these countries has carried its democratic revolution through to any real extent. Half-way agrarian reforms are absorbed by semi-serf relations, and these are inescapably reproduced in the soil of poverty and oppression. Agrarian barbarism always goes hand in hand with the absence of roads, with the isolation of provinces, with 'medieval' particularism, and absence of national consciousness. The purging of social relations of the remnants of ancient and the encrustations of modern feudalism is the most important task in all these countries.

The achievement of the agrarian revolution is unthinkable, however, with the preservation of dependence upon foreign imperialism, which with one hand implants capitalist relations while supporting and re-creating with the other all the forms of slavery and serfdom. The struggle for the democratisation of social relations and the creation of a national State thus uninterruptedly passes into an open uprising against foreign domination.

Historical backwardness does not imply a simple reproduction of the development of advanced countries, England or France, with a delay of one, two, or three centuries. It engenders an entirely new 'combined' social formation in which the latest conquests of capitalist technique and structure root themselves into relations of feudal or pre-feudal barbarism, transforming and subjecting them and creating a peculiar relations of classes.

Not a single one of the tasks of the 'bourgeois' revolution can be solved in these backward countries under the leadership of the 'national' bourgeoisie, because the latter emerges at once with foreign support as a class alien or hostile to the people. Every stage in its development binds it only the more closely to the foreign finance capital of which it is essentially the agency. The petty bourgeoisie of the colonies, that of handicrafts and trade, is the first to fall victim in the unequal struggle with foreign capital, declining into economic insignificance, becoming declassed and pauperised. It cannot even conceive of playing an independent political role. The peasantry, the largest numerically and the most atomised, backward, and oppressed class, is capable of local uprisings and partisan warfare, but requires the leadership of a more advanced and centralised class in order for this struggle to be elevated to an all-national level. The task of such leadership falls in the nature of things upon the colonial proletariat, which, from its very first steps, stands opposed not only to the foreign but also to its own national bourgeoisie.

The so-called 'national' bourgeoisie tolerates all forms of national degrada-

...can so long as it can hope to maintain its own privileged existence. But at the moment when foreign capital sets out to assume undivided domination of the entire wealth of the country, the colonial bourgeoisie is forced to remind itself of its 'national' obligations. Under pressure of the masses it may even find itself plunged into a war. But this will be with the hope of passing into the service of some other, more magnanimous power. Chiang Kai-Shek struggles against the Japanese violators only within the limits indicated to him by his British or American patrons. Only that class which has nothing to lose but its chains can conduct to the very end the war against imperialism for national emancipation.

The above developed views regarding the special character of the 'bourgeois' revolutions in historically belated countries are by no means the product of theoretical analysis alone. Before the second Chinese Revolution (1925-1927) they had already been submitted to a grandiose historical test. The experience of the three Russian Revolutions (1905, February and October 1917) bears no less significance for the twentieth century than the French Revolution bore for the nineteenth. To understand the destinies of modern China the reader must have before his eyes the struggle of conceptions in the Russian revolutionary movement, because these conceptions exerted, and still exert, a direct and, moreover, powerful influence upon the politics of the Chinese proletariat and an indirect influence upon the politics of the Chinese bourgeoisie.

The present domination of the Kuomintang over a considerable section of Chinese territory would have been impossible without the powerful national revolutionary movement of the masses in 1925-1927. The massacre of this movement on the one hand concentrated power in the hands of Chiang Kai-Shek, and on the other doomed Chiang Kai-Shek to half-measures in the struggle against imperialism. The understanding of the course of the Chinese Revolution has in this way the most direct significance for an understanding of the course of the Sino-Japanese war. This historical work acquires thereby the most actual political significance.

War and revolution will be interlaced in the nearest future history of China. Japan's aim, to enslave for ever, or at least for a long time to come, a gigantic country by dominating its strategic centres, is characterised not only by greediness but by wooden-headedness. Japan has arrived much too late. Torn by internal contradictions, the empire of the Mikado cannot reproduce the history of Britain's ascent. On the other hand, China has advanced far beyond the India of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Old colonial countries are nowadays waging with ever greater success a struggle for their national independence. In these historic conditions, even if the present war in the Far East were to end with Japan's victory, and even if the victor himself could escape an internal catastrophe during the next few years -- and neither the former nor the latter is in the least assured -- Japan's domination over China would be measured by a very brief period, perhaps only the few years required to give a new impulse to the economic life of China and to mobilise its labouring masses once more.

