What Is Communism?

5. What the Middle Class Will Gain from the Revolution

EARL BROWDER

ANSWERING previous questions about class relations and the role of various classes in the revolution, we made clear the reasons that socialism can only be inaugurated by the rule of the working class. Now we must give attention to a series of questions that have been asked about the position of the middle classes. We begin with the following:

> It may be very correct that only the working class can defeat capitalism and set up another system. I don't question that. But why should you expect that any middle-class groups will help the workers do that job? Take the farmers, for instance, a more hopelessly individualistic, private-property-loving group would be impossible to find. Imagine them helping abolish private property?

We take the farmers, as proposed by our correspondent; what do we find? Are they individualistic? Undoubtedly they are, so long as they find it possible to be. The average farmer, producing as an isolated unit, connected with the economic structure of society only through the market, selling and buying, is by necessity individualistic. The different social characteristics of men are the product of their differing social environments. If the farmer is able, through this market connection, to satisfy his needs, to find a comfortable life for himself and family, he will in a vast majority of cases be a contented, law-abiding citizen, giving full support to the existing system, without asking much about what is happening to his brothers. From the well-to-do farmers the working class can expect little or no help. We have already pointed out that it is to the poor farmers, making up the great majority, that we look for revolutionary allies.

The individualistic training of the poor farmers is modified and partly overcome by a whole series of experiences. True, he also is dependent upon the market, but he finds the market a cruelly powerful instrument of his exploitation; he sells at the prices offered and buys at the prices asked; he is the helpless creature of the market, which he learns is highly organized. He feels the heavy hand of Wall Street there. He is exploited directly by finance capital, in heavy interest charges on his indebtedness, for only by borrowing money for more working capital is he able to compete in the market at all. Almost all poor farmers also have heavy mortgages on their farms, contracted at a time of high valuations, the interest on which skims off the cream of their production. Or else they are landless tenants, working the land of the landlord (usually absentee or corporate), at rack rents running as high as 50 percent of the crop of sharecroppers. Faced with these conditions, which uniformly oppress large masses, and against which nothing at all is even slightly effective except the action of masses, the poor farmers are beginning to learn the lessons of solidarity, of joint action. After years of efforts at cooperative marketing, without success because all the cards are stacked against them, they are now turning to mass strikes, mass demonstrations, mass political actions. From that it is only another step to the search for allies, a search which brings them to the working class.

All farmers are lovers of private property, that is true. But they do not love private property "in general"; they love their own property and that which they might hope to add to their own. But the capitalist system is no longer any protection to their property. On the contrary, it is capitalism that has destroyed their hope of adding to their private possessions, and even that which they have is piece by piece being taken away from them. So the very love of private property, which in former times made even the poor farmers a solid conservative force, is today working in an opposite direction, is revolutionizing the poor farmers.

What have these poor farmers to gain through a working class revolution? Everything! A workers' government would secure them in possession of their land, which capitalism takes or threatens to take away. It would cancel their indebtedness, which now hangs like a millstone about their necks. It would abolish the exploitation of the marketing trusts, which now absorb four-fifths of the retail prices of agricultural products. It would provide production credits, machinery and seeds, on easy terms. It would make possible the building of voluntary cooperative farms on a giant scale, to bring the farmers all the advantages of machine mass production. It would bring the advantages of city life to the country side, with a rich and full cultural life, made possible by socializing agricultural production. Many of the benefits would flow, immediately, out of the coming to power of the working class and all of them would follow quickly with the building of socialist industry.

The poor farmers will gain a rich and prosperous life from the revolution; they lose nothing but the chains of their present degredation, against which they are already in revolt. All the most intelligent among them, the vanguard, already see this. Masses of them are beginning to understand it. The majority will, before long, have their eyes opened by the combination of bitter experience with capitalism and the educational work of their more progressive brothers.

The majority of the farmers are the natural and inevitable allies of the working class, in overthrowing capitalism, and building the socialist society.

WHAT about the city middle classes? We have a flood of questions about the probable position of the various groups, engineers, technicians, professionals, teachers, small businessmen, etc., in the new society. Let us briefly examine the problems of each of the main groups.

