

# Fourth May 1940 International

*The Monthly Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party*

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## Leon Trotsky Social Democracy and the War

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James P. Cannon . . . . . *The S. W. P. Convention*  
Farrell Dobbs . . . . . *Trade Union Problems*  
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Twenty Cents

# Why We Publish "Fourth International"

## A Statement by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

This is the first issue, Volume I, No. 1, of *Fourth International*, the new monthly theoretical organ of the Socialist Workers Party. *Fourth International* will defend the program, ideas and tradition which *The New International* can no longer represent. We owe our readers an explanation for changing the name of our official magazine.

*The New International* was the official theoretical organ of the Socialist Workers Party, American section of the Fourth International. The magazine had been in existence since 1934 and was published regularly with the exception of the period when the Fourth Internationalists of this country held membership in the Socialist Party. At all times *The New International* was the property of our organization. It voiced in its columns the official position of the Trotskyist movement, as a section of the International Communist League and later as a section of the Fourth International. The policies of the magazine were determined by our National Committee. The editors and business staff of the magazine were appointed by and subject to the decisions of the party. *The New International* was financed by the nickels and dimes and dollars of the worker members of the party and its sympathizers. Its deficits were paid by the party. *The New International* was an integral part of the international Trotskyist movement and its American section, the Socialist Workers Party.

By a breach of trust, morally and legally equivalent to a misappropriation of funds by a financial officer of a workers' organization, Burnham, Shachtman and Abern, who held posts on *The New International* by party appointment, and who were trustees for the party in The New International Publishing Company, have usurped the name of the magazine and attempted to appropriate its mailing rights as their personal property.

These turncoats, defeated in the party convention after a free and democratic discussion in the party, have sought to revenge themselves on the proletarian majority of the party by stealing the name and the mailing rights of the magazine entrusted to their management, and attempting to cash in on its tradition. An issue of *The New International* has appeared under the auspices of these ex-Trotskyists. A casual reading of the forged copy is sufficient to convince any reader that it is not *The New International* they have known, but a miserable counterfeit.

The old *New International* defended the program of the Fourth International; it was the chief medium for the publication of the theoretical contributions of Comrade Trotsky, and was honored throughout the world as the theoretical protagonist of the Marxism of our time, i.e., "Trotskyism." The counterfeit *New International*, stolen in sneak-thief fashion from the party that owned it and paid for it, and published behind its back in the dark of night, has nothing in common with the traditions of its name and its past association.

Those who know the revolutionary traditions established by the magazine, those who appreciate its great work in the ideas of Marxism throughout the world cannot fail to be revolted by the publication of *The New International* under revisionist and anti-Trotskyist auspices. This feeling of revulsion must have been augmented by the appearance from the pen of Burnham under the heading "Archives of the Revolution," of a foul attack on the Marxist doctrine and method and on the author of most of the rich material in Marxist theory which in the past appeared under this heading.

There is no doubt that by every political and moral right *The New International* belongs to the Socialist Workers Party as represented by its convention majority. There is likewise no doubt, competent attorneys have assured us, that all legal rights to the magazine, its name, its subscription lists and its second class mailing rights belong entirely to the Socialist Workers Party, and that Burnham, Abern and Shachtman would stand in any litigation as betrayers of financial trust and common thieves. No class-conscious worker would censure us for taking legal action to protect our rights in this case. Obviously, we are dealing here, not

with an ideological dispute but a case of petty-larceny. Nevertheless, we have decided to forego any legal action. We are washing our hands of *The New International* and launching a new magazine, *Fourth International*, for the following reasons:

1. It is not worthwhile for us to spend time and effort in legal struggles over property rights which could only divert energies and resources from more serious and important activity.
2. We do not want our irreconcilable political struggle against the turncoats to be obscured or confused by squabbles over a magazine's name and property rights. Our aim is, in every respect, to *distinguish* ourselves from the ex-Trotskyists, and to eliminate every possible point of *identification* with them.
3. The once-glorious name of *The New International* has been irretrievably sullied by its appearance for one issue under the auspices of these betrayers of its tradition. The program of the Fourth International, the great theoretical contributions of comrade Trotsky, the Marxist message of our party, cannot appear under its dirtied name. We want no deception; no confusion, no mixing of banners. We need a clean banner which will truly express what we stand for and at the same time sharply distinguish us from the prostituted *New International*. They stole it. They have already identified its name with their own treachery. Let them keep it, and let the whole world know it is henceforth their magazine, not ours.

Our magazine is *Fourth International*!

It alone is the theoretical organ of the Socialist Workers Party and of the Fourth International!

*Fourth International* will fill out all the unexpired subscriptions of *The New International*. The subscribers of *The New International* are entitled to get what they paid for—a theoretical organ of Bolshevism. We feel politically and morally responsible to give it to them by sending this magazine for the full time of the unexpired subscriptions.

We appeal to all readers who sympathize with the principles we stand for to help us maintain this magazine by subscriptions and contributions.

## FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

*The Monthly Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party*

VOLUME I

MAY 1940

NUMBER 1

## Editorial Comment

### *A New Stage in the War*

**W**ITH A SWIFTNESS and precision which the Allies apparently had not expected, the Nazi war machine answered the British laying of mine fields across its iron ore route along the Norwegian coast by crushing Denmark in a few hours on April 9 and in a not much longer period of time invading Norway and capturing all the strategic cities. The British responded with a naval attack upon the German fleet, with bombings of the new Nazi bases in Norway, and the landing of Allied forces at Narvik. Torpedoed German troop ships sank with thousands of youths in uniform, high-explosive shells from both British and Nazi guns and planes burst in Norway's main cities. With blood and desolation the Scandinavian peninsula was sucked into the widening vortex of the Second World War.

The first six months of the war were characterized by relative lack of activity between the major imperialist powers in the strictly military sphere. For that reason it was called a "strange" war. Pressed muzzle to muzzle behind formidable fortifications on the Western Front, the Nazi and Allied imperialisms turned to the satellite countries at their flanks, probing for weaknesses in the supply lines, jockeying for position, sparring for an opening.

At sea the Allied fleet skirmished with the hitherto untested German naval forces, British battleships feeling out Nazi bombers, mines, submarines, pocket battleships.

In the Balkans as in the Low Countries and Scandinavia, Allies and Nazis fought each other with diplomacy and gold. England attempted to buy all available supplies in the countries which normally supply Germany inside the circle of the blockade; Hitler attempted to divert the products of British and French-controlled industries into the third Reich.

Each of the rival imperialisms turned the screws tighter and tighter upon the non-belligerent satellite countries, attempting to squeeze them into one alliance or the other and thus convert them into battlefields. On the home front the Allies set up a military dictatorship that in its oppression of the workers, ending of civil liberties, and institution of death penalty for political opposition is scarcely distinguishable from the fascist dictatorships. They organized the censorship, propagandized and drilled the population into wartime regimentation, lined up the socialist and labor fakers, raced to cut down Germany's lead in armaments, especially aircraft. Germany meanwhile consolidated her latest gains in Poland, stepped up still further the production of her industrial machine, tightened the rationing of food. Hitler organized his military forces for the next blow

in the titanic effort of German capitalism to break through internal contradictions and the Versailles treaty to a major share of the world market and a new colonial empire.

The thrust at Scandinavia quickened the tempo of the war, brought closer major military struggles between the major warring powers, and by that token brought the United States visibly nearer to active military participation.

### *Who Is the Aggressor?*

The juridical question as to which imperialism took the first step in converting Norway into a bloody shambles is of little concern to the oppressed masses. The legal experts in so-called international law will be arguing that question as long as capitalism endures, just as they have been arguing to this day the question of juridical responsibility in the last World War without coming one inch closer to any solution. The class-conscious worker understands, that like crises, wars are inevitable in the capitalist system. No matter what laws are enacted by the capitalists, wars and crises will occur as periodic explosions until the capitalist system itself is destroyed and replaced by socialism.

What is of interest is not such thin disputes in the stratosphere of international law, but the actual development of the war and its effects upon the class struggle. Armed with accurate information about the *real* forces in conflict, the class-conscious worker is better prepared to extend and organize the movement that will smash capitalism and thus end war forever.

Hitler's lightning move northward can be accounted as a stiff setback for the Allies. Although in the long run the invasion will have a stimulating effect upon American industry, this setback found its reflection in a decline in the stock market which is very sensitive to such events. (There was a brief rise in those stocks particularly affected by the destruction of Scandinavian trade, such as the wood pulp industry.) The authoritative and ultra-conservative voice of America's Sixty Families, *The Annalist* (April 11), explains this phenomenon as follows:

"Most investors have not expected any such developments as those that have occurred during the past several days. The rapid German progress in Norway is interpreted by most as an Allied reverse of some seriousness. This might be interpreted as a favorable development in one sense, as making for a longer war and for heavier Allied purchase of war materials.

"But a collapse of Allied resistance would probably not end German aggression but would simply be followed by further unsettlement of unpredictable character. As a development which impairs the position of the Allies, consequently, the

German seizure of Norway is rightly interpreted as an unfavorable event."

The strategists of the American military machine likewise interpret Hitler's crushing of Scandinavia as a blow against the Allies and a move extremely favorable for Hitler both strategically and economically, since the "radius of action of his air force will be enormously increased, an uninterrupted supply of high grade iron ore assured, excellent advanced submarine bases provided, valuable shipbuilding plants made available, and needed foodstuffs supplied." These experts also hold that the British fleet can do little in the situation, that the "decision in Norway is one for the land forces," and that "every hour the Germans remain, their position is strengthened." The new bases seized by the Nazis will likewise "enormously increase the British difficulties in maintaining their blockade in the North Sea." At the same time, Great Britain will be cut from a convenient source of many needed supplies, principally bacon, butter, eggs, pulp, metals, fish, hides, whale oil, and merchant vessels. Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, in testifying before the Senate Committee considering new and larger appropriations for war is reported in the *New York Times* of April 18 as warning, "This nation must face the possibility of an Allied defeat."

The violently expanding spring of the Nazi war machine has thus begun to show its tremendous power. With Sweden and Finland bottled up and virtually at the mercy of the Nazis, Hitler—if he succeeds in maintaining his position, as seems likely—may be said to have struck a stunning blow at the Allies.

### **Roosevelt's Drive for War**

Aside from Roosevelt's public utterances which intimate secret commitments to the Allies, there are a thousand indications that the President is speeding up the war machine and that the recent events in Scandinavia bring much closer the day when American workers will be sent overseas to die for Wall Street's profits.

This is not the view solely of war's most indomitable opponents, the Trotskyists. The American military experts mentioned above, who for years have been consciously and deliberately planning for war, now view the butchery of American soldiers as very close:

"That the entire continent of Europe is on the way to engulfment in the war between the Allies and Germany is the conclusion inescapable from German occupation of Denmark and the invasion of Norway. That the President is fearful (!) that the struggle may involve the United States is shown by his suggestion that the American people should give careful thought to the potentialities of the latest developments. In other words there is not a neutral, large or small, that does not face, no longer the possibility, but the probability, that the interests of the belligerents will impel them to acts which will make the whole world a battlefield. . . ." (*Army and Navy Journal*, April 13, reactionary semi-official organ of the United States military forces since the Civil War).

The journal goes on to list the steps which Roosevelt is taking to become more deeply involved: freezing of the financial balances of gold on deposit in our banks for the account of Norway and Denmark, raising the question of the Monroe Doctrine in relation to the Danish possession of Greenland, arranging for Norwegian and Danish ship-

ping companies to transfer their vessels to American registry, increasing dependence of Holland upon Washington to protect her islands in the West Indies and in case Japan should join Germany, her possessions in the Far East—these experts have long predicted that Roosevelt will more likely take military action first in the Far East rather than in Europe. "Thus, the nation is being compelled to undertake responsibilities which bring us into greater conflict with German interests. . . ." In addition to this, of course, Roosevelt is conducting with his usual demagogic skill a propaganda campaign designed to whip up the war spirit throughout the nation.

For the past years Washington has steadily pressed the preparations for active participation in the war on the side of the Allies to the utmost capacity of the rapidly expanding war machine. The National Guard has increased its drill periods to almost double the former time (without additional pay to the members) and increased its training period in camp by a third, the Army command strenuously aiming to whip the National Guard into full wartime footing in the shortest possible time. Supplementing the efforts to build up the National Guard, an intensive campaign of recruitment to the regular forces has been launched from coast to coast and is now busily engaged in clothing America's unemployed youth in brass buttons and trench shoes.

The M-Day plans are being geared into action with almost daily orders to the various governmental departments connected with it, the design of this being to set the war machinery going with maximum efficiency the moment M-Day is made official—hence the spy scares, the intensified campaign of the FBI against labor, the "anti-trust" drive against the unions, the huge "trial orders" to different industries for war materials.

Shipbuilding is running at top capacity and yet is far behind the schedule laid out for it in accordance with the biggest peace-time appropriations ever levied by Congress. But in addition still more funds—\$963,000,000 is the latest proposal passed by the House of Representatives—are being diverted for the navy alone during the coming fiscal year.

The aircraft industry is mushrooming at a fantastic rate, yet is far behind orders.

The *New York Times* for April 18 reports that more than \$6,000,000,000 have been spent by the Roosevelt regime for armaments. This is a low estimate. Gibson's Monthly Forecast (March 15) estimates Hitler to have spent \$40,000,000,000 for armaments during the same period, and estimates British war costs to be running at the rate of \$9,600,000,000 yearly—40 per cent of the British national income—and French costs at \$7,400,000,000 yearly. The expenditures of the United States, the strongest and most arrogant colossus of the world imperialist powers, cannot be far behind. The days of official U.S. non-belligerency are numbered.

### **After the War, What Next?**

What prospects face American capitalism after the war? Continuously expanding production? Stagnation? Another war? Socialism? These questions are perhaps answered most graphically by the war industries themselves. Let us

take just one industry, which has shown an unprecedented growth, that of the manufacture of machine tools.

These tools, indispensable to mass production, are the master tools on which all metal products, including machine tools themselves, are made. Before improvements in any mass production goods can be made, the machine tool builder must design the equipment needed for its fabrication. Progress in machine tools always precedes improvements in other fields. For this reason the machine tool industry has an importance out of all proportion to the monetary valuation of its products.

In January 1939 this industry was operating at a rate of 52.5 per cent of capacity. By August as a result of the fast approaching war it had risen to 72.6 per cent. By December it advanced to 93.3 per cent—and since then it has risen still higher. Its heaviest orders have come from the aircraft industry, the army arsenals, the navy yards, and the munitions industries. It is likewise swamped with orders for similar machine tools for the Allies, particularly France.

One would think that the executives of the machine tool industry would be overjoyed. They are—in a limited way. But the “farsighted” executives of this industry are “worried” about the “consequences of peace.”

“England and France alone will have hundreds of American machine tools of the latest design, which will be converted from the manufacture of wartime to peacetime goods. Those goods will be sold in world markets in competition with goods made in America.

“More than one machine tool builder privately predicted that he will not be able to sell a single standard machine tool in England for five to ten years after the war. The same goes for France. For such markets as Russia and Japan, United States companies will have the severe competition of British, French, and German machine tool builders.” (*The Annalist*, March 21)

It is with good reason that these executives are “worried.” This tremendous spurt of activity in the machine tool industry epitomizes the development of industry as a whole in war time. The terrific expansion due to highly profitable war orders drives industrial productive capacity to new heights and to new efficiency. Billions of dollars in profits are taken by the stockholders. But upon the end of the war, this same height of productive capacity in place of providing for the needs of the people is diverted solely into competition with other capitalists on the world market in the struggle for profits. The contradictions of capitalism are heightened and brought inevitably to new and more violent explosions. The stagnation of another and deeper crisis, a still more catastrophic war, or swift transition to socialism, this is what faces capitalism in its death agony.

It is this death's-head visible on the dollar sign of their profits which explains the nervous flurries that disturb the stock markets each time “peace scares” circulate. The end of this war means the end of capitalism as surely as does the deepening of the war, although the latter alternative permits a brief and giddy final spurt of profits for the stockholders. Welles' trip to Europe, for instance, with the rumor that he was testing the possibility for peace between Germany and the Allies, possibly at the expense of the Soviet Union, had a temporarily adverse effect upon the market. But the death agony of capitalism is even more fundamentally disclosed by the fact that despite the inten-

sified activity in the industries mentioned above and steadily rising exports from the United States to the Allies, the index of industrial production as a whole has declined. The Federal Reserve Board index shows 128 for December, 119 for January, 109 for February, 105 for March. All the indications are for a steep depression, which can be flattened out or reversed only by much deeper involvement in the war. Stagnation or war—that or socialism, there is no other alternative before capitalism.

### ***The Peace in Finland***

Since our last editorial, sections of Finland have been added to the Soviet Union. But the military gains of the Finnish invasion were far outweighed by the political losses. Stalin's conduct in the war was prejudicial in the highest degree to the real defense of the Soviet Union through its alienation of the sympathies of the oppressed peoples throughout the world. Stalin's Finnish adventure was another blow against the world revolution.