The big Japanese trusts and concerns are already following in the wake of the army to divide the still unsecured booty. The Tokyo Government is seeking to regulate the appetites of the financial cliques that would tear North China to pieces. If Japan were to succeed in maintaining its conquered positions for an interval of some ten years, this would mean, above all, the intensive industrialisation of North China in the military interests of Japanese imperialism. New railways, mines, power-stations, mining and metallurgical enterprises, and cotton plantations would rapidly spring up. The polarisation of the Chinese nation would receive a feverish impulse. New hundreds of thousands and millions of Chinese proletarians would be mobilised in the briefest possible space of time. On the other hand, the Chinese bourgeoisie would fall into an ever greater dependence on Japanese capital. Even less than in the past would it be capable of standing at the head of a national war, no less a national revolution. Face to face with the foreign violator would stand the numerically larger, socially strengthened, politically matured Chinese proletariat, called to lead the Chinese village. Hatred of the foreign enslaver is a mighty revolutionary cement. The new national revolution will, one must think, be placed on the agenda still in the lifetime of the present generation. To solve the tasks imposed upon it, the vanguard of the Chinese proletariat must thoroughly assimilate the lessons of the Chinese Revolution. Isaacs' book can serve it in this sense as an irreplaceable aid. It remains to be hoped that the book will be translated into Chinese as well as other foreign languages."

Here then is the whole tragic story. Isaacs' book opens quietly. The first two chapters survey the political and economic position of China from early days up to the World War. The problems of China, soluble only by the Revolution, are boldly thrust into light. The third chapter, in which things begin to warm up, deals with the formative years of the nationalist party, the Kuomintang, and the part played by the Communist In-

ternational in its early growth. Chapters Four to Seventeen, written white-hot, take us from the great 1925 Canton Strike, through the March coup, the victorious campaign to the North, the Shanghai insurrection and its results, to the setting up and collapse of the Wuhan regime. Here is the whole story of the black treachery paid for with the sacrifice of the lives of millions of workers and peasants. Step by step, Stalin's betrayal is followed. Inexorably, like a Greek tragedy, the acts of Stalin, his "mistakes", are followed by blood. The Chinese masses paid for Stalin's "experiments", and for the "triumph" he needed, the Canton Commune, in order to expel from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union those who fought against him.

Will the Third Chinese Revolution take the fatal course of the Second? It is not likely. The lessons of the Second Revolution, like the lessons of the Russian Revolution of 1905, will be taken to heart. In this sense Isaacs' book is a harbinger of the victorious Chinese Revolution.

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DISCUSSION ARTICLE ON THE MUNICH AGREEMENT

The leading article in the November issue of "The Spark" draws inferences from the Four-Power agreement at Munich, which, however, hypothetical, will play an important role in determining the propaganda and tactics of the European sections of the Fourth International, primarily, in the immediate future. Consequently disagreements on the objects and probable effects of the Munich agreement should be thoroughly ventilated throughout all sections without the slightest delay.

The events leading up to the Munich conference, despite apparent contradictions and inconsistencies, followed a definite line of action on the part of the imperialist powers. This does not mean that the powers subjectively and consciously had complete control of what took place and could have foretold the result. Only through the application of the principle of the class struggle on an international scale, that is, world imperialism versus the world proletariat, do the inconsistencies disappear and it becomes possible completely to comprehend the character of the crisis.

The Imperialist-Capitalist class of the present epoch has revealed itself to be possessed of an extremely high measure of class-consciousness, unparalleled in any former ruling class in history. Proletarian class-consciousness appears almost as a figment of the imagination compared with that of the enemy class. Tactical prudence does not necessitate concealment of this fact -- the truth has never served the cause of the reaction. It is hardly necessary to furnish proof of the above averment -- precisely the "Spark" article itself provides numerous examples of bourgeois class-consciousness in its first few paragraphs. The same article furnishes instances of the ability of the imperialist powers to overcome their own rivalries when faced with the menace of the armed proletariat, notably the Paris Commune and the Wars of intervention against the Soviet Union. We would be deceiving ourselves were we to imagine that the class-conscious workers and revolutionaries were the only ones capable of drawing conclusions from the first imperialist war and the Russian Revolution. It taught the bourgeoisie and their functionaries a great deal and they have long memories where their profits are concerned.

When the aforementioned article differs from the theory that at Munich the four robbers came to an agreement at the expense of the Soviet Union, and later comes to the conclusion that the contradictions between British-French imperialism and German-Italian imperialism are totally insoluble and that war between these two imperialist groupings is inevitable, then we must express our disagreement with this formulation. It need be mentioned only incidentally that were such an imperialist war to break out the position of Italian imperialism remains uncertain since the rival alliances in an imperialist war are determined not by political ideologies but by economic, geographical and military considerations. Fundamentally the four-power pact is an imperialist alliance directed in the first instance against the proletariat of all Europe. When Hitler fulminates against Bolshevism he is perfectly cognizant of the main danger. The imperialists fear the Bolshevism of the German, French, Italian and British workers most of all. They do not fear the Soviet Union as a combined whole. They recognise full well that they have a powerful ally inside the U.S.S.R. in the form of the bureaucracy and its leader Stalin, who everywhere crush any revolutionary manifestations on the part of the Russian masses. But the imperialists are conscious of the menace to their class interests in the new forms of property created by the October overthrow which Stalin and the G.P.U. have been unable to eradicate, and the ideological reflection in the Soviet masses of the new forms of property. The destruction of the Soviet Union by the imperialist powers would spell disaster for the European proletariat, and the loss of their most powerful ally.