Engineers and technicians constitute a large and economically important, middle class grouping. They are among the hardest hit by the crisis. Capitalism holds out not the slightest hope for their occupation; even the return of prosperity in terms of 1929, which few longer even hope for, would not re-employ half of them. They have been "overproduced," so far as capitalism is concerned. Their full re-employment depends entirely upon the victory of socialism, the only system that can make full use of all productive forces. In addition to their economic interest in a successful revolution, their interest and pride in their craft impels them to socialism. All that stands in the way of winning most of them to the revolution is the still colossal social-economic illiteracy prevailing among them, due to capitalist education and environment.

Teachers are another large and functionally important group. A large part of them are properly classed with the proletariat, even though the special influences that mold them have given most of them a middle-class psychology. They are also an "overproduced" group under capitalism, being about 20 percent unemployed. For a majority, their economic conditions are miserably low, below that of the employed skilled factory worker. Their conditions of work, under the tyranny of a system of business-men Boards of Education and Boards of Directors, oppresses and drives out the progressive and fearless minds among them and elevates to ruling posts the Babbitt types, like President Robinson of City College of New York. Their only hope of economic security and self-respecting conditions of work is the success of the socialist revolution. That they can confidently expect such a position in a socialist America is witnessed by the enormous expansion in education in the Soviet Union and in the high place education occupies even today within the revolutionary movement.

As to the so-called free professions (physicians, surgeons, dentists, lawyers, writers,

artists, etc.), their conditions of life and work would be fundamentally changed in a socialist society. The organized public health services would absorb most, if not all, of the physicians, etc. Writers and artists would more and more be drawn into the great socialized educational and cultural system, under the direction and patronage of the Workers' State, the trade unions, etc. Their present status of "free" professions, which means freedom to sit around waiting for private practice and fees, which for a majority of them means starvation while their professions are stultified, with the masses denied their services, would be superceded by the status of *organized* professions serving an organized society. The only group in this series we can hold out very little hope for is the lawyers. God only knows what they will be good for in a socialist society!

Even the small business men have much more to gain from the revolution than they can possibly lose. Most of them are already on the verge of ruin from the competition of the chain stores, which now occupy about 25 percent of all retail business. Even now most of them would be glad to surrender their "independent" positions to take a post as manager of some well-established chain. To enter the service of a Workers' Government, which is organizing the whole of distribution, would be to improve both their economic and social positions.

What we have said about all of these groups applies to the main body of their members, but not to all. In each case there is an upper stratum, closely tied up socially and economically with the ruling capitalist class, which ties it up for good or ill, better or worse, life or death, with the capitalist system. There is another section, demoralized, impoverished, brutalized, by the present system, which cannot possibly march forward to the new society together with the workers, but which seems destined to provide the storm troops for the fascist last stand of capitalism. The task of the revolutionary movement is to reduce both these groups to their smallest possible proportions.

ALL of which brings us to a question, often asked in a variety of forms, in middle class circles:

> Since Communist (or socialist) society is in the interest of the great majority of the population why do you insist upon calling the changes a working-class, or proletarian, revolution? Why not call it a peoples' revolution?

In the broad sense of serving the best interests of the great majority, the socialist revolution is a peoples' revolution. The revolutionary movement is similarly a peoples' movement. Every great revolutionary upheaval in history has been, and must be, a peoples' revolution. So in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the bourgeois revolutions were peoples' revolutions.

It is, however, precisely for this reason that it is necessary to insist upon the working class, the proletarian character of the socialist revolution. This revolution is not a smooth, painless, peaceful slipping over from one stage of society to another. It is a struggle, bitter, stubborn, protracted, painful. The old, rotten, dying society does not let go; it holds on to humanity by the throat, determined that if it must die, then the human race must die with it. The revolutionary movement, which must break this death-grip of the dying capitalist class in order to rescue the human race from destruction, must itself be strong, fearless, stubborn, persistent, enduring, bold, self-sacrificing, enthusiastic, intelligent, clear-headed and bound for an unshakeable, steel-like unity. Because of its position in the present-day society, where the very process of production itself prepares it for its tasks and places the strategic positions in its hands—once it is organized and conscious of its tasks—the working class, and only the working class, possesses these qualities and can therefore assume these tasks.