It is true that the Allies counted the peace treaty as a defeat for them. Among other things, their campaign for military intervention in the Soviet Union had to be temporarily held over. That they felt this defeat not lightly was shown by the collapse of Daladier's cabinet in France consequent to the peace, and by the fact that both Paris and London made diplomatic threats against the Soviet Union. Attacks against the Soviet ambassador to France caused his withdrawal and Chamberlain intimated that the Allies would return Polish and Finnish territory to these countries at the end of the war. But we do not gauge our actions by the ideas of either the Allies, Hitler, or Stalin as to whether the peace treaty was a gain or a loss. In our estimation the entire war with Finland was a blow against the Soviet Union, despite—we repeat it—the progressive feature of additions of territory to the Soviet Union.

On the military side, Stalin revealed grave and shocking weaknesses in the Red Army command and equipment. The generals who were left by Stalin after his purges displayed themselves as inept in their planning of the campaign and inconsiderate of the lives of the rank and file soldiers. So far as offensive power is concerned, the army proved itself ill-equipped in comparison with the modern heavily mechanized forces of the Allies and the Nazis. This was generally known and conceded by everyone except Stalin, since the real strength of the Red Army is primarily of a *defensive* character; but Stalin revealed that matters are even worse with the Red Army than had been expected.

It is true that Stalin gained the military base of Hangoe, a railroad line across the waistline of Finland to the Gulf of Bothnia, freedom of travel across the Petsamo region, and liquidation of the Mannerheim line which threatened Leningrad. But these gains are small change indeed compared to the unfavorable reaction engendered in the world working class which is the real bulwark of the Soviet Union.

As the war with violent paroxysms approaches its climax, where one imperialist country or another facing defeat will resort to the most desperate methods, the danger to the Soviet Union heightens accordingly. As never before the working class must stand firm in defense of the conquests

of the October revolution. In the U.S.S.R. they must work for the overthrow of Stalin, the revivification of the soviets, and the extension of the regenerated workers' state through the methods of Lenin and Trotsky. In the imperialist coun-

tries they must devote all energy to preparation for the final struggle with capitalism. The socialist revolution is on the order of the day—the workers must gird themselves for action!

# Industrial Unionism and Labor Unity

By FARRELL DOBBS

**T**HE NATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT has greatly increased in numbers since the split in 1936 over the issue of craft versus industrial unionism. Both the AFL and the CIO have grown during the four years of conflict. At least five million new members have entered the ranks of organized labor since the split, and the membership of all unions combined totals almost one-fourth of the organizable workers in the country. However, there are still more than thirty million unorganized.

Healthy growth has been recorded by the AFL and the CIO where they have functioned as parallel organizations operating independently and in separate sections of industry. On the other hand, the practice of organizational cannibalism in certain fields has resulted in many cases in the complete failure of both unions to make any substantial headway. In other cases the internecine struggle has weakened the contending organizations to a point where a maximum of militancy is required of the workers in their fight against the employers in order to realize a minimum of gain.

## *Disrupters In the Unions*

Even when the most principled tactics are followed by the combatants in this civil war, the employers are able to direct their strategy in such a way as to strike heavy blows against the entire trade union movement under the subterfuge of demands for the protection of their "neutrality" toward the contesting unions. The workers draw many incorrect conclusions about trade union principles which they then have to unlearn before they can effectively fight against the employers. The employer on the other hand finds new ideas for the artificial creation of phoney independent unions. In watching one union fight another, the employer learns new methods which he will use in fighting all unions. These are present-day conditions under the best of existing circumstances.

There are individuals and groups participating in the conflict between the unions that are not motivated primarily by trade union principles. They turn an already bad situation into a state of complete chaos. The outstanding example of this unprincipled type is the Communist Party. This clique has drawn a disruptive trail through the auto union, the maritime unions, and every other section of the movement where it could find a way to attach itself to the struggle.

## *Roosevelt's Kind of Unity*

The realization of the harm which comes to the workers through this cleavage in their ranks has led many to work diligently for the unification of the movement since the day

the division occurred. There is a rising clamor for unity today among an increasing number of the top officials of both the AFL and CIO. At first glance this seems healthy and entirely commendable, but there is more behind it than meets the naked eye. The main driving force behind this new burst of activity in the interest of unity on the part of the trade union officialdom is pressure from Roosevelt, who has his own special reasons for wanting unity in the labor movement.

Roosevelt wants unity, not for the benefit of the workers, but to serve the interests of the third-term movement and the war machine of American imperialism. To make war it is necessary to have straitjacketed workers in the factories and patriotic worker-soldiers in the army. The best guarantee for this is to have a peaceful, orderly labor movement, dominated by leaders who believe firmly in the defense of capitalism in imperialist war as well as in its defense against the proletarian revolution. Roosevelt is justifiably confident that a majority of such leaders are at the head of both the AFL and the CIO. All that remains to be done in this phase of the war program is to bring these leaders together in a united labor movement, thus eliminating further possibilities of internal friction. That is why Roosevelt is for unity—his kind of unity.

## *Unity Against War*

It does not follow that the workers, hating war, should be against unity. The workers must aim to present a united and militant opposition to war. It is not only the unification of the AFL and the CIO that is necessary; the Railroad Brotherhoods and all other bona fide independent unions must be included. The task does not end with the uniting of all the unions; the employed must unite with the unemployed, the industrial workers with the agricultural laborers; there must be a complete elimination of racial discrimination in all workers' organizations. The goal must be genuine and complete unity of labor. The workers need leaders who are militant anti-war fighters.

In considering the problem of unity the issues which led to the schism in the trade union movement must be re-examined. It should be remembered that the progressive workers supported the CIO in the split because it was fighting for industrial unionism. The questions naturally arise: What is the present status of the industrial unions? Have they been accepted or rejected by the workers? Are the craft unions which still exist any longer a threat to the mass production workers?

## *Craft Unionism*

The rise and decline of craft union organizational meth-

ods is graphically reflected in the history of the American Federation of Labor. The story of the AFL is the story of its inability to adjust the organizational structure of the unions to conform with the changing social organization of industry. The organizational policies of the AFL are not the unanimous expression of the opinions of all the leaders, much less of the rank and file. There are many sympathizers of industrial unionism in its ranks, even in high circles. The Executive Council, however, is dominated by a case-hardened core of craft unionists, who stand facing the past, stubbornly refusing to recognize the new conditions produced by the grinding wheels of history. They have their main roots in the building trades and the metal trades, supporting themselves on a brittle mass base of one-time privileged workers who also stand with their faces to the past. William Green is not a part of this core. He is their helpless tool. It is one of the ironical pranks of history that a miner had to turn musician to remain at the head of the AFL.

The AFL today reports a membership which represents about ten per cent of the organizable workers. Prior to the NRA it had never more than seven per cent and more often less than five per cent of the organizable workers on its membership rolls. There is one exception, the period from 1919 to 1921. The wave of militancy which swept through the American working class under the impact of the Russian revolution, symbolized by the great strikes in the steel and packing industries, flooded the AFL. The crest of the wave was reached in 1920 when the reported membership exceeded by 72,386 the 4,006,354 represented by the delegates at the 1939 Cincinnati convention. But craft union methods and class collaboration policies had whittled this figure down to 2.9 million by 1923. Ten years later, on the eve of the New Deal; the AFL membership had dropped to 2.1 million, the lowest figure since 1916. Then came the NRA and with it a new crisis for the craft unionists.

Under the impulse of Section 7A, the first wave of workers came into the established unions outside the basic industries. Then the mass production workers began to stir. With ominous forebodings of the future in store for them, the craft union bureaucrats immediately pressed demands for their jurisdictional rights in the big plants they had never tried seriously to organize. True, they had sought to organize the skilled craftsmen in the plants, but they had no place in their unions for the mass of semi-skilled and unskilled workers on the mass production belts. Then, too, as good class collaborationists, they had no desire to enter into serious class struggle conflict with the huge industrial trusts. Their demands for jurisdiction under the new conditions did not represent any change in basic policy. They still had no desire to organize the semi-skilled and unskilled; they just didn't want anybody else to organize the skilled workers. That they were prepared to fight desperately for their craft interests and policies has been indisputably demonstrated by events.

### **Lewis-Hillman-Dubinsky**

Lewis, Hillman and Dubinsky, representing unions already patterned along industrial lines, and therefore finding no serious contradictions for themselves in the problems of organizational structure in the mass production industries,

sensed the dynamic character of this new mass pressure for unionism and saw a great future for themselves in taking the early leadership of the movement for industrial unionism. As class collaborationists of long training, as experts in this field of policy, they were confident of their ability to harness the revolutionary spirit of the workers and direct the new industrial unions into the safe channels of employer-employee, government-union cooperation. Lewis had learned this trade well in the miners—how to stem the tide of class struggle and how to twist the principles of union democracy out of shape in order to protect his ruling position. Hillman and Dubinsky had played the same game in the needle trades. Not as skilled as Lewis in strangling democracy in the unions, although they are far from being amateurs at this, both surpassed him in the more refined points because of their practice in giving a class collaborationist twist to the radical political movement. For the tasks at hand Lewis, Hillman and Dubinsky were a good working combination. With Roosevelt—a clever bourgeois politician who knew a good class collaborationist scheme when he saw one—in the White House, they felt that their plans could not fail.

The conflict broke into the open at the 1934 AFL Convention in San Francisco. A compromise was reached through the agreement of the AFL to issue Federal Charters under the control of the Executive Council. For immediate organizational purposes these charters were to have general jurisdiction in the basic industries. The final decision on jurisdiction was to be made later. The craft unionists decided to lay back until the plants were organized and then demand their pound of flesh. The Federal Charters were issued. The workers flocked into the AFL.

### **The Split**

On the field of action against the employers the mass production workers found themselves thwarted. The fight in auto was steered into a governmental board. The same thing occurred in rubber, although some gains were made in spite of the leadership as a result of militant strike action. A hard-fought strike in textiles, where the workers went up against police, special deputies and national guardsmen, was steered into a similar cowardly settlement. Decisions on even the vicious speedup and stretch-out systems were referred to governmental boards. The steel workers fared no better. In sharp contrast stood the militant, victorious struggles of Toledo and Minneapolis. And in the midst of it all the craft unionists began to clamor for jurisdictional guarantees. The AFL was through in the basic industries. The workers were tearing up their membership cards.

Lewis-Hillman-Dubinsky had stood on the sidelines and cheered the workers as they fought the craft unionist leaders to a standstill. They now had a clear field before them. The industrial unionists had rolled up an impressive minority vote at the 1936 AFL convention in Atlantic City. The time had come to act.

The Committee for Industrial Organization was formed, under the Lewis-Hillman-Dubinsky leadership, at the end of 1935. Its announced purpose was to work as an organized group within the AFL to promote the cause of industrial unionism. Suspended in advance by the AFL Execu-

tive Council, they didn't get to the 1936 AFL convention at Tampa.

### ***Industrial Unionism***

The industrial unions correspond to the modern organization of industrial life. The development of modern industry, with its automatic machinery, capable of great precision, has sharply reduced the need for the skilled worker. In his place has appeared a predominant element of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, chained to the production machinery in such a manner that dividing lines cannot be drawn among them as is demanded by the craft unionists. In each industry there must be one union for all the workers in the plant, with all the plants tied together through the democratic organization of the administrative machinery of the industrial union. In like manner the various industrial unions must be linked together. The complete organization of labor must envisage the uniting of all unions in the closest bond of cooperation, with full democratic rank and file control on the job and in the administrative apparatus of the entire union movement.

The organization of the industrial unions has produced a decisive change in the social composition of organized labor and tapped new reservoirs of working class power. The workers in the basic industries are the most complete proletarians—creators of wealth who share in none of its benefits. They have introduced real militancy into the trade union movement in their first wide-scale struggles. Their full power is yet to be shown. The great sitdown strikes, conducted in spite of the restraints by the class collaborationist leadership of the CIO, are only heat-lightning. The revolutionary courage and determination of the American workers, once it unfolds in full scope, will sweep everything before it.

The relation of forces between the repressive leadership and the aggressive rank and file has been sharply altered in the new industrial unions. The rapid development of the shop steward system, plant committees, grievance committees, industry councils; the immediate appearance of broad strike committees when open conflict breaks out with the employer; the decisive manner in which the workers take matters into their own hands when the union leadership fails to force the employer to abide by the union contract—these are the convincing evidences of a rising pressure for rank and file control in the unions. This pressure from the ranks upon the class collaborationist leaders reduces their value as an insulation between the workers and the employers. Capitalism feels ever more keenly the heavy hand of the working class.

### ***Ferment in the CIO***

The CIO, now the Congress of Industrial Organizations, has enjoyed a speedy growth, especially among the unorganized workers in heavy industry. Since its suspension from the AFL in 1936 it has recruited two new members for every one taken in by the AFL. Beginning in 1936 with an organization only two-fifths the size of the just purged AFL, it today claims a membership equal to if not larger than that of the AFL. The actual size of the CIO is a disputed point. Most of this growth and the resultant mass

actions have occurred in industries controlled by the most powerful sections of the bourgeoisie.

There is great ferment in the ranks of the industrial unions. Dissatisfaction with official policies of the CIO leadership is widespread. Failure of the officials to enforce the union contracts is leading to frequent strike revolts initiated by the workers in the plants. Important contracts are coming up for renewal. The workers want action. The 30 hour week at 40 hours pay is today demanded by the auto workers, ground down by chronic unemployment. The 30 hour week with no reduction in pay is the slogan of the ladies' garment workers. Demands for constitutional conventions, democracy in the unions, are heard with increasing frequency in the CIO. Pressure for independent working class political action, an independent Labor Party, takes on new force. These CIO sentiments are telegraphed into the more progressive sections of the AFL. A new wave of working class militancy is on the way.

### ***Position of the AFL***

The AFL has replaced the one million members lost with the suspension of the CIO and has added an additional half million. Its membership today is slightly over four million. The tonic effect of the CIO campaign immediately gave new life to the AFL. The CIO sitdown victories, the contract with U.S. Steel, gave new courage to all the workers. The AFL registered increased vitality and strike activity. The favoritism of the employers toward the AFL as against the CIO added to its recruiting power among less advanced workers. Outside the basic industries the workers were more inclined to lean toward the AFL as the traditional organization of labor. It had stable unions of long standing. There were partial adoptions by the AFL of the industrial organization form in a few specific cases. In the first stages of the campaign the CIO carried on little activity outside the basic industries. The AFL continued to remain the union of the skilled workers. The absolutely unprecedented activity of the AFL organization staff was also a large contributing factor in its growth.

The main foundation of the AFL is the building trades, the metal trades and the truck drivers. The secondary strata is composed of actors, bakers, barbers and beauticians, brewery workers, building service employes, clerks, fire-fighters, laundry workers, postal employes, stage hands, teachers, affiliated railway organizations and small miscellaneous groups. The secondary organizations are in fields not seriously disputed by the CIO, but they also are not a decisive factor in the movement. Among them are groups with strong sympathies for the industrial union movement.

The building trades, the metal trades and the truck drivers are both the main strength and the greatest weakness of the AFL. The building trades are now under direct attack from the CIO. At the outset of the struggle they have felt themselves compelled to begin experimenting with new organizational policies. The heat of the battle will force more radical changes. The metal trades have before them the futile task of protecting their hegemony over the skilled workers in heavy industry as the only substantial possibility for growth. Failing to grow they cannot help but regress. The powerful and fast growing truck drivers organization, whose aid is especially vital to the building trades



in its present fight, is becoming more and more outspoken in its demands for unity. The craft union core is in dire straits.

### **Position of the CIO**

Beginning in 1936 with about one million members, the CIO today claims more than four times its original size. Its main base is in aluminum, auto, mining, needle trades, oil, radio, rubber, steel and textiles. The extent of organization varies in these industries, but it does not follow that failure to organize decisive majorities will result in successes by the AFL. It is more often the case that those workers who are not in the CIO are either unorganized or in company unions.

The most serious defection suffered by the CIO was the withdrawal of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, which is headed by Dubinsky, one of the original CIO leaders. The ILGWU, now independent, has just recently negotiated a jurisdictional agreement with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, CIO, headed by Hillman, also one of the original CIO leaders. There is a possibility that the ILGWU will return to the AFL. If so, there is little likelihood, in view of the pact with the ACW, that a jurisdictional fight would develop in the needle trades as a result. However, reaffiliation to the AFL on the part of the ILGWU would give unwarranted moral and material support to the craft union core.

Among the secondary CIO fields not seriously disputed by the AFL are the distillery workers, certain sections of the transport workers and numerous small organizations. The newspaper editorial workers are generally with the CIO, but there has been quite a battle in this field in Chicago.

### **FBI Attacks**

The disruptive AFL attack upon the CIO in auto turned out to be a dud. The auto workers have definitely had their fill of the craft unionists. It will take a great deal more than a Homer Martin, gone haywire, to change their minds. The AFL campaign in mining has been noisy but ineffective.

The main danger to the industrial unions does not come from the attacks of the AFL; it lies in the bold counter-offensives of the corporations and in the governmental preparations for wartime regimentation of the workers. The ignominious and still unretrieved defeat in Little Steel, the failure to organize Ford, the retreat of the union leadership before the onslaughts of the corporations and their government—these are the most serious dangers to the CIO workers. Nor can the industrial unions afford to maintain silence while the FBI attacks the AFL unions. They will be next on the list of victims of the Roosevelt-Arnold-Hoover drive.