The "Spark" article considers that the desire for world hegemony and prestige will set the rival imperialisms at one another's throats. This assumption cannot be borne out by experience since prestige is subordinated by the bourgeoisie to the interests of profits. When Hitler and Chamberlain reiterate that the German people want peace with the British people and vice versa, they quite genuinely mean it. They know that a war between them would be fatal to their common class interests. The agreement between Hitler and Chamberlain that Germany and Britain will never go to war again is seriously intended, otherwise Hitler would not have come to such an agreement since, if German imperialism at any time in the future attacks Britain, it will be branded as the aggressor, which would enable the British bourgeoisie to raise the chauvinistic and social patriotic feelings of the masses and rally them to the defence of the fatherland. We do not conclude from the foregoing that war between Britain and Germany is now completely excluded, but we see the deep-rooted desires and the conscious attempts on the part of the imperialists to subordinate their own rivalries in the face of the mighty danger common to them all -- the world socialist revolution.

Why then the crisis, the mobilisation in France, the digging of trenches in Hyde Park, the issuing of gas-masks, etc., etc.? Perhaps there did exist the danger of war. It would be idle to attempt to estimate whether or not Chamberlain was aware at the outset that there would not be war. At the same time the preparations were exceedingly profitable to the bourgeoisie, and in addition it served the purpose of practical demagogue, upon which the whole of the politics of democratic Capitalism is built up. Had there been no preparations it might have occurred to the masses that Chamberlain et al knew all along there would be no war and that they were quite prepared to hand over Czecho-Slovakia to Hitler. Most dangerous of all, it might have revealed to the masses the community of interests between their own democratic imperialisms and the fascist imperialisms. Chamberlain and Daladier are not prepared as yet to risk the possible reactions of such enlightenment on their respective working classes. Imperialist propaganda and tactics, whether fascist or democratic, has today become extremely subtle, much more so perhaps than that which we are prepared to credit them.

The "Spark" article states that it is premature to call the Franco-Soviet Pact dead, that it retains its value for France, indicating that it may therefore enjoy a new lease of life. Here again we disagree. The Franco-Soviet Pact and the Popular Front, though still spoken of, are virtually dead. The fact that there are rumours of a possible rapprochement between Germany and Russia, which emanate not from opposition sources to the Stalinist line, but for example from Walter Duranty the Stalinist hack, reveals that Moscow at any rate regards the Franco-Soviet Pact as of no more force or effect. The next Moscow Trial will no doubt clarify this point. French imperialism knows very well the danger of German domination over Europe, yet they have by their actions voluntarily handed over such domination to Hitler. Daladier's next step is the introduction of fascism in France, since if the crisis taught us anything, it was the fact that bourgeois democracy can no longer survive in the era of declining Capitalism. French and British capitalism will require Hitler's aid in this project and it will readily be forthcoming. This can be counted among the gains of British and French imperialisms by the Munich agreement. It is agreed that class contradictions do not eliminate imperialist contradictions, but we see now to what lengths the bourgeoisie will go to subordinate the latter to the former as they succeeded in doing at Munich.

The result of Stalin's foreign policy has been to isolate the Soviet Union, now as never before. An advance on the Soviet Union by the super-Wrangel, Hitler, is an immediate perspective of European imperialism, either with the connivance or the active assistance of French, and British and Italian imperialism. From the point of view of military technique, each war commences where the previous war ended. Considering that the first imperialist war ended by a united imperialist war of intervention against Russia which was followed by an imperialist peace, it is not far-fetched to infer that the next war can commence as a war of intervention. We cannot be concerned with sophistry designed to show that things are not quite so bad. The above is the worst possible variant and it must consequently determine the propaganda, strategy and tactics of the Fourth International.

The Workers Party of South Africa -- Johannesburg Section.

- (1. The article in the "Spark" furnished "instances of the ability of the imperialist powers to overcome their own rivalries when faced with the menace of the armed proletariat". But we have not yet such a situation.
2. The four-power pact to which this discussion article refers as an accomplished fact is not yet in existence.

3. The desires of Chamberlain and Hitler never to go to war again is not enough to stop the impending war. "None of these gentlemen want a war. All are afraid of its consequences. But fight they must. War they cannot avoid. Their economy, their politics, their militarism -- all faces war" (L. Trotsky).
4. The fear of being branded as the aggressor has never yet stopped an aggressive imperialism from going to war.
5. French imperialism has not handed voluntarily the domination over Europe to Hitler. A fascist France or Britain would just as little be disposed to give voluntarily a part of their Empires to Hitler as a "democratic" France or Britain would. World hegemony means profits.
6. The argument on military technique cannot be transferred mechanically to the political sphere.
7. The "Spark" article was not "concerned with sophistry designed to show that things are not quite so bad".
8. The propaganda, strategy and tactics of the Fourth International are not determined by this or that prognosis on the coming war. The thesis "War and the Fourth International" prescribes clearly and unambiguously the line of action for Revolutionary Socialists in the coming war. This line of action is not affected by the correctness of a prognosis.

Editor of "The Spark".)

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(Issued by the Workers Party of South Africa, P.O.Box 1940, Cape Town. C.R. Goodlatte 33, York Street, Salt River, is responsible for all political matter in this issue.)