That is why, when the slogan of "peoples' revolution" is raised to avoid these problems, to slur over or hide the necessary role of the working class, we Communists must oppose it and explain over and over again, patiently but persistently, the *proletarian* character of the socialist revolution. At the same time, it is the Communists who, always and everywhere, put forward the task of rallying the majority of the people in alliance with the working class, finding for each group and each individual his place in the struggle and in the new society, thus making the *proletarian* revolution at the same time, in reality, a true *peoples'* revolution.

NOW we come to another set of questions, which our readers have asked us. A multitude of these questions can be summarized in the following:

> Cannot this social transformation best be achieved through existing democracy and the ballot? Why do you Communists insist so much on force and violence as the means to achieve your ends? What is all this talk about the dictatorship of the proletariat? Should we not be the enemies of dictatorship and in favor of democracy?

We Communists have studied history carefully. We have failed to find a single instance in all history in which power has been transferred from one class to another, involving a change in the whole economic system, by means of balloting or any other method of formal democracy. We find that our own United States was able to come into existence only as the result of a successful, though bloody and costly War of Independence. We find that even such a change as the elimination of chattel slavery from one section of the country, and the consequent opening up of the whole country to the unchecked development of capitalism, required four years of destructive civil war. American examples can be duplicated in every other country. And in the past years we have the supreme example of Europe. In every country where capitalism is facing a probable overthrow by rebelling masses, there we witness the emergence of fascism right out of the womb of our boasted democracy. Fascism is truly the enemy of democracy. It devours it in the most bloody and bestial reaction the world has ever seen. But we have no single example yet of this existing democracy destroying fascism. On the contrary, everywhere that capitalism is facing a life-and-death crisis, this democracy gives birth to the fascist child that destroys it.

We Communists, as Stalin so well said in his interview with Wells, do not idealize violence. A violent struggle with the old capitalist system is by no means our choice. We know only too well the terrible price the workers pay, as the result of capitalist violence, every day and not only during revolutionary unheavals. We would be only too happy if the bankrupt capitalists would give up their weapons of force and violence, which they use against the population at home and are piling up in ever greater amount for international war. But we would be not only fools, we would be criminals, if we should tell the toiling masses to expect that capitalists will peacefully submit, step off the stage of history and allow the human race to move smoothly to a new and better society. We know they will not. We know that the more capitalism is unable to operate, the more it must starve the masses of the people, the more fiercely will it use force and violence to keep down the rising discontent, the more frantically will it snatch away from the masses even those formal democratic rights which it granted at a time when it felt more secure. Even in the United States, the classical land of bourgeois democracy, almost all the authoritative spokesmen for the ruling class have openly declared that, rather than allow any fundamental change in the economic system, they will cancel all democratic rights and pass over to open fascist dictatorship. Already under the Roosevelt administration enormous strides in this direction have been made. Martial law and fascist terror against the San Francisco strike last summer gave a sample of the whole future course of the capitalist class. And can anyone, even the most optimistic pacifist, tell us that the Southern white landlords will ever peacefully grant democratic rights to the Negroes, not to speak of land?

Our democratic rights in essence are only the right to choose between the different nominees of the capitalist class. That is, we have democratic rights so long as we do not use them against capitalism. The moment sufficient masses begin to use these democratic rights to go beyond the interests of capitalist profits, we will suddenly find a state of emergency has been declared and democratic rights have been indefinitely suspended. This democracy is real only for the capitalists as among themselves, individually and in groups. It is a dictatorship against the workers and

the toiling masses. It is the dictatorship of the capitalist class.

For the workers to gain for themselves a real democracy, it can only be together with a dictatorship against the capitalists. Just as the capitalists enjoy democracy among themselves only by suppressing the toiling masses, so these masses can only enjoy democracy by suppressing the capitalist class. Democracy and dictatorship are, therefore, not two opposing systems, in general. They are like the two poles of a magnet. They always go together. The only question is: democracy for whom? Dictatorship against whom? We Communists propose to reverse the present relationship in this respect.