### **Fields of AFL-CIO Conflict**

Among those most seriously handicapped by the internal struggle in the trade union movement are the maritime workers. Both unions contend for membership in the packing houses, but company unionism remains strongly entrenched in the industry. Even less impressive are the accomplishments of both organizations in the utility field and the tobacco industry. However, the AFL has recently made

important gains in one of the larger tobacco companies. There are sporadic AFL-CIO conflicts in the furniture, glass, paper, and shoe industries. Competition is stronger in the struggle for members among the wood workers, government employes and office workers.

The newly developed AFL organization drive in the South is mainly a move against the CIO. The minimum objective is a block of members recruited from every possible field in this poorly organized section of the country. A stronger motive is the desire to make a flank attack on the CIO by attempting to organize the Southern plants of the mass production industries. These plants in the South are steadily increasing in size and number as a result of the attempts of the industrialists to evade the rising militancy of the northern workers.

The overthrow of the late Charles P. Howard, president of the ITU, one-time official secretary of the CIO, was hailed by the AFL as a victory for craft unionism, but this was followed soon by the refusal of the union, through membership referendum, to pay the special assessment levied by the AFL for the fight against the CIO. The AFL has suspended the ITU and it now has an independent status. Although the union clearly does not endorse all the policies of John L. Lewis, it is also plain that the typographical workers, although themselves dominated by a craft psychology, do not give approval to the policies of the AFL in fighting the CIO.

### **Trade Union Unity**

The main responsibility for the AFL-CIO split rests upon the AFL as does the main burden of the blame for the continuation of the split. The formation of the CIO was a progressive action. The stand of the CIO leadership on the question of unity with the AFL is progressive only insofar as they defend the industrial organization methods against the onslaughts of the craft unionists. Both leaderships are class collaborationist, both are subservient to the bourgeois government. The basic differences in policy between the top leadership of the AFL and the CIO relate formally to the question of organizational structure. The leadership of the CIO, however, is based on a more dynamic stratum of the proletariat and is more sensitive to their bitter discontent.

This explains why the CIO has followed a somewhat more enlightened policy of social legislation, on the problems of the unemployed, and on the housing question. It has given more concrete expression to the political sentiments of the workers. But its superiority to the AFL in these respects is rather the result of rank and file pressure than of a more enlightened policy on the part of the leadership. This pressure from the ranks will continue with increasing vigor in a united labor movement.

The manipulations of the two leaderships for positions of power in the united movement are of interest to the workers only to the extent that the CIO leaders represent tendencies which are more or less progressive. They have no interest in the aspirations of the leaders to positions of special influence with the bourgeois politicians. Nor are the workers concerned in the ambitions of the officials to enthrone themselves in high positions in the bourgeois political apparatus. On the contrary, the workers need democracy in the unions and their own independent political party. The

criminal action of the leadership in utilizing the division in the movement for the achievement of their own personal ambitions is against the wishes and the expressed desires of the trade union workers.

Formal trade union unity at the expense of the industrial form of organization and the gains of the industrial unions would be a catastrophe. But once the preservation of the industrial unions has been assured in the united movement, there can no longer be any justification for a continuation of the split.

### ***For a Rank and File Referendum***

The test of time has proved to the hilt that craft union organizational methods are outmoded. The success of the industrial unions has demonstrated to the rank and file AFL workers the false position of the craft union core of the AFL Executive Council. The decisive majority of the organized labor movement agrees that the industrial unions have proved to be an indispensable instrument for working class organization in modern industry. The lessons of the recent struggles, gained the hard way, have literally penetrated the trade union movement to the marrow. The only

ones who remain unconvinced are the craft union leaders and the small section of skilled workers who support them. They no longer deceive anyone but themselves. They are discredited.

The great majority of the workers want unity and yet it does not come. The usurpation of the right of policy making by the present undemocratic official apparatus of the trade union movement is responsible for this intolerable situation. The trade union workers must insist upon a referendum vote in the AFL, the CIO, the Railroad Brotherhoods and all other bona fide independent unions for the complete unification of the organized labor movement, on the basis of full guarantees for the preservation and extension of the industrial union method of organization.

The launching of a big movement for such a referendum would provide the trade union militants with the best opportunity to fight for full union democracy and rank and file control in the united movement, and an orientation toward class struggle policies on the field of action against the employers. Such agitation, in turn, is the best way to develop an unyielding opposition to the war.

# Autopsy of the New Deal

By **GEORGE NOVACK**

**R**OOSEVELT rode into office thundering against "the economic royalists" on the home front. In 1932 he threatened "to drive the money-changers out of the temple." In accepting his second nomination four years later, he again challenged (in words) "the despotism of the privileged princes of the new economic dynasties" and pledged himself to fight against "the resolute enemy within our gates." "Here in America," he concluded, "we are waging a great war. It is not alone a war against want and destitution and economic demoralization. It is a war for survival of democracy. . . . I am enlisted for the duration of the war."

Now, in 1940 we hear equally martial music from the White House but on a different theme. The struggle against "the malefactors of great wealth" at home has been set aside for the struggle against "foreign aggressors." Instead of castigating "America's 60 Families" on ceremonial occasions, Roosevelt seizes every opportunity to denounce Hitler and Stalin. Today these totalitarian tyrants, and not our own economic tyrants, are the main enemies of "democracy." The offensive against social evils is no longer to be conducted within our national boundaries but transferred to the world arena where the other imperialist powers are already at war.

Why does Roosevelt subordinate domestic issues to foreign problems? On one hand, he is anxious to conceal, so far as possible, the complete collapse of the New Deal program. On the other hand, he must prepare the people of the United States for total intervention in the imperialist tournament. In order to make war abroad, Roosevelt had first to make peace with "the enemy within our gates" and place himself unreservedly at the service of the masters of capital.

This change in Roosevelt's pronouncements reflects the profound reversal in the trend of his policies since he took office. The significance of this shift can be summarized in a sentence. The New Deal has been replaced by the War Deal.

There is an important difference between these two phases of Roosevelt's politics. Roosevelt's campaign against the economic royalists was largely a sham battle, limited to minor issues. His fulminations against them were not to be taken seriously. Quite otherwise with his invectives against Hitler and Stalin. This time Roosevelt means business. Instead of opposing himself to the plutocrats, he is engaged in carrying out their commands. The offensive against them that fizzled out so quickly and so completely is to be fought to a finish against the enemies of American imperialism.

"This generation has a rendezvous with Destiny!" proclaimed the President in 1936. This destiny, we see in 1940, is to be a rendezvous with death on the battlefields of the new world war.

### ***Life and Death of the New Deal***

Although the parents of the New Deal have not yet officially admitted its death, it has long since ceased to be a living movement, a practical guide and inspiration for the conduct of the rulers at Washington. Only its corpse remains. Before its burial, it would serve political science to conduct a brief inquest into the causes of its death and the nature of its successor.

The New Deal was a political product of the predicament in which American capitalism found itself as the result of the world crisis since 1929. This crisis culminated in the breakdown of the economic system when all banks closed on March 4, 1933.

This was the day Roosevelt took over the presidency.

The New Deal represented the response of the new capitalist regime to this potentially revolutionary situation. Roosevelt and a subservient Congress hastily enacted a series of measures to prop up the prostrated body of American capitalism and restore some of its vital energy.

The improvised, purely opportunistic nature of the New Deal policies was indicated by the fact that its most important features were not mentioned in the Democratic Party platform upon which Roosevelt had presumably been elected. At several points, notably the promises to cut down governmental expenditures by twenty per cent and to balance the federal budget, they were directly contradictory.

The New Deal in the United States was an outgrowth of the same general economic and social factors which gave rise to Fascism in Germany and Austria. They were symmetrical political phenomena. The disintegration of capitalist economy everywhere menaced the power of monopoly capital. In order to beat back the rising revolt of the working masses and to strengthen their shaken domination, the capitalist class in one country after another resorted to drastic action. Big Business in the poorer capitalist nations, the so-called "proletarian nations" in Mussolini's phrase, bound their populations in the totalitarian straitjacket of Fascism before putting them in uniform to fight for "a place in the sun."

Thanks to their immense resources, the wealthier imperialists were enabled, for a time, to find a somewhat less violent and reactionary solution for the same problem. They took, not the road of fascist counter-revolution but the road of reform. They sought to maintain their rule with some semblance and substance of popular support. Such was the nature of the short-lived Popular Front in France. Such, above all, was the New Deal. "We took the middle road," said Roosevelt, "between naked reaction and revolution."

In a speech at Philadelphia on June 27, 1936 the President declared: "In the spring of 1933 we faced a crisis which was the ugly fruit of 12 years of neglect of the causes of economic and social unrest. It was a crisis made to order for all those who would overthrow our form of government. . . . We met that emergency with emergency action. . . . We were against revolution. Therefore we waged war against those conditions which make revolutions—against the inequalities and resentments which breed them."

The New Deal brand of Liberalism, he pointed out to short-sighted plutocrats who protested against his policies, "becomes the protection for the farsighted conservative."

The principal task imposed upon the Democratic administration was the rescue of American capitalism. Roosevelt solicited the support of American business men in reward for fulfilling this job. "No one in the United States," he proclaimed on October 23, 1936, "believes more firmly than I in the system of private business, private property and private profit. No Administration in the history of our country has done more for it. It was this Administration which dragged it back out of the pit into which it had fallen in 1933."

Through its monetary measures, through the RFC, AAA, NRA, HOLC, FCA, the FDIC and other agencies, through its public works program, the Federal government mobilized its full resources behind the magnates of Big

Business and High Finance. Aided by an upswing in world economy, American capitalism recovered part of its strength in the following five and a half years.

As the claims of the lower orders in the United States for relief could not be utterly denied, the New Deal gave certain concessions to them. Through the AAA, its subsidy and crop-restriction measures, the New Deal aided the wealthier farmers. Through the HOLC, some small homeowners; through the FDIC, small bank depositors. Through WPA and PWA aid was extended to part of the unemployed and jobless construction workers. To the labor aristocracy was given Section 7A of the NRA and later the Wagner Act. To the unemployed youth, the CCC and NYA.

These concessions were meagre compared to the magnificent sums placed at the disposition of the big propertied interests by the state. For every dollar wrested from the government by the lower classes, ten were donated to the plutocracy. Even those measures presumably taken for the exclusive benefit of the poor turned out to benefit the rich no less. AAA payments flowed into the pockets of large landowners and helped drive the agricultural workers off the land. The enormous Federal expenditures for public works not only provided jobs for the unemployed but orders for heavy industry and purchasers for the products of light industry and agriculture. The Social Security Act, which taxed workers' wages for old age pensions and unemployment insurance, also provided federal income which might otherwise have been taken from capitalist profits.

This part of the New Deal was the price American capitalists had to pay for insurance against social revolution. They paid the premium unwillingly, and have tried at every opportunity since to take back these concessions yielded under pressure to the masses.

### ***The Crisis in the New Deal***

The Democratic regime was extremely reckless in its promises. Reviewing the record of his first term, Roosevelt boasted: "We planned it that way!" But the country's confidence in Roosevelt's plans, bolstered by the industrial upturn, was severely shaken by the economic decline during the last months of 1937. This crisis showed that the New Deal magic had been effective only partially and for a brief time.

Despite Herculean efforts, American economy under Roosevelt had not attained heights of production surpassing those of 1929. The national income per capita in 1938 was only 76 per cent of that in 1929. The working masses were deeply discontented; their living standards had shrunk steadily. Unemployment was a running sore. The agricultural difficulties persisted. Governmental finances worsened year by year. Neither civil nor world peace was in sight. Instead of bringing general prosperity as it promised to the American people, the New Deal succeeded only in producing a new crisis!

The economic crisis of 1937 marked the turning point in the career of the Roosevelt regime. The obvious failure of the New Deal to fortify American economy against another collapse impelled Roosevelt, as representative of capitalist interests, to seek a new policy. This he found by following the line of least resistance to the insistent demands of the imperialist wing of the big bourgeoisie.

While the New Deal was working out its destiny within the United States, tremendous events were changing the world outside. Germany in the West and Japan in the Far East, hammering at the post-war order constructed by the victors at Versailles, were challenging America's right to world dominion. Wall Street exerted pressure upon Washington to counteract this challenge.

Roosevelt, ever the opportunist, saw a way out of the crisis confronting his regime by submitting to the dictates of the magnates of imperialism. Wall Street's mission became his own. The New Deal planks were stowed away or thrown overboard one by one in the dark of the night. New sailing orders were issued to his crew in Roosevelt's famous speech at Chicago on October 1937. "Steer toward the coming war and make all preparations accordingly."

### ***The Dialectical Development of Roosevelt's Politics***

The course toward war taken by the Roosevelt administration during the past two and a half years was an inescapable consequence of the international relations of American capitalism and of the contradictory tendencies within the government at its head. Roosevelt's policies were not arrived at on an independent and purely personal basis but as the resultant of the continuous conflict of forces around him.

Everything contains within itself its own opposite. This was true of the Roosevelt regime. The New Deal, which dominated its initial period in power, aimed to save American capitalism primarily by internal alterations. It was essentially a program of domestic reform designed to adopt the structure and operations of the American state and economy to the changed conditions created by the crisis of 1929-1933.

But from the first an opposing tendency was present within the Roosevelt administration. This militarist tendency sought to solve the problems of American capitalism by broader and bolder measures, by external action, by extending the scope of its imperialist rule over the Western hemisphere and eventually throughout the world. These two lines of action corresponded to the interests of different social forces. The reformists reflected the influence of the liberals and petty bourgeoisie and their followers among the labor aristocracy. The militarist wing represented the outlook and interests of the big bourgeoisie, the real rulers of the United States. Nothing less than the crushing of all competitors and the conquest of the planet could satisfy the appetites of America's monopolists.

These two contradictory tendencies, united from the beginning in Roosevelt's administration, were also fused in his own personality. The Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the first World War was a "Big-Navy Man" far more than a crusading social reformer. This inherent contradiction accounted for the two-faced character of the major activities of his administration. Thus the great Tennessee Valley project was represented by the liberals as a social service and to the conservatives as a necessity for national defense. Similarly with the CCC and with the military budget. The iron fist of Yankee imperialism in Latin America

was concealed behind the bland hypocrisy of "The Good Neighbor" policy.

The Roosevelt administration was drawn along by both tendencies with the first taking the lead during New Deal days. But with the profound developments in the world situation and the deepening of the crisis, the opposition between his positive program of reforms and its negation, the imperialist adventure, became more and more pronounced. Roosevelt himself was finally obliged to choose between them as their divergencies indicated that the New Deal must yield to the claims of the War Deal.

### ***The Triumph of the War Deal***

For many months now the imperialist alternative, which signifies the political victory of America's 60 Families, has been displacing Roosevelt's program of reforms. Wherever New Deal measures have conflicted with war measures, they have been sacrificed. This was demonstrated with mathematical precision when the cut in relief appropriations in this year's budget equalled the increase in military expenditures.

Today New Deal spokesmen head the war-mongers. Although their new course has yet to attain its logical goal of complete participation in the war, it is not far from it. The nature and the direction of its movement is unmistakable and confirmed daily by every speech and action of the Roosevelt regime.

On the eve of his reelection to the presidency on October 31, 1936, Roosevelt reported to the nation: "I submit to you a record of peace, and on that record a well-founded expectation for future peace—peace for the individual, peace for the community, peace for the nation, and peace with the world."

On the eve of another Presidential campaign, Roosevelt declared to the Pan-American Union: "We must be prepared to meet force with force." Thus, on April 15th of this year, Roosevelt submits to the American people: "a record of war, and on that record a well-founded expectation for future war—war for the individual, war for the community, war for the nation, and war with the world."

The death of the New Deal proves how, under contemporary conditions, even the Cræsus of the capitalist world could not solve the problems of its ruling class within national limits and by purely domestic means. The internal contradictions and external pressures drive every great power onto the path of imperialist aggrandizement and attack, and also force it to nullify all experiments with liberal reforms. Fascism and the New Deal were not simply different methods adopted by the big bourgeoisie to deal with proletarian revolution. They were at the same time parallel methods of preparing the nation for war. Both forms of capitalist rule, the fascist and the bourgeois-democratic, must serve the needs of capitalist expansion. In their mutual combat for the wealth of the world they reveal their common destination and cannibalistic character.

Roosevelt's war policy shows how, under the capitalist regime, the aims and interests of Big Business force themselves through against all obstacles, until they become the official governmental program, even of erstwhile opponents.

"The state is the executive committee of the ruling class." This elementary teaching of Marxism has been freshly confirmed by the conduct of the Roosevelt regime.

The precedent of Woodrow Wilson might have put the American people on guard against his Democratic succes-

sor. Just as the New Freedom of Wilson's first administration gave way to war and the old slavery during his second, so the New Deal of Roosevelt is following the same course. Capitalist politicians, whatever their pretensions, cannot act otherwise than in the service of the capitalist bosses.

## "Progressive Paralysis"\*

### The Second International on the Eve of the New War

By LEON TROTSKY

THE INTERNAL LIFE of the Second International remains as a rule beyond our horizon. This is partly due to the fact that we long ago settled accounts with the social democracy; partly due to the fact that this "International" has virtually no "internal life" inasmuch as its various parties exist in complete independence of one another. In recent years the Second International tried to make itself as inconspicuous as possible so as not to reveal its internal contradictions. However, the approach of the war has driven it out of its state of passive equilibrium. We have the remarkable testimony of F. Dan, the leader of the Mensheviks, as to this. In scarcely any other social democratic publication is it possible to find so frank a portrayal of the internal struggle in the Second International as provided by *Sotsialisticheski Vestnik*, the Menshevik organ issued in Paris. Frankness, as is always the case in such instances, is evoked by the intensification of internal struggles. In complete harmony with the entire character of the social patriotic "International" the groupings take place along national lines, that is, along the lines of the interests of the bourgeois "fatherlands." Just as the capitalist world is divided into the fat cows of imperialist democracies and the lean and greedy cows of the Fascist dictatorships, so the Second International has broken up into a "satiated" group who still remain share-holders in their national imperialist enterprises and a group of lean cows driven from the national pastures by fascism. The struggle proceeds precisely along this line.

The leading role in the Second International prior to the first World War was played by the German social democracy. Since the Versailles peace, leadership in the International as well as in European politics has been with England and France. As for the United States, the incontestable and in many ways decisive influence of her politics on the Second International is exerted not through the weak American Socialist Party but directly through the European governments. The docile social democratic agency in this too only apes its capitalist masters. Just as the League of Nations in the last analysis adapted itself to the policy of the United States, despite the fact that the latter stood apart from European combinations, so the Second International, especially in the person of the British and French parties, considered it its duty at every step to keep an eye on Washington and to sing pæans to Roosevelt as the anointed leader of the alliance of "democracies."

As the last Socialist Congress at Nantes frankly acknowledged, the fat parties consider as their basic task

not only the defense of the national independence of their country but also their colonial possessions. Social patriotism is only a mask for social imperialism—we established this back in 1914. Inasmuch as the imperialist interests by their very nature conflict with one another, there cannot even be talk of a unified international policy of social patriots of various countries. In the best case, agreements of individual parties among themselves are possible, corresponding to the international combinations of their respective governments.

The camp of the lean parties is depicted by a different picture. In the character of their ruling bureaucracy, in their entire past and in their aspirations these parties do not differ from the fat ones. But they, alas, have been deprived of pastures just as the imperialist fatherlands which cast them out were deprived of colonies. The fat ones are most of all concerned with preserving the *status quo* both within their own countries as well as internationally. For the lean ones, *status quo* implies impotence, exile, meager rations. The Italian, German, Austrian, and now the Spanish socialist parties too are not directly bound by the discipline of national imperialism which rejected their services with a kick. They were cast into an illegality counter to their traditions and their best intentions. Because of this, naturally, they have not in the slightest degree become revolutionary. They do not of course so much as think of preparing the socialist revolution. But their patriotism is temporarily turned inside out. They stubbornly dream that the armed force of the "democracies" will overthrow their national fascist regime and enable them to reestablish themselves in their former posts, editorial offices, parliaments, leading bodies of the trade unions and to reopen their bank accounts. While the fat ones are interested only in being left in peace, the lean ones, on the contrary, are interested in their own way in an active international policy.

The general picture of the two camps is somewhat complicated by the Russian Mensheviks. As was shown by their conduct during the February revolution, this party differs in no way whatever from the German social democracy or the British Labour Party. The Mensheviks only entered later than the others upon the arena of social patriotism and fell under the wheel before the others, the wheel that crushed them rotating not from left to right but from right to left. Thanks to years of illegal existence, the experience of three revolutions, and two exiles the Mensheviks have acquired a certain skill which enables them to play something akin to a leading role in the camp of the lean ones. But that makes them all the more hateful to their fat comrades in the International.

\*This article was written for *The New International* last July. It is printed here for the first time.—Ed.

The Soviet state, to which the Mensheviks fell victim, in the meantime turned so drastically upon the proletarian revolution that it became a desirable ally to the imperialist states. In harmony with this the British and French socialist parties are extremely interested in a rapprochement with the Kremlin. Small wonder that the Russian Mensheviks have fallen under such conditions into the position not only of poor but compromising relations in their own International.

From Dan's article we learn that the "lean ones" proposed a year and a half ago that the International take up the "problem of the struggle for democracy and peace in our epoch." It is the question of that "active" international policy which would give back to the lean ones those lost layers of fat. Naturally one must have an unusual reserve of petty bourgeois narrow-mindedness not to understand to this day the iron law of the transformation of bourgeois democracy into its very opposite and to continue to accept democracy as a supra-historical suitcase in which it is possible to carry a volume of *Das Kapital*, a parliamentary mandate, extra suspenders, a ministerial portfolio, stocks and bonds, the "final goal" of socialism, intimate correspondence with one's bourgeois colleagues, and anything else you please except, of course, explosives. In point of fact, bourgeois democracy is the political formula for free trade, nothing more. To make one's aim in our epoch the "struggle for democracy" can be done with the same success and sense as the struggle for free trade. However even this program proved too radical for the Second International. "After a year's delay," complains the author of the article, "it (the Executive Committee) finally made the attempt to bring up for discussion the problem of the struggle for democracy and peace in our epoch." But, alas, "this attempt ended in failure." The resistance came of course from the side of the fat ones. "The bigger and more influential parties of the International who have preserved their legal status," writes Dan, "did not desire widely to unfold the discussion and carry it to the end"; they rejected "abstract theorizing" and "sterile argumentation." In simple language, they refused to bind themselves to any kind of joint decisions which might in the future place them in conflict with the interests of their own national imperialisms.

The nub of the matter is that the "lean" sections of the Second International view the slogan of struggle for democracy against fascism seriously; because they themselves are victims of fascism and are, naturally, inclined to take back their lost posts with the aid of democratic tanks and battleships. This circumstance renders them very dangerous to the "solid" sections of the Second International. Let us recall that precisely at the beginning of this year the British and French diplomats did everything in their power to attract Italy to their side. Needless to say, if this attempt is successfully terminated the British and French sections of the Second International would adjust themselves perfectly to an alliance with Rome, whereas the Italian section would find it very difficult. All its fantastic hopes for a brighter future, namely, restoration of the past, lie in a military defeat of Mussolini. It is hardly surprising that the fat and the lean ones find it increasingly more difficult to arrive at "unanimous" resolutions or even to sit at the same table.

The terminology employed by the Second International

is somewhat different from the one we propose. The fat designate the lean simply as "dead"; while labelling themselves alone as "living," complains Dan. According to the same author these living ones "have chosen to proclaim the existence of an impassable gulf between the revolutionary (?) situation of the illegal and the reformist-legal parties, i.e., they have essentially proclaimed as artificial their unification in one International." Wells, Hilferding, Nenni, Dan himself, and other fighters "for democracy in our epoch" can be viewed as "revolutionists" as little as a bankrupt grocer can be taken for a proletarian. Nevertheless the factual information of the leader of the Mensheviks retains all its validity. The respectable parties of the sated colonial empires have declared that they have no business in one International with the illegal parties of the hungry imperialist countries. "... The elimination of the decisive participation of illegal parties in determining the policies of the International has become their immediate goal," continues Dan. "As is well-known, they have to a considerable measure realized this during the sessions of the Executive Committee held in Brussels May 14-15." In other words, the fat ones have driven the lean from the leading organs of the Second International. They have thus resolved the "problem of struggle for democracy and peace in our epoch."

One cannot deny that in their actions there is much logic and sense. The rulers and their retinue have always, as is well-known, preferred the company of fat people and mistrusted the lean. Julius Cæsar suspected Cassius precisely because of his leanness and his hungry look. Such people are inclined to be critical and to draw reprehensible conclusions. "Your bourgeoisie which was incapable of acquiring colonies in time, is now trying to disturb the holy *status quo*; that is why they have driven you into illegality and turned you into a disruptive element in the Second International; you must understand yourselves that you are only intruders in a solid organization which has in its ranks ministers and, generally, pillars of law and order." This is what the living, or the fat ones, had in mind.

The "lean" (or the dead) tried to argue that at the founding congress of the revived Second International held in Hamburg in 1923 a beautiful set of statutes was adopted which recognized, as Dan puts it, "the sovereignty of international-socialist policy over the national policy of individual parties and the decisive role of the International not only in peace but also in wartime." Not uninteresting is the fact that the above points were introduced into the statutes upon the initiative of Martov, the leader of the Russian Mensheviks. Martov's "points" remained, as is self-evident, only on paper. The parties which signed the new statutes in 1923 were the same ones that committed treachery in 1914—minus the revolutionary wing. The case-hardened social-imperialists were all the more ready to make verbal concessions to their allies of the 2½ International because they themselves were still in need of cover on the left flank. In those days the Comintern was still a revolutionary organization. The "sovereignty" of international principles? Of course! Provided "our" colonies, "our" markets, "our" concessions, including of course our democracy are safeguarded. The regime of the Second International rested

upon this equivocation until Hitler made a breach in the Versailles system.

But even for the extreme "left" opposition the "sovereignty of international principles" signifies, as we already know, not the independent class policy of the proletariat but only an attempt to arrive at agreement with other sections on the question: The victory of whose bourgeoisie is most advantageous (for the lean)? In the apparatus of this International not a single individual is to be found who seriously holds the position of proletarian revolution. To all of them the proletariat is only a force auxiliary to the "progressive" bourgeoisie. Their internationalism is the very same social patriotism, only crushed, discredited, afraid of venturing into the open, and ever in search of camouflage.

Dan explains the policy of the "living" parties by the "routine" of their political thought, by their "nearsightedness," "empiricism" and other intangible causes. The "nearsightedness" of this explanation literally strikes one between the eyes. Empiricism prevails in politics whenever a certain group finds it disadvantageous to draw its own thoughts to their logical conclusion. Existence, it was once said, determines consciousness. The labor bureaucracy is an integral part of bourgeois society. In his capacity as leader of "His Majesty's Opposition," Major Atlee receives a substantial salary from the royal exchequer. Walter Citrine earned a title in the nobility. Members of parliament enjoy great privileges. The trade union bureaucrats receive high salaries. All of them are chained by continuous links to the bourgeoisie, to its press, its industrial and other enterprises, in which many of these gentlemen participate directly. These circumstances of day-to-day existence are of incomparably greater significance in guiding party policy than is the principle of "internationalism" which was smuggled into the Hamburg statutes.

Dan has nothing at all to say about the French party, apparently out of politeness to the hosts whose hospitality the Mensheviks enjoy. However, in France things are not much better. Despite the incontestable talent of the French for logical thought, the politics of Leon Blum in no way differs from the "empirical" politics of Major Atlee. The leading socialist and trade-union cliques have their roots intertwined with those of the ruling stratum of the Third Republic. Blum is merely a conservative middle bourgeois who fatally gravitates to the society of the big bourgeois. During the Oustrich investigation, the case of the banker and swindler, it was revealed in passing that Blum frequented the arch-bourgeois salon, where he rubbed shoulders with conservative politicians and financial moguls, among them Oustrich in particular, and through the latter arranged, over a cup of coffee, a post for his son. The day-to-day life of the tops of the French labor party and the trade unions is comprised wholly of such colorful episodes.

The ruling bureaucracy of the Second International is the least independent, the most cowardly and corrupted section of bourgeois society. All shifts in the situation whether to the right or the left are of mortal danger to them. Hence their sole urge: to maintain the *status quo*; hence their compulsory "empiricism," i.e., fear to look into the future. The policy of the Executive Committee of the Second International can perplex only those who contrary to the evidence of reality insist on considering the social democ-

racy as the class party of the proletariat. Everything falls immediately into its proper place, if one clearly understands that the social democracy is a bourgeois party, fulfilling the function of a "democratic" brake upon the class struggle of the proletariat.

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The conduct of "empiricists" on good salaries, "has in reality already paralyzed and castrated the International politically," complains Dan. According to him, during the five month period following its January session, the Executive Committee failed to react to a single international event of major importance (Czechoslovakia, Albania, etc.). "It is as if it (the Executive Committee) had sunk into a state of political encephalitis." And the leader of the Mensheviks asks: "Is the Socialist International really threatened with the death that has already befallen the Communist International? . . ." He continues: "Will the first blast of the war tempest really wreak more havoc with the foundations of the international socialist unification of the proletariat than was the case in 1914? Or will this unification collapse itself even before the storm breaks!" The word "really" has a discordant ring, since in question here are long established processes and long ago predicted consequences. But be that as it may, rhetorical questions from a Menshevik pen acquire special force. They signify that the flood waters have risen above their chins. Dan does not hide this. Here is his "conditional" prognosis for the Second International: "Its transformation into a kind of League of Nations carries with it the threat of the same death from which its Geneva prototype is dying (if it is not already dead!) before our very eyes—death from progressive paralysis." To which we need only add that this progressive paralysis started in August 1914 and has today entered its final stage.

Astonishingly enough, precisely at the threshold of a new war, at the moment when the social democratic opposition began to feel premonitions of the collapse of its own International, the Comintern found the Second International ripe enough for alliance and even for fusion. This apparent paradox is wholly in accordance with social law. The Comintern herd now likewise consists of fat and lean cows and the reciprocal relation between them approximately parallels that in the Second International. In its diplomatic plans the Kremlin takes into account the fat parties of the Second and Third Internationals and not the poor and pitiful splinters of sections smashed by Fascism. The Second International ejects "democratically" from its leading organs the leaders of illegal parties; the Kremlin shoots them "in a totalitarian manner" in batches. This minor difference in technique leaves undisturbed the basic political solidarity. Just as the international social democracy constitutes the left flank of democratic imperialism, led by Great Britain and under the supreme control of the United States; just so the Comintern—the direct instrument of the Soviet bureaucracy—is, in the last analysis, subject to the control of the very same imperialism. Following in the footsteps of the Second International, the Comintern has today publicly renounced the colonial struggle for emancipation. Atlee and Politt, Blum and Thorez work in the same harness. In case of war the last remaining distinctions be-

tween them will vanish. All of them together with bourgeois society as a whole will be crushed under the wheel of history.

We must once again repeat that in our cursed epoch, when all the forces of capitalism as it rots alive, including the old labor parties and trade unions, are directed against the socialist revolution, the march of events provides the proletarian vanguard with one priceless advantage: Even prior to the outbreak of the war all the starting positions have been occupied, both Internationals in their death agony are openly entering the camp of imperialism—and just as openly against them marches their mortal enemy, the Fourth International.

Philistines have mocked at our interminable discussions on the question of internationalism, at our "captiousness"

towards all social patriotic and pacifist deviations. To these gentlemen our ideas seem "abstract" and "dogmatic" only because our ideas formulate the basic tendencies of historical development which remain impenetrable to the superficial mind of opportunists and centrists. These basic tendencies are now emerging into the open, while the structures built on conjunctural foundations are toppling. The parties of the Second and Third Internationals from now on will disintegrate and crumble. The cadres of the Fourth International on the contrary will serve as the axis for the mobilization of increasingly broader proletarian masses. We leave it to skeptics to bare their rotten teeth. We march forward on our road.

July 29, 1939

# The Convention of the Socialist Workers Party

By JAMES P. CANNON

**T**HE SPECIAL CONVENTION of the Socialist Workers Party, held in New York, April 5-8, summed up the internal discussion which had been in progress ever since the outbreak of the war in Europe. The task of the convention was to determine whether the party shall maintain its allegiance to the program of the Fourth International; that is, whether it shall continue to exist as a revolutionary organization or begin to degenerate along the lines of reconciliation with democratic imperialism. The convention accomplished its task in a revolutionary fashion. By the decisive vote of 55 to 31, the delegates from the branches reaffirmed their allegiance to the program and rejected the revisionist improvisations of the opposition.

The victory of the proletarian revolutionary tendency was in reality far more decisive than these figures indicate. More than half of the delegates of the opposition came from New York branches which are predominantly petty-bourgeois in composition. Outside New York the delegates stood three to one behind the majority of the National Committee in its defense of the program. But even these figures do not adequately portray the weakness of the opposition in the proletarian ranks of the party. Among the genuine worker elements of the party, those members connected with the mass movement and directly engaged in the class struggle, the position of the majority of the National Committee prevailed by not less than ten to one. The opposition started and finished as a purely literary tendency, making big pretensions, but without any serious base of support in the proletarian ranks of the party.

The decision of the party came at the end of a thoroughgoing, democratic party discussion which left not a single question unclarified. The discussion was formally opened early in October and continued uninterruptedly for six months. It is highly doubtful that any party discussion anywhere was ever so extensive, so complete and so democratically conducted as this one. Thirteen big internal bulletins

were published by the National Committee during the discussion, with the space about equally divided between the factions; and there was an unrestricted distribution of factional documents, besides those published in the official bulletins. In addition, there were innumerable debates and speeches in party membership meetings. Such an extensive and drawn-out discussion may appear to be abnormal, even for a democratic organization such as ours which settles all disputed questions by free and democratic discussion. So it was. But the controversy which preoccupied our members in this instance, went far beyond the usual differences of opinion as to the best methods of applying the program. The revisionist opposition attacked the program itself.

Their position at bottom represented a fundamental break with the programmatic concepts, traditions and methods embodied in the Fourth International. Consequently it was necessary to carry the fight out to a definitive conclusion. The result justified the extraordinary amount of time and attention devoted to the dispute. The internal fight was imposed upon the party by the war. Disoriented by the war, or rather by the approach of war, a section of the leadership turned their backs on the program, which had been elaborated in years of struggle in preparation for the war. Overnight, they forgot the principles which they had defended jointly with us up to the very day of the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact. These soldiers of peace had evidently assimilated the ideas of Bolshevism only as a set of literary formulas. They wrote endlessly, and sometimes cleverly, in favor of them. But the moment the formulas were put to the test of life—or rather the threat of such a test, for America has not yet entered into the war—the literary exponents crumpled miserably and shamefully. And with amazing speed.