In my speech before the International Industrial Relations Institute Conference on Social-Economic Planning last November, I had occasion to mention this question. Allow me to quote a few paragraphs from that speech:

> Capitalist crisis finds its supreme example in the present condition of the capitalist world. It can be solved only by destruction and violence. If the conditions of bourgeois property are to be maintained, this can only be accomplished by the destruction of the excess wealth and productive forces, and the most violent suppression of the suffering masses who have no interest in such property. If the productive forces and accumulated wealth of society are to be preserved and further developed, this can only be accomplished by the destruction of bourgeois property rights and of the institutions by which they are maintained, with the necessary accomplishment of suppression of the exploiting minority and their agents.
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> Thus, some form of violence and destruction are unavoidable. This is not something to be chosen or rejected. The only choice is between the two sides of the struggle.
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> If bourgeois property wins the immediate fight, at the expense of the masses of the population and by destroying vast wealth and productive forces, this by no means represents any permanent solution of the problem. It only reproduces the contradictions on a higher scale, with a more violent crisis ensuing. That is why the more successful are the immediate policies of Roosevelt, for example, the deeper grow the general difficulties, contradictions and antagonisms.
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> But if the progressive forces in society overcome bourgeois property, then history leaps forward to a new and higher stage. Then a planned utilization of the full productive possibilities once and for all release humanity from the tryranny of man over man and of nature and things over man; mankind emerges into the era of freedom.
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> This is possible because today, as distinct from past revolutionary periods of history, the revolutionary class is the working class, which is itself the greatest productive force, which is the foundation of society and which cannot free itself without freeing the whole human race.

Earl Browder's sixth article, next week, will deal with the Communist position in relation to religion and the churches.—THE EDITORS.

Questions from Readers

EARL BROWDER

About the Franco-Soviet Pact

Question: How does the Franco-Soviet Pact fit into a consistent Communist policy? Is the French Communist Party not placed in the difficult position of either opposing the pact or making peace with their own bourgeoisie?

Answer: None of the problems involved in the Franco-Soviet Pact are new in principle; the answers to all of them were worked out in the first years of the Soviet Power. This Pact is a concrete example of the Leninist policy of utilizing the antagonisms among the imperialist powers in order to promote the interests of the working class, of the world proletarian revolution.

But it is much more than this: It is part of the whole great structure of the *peace of the Soviet Union* which, while *utilizing* the imperialist antagonisms (not for war, but to maintain peace), rests upon the *foundation* of the *revolutionary mass struggle* against imperialist war in every country. In world politics today, proletarian diplomacy necessarily is directed toward making as difficult as possible the outbreak of imperialist war, toward isolating the most direct organizers of such war, toward providing rallying points—policies, slogans, banners—around which the mass resistance to war in all countries can concentrate.

All these objectives are served by the Franco-Soviet Pact. It increases the difficulties of Hitler fascism, together with its allies, which is the most direct and energetic organizer of war and is a big step toward its isolation; it provides immediate channels to direct the pressure of the anti-war masses in a practical way in the direction of peace. The work of the French Communist Party is therefore greatly helped, not hindered, by the conclusion of this Pact. Of course the parliamentary representatives of the French Communist Party will vote to confirm the Pact. But only an incorrigible Trotskyist counter-revolutionary could draw the conclusion, as did Ludwig Lore in The New York Post, that this means that the French Communist Party will follow this up by voting for the budget, for military credits and for the two year military service; it will do nothing of the kind. The class relations within France remain unchanged; the government is in the hands of the bourgeoisie; the French Communist Party will continue and extend not only its mass anti-militarist campaign, but also its efforts to win the majority of the French masses to overthrow bourgeois rule, to establish workers' rule, as the only real *guarantee* that the Pact will be carried out in life.

That the existence of the Pact facilitates the work of the French Communist Party was proved by the results of the recent municipal elections in which the united front of Communist and Socialist Parties made great advances which the whole world has recognized as the main feature of the elections. (Our American Socialist Party could learn much from this if it only were willing). The Pact furthers the interest of the German workers, by weakening the position of Hitler, as well as the interests of the workers of all lands.

It is a sorry commentary on the political capacity (or shall we say integrity?) of the "militants" in the Socialist Party, that The Socialist Call, while professing to stand for struggle against fascism and war, outdoes the "old guard" New Leader in its slander and misrepresentation of the Pact, finding the most fit person for this job in the renegade Gitlow. In this respect, the Socialist leaders and the renegades are again mechanically repeating their proven lies and slanders of the time of signing of the Litvinov-Roosevelt agreement on recognition. Remember how they then declared Litvinov had agreed to curb the Communist Party of the United States on Roosevelt's orders, just as now they spout their slanders that Stalin has delivered the French Communist Party to Laval! These gentlemen, specialists in agitation against the forces of revolution, conveniently forget that the Soviet Union has signed agreements with France and the United States, which, far from promising to "call off the Communists" in these countries, specifically declare that nothing of the kind will be done, that the Soviet Union will not interfere in the internal affairs of these countries in any way. The Soviet Union scrupulously keeps all its agreements. It is stupidity or malice which confuses diplomatic formalities, such as the "toast to the King" and so forth, with the substance of policy contained in the international negotiations and agreements of the Soviet Union, which is consistently proletarian and international in character. Even those tender souls who are outraged by the "toast to the King," should have found solace in the spectacle of members of His Britannic Majesty's Government standing at attention to the playing of the Internationale and drinking a toast to Soviet power!

Today the outstanding character of the Pact is that its is *an instrument for peace.* What role it will play if, in spite of all, peace is violated, flows from this character. We would be fools to think that the Pact, as such, really binds the French bourgeoisie to assist an attacked Soviet Union; but certainly it strengthens the hands of the French masses who *will* come to the defense of the Soviet Union.

As to Who is Practical

Question: Admitting that you Communists have the clearest idea of socialism and how to get it, is it not still true that the masses of workers are more interested in bread and butter—unemployment insurance, for example? Is not the criticism of Norman Thomas correct, that you are impractical people, engaged in making trouble rather than in solving the problems of the day?

Answer: Communists claim to be the most practical people in the world, not only in the fight for socialism but also in the fight for bread and butter. We welcome the test of examination of our work, in comparison with all other groups. Nowhere is this clearer than precisely the question of unemployment insurance, the most burning question of the day.

How does unemployment insurance stand in the 74th Congress now in session in Washington? There are two measures before Congress, the administration measure (Wagner-Lewis-Doughton Bill) and the Workers' Bill (HR2827). No one, not even its sponsors, pretends that the administration measure meets present problems; the most that is claimed for it is that it takes one small step in the direction of meeting unemployment problems some time in the future, provided capitalism recovers its "prosperity" in the meantime. (Communists deny even this small claim!). The Workers' Bill (HR2827), the only alternative in Congress, was written by the Communist Party. Not the "practical" people, take note, but by the "impractical" Communists! We are so "impractical" that we even organized a great mass movement in its support, a movement which brought such a convincing volume of testimony before the hearings of the Congress sub-committee, that that body reported favorably, recommending its adoption. This "impractical" Communist Party, still without a single representative in Congress, organized such a campaign for the Workers' Bill that it swung fifty Republican and Democratic Representatives to vote for it against the administration bill. Where was the "practical" Socialist Party in all this? They never could make up their minds as to which bill they stood for, not to mention their inability to work out any proposals of their own. Formally, the N.E.C. of the S.P. put itself on record, through a sub-committee, in the report on the Workers' Bill to Congress, *after the hearings were ended,* but the S.P. as a whole is still at sixes and sevens on the question. The most "impractical' observer ever invented, the fabled Man

From Mars, could hardly fail to conclude, if given the question of unemployment insurance as the test, that the only practical people in our 125,000,000 are the Communists and those who joined them in the campaign for the Workers' Bill.