Even a revolutionary party is not free from the pressure of its bourgeois environment. In the case of Burnham and Shachtman this pressure was reflected in its crudest form.



Stalin in alliance with the brigands of French imperialism, and prospectively with the United States, was acceptable to democratic public opinion; his frame-up trials and purges and his bloody work in Spain were passed over as the peccadillos of an eccentric "democrat." During all this time—the time of the Franco-Soviet pact—all the leaders of the opposition fully agreed with us that the defense of the Soviet Union is the elementary duty of every worker's organization. When the same Stalin "betrayed" the imperialist democracies by making an alliance with Hitler Germany, he became anathema to the bourgeois democrats. Immediately, as if by reflex action, our heroic Burnham, and after him Shachtman and the others, disavowed the defense of the Soviet Union by the world proletariat as an "outmoded" idea. That is the essence of the dispute they started in the party, and its immediate causes. All the rest of their explanations are literary trimming.

Fortunately, the proletarian militants of the party took their program more seriously, and showed they are capable of adhering to it without regard to external pressure. Our eleven years' struggle for a proletarian party—which has also been an unceasing struggle against alien tendencies within our own ranks—was recapitulated in our six months' discussion. The convention drew a balance from this whole experience, and put an end to all speculation about the course of the party. It recorded the determined will of the proletarian majority to face the war with the same program that had been worked out in years of international collaboration in anticipation of the inevitable war. It showed clearly that, in spite of all obstacles and difficulties, the party has become predominately proletarian in composition. Thereby it has reenforced its proletarian program.

Our convention had more than national significance. The Fourth International, as a whole, like all other organizations in the labor movement, was put to a decisive test by the outbreak of the war. Fortuitous political circumstances have delayed the entry of U.S. imperialism into the war. This provided our party with a more favorable opportunity for a free and democratic discussion of the issues posed by the war crisis than was enjoyed by any other section of our International. Our party was also the best equipped by past experience and training to carry out this discussion in all its implications, from all sides, and to the very end. In addition, outstanding representatives of several other important sections of our International were able to participate directly in the literary discussion in our party. The discussion in the S.W.P. became in effect a discussion for the entire Fourth International and was followed with passionate interest by the members of all sections.

It was clear from the beginning that the issues at stake were international in character and that our decisions would have fateful consequences for our movement on a world-wide scale. Thus our convention, formally and nominally a convention of the Socialist Workers Party, was in its political import a veritable Congress of the Fourth International. Under war conditions, and the consequent illegality of many of the sections, a formally organized World Congress, composed of representative delegations, could not be held. Our convention had to serve as temporary surrogate for the World Congress. Politically, there

can be no doubt that it had this meaning for all the other sections.

The discussion initiated in our party was transferred into the other sections; and, one after the other, they began to take positions on the dispute. In every case where we have been able to establish communication under war conditions, and have direct knowledge of their position, the sections have supported the majority of our party. The International report at our convention disclosed that the Canadian, Mexican, Belgian, German, Argentine, Chinese, Australian and Russian sections have all declared categorically in support of the position of the majority of our party. The other sections, with whom communication is faulty or who have not formerly recorded their position, indicate the same tendency. After our convention there can no longer be the slightest doubt that the overwhelming majority of the members and sections of the Fourth International remain true to their banner—to the doctrine and program of revolutionary Marxism. The decision is made. The revisionist movement of Burnham and Co. can no longer hope for success in our movement, nationally or internationally. The Fourth International remains, after the first test of the war, firm in its programmatic position—the only revolutionary organization of the workers' vanguard in the entire world.

From beginning to end, and in all respects, the two factions in the S.W.P. confronted each other in a classic struggle of the proletarian against the petty-bourgeois tendency. This line of demarcation was unmistakably evident in the class composition of the factions and in their general orientation, as well as in the programs they defended.

Despite the extraordinary preoccupation of the entire party with the theoretical dispute, the convention, on the initiative of the majority, devoted two whole sessions and part of a third to discussion of the trade union question and mass work in general. Led by the informed and inspiring report of Farrell Dobbs, the discussion of the delegates on this point revealed that our party in many localities and industries is already deeply integrated in the mass movement of the workers, and that its whole orientation is in this direction. The reports of the delegates showed that even during the six months' discussion, when the literary panic-mongers were crying havoc and discovering nothing but weaknesses and failures, the proletarian supporters of the majority were busy in many sections with their trade union work; burrowing deeply into the mass movement and establishing firm bases of support for the party there. The opposition at the convention was greatly compromised and discredited by the fact that it virtually abstained from participation in this extensive discussion. They had nothing to say and nothing to report. Here again the petty-bourgeois composition of the opposition, and its lack of serious interest in mass work, were flagrantly manifest.

The report and discussion on the trade union question and mass work dealt a knockout blow to the calamity howlers, pessimists and quitters who have been attributing to the movement their own weakness, cowardice and futility. The convention resounded with proletarian optimism and confidence in the party. The trade union report and discussion, following the decisive reaffirmation of the proletarian program, engendered a remarkable enthusiasm. It was clear from this discussion that the turn of the party toward mass

work is already well under way and that the proceedings of the convention could not fail to give it a powerful acceleration.

If any came to the convention with the usual discouragement over a heated factional fight and the prospect of a split, there was no evidence of it. In the camp of the proletarian majority there was not a trace of pessimism, or discouragement, or doubt that the party is going forward to the accomplishment of its historic goal, and that the period ahead of us will be one of expansion and growth and integration in the mass movement. They approached the factional situation in the convention with the calm assurance of people who have made up their minds and know precisely what they want. When the leaders of the petty-bourgeois opposition, defeated in the convention, hurled the threat of split, it was received without a ripple of agitation. The demand of Burnham and Shachtman for the "right" to publish a press of their own in opposition to the press of the party—that is, to make a split in the hypocritical guise of unity; to attack the party in the name of the party—was rejected out of hand by the majority of the convention. The minority was confronted with a clear alternative: either to accept the decision of the majority under the rules of democratic centralism or go their own way and unfurl their own banner.

The majority did everything possible to preserve unity, and even made extraordinary concessions to induce the minority to turn back from their splitting course before it was too late. Their party rights as a minority were guaranteed by a special resolution at the convention. This reso-

lution went to the extreme length of sanctioning a continuation of discussion of the decided questions in the Internal Bulletin, and a discussion of the theoretical aspects of the questions in *The New International*. At the same time, the convention resolution decreed that discussion in the branches must cease, and that all attention and energy of the party membership be concentrated on practical mass work in the next period.

The minority was given proportional representation on the National Committee and a period of time to make up their minds whether to remain in the party or not under the terms and conditions laid down. The minority leaders rejected the convention decision, launched their own publication, and began a public attack on the program of the party and the Fourth International. Thus, by their own decision and actions, they placed themselves outside the ranks of the party and the Fourth International. Their political degeneration is inevitable; nobody has ever yet found a revolutionary road outside the Fourth International. But that is their own affair. Our discussion with them, which was fully adequate, is now concluded.

We are looking forward, not backward. Our task is a deeper penetration of the workers' mass movement on the basis of the convention decisions. That is our way to prepare for the war. In this course we are assured of the support of the overwhelming majority of the sections of the Fourth International. With a correct program, and the assurance of international collaboration and support, we have every reason to be confident of our future.

# The Algebra of Revolution

By J. GERLAND

**A** RECEDING WAVE drops the heaviest stones first, the pebbles next, and carries the sand a little farther. To deserters from Marxism, the heaviest stone is the heart of the doctrine itself—its method, the dialectic. That is what they abandon first. The list is long of tired revolutionaries, who, for nearly three-quarters of a century now, have denounced the hated dialectic while they still continued for a time to recognize "economic determinism" in history or even the "historic necessity" of socialism.

In an opposite rush of the current, the same phenomenon is observable. The incoming tide washes the sand along before budging the stones. A person who comes to Marxism—especially if he has passed his intellectual youth—grasps successively the different isolated and abstract aspects of it before he penetrates to its method in its entirety—not rarely stopping short of this.

Marxism is thus subjected to incessant attempts at dismemberment. The dialectic is the point of concentration of the resistance which petty-bourgeois thought opposes to Marxism.

This resistance assumes various social, political, or philosophical shadings, but expresses itself through arguments which remain within a fairly narrow scope: "Marx took over the dialectic from Hegel the idealist. It retains the mysticism of its origin and sullies Marxist thought." To

the severest critics, it is the basic defect of the edifice, a "metaphysics" which led Marx into making unfounded assertions, exaggerated affirmations, specious paradoxes, all of which obscure his "economic" work and threaten to ruin its "scientific" conclusions. To the more amiable critics, if the dialectic is not quite that detrimental it is nonetheless useless; it is claptrap inherited from the past which must be eliminated—in another century Marx would have linked his doctrine to another philosophy (pragmatism?) and the problem of the dialectic would not have arisen. The dialectic in Marxism is nothing but a historic accident. It is in accordance with the "true" spirit of the doctrine to remove this vestige of another epoch. Do not hesitate, let us cut out this useless appendix which may at any time become the seat of a new infection of mysticism.

This accusation of mysticism—the most widely propagated of all—launched against the Marxist dialectic is not encumbered with numerous proofs. It is not very easy, in fact, to produce any. To refute them it would be enough to point to all the passages where Marx counterposes his rational method to the mystical method of idealism. By uncovering the social roots of all the mystic baggage which philosophy carted for centuries, has not Marxism placed a cross over mysticism forever?

Lacking even the smallest particle of a quotation from

Marx, our critics remind those who have supposedly forgotten it that Marx as a youth passed through the school of Hegelian idealism and that this "could not fail" to leave its imprint upon his mind. All that remains necessary is an explanation as to why Marx developed the most fundamental negation of idealism that mankind has yet formulated.

Mysticism demands essentially that the mind set itself free from logical categories. Impelled by the wish, the unification of subject with object is immediately accomplished, with the "fusion" taking place outside all logical discourse. The dialectic does not reject these categories but reveals their inter-connections and their development. It does not deny logic but gives it in this way, with new tools, a new power. Its increased power broadens its domain and consequently narrows that of the mystic. Formal logic, only too often obliged to capitulate before reality, leaves the field open to mysticism. The dialectic is revealed as the mortal—and victorious—enemy of mysticism in the unfolding of all the power of human reason.

Before Marx, the social sciences consisted of nothing but platitudes, testifying to the impotence of contemporary logic to master a complex reality—an impotence which reflected the existing social conditions. This "science" was not rational knowledge, but the projection of desires and aspirations, that is, in great part a tendency toward mysticism. The dialectic puts an end to all this.

Another illustration. The deep-rooted aversion of the Anglo-Saxon mind for the dialectic is well known; its source lies in the historical development of English society. Empiricism and agnosticism, so well suited to this mind, led it towards the middle of the last century into profound contradictions which could be resolved only by dialectical materialism. How far from understanding this were the British professors! They swerved from the rut of empiricism by heading toward the absolute. They appropriated in particular the system of Hegel, that is, its husk, without even noticing the living kernel, and for several decades the British and American universities indulged in orgies of absolute idealism. Pragmatism was in part a reaction against these waves of mysticism but in no way a solution of the difficulties, which only the dialectic could surmount.

Among the "defects" of the dialectic, the charge that it is metaphysics alternates with the accusation that it is mysticism. The contention itself is not easy to formulate. Metaphysics originally was the search for "First Causes." Hegel used the term in a different and well-defined sense to characterize the anti-dialectical thought of the 18th century, above all, French rationalism. It is in this sense that the founders of scientific socialism introduced it into the Marxist vocabulary. In commonly accepted thought the term "metaphysical" depreciated throughout the 19th century and to each critic it seemed sufficient merely to hurl it at his adversary. Finally, following the positivism of Comte, the scientists labelled as metaphysical everything that went beyond their thinly sliced morsel of science and in particular anything that brought up the obligation, so distasteful to bourgeois scientists, of choosing between materialism and idealism.

The critics of the dialectic apply the sufficiently compro-

mised label of *metaphysical* upon it without so much as taking the trouble to indicate what they mean by it. Why bother over a mere relic! The Marxist dialectic, we confess, is "metaphysical," in the sense that it participates boldly in the struggle of materialism against idealism. In this respect materialism itself is metaphysical in the sense that it transcends one or more immediate experiences and that it is impossible to demonstrate it like a simple theorem of geometry. It is hardly correct to say even that materialism is proved by the *state* of science in a given epoch. It finds its truth in the general *development* of science, in the movement which unceasingly increases the power of reason, in the ever-broadening possibility of going beyond the hypothesis of a god.

It would be far too compromising for the critics to reject materialism as metaphysical. They have not as a rule yet reached this stage when we occupy ourselves with them. Hence, they limit themselves to the dialectic and their principal argument in qualifying it as metaphysical consists in the fact that they can live very well and act without it and that the dialectic, moreover, is not subject to verification. In its most outspoken form, the argument is converted into a denial, pure and simple, of the dialectic: "It is nothing but a myth, a fiction—nobody knows exactly what it is." Or some view it as a mere literary ornament with which Marx decorated his too arid dissertations and from which he extracted brilliant metaphors. "But all this has nothing to do with science. Moreover, no Marxist has ever systematically formulated the laws of the dialectic." That, it appears, is what the critics mean by metaphysics.

Marxism, it must be recognized, lacks a perfected treatise on the dialectic. Marx on various occasions indicated (in letters to Engels, Kugelmann, Dietzgen) his intention of writing a brief theoretical exposition of his method. He died while still working on "Capital." Engels, after his "Anti-Dühring," undertook systematic research on the dialectic, especially in relation to the natural sciences. He soon had to abandon it in order to take up the arduous task of deciphering and publishing the second and third volumes of "Capital." Lenin, in the isolation of the first months of the war, annotated Hegel and Aristotle preliminary to a study upon the dialectic, but the whirlwind of events decided otherwise.

It is doubtful that Marxism will ever have, before the advent of socialism, a manual of the dialectic. The more the workers' movement develops, all the more do political, strategic, and tactical questions take first place. And that is fortunate—it is the sign that problems are reaching a solution in deeds. To those who may lament this, we can only say that one no more chooses his epoch than he does his parents. The methodological study of the dialectic, which will also be the preparation for its replacement by still more powerful methods of thought, is one of the tasks for the socialist society. This study will be part of the general inventory which the new society will take of the heritage received from the preceding generations.

The situation as regards the dialectic is not so very different from that of culture in general. Just as it is not possible to envisage a "proletarian" culture, so it is impossible to envisage a systematically developed proletarian philosophy. The truth is that the dialectic does not pretend to be

more than a method, the expression of the movement of thought that seeks to transcend immediate experience. With Marx it found its practical application in the domain to which scientific knowledge was most foreign: sociology. In any society divided into classes, the "sciences of man" lag considerably behind the natural sciences—the possessing class has no interest whatever in revealing the mechanism of its domination. The bourgeois epoch constitutes the most striking illustration of this fact. But a method is an instrument for arriving at the truth, and where the social brakes are the tightest, a method far more powerful than the relativism of the natural sciences is required. The dialectic coincides with the revolutionary role of Marxism: the object imposed its method and, at the same time, could not be realized through anything else.

The most authentic product so far of the dialectic method, consciously applied, is "Capital." The great themes of Hegelian logic are there directly transposed—the mode of exposition itself with its movement from the abstract to the concrete, the development of the categories, the opposition of profound reality to immediate existence, the notion of concrete totality, etc., ideas all of them foreign equally to Cartesian rationalism and Anglo-Saxon empiricism. To those who clamor for a manual of the dialectic, we can boldly reply: Take "Capital" by Karl Marx.

But this book is not solely a treatise on logic. It reveals the movement of a reality singularly difficult to penetrate—modern capitalist society—and does so with astonishing accuracy. Here the method is judged by its own results. We had to wait for the Anglo-Saxon critics to hear this surprising demand: that the Marxists say what test\* can be made to verify the dialectic. This is nothing but a "modern" version of the accusation of metaphysics. To these also the answer must be made: Take "Capital." If one can speak of a "test" in such a domain, here is a real and crucial test. Can our critics cite a single book—I shall not say in sociology alone, it would be no risk, but in any science—which has for seventy-five years retained equal timeliness and validity? Does the method mean nothing in this respect? It would be crediting "mysticism" and "metaphysics" with strange power to believe them capable of such prowess.

The first question to pose to those who deny the scientific character of the dialectic is to ask them what they mean by scientific method. They generally forget to define this detail. What the manuals repeat on this subject is more often ethical rules rather than methodological principles. The scientists themselves do not begin dissertating on their methods until they hope to depreciate the value of science by showing its relativity. This movement has been observable for some forty years. If the work of these same scientists is examined, one can say that it is compounded of a melange of common sense, that is, formal logic converted into small change, and the dialectic in a fragmentary and unconscious form. The practice of the dialectic begins precisely where thought truly progresses, and imposes itself more each time the mind goes beyond the immediate data. The great unifying theories—the electro-magnetic theory of light, to take one example—are beautiful works of the dialectic. But the act of eating is far removed from the formulation of the

laws of digestion. As an epigraph on all the works of Marx, one could well inscribe: "*More consciousness!*" The dialectic is situated precisely in this movement. It enunciates and seeks to systematize the modes of thinking that follow intelligence at its various levels from the time intelligence begins to exercise its rights, that is, to transcend what is presented immediately before it, and in those cases where the mind does not turn upon itself (as in formal logic) but moves forward.

A particularly resistant reality, the development of society, required the conscious use of the most powerful processes of thought; hence the appearance of precisely the materialist dialectic. Thus sociology at once acquired, under penalty of extinction, the most highly perfected method so far developed for the human intelligence, and in this sense it blazes the way for the other sciences. Need it be added that the latter, making conscious use of the dialectic, will sharpen and enrich it? Carried by the whole current of human knowledge, the dialectic itself will be surpassed. But that, as we have seen, is the task of the coming epoch.

\* \* \*

The physicist Henri Poincaré once observed that you cannot experiment with war. This is still more true of the politics of the proletariat. Just as medicine is based on physiology, Marxist politics rests on sociology. But the latter, unfortunately, has no laboratories at its disposal. The Marxist party can carry out experiments only on an extremely restricted scale: to "test" such and such a partial slogan in a factory, a city, before launching it on a national scale. In the decisive questions, it does not have the right to enter into *experimentation*. Because of this, *observation* becomes of singularly important value. Marxists scrupulously study the past, above all the traditions of their class and its struggles.

It is from this that the accusation of conservatism is derived, often repeated by the innovators of the hour against the doctrine of scientific socialism. Hundreds and thousands of artistic, literary, philosophic, and sometimes political parlor-pink circles flourish unceasingly among the petty-bourgeois *intelligentsia*. They grasp in flight this or that idea, build a "theory" out of it and live off it for a few years or months. The Marxists have nothing in common with these "adventurers of thought." The revolutionary Socialists are at the apex of an entire historic class, the proletariat. They know the value of a dearly won tradition.

So far as the dialectic is concerned, this tradition speaks with a voice singularly clear and strong. To the extent that they gave theoretical expression to their headlong plunge—one obviously cannot speak of the Millerands and Briands—virtually all the renegades from the revolution precluded their denial of the social and economic and political tenets of socialism by rejecting the dialectic. At the beginning of this century, the German social democrat Bernstein published a book against Marxism which can be regarded as the classic expression of reformism. The same chapter in which the author attempts to demolish the dialectic as mystic and anti-scientific ends with the affirmation that the politics of Marx is nothing but Blanquism. . . . These are the lessons that no revolutionary socialist dare forget.

The Russian revolutionist Hertzzen called the dialectic the "algebra of revolution." It is really much more than

\*James Burnham, "A Belated Dialectician," *Partisan Review*, Spring 1939

that and its value extends to all of human knowledge, of society, of nature. But it is at least that. All of scientific socialism demands it. If Marx had not found in Hegel the essential forms of the dialectic, he would have produced them, more or less completely, just as the working class movement, if Marx had not lived, would have produced a scientific socialism basically identical with Marxism, al-

though undoubtedly much inferior to it in form. To try now to disconnect the dialectic from Marxism is a task as reactionary as to want to "purify" the working class movement of Marxism. In attempting one or the other, the critics will break their necks and succeed only in bringing judgment upon themselves.

February 18, 1940

# Falsified Statistics—The Death Chart of Stalinism

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

**I**NEXTRICABLY LINKED with and running parallel to Stalin's perfidies and frame-ups in politics are his convulsions and falsifications in the sphere of economic life.

In politics and in economy, these falsifications have swelled to unprecedented proportions since 1935. A stage was finally reached, some 18 months ago,\* when even falsified figures became a source of danger to Stalin. So, with the termination of the Second Five Year Plan, publication of official data relating to progress in industry practically ceased.

This silence was finally broken with the long-belated announcement of the inception of the Third Five Year Plan. But only a trickle of figures seeped through. Five days after the signing of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, on August 28, 1939, *Pravda* suddenly took the plunge. It published the purported balance-sheet of the First and Second Five Year Plans in the light of the newly-resumed Third Five Year Plan. The material covers a full page and is entitled:

"FIGURES OF THE GREAT TRIUMPHS OF SOCIALISM"

"Material for Agitators and Propagandists"

Falsified? The crudest job yet! But to falsify now is to embellish the *most recent* developments. Therefore they have to minimize the *past* achievements, and thus bring their statistics closer to reality. As a result, there is a glaring discrepancy between the past and most recent falsifications. In the light of this discrepancy the actual state of affairs becomes revealed. In fact *Pravda's* blob of statistics serves to reveal Stalinism for what it is: A REGIME OF CRISIS, which is exhausting all its remaining possibilities at an ever increasing pace; sapping, first and foremost, its most substantial prop, that is, constantly and rapidly expanding production.

Below we print a table which was compiled solely on the basis of *Pravda's* August 28 issue. Contained in this table are four related and vitally important items which cover the year 1913—Czarist Russia on the eve of the first World War; the year 1929—crucial year of the First Five Year Plan; the year 1933—the "turn" in the Second Five Year Plan; and, lastly, 1938—Stalin's "threshold to Communism." These are *Pravda's* figures for the national income, the annual wage fund, the average annual wage, and, finally, the total labor force in those key years.

The symptomatic importance of these figures is self-

evident. The size of the national income provides a well-nigh infallible index of the condition of the productive forces in a country. A rise in national income signifies the expansion of production. The rate of its annual increase or decrease is intimately related to the rate at which productive forces expand or contract. Similarly, the nation's labor force contracts or expands, as a rule, with the fall or rise of national income. For precise analytical study, the basis on which national income is calculated must be known. That, however, remains Stalin's private secret. *Pravda* assures us that the basis for all figures is the same. We can only pass on this assurance for what it is worth. Now let us turn to the table itself:

	1913	1929	1933	1938
1. National Income (in billions of rubles)	21.0	28.9	48.5	105.0*
2. Annual Wage Fund (in billions of rubles)	not given	9.7	34.95	96.4
3. Average Annual Wage (in rubles).....	not given	800.	1,566.	3,467.
4. Number of Workers and Employes (in millions).....	11.4	12.2	22.3	27.8
5. Percentage of Population Classified as Workers and Employes .....	not given	17.3%**	not given	34.7%

The figures for national income show a swift rise in economy, from 28.9 billion in 1929 to 48.5 billion in 1933, and then a dizzy leap to the "estimated" sum of 105 billion for 1938. On the basis of these figures, we can now compute the average rate of expansion for each of the above periods. As compared with 1913, Soviet income (and economy) expanded at the rate of 1.37 times a year at the beginning of the First Five Year Plan; between 1929 and 1933—the duration of the first plan—the rate of expansion rose to 1.67 times; that is, at the end of the first planned period it was almost double that of 1929; and in 1938, the claimed rate is 2.2 times, i.e., considerably more than double that of the previous period.

Now let us compare this set of figures with another set; the corresponding data for the expansion of the labor force. If in 1913 there were 11.4 million persons listed in this

\*This article was written Sept. 10, 1939 for *The New International*. It is published here for the first time.—Ed.

\*Official Stalinist estimate.  
\*\*1928 figure given.

category, in 1929 we find 12.2 million. Therefore, the rate of increase was 1.07. In 1933 this rate rises to 1.9 (22.3 million as against 12.2 million), i.e., practically double. Finally, in 1938 Stalin's figures report that the rate of increase had *dropped* to 1.3 as compared with the previous period (27.8 million as against 22.3 million), i.e., only one-third the previous growth. A corresponding table reads as follows:

	1913-29	1929-33	1933-38
Rate of Expansion of National Income...	1.37	1.67	2.2
Rate of Expansion of Labor Force.....	1.07	1.9	1.3

These figures translated into the language of economic development show (1) a sharply rising curve of production which is, (2) accompanied by an almost identical rising curve in the growth of the labor force for the period of the First and Second Five Year Plans. With the rise in production there occurs an increase in the industrial army. But then we are suddenly confronted with a sharp break. The two processes fork in opposite directions. With the beginning of the Third Five Year Plan the production-curve soars upwards, while the labor-curve dips downward. We must pause.

Not that the phenomenon of expanding production in the face of a stationary or even declining labor force is an inexplicable phenomenon. Just the contrary. In advanced capitalist countries it has become a commonplace, acquiring a chronic character, and tending constantly to increase the army of unemployed. But then capitalism is decaying. Furthermore under capitalism, planned economy with a view to dynamic expansion is impossible; there is no prospect of opening up thousands of new factories, mills and mines, or developing new branches of industry that can be and are scheduled under a unified plan. With the Soviet Union the case is otherwise. Moreover, the Soviet Union has far from attained the mechanization of advanced capitalist countries, to say nothing of per capita production, or the degree of labor productivity, which, by admission of the regime itself, is far below that of corresponding industries in capitalist countries. Far from having reached a peak or saturation in her labor force, the Soviet Union suffers from an acute *shortage* of labor. In fact, this is cited repeatedly in the official press as one of the main reasons for failure to fulfill plan-quotas. Why then the retarded growth of labor forces? Is it perhaps because the peasants prefer to stay on the land? Or is it because any further increase (on paper) would cut down the "average annual wage," and so had to be scaled down? Whatever the multiplicity of reasons may be, the fact is that we have a falsification here which *admits* this retardation and which tries to cover it up by puffing up the national income, and the annual wage fund.

From this admission we may justifiably conclude that the retarded growth of the labor army can only be a reflection of the retarded growth of national economy as a whole in the last few years. It is no longer expanding at the previous rate (1.67) but has instead declined. The actual rate of expansion of the national income is in all probability far closer to the reduced rate of the expansion of the labor force, i.e., 1.3 than it is to 2.2, the rate claimed by Stalin. This means that after years of rapid rise, economic development as a whole is slowing down. Production is beginning

to stagnate around levels already achieved. Development in new fields does not compensate for the lag in the old. We refrain from adducing supplementary data that bear this contention out. We are willing to rest our case on Stalin's own admission that the possibilities for further economic expansion under his regime are tending towards zero.

Let us scrutinize the Stalinist statistics more closely.

From 1929 to 1933 production almost doubles, and with it we have a doubling of the labor force. To be sure, the labor army expands at a swifter tempo than production (1.9 as against 1.67). But the discrepancy between these two rates—which, by the way, reflect much more truly the actual processes in Soviet economy—can readily be accounted for by the interplay of two factors: Low productivity of labor, on the one hand, and the swelling of the ranks of "employees," i.e., the bureaucratic staff, on the other. Assuredly, not an ideal picture, but nevertheless one of remarkable progress. We shall presently return to the full implications of this historically unprecedented economic rise.

Meanwhile, let us compare the figures for 1929 with those chosen for the year 1913 by the bureaucracy itself. It is hard to believe one's own eyes! These figures are nothing short of an official admission that in 1929—the year of the "Entry Into Socialism"—the levels attained barely surpassed those of Czarist Russia. The national income of 28.9 billion is matched against 21 billion under Czardom. The totals given for the respective labor forces approximate each other even more closely—12.2 million as against 11.4 million. It is as if Stalin wished not only to confirm this fact known for a long time but to insist on it.

Now Russia under the Czars did not have 11.4 million *industrial* workers, not even half that number. Stalin's statisticians must have therefore included also the Czarist "employees." Did they compensate for this by adding Stalin's *chinovniks* in the number of "workers and employees" for 1929 and thereafter? They undoubtedly did.

The average annual wage under Czardom is not given. Neither is the annual wage fund. These omissions are more eloquent even than the "falsifications by commission." The reticences of the Kremlin do actually speak volumes. In this case, the explanation stares one in the face in the column for data on the "annual average wage," where we find 800 rubles as the "average" wage for 1929.

This average, like all similar averages under this head, is arrived at very simply: Stalin divides the total wage fund (in this case 9.7 billion) by the total number of "workers and employees" (12.2 million) and puts down the quotient in round figures as 800. But as we already know, included in the total of "workers and employees" are an impressive number of bureaucrats from the party-union-administrative tops down to the skilled tiers of workers, who received far above the average wage. How many?

The precise number cannot be estimated. This, too, is Stalin's secret. But if we assume that the productivity of a worker in 1929 approximated the levels of 1913, then we may draw the conclusion that Stalin's hordes of bureaucrats must have at least approximated in number those of the Czar's regime, of whom there were between 4-5 million in 1913, or about 40% of the total "workers and employees." The figure must be fixed at even a larger proportion, if we take into account the progress in technology from 1913-

1929, etc. But even if this estimate is cut by one-half it would still reduce the average wage of the mass of Soviet workers, especially the unskilled, not only below 70 rubles a month but actually below the living standards under Czarism. Thus, we have here an official acknowledgment by Stalin that in attaining and exceeding Czarist productive levels, his regime devoured and wasted a greater share of the national income than did the Czarist vampires. Thus social *parasitism* may attain proportions exceeding those of social *exploitation*—and this in the performance of a progressive task!

A profound lesson in the contradictory march of history, that is, in dialectics.

But the matter is far from exhausted. In point of fact, the year 1929 was one of the GOOD years under Stalinism for the workers, not to mention the peasants. The calculation in "rubles" for that particular year and period given in *Pravda* is in itself a flagrant fraud, intended primarily to cover up the terrible years, 1930-1931-1932. Those were the years of "socialist" inflation, when the currency was boosted from 2.0 billion in 1929 to 8.4 billion at the beginning of 1933 (when a reverse policy was adopted). Trotsky pointed out: "It is needless to say that inflation meant a dreadful tax upon the toiling masses. . . . In the sphere of agriculture inflation brought no less heavy consequences." In terms of human suffering and sacrifice, in terms of havoc in agriculture, the decimation of livestock, the regime of famine, the millions of lives lost (the peasantry), the debit side of the bureaucratic ledger is matched only by the depredations of Asiatic conquerors. How then was the bureaucracy able to maintain itself?

Here we return to the rise in economy recorded during this period. Throughout these years production continued to expand.

To dilettantes and superficial observers of history, on the one hand, and to Stalin and all his flunkies, on the other, it appears as if the regime was able to preserve itself solely through the application of cunning maneuvers, terror, etc., etc. Violence alone did not, will not, and cannot save Stalin.

If the bureaucracy was able to maintain itself, it was because the October revolution had lodged at the foundation of the Soviet Union such colossal and progressive dynamic forces, and had extended such huge historical credits that not even Stalin and his regime were able to exhaust them in the span of more than 15 years.

From the end of 1932, on the basis of rapidly expanding production—unprecedented in history—came a gradual but unmistakable improvement in the living conditions of the masses. Just as in 1923, so also in this period and thereafter, the bureaucracy was able to stabilize itself on the basis of this *rapid economic upswing*. It was this factor that enabled the Bonapartist regime to intrench itself and to survive in the period of the first two plans. This and this alone saved Stalin in the terrible years from 1930-1932 when the masses sank to the lowest levels after the Civil War. This and this alone has enabled him to survive to the present time.

The purges, the application of terror in ever increasing doses served only as preventive, that is, supplementary measures.

The economic rise took place—*despite* the bureaucracy—on the basis of nationalized economy and the introduction (belated) of planning. Despite its monstrous waste and misdirection, despite its parasitic social nature, the Stalin regime was able to play a progressive role in the past because its rule straddled this foundation. Stalinism wrote those pages in blood and infamy. However, the successes achieved by planned economy were little short of staggering.

These successes appeared on the surface to stabilize the regime and render it impregnable. In reality, they were undermining it. The maintenance and extension of Bonapartist rule and privileges came into an irreconcilable conflict, which grew in intensity with the further development of the country's productive forces.

The dynamic development of productive forces could be laced into the straitjacket of Stalinist Bonapartism only temporarily, and only after wild convulsions, each more violent than the preceding. These disturbances in the foundation, which are harbingers of a catastrophic eruption, found their reflection in convulsions in the political superstructure, each more bestial and unrestrained than the one before.

If Stalin falsifies statistics of Soviet economy, it is to hide this irreconcilable conflict between advancing economy and the fetters of his regime. If Stalin staged frame-ups and unleashed his terror in the period from 1935-1938, it was primarily to compensate for the declining rate of economic expansion, which spells his doom. The rising intensity of oppression in the political superstructure is a refracted and an inverse index of the economic downswing in the foundation.

The primary cause of this decline is the bureaucracy itself. Once again, the falsified statistics bear this out to the hilt.

*Pravda* boastfully cites the increases in the average annual wage to show that the living conditions of the masses have steadily improved since 1929. True enough, there has been an improvement, not since 1929, but since 1933. The peasantry gained much more from it than have the workers. The war has now introduced its own unknown quantities into that equation also. While we cannot specify any of them in advance, the general direction in which they will act can nevertheless be posited. War will *worsen* the economic position of the masses in the Soviet Union as elsewhere in the world. With this difference, however, that the Stalin regime will not dare in the interests of its own self-preservation to surrender even under duress of war an iota of its privileges. The slightest breach in the Bonapartist dam carries with it the threat of a deluge. Meanwhile, the encroachments of Stalinism have already become incompatible with a further strain on economy. Precisely in this sphere of encroachments, Stalin's latest statistics provide the clearest indication to date, not of an improvement in the living standards of the masses, but rather of his regime's "share" in the national income.