As an interesting side-light on the question as to who is more practical, the Communists or Socialists, it may not be out of place to quote Norman Thomas, since our questioner has cited him as an authority. Mr. Thomas, in a circular letter sent out over the country on February 9, 1935, to a considerable number of his colleagues, had the following interesting comments to make:

> It looks as if we had escaped or delayed a split only to fall a victim of paralysis. With a few shining exceptions practically everywhere the Party is losing, not gaining morale. . . . Unfortunately, whether they were so intended or not, the actions of the extreme right-wing in New York have brought about widespread conviction that the Party is splitting, that it is futile and that at any rate, it is an adjunct of Roosevelt, notably in what it has said about the security program. . . . Already to an amazing extent we have lost what I may call the cultural field to the Communists in spite of their appalling mistakes. We are rapidly losing in many parts of the country in the political field to Long, to Dr. Townsend, to Upton Sinclair and God knows who else. . . . It may be a question whether it will be worth while to conduct a national campaign in 1936. . . . Among other things, as Chairman of the Finance Committee, I find it is a virtual impossibility to raise money from friendly sources because of the general belief that we are dead or dying.

These words of Mr. Thomas are far more drastic, cut much more deeply, than anything that we Communists would dare to say, on our own responsibility, about the "practical" situation of the Socialist Party. It would seem, from any practical viewpoint, that if, as Mr. Thomas says, the Communists have made "appalling mistakes," we would search the English language in vain for any word fit to describe those of the leaders of the Socialist Party, which have brought it to the pass described by the above-quoted colorful passages.

Correspondence

Walgreen—Adulterator

To The New Masses:

Mr. Walgreen, head of the Walgreen chain drug stores, wants true-blue Americanism taught in the American colleges. The enclosed bulletin issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, issued Feb. 25, 1935, page 287, case 22585, shows Walgreen's principles of rugged individualism:

> Adulteration of Elixir Iron, Quinine, and Strychnine, and adulteration and misbranding of Milk of Bismuth
> U. S. vs. Walgreen Co.
> Plea of guilty. Fine $100.
> Food & Drug No. 30319
> Sample Nos. 4339A-4345A
>
> that the Elixir Iron, Quinine, and Strychnine was adulterated in that it was sold under a name recognized in the National Formulary, and differed from the standard of *strength, quality,* and *purity* as determined by the test laid down in the National Formulary official at the time of investigation.
>
> Adulteration of the Milk of Bismuth was alleged for the reason that its strength and purity *fell below* the professed standard and quality under which it was sold.
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> Misbranding of the milk of bismuth was alleged for the reason that the statement "STRONGER THAN THE N.F. PRODUCT." On May 17, 1934, a plea of guilty was entered on behalf of the defendant company, and the court imposed a fine of $100.

Down with the REDS—Long live Walgreen and his adulterations.

Brooklyn, N. Y. William Losak.

May Day in Berlin

To The New Masses:

I arrived at the Friedrichstrasse Station in Berlin early morning on May Day. Along the side streets squads of uniformed S. A. troopers could be seen, rounding up workers for the march. Clusters of S. A. men were posted at the station too. I approached one group, to ask about the demonstration. Whiskey-and-beer-laden breaths gave answer. Closer inspection of the men revealed that it was the "lumpen" elements who were drunk; most of the S. A. faces were sober and reserved, exhibiting no animation over the holiday.

On Unter der Linden was a solid cordon of S. S. men and police, through which only swanky official cars were permitted to proceed. Presently a feeble hurrah arose from the S. S. troopers. I looked. Goebbels, surrounded by heavily-medalled officers, dashed by in a sport-model Mercedes and responded with an aenemic smile. (The Mercedes firm has gratefully donated cars to all leading Nazis.)

My friend, a young (100% Aryan) worker in a paper mill, was still in bed when I called. Asked why he wasn't demonstrating, he replied "Do you think I'm crazy?" It took a good deal of persuasion to get him out on the streets. Templehoff Field was quite full. My friend explained that the workers from the big factories and firms were under strict compulsion to attend. Appearances confirmed this, for the masses stood around, entirely indifferent to the speech-making. Many attempted to leave the field, but were kept back by the police and detachments of Goering's "Feld-polizei." (This branch is noted for its extreme brutality). Snow and hail fell, causing dozens of undernourished working men and women to drop unconscious. Every few minutes another one was carried out on stretchers, followed by the angry eyes of workers. The end of Hitler's inane speech was greeted with perfunctory applause and a mad dash to get away from the whole mockery.