Given the annual national income, and the annual national wage, it is a simple matter to compute the percentage accruing to "workers and employes." From this, it is possible to deduce indirectly and approximately the portion devoured annually by the Bonapartist camp-followers.

Taking the *Pravda's* figures, we obtain the following results:

In 1929, 17.3% of the population received 34% of the national income.

In 1933, an unspecified percent received 72%.

In 1938, 34.7% of the population (27.8 million) received 96.4 billion or 91.8% of the national income (105 billion).

The first and obvious correction that must be introduced in the foregoing figures is a change in the percentage of the population. 27.8 million "workers and employes" do not constitute 34.7% of Russia's population, estimated at 160-170 million. The Stalinists have merely doubled the actual percentage in each instance. Apparently, with the irrevocable triumph of socialism, it is impermissible for workers to number less than 30% of the population.

Moreover, the figures presented for the wage fund for 1938 are highly exaggerated. Merely juxtaposing the sum given for the annual wage for 1938—96.4 billion—with the claimed national income of 105 billion suffices to expose the fraud. This leaves a spread of less than 9 billion rubles between the amount paid out in wages and salaries and the total national income. As we have already stated, the Stalinist falsification serves only all the more glaringly to reveal the truth. Let us take these figures as Stalin manufactures them, and introduce only the obvious elementary correction in division. Our corrected table now reads:

In 1929

8.7% of the population received 34.0% of the national income

In 1933

14-15.0% " " " " 72.0% " " " "

In 1938

17.4% " " " " 91.8% " " " "

The above figures contain an admission that a small minority of the country (1/6th and even less) absorbs one-third, two-thirds, and even more than nine-tenths (!) of the national income.

Thus, the figures for the annual wage fund in reality provide a gauge for measuring the rapacious "legal" encroachments of the bureaucracy. The total amount they actually devour is immaterial. For here we have a *relative* gauge. If for example we assume that they appropriate one-half of the wage fund, then they devoured one-sixth of the national income in 1929, one-third in 1933, and almost one-half in 1938. They may have grabbed more, or maybe less, but whatever the actual total is, the ratio between the different sums remains the same. That is to say, on the basis of the above estimate the bureaucracy devoured at least *twice* as much during the Second Five Year Plan as they did during the first. And their "plan" for the Third Five Year tenure is still more ambitious.

National economy cannot withstand this drain, especially under war-time conditions.

To recapitulate: the statistics are false, but the falsifications have a basis in fact, and so the truth is refracted through them, warped but unmistakable. Even prior to the outbreak of war, Stalinism was nearing the end of its historical tether. It is rapidly exhausting all its "credits." Further expansion of the productive forces is becoming more and more incompatible with the further existence of the regime. Stalinism will be sent to its grave by the greatest productive force of the Soviet Union—her working class. Stalin's statistics chart his own death agony.

# An Open Letter to Comrade Burnham

By LEON TROTSKY

**EDITORIAL NOTE:** This letter from Trotsky to Burnham was written during the internal discussion in the Socialist Workers Party under date of January 7, 1940. Since that time Burnham has abandoned all pretense of loyalty to the principles of the Fourth International. Comrade Trotsky's remarkably penetrating analysis of the revisionist position Burnham took in the internal discussion appears now as a prophetic warning of Burnham's break with the revolutionary movement. It was first published in the *Internal Bulletin* of the S.W.P. and is now printed here for the information of our readers.

Dear Comrade,

You have expressed as your reaction to my article on the petty-bourgeois opposition, I have been informed, that you do not intend to argue over the dialectic with me and that you will discuss only the "concrete questions." "I stopped arguing about religion long ago," you added ironically. I once heard Max Eastman voice this same sentiment.

As I understand this, your words imply that the dialectic of Marx, Engels and Lenin belongs to the sphere of religion. What does this assertion signify? The dialectic, permit me to recall once again, is the logic of evolution. Just as a machine shop in a plant supplies instruments for all departments, so logic is indispensable for all spheres of human knowledge. If you do not consider logic in general to be a religious prejudice (sad to say, the self-contradictory writings of the opposition incline one more and more toward this lamentable idea), then just which logic do you accept? I know of two systems of logic worthy of attention: the logic of Aristotle (formal logic) and the logic of Hegel (the dialectic). Aristotelian logic takes as its starting point immutable objects and phenomena. The scientific thought of our epoch studies all phenomena in their origin, change, and disintegration. Do you hold that the progress of the sciences, including

Darwinism, Marxism, modern physics, chemistry, etc. have not influenced in any way the forms of our thought? In other words, do you hold that in a world where everything changes, the syllogism alone remains unchanging and eternal? The Gospel according to St. John begins with the words: "In the beginning was the Word," i.e., in the beginning was Reason or the Word (reason expressed in the word, namely, the syllogism). To St. John the syllogism is one of the literary pseudonyms for God. If you consider that the syllogism is immutable, i.e., has neither origin nor development then it signifies that to you it is the product of divine revelation. But if you acknowledge that the logical forms of our thought develop in the process of our adaptation to nature, then please take the trouble to inform us just who following Aristotle analyzed and systematized the subsequent progress of logic. So long as you do not clarify this point, I shall take the liberty of asserting that to identify logic (the dialectic) with religion reveals utter ignorance and superficiality in the basic questions of human thought.

Let us grant however that your more than presumptuous innuendo is correct. But this does not improve affairs to your advantage. Religion, as I hope you will agree, diverts attention away from real to fictitious knowledge, away from the struggle for a better life to false hopes for reward in the Hereafter. Religion is the opium of the people. Whoever fails to struggle against religion is unworthy of bearing the name of revolutionist. On what grounds then do you justify your refusal to fight against the dialectic if you deem it one of the varieties of religion?

You stopped bothering yourself long ago, as you say, about the question of religion. But you stopped only for yourself. In addition to you, there exist all the others. Quite a few of them. We



revolutionists never "stop" bothering ourselves about religious questions, inasmuch as our task consists in emancipating from the influence of religion not only ourselves but also the masses. If the dialectic is a religion, how is it possible to renounce the struggle against this opium within one's own party?

Or perhaps you intended to imply that religion is of no political importance? That it is possible to be religious and at the same time a consistent communist and revolutionary fighter? You will hardly venture so rash an assertion. Naturally, we maintain the most considerate attitude toward the religious prejudices of a backward worker. Should he desire to fight for our program, we would accept him as a party member; but at the same time, our party would persistently educate him in the spirit of materialism and atheism. If you agree with this, how can you refuse to struggle against a "religion," held, to my knowledge, by the overwhelming majority of those members of your own party who are interested in theoretical questions? You have obviously overlooked this most important aspect of the question.

Among the educated bourgeoisie there are not a few who have broken personally with religion, but whose atheism is solely for their own private consumption; they keep thoughts like these to themselves but in public often maintain that it is well the people have a religion. Is it possible that you hold such a point of view toward your own party? Is it possible that this explains your refusal to discuss with us the philosophic foundations of Marxism? If that is the case, under your scorn for the dialectic rings a note of contempt for the party.

Please do not make the objection that I have based myself on a phrase expressed by you in private conversation, and that you are not concerned with publicly refuting dialectic materialism. This is not true. Your winged phrase serves only as an illustration. Whenever there has been an occasion, for various reasons you have proclaimed your negative attitude toward the doctrine which constitutes the theoretical foundation of our program. This is well-known to everyone in the party. In the article "Intellectuals in Retreat," written by you in collaboration with Shachtman and published in the party's theoretical organ, it is categorically affirmed that you reject dialectic materialism. Doesn't the party have the right after all to know just why? Do you really assume that in the Fourth International an editor of a theoretical organ can confine himself to the bare declaration: "I decisively reject dialectical materialism"—as if it were a question of a proffered cigarette: "Thank you, I don't smoke." The question of a correct philosophical doctrine, that is, a correct method of thought, is of decisive significance to a revolutionary party just as a good machine shop is of decisive significance to production. It is still possible to defend the old society with the material and intellectual methods inherited from the past. It is absolutely unthinkable that this old society can be overthrown and a new one constructed without first critically analyzing the current methods. If the party errs in the very foundations of its thinking it is your elementary duty to point out the correct road. Otherwise your conduct will be interpreted inevitably as the cavalier attitude of an academician toward a proletarian organization which, after all, is incapable of grasping a real "scientific" doctrine. What could be worse than that?

### **Instructive Examples**

Anyone acquainted with the history of the struggles of tendencies within workers' parties knows that desertions to the camp of opportunism and even to the camp of bourgeois reaction began not infrequently with rejection of the dialectic. Petty-bourgeois intellectuals consider the dialectic the most vulnerable point in Marxism and at the same time they take advantage of the fact that it is much more difficult for workers to verify differences on the philosophical than on the political plane. This long known fact is backed by all the evidence of experience. Again, it is impermissible to discount an even more important fact, namely, that all the great and outstanding revolutionists—first and foremost, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Franz Mehring—stood on the ground of dialectic materialism. Can it be assumed that all of them were incapable of distinguishing between science and religion? Isn't there too much presumptuousness on your part, Comrade Burnham? The examples of Bernstein, Kautsky and Franz Mehring are extremely instructive. Bernstein categorically rejected the dialectic as "scholasticism" and "mysticism." Kautsky maintained indifference toward the question of the dialectic, somewhat like Comrade Shachtman. Mehring was a tireless propagandist and defender of dialectic materialism. For decades he followed all the innovations of philosophy and literature, indefatig-

ably exposing the reactionary essence of idealism, neo-Kantianism, utilitarianism, all forms of mysticism, etc. The political fate of these three individuals is very well known. Bernstein ended his life as a smug petty-bourgeois democrat, Kautsky, from a centrist, became a vulgar opportunist. As for Mehring, he died a revolutionary communist.

In Russia three very prominent academic Marxists, Struve, Bulgakov and Berdyaev began by rejecting the philosophic doctrine of Marxism and ended in the camp of reaction and the orthodox church. In the United States, Eastman, Sidney Hook and their friends utilized opposition to the dialectic as cover for their transformation from fellow travelers of the proletariat to fellow travelers of the bourgeoisie. Similar examples by the score could be cited from other countries. The example of Plekhanov which appears to be an exception, in reality only proves the rule. Plekhanov was a remarkable propagandist of dialectic materialism, but during his whole life he never had the opportunity of participating in the actual class struggle. His thinking was divorced from practice. The revolution of 1905 and subsequently the world war flung him into the camp of petty-bourgeois democracy and forced him in actuality to renounce dialectic materialism. During the world war Plekhanov came forward openly as the protagonist of the Kantian categorical imperative in the sphere of international relations: "Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you." The example of Plekhanov only proves that dialectic materialism in and of itself still does not make a man a revolutionist.

Shachtman on the other hand argues that Liebknecht left a posthumous work against dialectic materialism which he had written in prison. Many ideas enter a person's mind while in prison which cannot be checked by association with other people. Liebknecht, whom nobody, least of all himself, considered a theoretician, became a symbol of heroism in the world labor movement. Should any of the American opponents of the dialectic display similar self-sacrifice and independence from patriotism during war, we shall render what is due him as a revolutionist. But that will not thereby resolve the question of the dialectic method.

It is impossible to say what Liebknecht's own final conclusions would have been had he remained at liberty. In any case before publishing his work, undoubtedly he would have shown it to his more competent friends, namely Franz Mehring and Rosa Luxemburg. It is quite probable that on their advice he would have simply tossed the manuscript into the fire. Let us grant however that against the advice of people far excelling him in the sphere of theory he nevertheless had decided to publish his work. Mehring, Luxemburg, Lenin and others would not of course have proposed that he be expelled for this from the party; on the contrary, they would have intervened decisively in his behalf had anyone made such a foolish proposal. But at the same time they would not have formed a philosophical bloc with him, but rather would have differentiated themselves decisively from his theoretical mistakes.

Comrade Shachtman's behaviour, we note, is quite otherwise. "You will observe," he says—and this to teach the youth!—"that Plekhanov was an outstanding theoretician of dialectic materialism but ended up an opportunist; Liebknecht was a remarkable revolutionist but he had his doubts about dialectic materialism." This argument if it means anything at all signifies that dialectic materialism is of no use whatsoever to a revolutionist. With these examples of Liebknecht and Plekhanov, artificially torn out of history, Shachtman reinforces and "deepens" the idea of his last year's article, namely, that politics does not depend on method, inasmuch as method is divorced from politics through the divine gift of inconsistency. By falsely interpreting two "exceptions," Shachtman seeks to overthrow the rule. If this is the argument of a "supporter" of Marxism, what can we expect from an opponent? The revision of Marxism passes here into its downright liquidation; more than that, into the liquidation of every doctrine and every method.

### **What Do You Propose Instead?**

Dialectic materialism is not of course an eternal and immutable philosophy. To think otherwise is to contradict the spirit of the dialectic. Further development of scientific thought will undoubtedly create a more profound doctrine into which dialectical materialism will enter merely as structural material. However, there is no basis for expecting that this philosophic revolution will be accomplished under the decaying bourgeois regime, without mentioning the fact that a Marx is not born every year or every decade. The life-and-death task of the proletariat now con-

sists not in interpreting the world anew but in remaking it from top to bottom. In the next epoch we can expect great revolutionists of action but hardly a new Marx. Only on the basis of socialist culture will mankind feel the need to review the ideological heritage of the past and undoubtedly will far surpass us not only in the sphere of economy but also in the sphere of intellectual creation. The regime of the Bonapartist bureaucracy in the U.S.S.R. is criminal not only because it creates an ever growing inequality in all the spheres of life but also because it degrades the intellectual activity of the country to the depths of the unbridled blockheads of the G.P.U.

Let us grant however that contrary to our supposition the proletariat is so fortunate during the present epoch of wars and revolutions as to produce a new theoretician or a new constellation of theoreticians who will surpass Marxism and in particular advance logic beyond the materialist dialectics. It goes without saying that all the advanced workers will learn from the new teachers and the old men will have to reeducate themselves again. But in the meantime this remains the music of the future. Or am I mistaken? Perhaps you will call my attention to those works which should supplant the system of dialectic materialism for the proletariat? Were these at hand surely you would not have refused to conduct a struggle against the opium of the dialectic. But none exist. While attempting to discredit the philosophy of Marxism you do not propose anything with which to replace it.

Picture to yourself a young amateur physician who proceeds to argue with a surgeon using a scalpel that modern anatomy, neurology, etc. are worthless, that much in them remains unclear and incomplete and that only "conservative bureaucrats" could set to work with a scalpel on the basis of these pseudo-sciences, etc. I believe that the surgeon would ask his irresponsible colleague to leave the operating room. We too, Comrade Burnham, cannot yield to cheap innuendos about the philosophy of scientific socialism. On the contrary, since in the course of the factional struggle the question has been posed point blank, we shall say, turning to all members of the party, especially the youth: Beware of the infiltration of bourgeois scepticism into your ranks. Remember that socialism to this day has not found higher scientific expression than Marxism. Bear in mind that the method of scientific socialism is dialectic materialism. Occupy yourselves with serious study! Study Marx, Engels, Plekhanov, Lenin and Franz Mehring. This is a hundred times more important for you than the study of tendentious, sterile, and slightly ludicrous treatises on the conservatism of Cannon. Let the present discussion produce at least this positive result that the youth attempt to imbed in their minds a serious theoretical foundation for revolutionary struggle!

### False Political "Realism"

In your case, however, the question is not confined to the dialectic. The remarks in your resolution to the effect that you do not now pose for the decision of the party the question of the nature of the Soviet State signify in reality that you do pose this question, if not juridically then theoretically and politically. Only infants can fail to understand this. This very statement likewise has another meaning, far more outrageous and pernicious. It means that you divorce politics from Marxist sociology. Yet for us the crux of the matter lies precisely in this. If it is possible to give a correct definition of a state without utilizing the method of dialectic materialism; if it is possible correctly to determine politics without giving a class analysis of the state then the question arises: Is there any need whatsoever for Marxism?

Disagreeing among themselves on the class nature of the Soviet state, the leaders of the opposition agree on this, that the foreign policy of the Kremlin must be labelled "imperialist" and that the U.S.S.R. cannot be supported "unconditionally." (Vastly substantial platform!) When the opposing "clique" raises the question of the nature of the Soviet State point blank at the convention (what a crime!) you have in advance agreed . . . to disagree, i.e., to vote differently. In the British "national" government this precedent occurs of Ministers who "agree to disagree," i.e., to vote differently. But His Majesty's Ministers enjoy this advantage that they are well aware of the nature of their state and can afford the luxury of disagreement on secondary questions. The leaders of the opposition are far less favorably situated. They permit themselves the luxury of differing on the fundamental question in order to solidarize on secondary questions. If this is Marxism and principled politics then I don't know what unprincipled combinationism means.

— You seem to consider apparently that by refusing to discuss dialectic materialism and the class nature of the Soviet State and

by sticking to "concrete" questions you are acting the part of a realistic politician. This self-deception is a result of your inadequate acquaintance with the history of the past fifty years of factional struggles in the labor movement. In every principled conflict, without a single exception, the Marxists invariably sought to face the party squarely with the fundamental problems of doctrine and program, considering that only under this condition could the "concrete" questions find their proper place and proportion. On the other hand the opportunists of every shade, especially those who had already suffered a few defeats in the sphere of principled discussion invariably counterposed to the Marxist class analysis "concrete" conjunctural appraisals which they, as is the custom, formulated under the pressure of bourgeois democracy. Through decades of factional struggle this division of roles has persisted. The opposition, permit me to assure you, has invented nothing new. It is continuing the tradition of revisionism in theory, and opportunism in politics.