In the afternoon, groups of school-children were led by their teachers to Hitler's residence on Wilhelmstrasse. There they gathered under his window and called in chorus: "Liebe Führer, Zeige dich! Wir lieben Dich so sehr!" ("Beloved leader, show yourself! We love you so!") After the proper interval, the bullet-proof windows of Hitler's bomb-proof house were opened and the Fuehrer, with all the airs of a royal prima donna, made his gracious bows. The school children, together with about two hundred typical "Kleinbuerger" went into ecstacies. Not a proletarian face could I discern in the whole crowd—not a single worker's face!

In the movies, "Triumph des Willems" (title by Hitler) was being shown. From a technical-propagandistic viewpoint, the film is really a masterpiece. It is built up in such a way as to hypnotize the audience into participating in the scenes of mass frenzy which are screened. But nothwithstanding all the trickery, there was a marked absence of applause as the faces of Hitler, Herr Goebbels and Goering flashed on the screen.

As we walked about Berlin, my friend insisted that this May Day showing is the weakest Hitler has had. He pointed out that each year the mass support, even of the petty bourgoisie, is falling markedly. Later he took me to the homes of several of his friends, all of whom treated the "Tag der Arbeit" with contempt and anger. Those who had been compelled to march were angriest of all, and one of them vowed that next year they would have to "drag him out of the house with horses" before he would march.

All through the day, in the Wedding and other proletarian districts there had been spontaneous and lightning counter-demonstration. Thus, on many Wedding streets, red pillows and blankets were suddenly aired in front of houses and in courtyards. Or groups of young workers, marching along the streets, would pull off their jackets, revealing red pull-overs. After a block or two, upon a given warning signal, their jackets came on again and they melted away. Or a sudden "Achtung! Achtung!" would be heard, followed by a chorused shouting of revolutionary slogans.

In the evening, we visited several proletarian beer-halls in Neuköln and Gesundheitsbrunnen. Here, despite the presence of uniformed S. A. men and Nazi stools, not a single "Heil Hitler" could be seen or heard as the workers came and went. The air was strained with the hostility which was on the verge of erupting. In one place, there was an unusual liveliness, an air of tensely restrained mirth. We soon found out the cause: The pianist in the orchestra, struck two loud notes at the end of each piece. From the hall the response came from under the tables, each man stamping in unison with his feet. What did it mean? My friend, his eyes now gladly bright, nudged me and at once I understood! The two piano notes were the revolutionary salute "Rot Front!" and the responding stamping of approving feet was the fighting response. The spirit of May Day lives in Berlin!

Amsterdam, Holland. Mike Pell.

Letters in Brief

Irvin Schlein writes: "I wish to express my sincere appreciation for Malcolm Cowley's article. In all my reading of Marxian criticism never have I seen such a simple elucidation of the relationship existing between the artist and the revolutionary movement."

M. Blyne writes that the Workers Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street, New York, has published a nine-page "Guide to Readings in Communism" which can be used as supplementary readings in connection with Earl Browder's series. This guide will be sent by mail on receipt of five cents for postage.

The Relief Workers Organizing Committee, 11 West 18th Street, is greatly handicapped in its work by lack of the small amount of funds necessary for expenses, and sends us an appeal fer help.

Three other views of what the magazine should be like: From Phoenix, Ariz.; Clyde Fisher: "I would like to see a magazine built on the lines of Current History from a Marxist point of view. Why not serialize some Marxist classics?" From a reader in Portland, Ore.: "A short article each week on science and invention; on health under socialism; on decaying American schools; on civil liberties and world news in brief; also a revolutionary poem and a workers' song, notes and music; more about what is going on in U.S.S.R.; one page of cartoons each week." From Morris Halcobsky, New York: "I often wonder as to the reason why The New Masses does not contain more often beletristic material, be it in the form of a short story, miniature, etude or portrayal. Such reading matter, I believe, is very important and of great incentive especially to those readers who are not very familiar with political problems."