Toward the close of the last century the revisionist attempts of Bernstein, who in England came under the influence of Anglo-Saxon empiricism and utilitarianism—the most wretched of philosophies!—were mercilessly repulsed. Whereupon the German opportunists suddenly recoiled from philosophy and sociology. At conventions and in the press they did not cease to berate the Marxist "pedants," who replaced the "concrete political questions" with general principled considerations. Read over the records of the German social democracy towards the close of the last and the beginning of the present century—and you will be astonished yourself at the degree to which, as the French say, *le mort saisit le vif* (the dead grip the living)!

You are not unacquainted with the great role played by Iskra in the development of Russian Marxism. Iskra began with the struggle against so-called "Economism" in the labor movement and against the Narodniki (Party of the Social Revolutionists). The chief argument of the "Economists" was that Iskra floats in the sphere of theory while they, the "Economists," propose leading the concrete labor movement. The main argument of the Social Revolutionists was as follows: Iskra wants to found a school of dialectic materialism while we want to overthrow czarist autocracy. It must be said that the Narodnik terrorists took their own words very seriously: bomb in hand they sacrificed their lives. We argued with them: "Under certain circumstances a bomb is an excellent thing but we should first clarify our own minds." It is historical experience that the greatest revolution in all history was not led by the party which started out with bombs but by the party which started out with dialectic materialism.

When the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks were still members of the same party, the pre-convention periods and the convention itself invariably witnessed an embittered struggle over the agenda. Lenin used to propose as first on the agenda such questions as clarification of the nature of the Czarist monarchy, the analysis of the class character of the revolution, the appraisal of the stages of the revolution we were passing through, etc. Martov and Dan, the leaders of the Mensheviks, invariably objected: we are not a sociological club but a political party; we must come to an agreement not on the class nature of Czarist economy but on the "concrete political tasks." I cite this from memory but I do not run any risk of error since these disputes were repeated from year to year and became stereotyped in character. I might add that I personally committed not a few sins on this score myself. But I have learned something since then.

To those enamoured with "concrete political questions" Lenin invariably explained that our politics are not of conjunctural but of principled character; that tactics are subordinate to strategy; that for us the primary concern of every political campaign is that it guide the workers from the particular questions to the general, that it teach them the nature of modern society and the character of its fundamental forces. The Mensheviks always felt the need urgently to slur over principled differences in their unstable conglomeration by means of evasions whereas Lenin on the contrary posed principled questions point blank. The current arguments of the opposition against philosophy and sociology in favor of "concrete political questions" is a belated repetition of Dan's arguments. Not a single new word! How sad it is that Shachtman respects the principled politics of Marxism only when it has aged long enough for the archives.

Especially awkward and inappropriate does the appeal to shift from Marxist theory to "concrete political questions" sound on your lips, Comrade Burnham, for it was not I but you who raised the question of the character of the U.S.S.R., thereby forcing me to pose the question of the method through which the class char-

acter of the state is determined. True enough, you withdrew your resolution. But this factional maneuver has no objective meaning whatsoever. You draw your political conclusions from your sociological premise, even if you have temporarily slipped it into your brief-case. Shachtman draws exactly the same political conclusions without a sociological premise: he adapts himself to you. Abern seeks to profit equally both from the hidden premise and the absence of a premise for his "organizational" combinations. This is the real and not the diplomatic situation in the camp of the opposition. You proceed as an anti-Marxist; Shachtman and Abern—as Platonic Marxists. Who is worse, it is not easy to determine.

### **The Dialectic of the Present Discussion**

When confronted with the diplomatic front covering the hidden premises and lack of premises of our opponents, we, the "conservatives," naturally reply: A fruitful dispute over "concrete questions" is possible only if you clearly specify what class premises you take as your starting point. We are not compelled to confine ourselves to those topics in this dispute which you have selected artificially. Should someone propose that we discuss as "concrete" questions the invasion of Switzerland by the Soviet fleet or the length of the tail of a Bronx witch, then I am justified in posing in advance such questions as does Switzerland have a sea coast? are there witches at all?

Every serious discussion develops from the particular and even the accidental to the general and fundamental. The immediate causes and motives of a discussion are of interest, in most cases, only symptomatically. Of actual political significance are only those problems which the discussion raises in its development. To certain intellectuals, anxious to indict "bureaucratic conservatism" and to display their "dynamic spirit," it might seem that questions concerning the dialectic, Marxism, the nature of the state, centralism are raised "artificially" and that the discussion has taken a "false" direction. The nub of the matter however consists in this, that discussion has its own objective logic which does not coincide at all with the subjective logic of individuals and groupings. The dialectic character of the discussion proceeds from the fact that its objective course is determined by the living conflict of opposing tendencies and not by a preconceived logical plan. The materialist basis of the discussion consists in its reflecting the pressure of different classes. Thus, the present discussion in the S.W.P., like the historic process as a whole, develops—with or without your permission, Comrade Burnham—according to the laws of dialectical materialism. There is no escape from these laws.

### **"Science" Against Marxism and "Experiments" Against Program**

Accusing your opponents of "bureaucratic conservatism" (a bare psychological abstraction insofar as no specific social interests are shown underlying this "conservatism"), you demand in your document that conservative politics be replaced by "critical and experimental politics—in a word, scientific politics." (p. 32). This statement at first glance so innocent and meaningless with all its pompousness, is in itself a complete exposure. You don't speak of Marxist politics. You don't speak of proletarian politics. You speak of "experimental," "critical," "scientific" politics. Why this pretentious and deliberately abstruse terminology so unusual in our ranks? I shall tell you. It is the product of your adaptation, Comrade Burnham, to bourgeois public opinion, and the adaptation of Shachtman and Abern to your adaptation. Marxism is no longer fashionable among the broad circles of bourgeois intellectuals. Moreover if one should mention Marxism, God forbid, he might be taken for a dialectic materialist. It is better to avoid this discredited word. What to replace it with? Why, of course, with "science," even with Science capitalized. And science, as everybody knows is based on "criticism" and "experiments." It has its own ring; so solid, so tolerant, so unsectarian, so professorial! With this formula one can enter any democratic salon.

Reread, please, your own statement once again: "In place of conservative politics, we must put bold, flexible, critical and experimental politics—in a word, scientific politics." You couldn't have improved it! But this is precisely the formula which all petty-bourgeois empiricists, all revisionists and, last but not least, all political adventurers have counterposed to "narrow," "limited," "dogmatic," and "conservative" Marxism.

Buffon once said: the style is the man. Political terminology is

not only the man but the party. Terminology is one of the elements of the class struggle. Only lifeless pedants can fail to understand this. In your document you painstakingly expunge—yes, no one else but you, Comrade Burnham—not only such terms as the dialectic and materialism but also Marxism. You are above all this. You are a man of "critical," "experimental" science. For exactly the same reason you culled the label "imperialism" to describe the foreign policy of the Kremlin. This innovation differentiates you from the too embarrassing terminology of the Fourth International by creating less "sectarian," less "religious," less rigorous formulas, common to you and—oh happy coincidence!—bourgeois democracy.

You want to experiment? But permit me to remind you that the workers' movement possesses a long history with no lack of experience and, if you prefer, experiments. This experience so dearly bought has been crystallized in the shape of a definite doctrine, the very Marxism whose name you so carefully avoid. Before giving you the right to experiment, the party has the right to ask: what method will you use? Henry Ford would scarcely permit a man to experiment in his plant who had not assimilated the requisite conclusions of the past development of industry and the innumerable experiments already carried out. Furthermore experimental laboratories in factories are carefully segregated from mass production. Far more impermissible even are witch doctor experiments in the sphere of the labor movement—even though conducted under the banner of anonymous "science." For us the science of the workers' movement is Marxism. Nameless social science, Science with a capital letter, we leave these completely at the disposal of Eastman and his ilk.

I know that you have engaged in disputes with Eastman and in some questions you have argued very well. But you debate with him as a representative of your own circle and not as an agent of the class enemy. You revealed this conspicuously in your joint article with Shachtman when you ended up with the unexpected invitation to Eastman, Hook, Lyons and the rest that they take advantage of the pages of the *New International* to promulgate their views. It did not even concern you that they might pose the question of the dialectic and thus drive you out of your diplomatic silence.

On January 20 of last year, hence long prior to this discussion, in a letter to Comrade Shachtman I insisted on the urgent necessity of attentively following the internal developments of the Stalinist party. I wrote: "It would be a thousand times more important than inviting Eastman, Lyons and the others to present their personal sweatings. I was wondering a bit why you gave space to Eastman's last insignificant and arrogant article. He has at his disposal Harper's Magazine, the Modern Monthly, Common Sense, etc. But I am absolutely perplexed that you personally invited these people to besmirch the not-so-numerous pages of the *New International*. The perpetuation of this polemic can interest some petty-bourgeois intellectuals but not the revolutionary elements. It is my firm conviction that a certain reorganization of the *New International* and the *Socialist Appeal* is necessary: more distance from Eastman, Lyons, etc.; and nearer to the workers and, in this sense, to the Stalinist party."

As always in such cases Shachtman replied inattentively and carelessly. In actuality, the question was resolved by the fact that the enemies of Marxism whom you invited refused to accept your invitation. This episode, however, deserves closer attention. On the one hand, you Comrade Burnham, bolstered by Shachtman, invite bourgeois democrats to send in friendly explanations to be printed in the pages of our party organ. On the other hand, you, bolstered by this same Shachtman, refuse to engage in a debate with me over the dialectic and the class nature of the Soviet State. Doesn't this signify that you, together with your ally Shachtman, have turned your faces somewhat towards the bourgeois semi-opponents and your backs toward your own party? Abern long ago came to the conclusion that Marxism is a doctrine to be honored but a good oppositional combination is something far more substantial. Meanwhile, Shachtman slips and slides downward, consoling himself with wise-cracks. I feel, however, that his heart is a trifle heavy. Upon reaching a certain point, Shachtman will, I hope, pull himself together and begin the upward climb again. Here is the hope that his "experimental" factional politics will at least turn out to the profit of "Science."

### **"An Unconscious Dialectician"**

Using as his text my remark concerning Darwin, Shachtman has stated, I have been informed, that you are an "unconscious dialectician." This ambiguous compliment contains an iota of truth.

Every individual is a dialectician to some extent or other, in most cases, unconsciously. A housewife knows that a certain amount of salt flavors soup agreeably, but that added salt makes the soup unpalatable. Consequently, an illiterate peasant woman guides herself in cooking soup by the Hegelian law of the transformation of quantity into quality. Similar examples from daily life could be cited without end. Even animals arrive at their practical conclusions not only on the basis of the Aristotelian syllogism but also on the basis of the Hegelian dialectic. Thus a fox is aware that quadrupeds and birds are nutritious and tasty. On sighting a hare, a rabbit, or a hen, a fox concludes: this particular creature belongs to the tasty and nutritive type, and—chases after the prey. We have here a complete syllogism, although the fox, we may suppose, never read Aristotle. When the same fox, however, encounters the first animal which exceeds it in size, for example, a wolf, it quickly concludes that quantity passes into quality, and turns to flee. Clearly, the legs of a fox are equipped with Hegelian tendencies, even if not fully conscious ones. All this demonstrates, in passing, that our methods of thought, both formal logic and the dialectic, are not arbitrary constructions of our reason but rather expressions of the actual inter-relationships in nature itself. In this sense, the universe throughout is permeated with “unconscious” dialectics. But nature did not stop there. No little development occurred before nature’s inner relationships were converted into the language of the consciousness of foxes and men, and man was then enabled to generalize these forms of consciousness and transform them into logical (dialectical) categories, thus creating the possibility for probing more deeply into the world about us.

The most finished expression to date of the laws of the dialectic which prevail in nature and in society has been given by Hegel and Marx. Despite the fact that Darwin was not interested in verifying his logical methods, his empiricism—that of a genius—in the sphere of natural science reached the highest dialectic generalizations. In this sense, Darwin was, as I stated in my previous article, an “unconscious dialectician.” We do not, however, value Darwin for his inability to rise to the dialectic, but for having, despite his philosophical backwardness, explained to us the origin of species. Engels was, it might be pointed out, exasperated by the narrow empiricism of the Darwinian method, although he, like Marx, immediately appreciated the greatness of the theory of natural selection. Darwin, on the contrary, remained, alas, ignorant of the meaning of Marx’s sociology to the end of his life. Had Darwin come out in the press against the dialectic or materialism, Marx and Engels would have attacked him with redoubled force so as not to allow his authority to cloak ideological reaction.

In the attorney’s plea of Shachtman to the effect that you are an “unconscious dialectician,” the stress must be laid on the word **unconscious**. Shachtman’s aim (also partly unconscious) is to defend his bloc with you by degrading dialectic materialism. For in reality, Shachtman is saying: The difference between a “conscious” and an “unconscious” dialectician is not so great that one must quarrel about it. Shachtman thus attempts to discredit the Marxist method.

But the evil goes beyond even this. Very many unconscious or semi-unconscious dialecticians exist in this world. Some of them apply the materialist dialectic excellently to politics, even though they have never concerned themselves with questions of method. It would obviously be pedantic blockheadedness to attack such comrades. But it is otherwise with you, Comrade Burnham. You are an editor of the theoretical organ whose task it is to educate the party in the spirit of the Marxist method. Yet you are a **conscious opponent of the dialectic** and not at all an **unconscious dialectician**. Even if you had, as Shachtman insists, successfully followed the dialectic in political questions, i.e., even if you were endowed with a dialectic “instinct,” we would still be compelled to begin a struggle against you, because your dialectic instinct, like other individual qualities, cannot be transmitted to others, whereas the conscious dialectic method can, to one degree or another, be made accessible to the entire party.

### **The Dialectic and Mr. Dies**

Even if you have a dialectic instinct—and I do not undertake to judge this—it is well-nigh stifled by academic routine and intellectual hauteur. What we term the class instinct of the worker, with relative ease accepts the dialectic approach to questions. There can be no talk of such a class instinct in a bourgeois intellectual. Only by **consciously** surmounting his petty-bourgeois spirit can an intellectual divorced from the proletariat rise to Marxist politics. Unfortunately, Shachtman and Abern are doing

everything in their power to bar this road to you. By their support they render you a very bad service, Comrade Burnham.

Bolstered by your bloc, which might be designated as the “League of Factional Abandon,” you commit one blunder after another: in philosophy, in sociology, in politics, in the organizational sphere. Your errors are not accidental. You approach each question by isolating it, by splitting it away from its connection with other questions, away from its connection with social factors, and—independently of international experience. You lack the dialectic method. Despite all your education, in politics you proceed like a witch-doctor.

In the question of the Dies Committee your mumbo-jumbo manifested itself no less glaringly than in the question of Finland. To my arguments in favor of utilizing this parliamentary body, you replied that the question should be decided not by principled considerations but by some special circumstances known to you alone but which you refrained from specifying. Permit me to tell you what these circumstances were: Your ideological dependence on bourgeois public opinion. Although bourgeois democracy, in all its sections, bears full responsibility for the capitalist regime, including the Dies Committee, it is compelled, in the interests of this very same capitalism, shamefacedly to distract attention away from the too naked organs of the regime. A simple division of labor! An old fraud which still continues, however, to operate effectively! As for the workers, to whom you refer vaguely, a section of them, and a very considerable section, is like yourself under the influence of bourgeois democracy. But the average worker, not infected with the prejudices of the labor aristocracy, would joyfully welcome every bold revolutionary word thrown in the very face of the class enemy. And the more reactionary the institution, which serves as the arena for the combat, all the more complete is the satisfaction of the worker. This has been proved by historical experience. Dies himself, becoming frightened and jumping back in time, demonstrated how false your position was. It is always better to compel the enemy to beat a retreat than to hide oneself without a battle.

But at this point I see the irate figure of Shachtman rising to stop me with a gesture of protest: “The opposition bears no responsibility for Burnham’s views on the Dies Committee. This question did not assume a factional character,” and so forth and so on. I know all this. As if the only thing that lacked was for the entire opposition to express itself in favor of the tactic of boycott, so utterly senseless in this instance! It is sufficient that the leader of the opposition, who has views and openly expressed them, came out in favor of boycott. If you happened to have outgrown the age when one argues about “religion,” then, let me confess, I had considered that the entire Fourth International had outgrown the age when abstentionism is accounted the most revolutionary of policies. Aside from your lack of method, you revealed in this instance an obvious lack of political sagacity. In the given situation, a revolutionist would not have needed to discuss long before springing through a door flung open by the enemy and making the most of the opportunity. For those members of the opposition who together with you spoke against participation in the Dies Committee—and their number is not so small—it is necessary in my opinion to arrange special elementary courses in order to explain to them the elementary truths of revolutionary tactics which have nothing in common with the pseudo-radical abstentionism of the intellectual circles.

### **“Concrete Political Questions”**

The opposition is weakest precisely in the sphere where it imagines itself especially strong—the sphere of day-to-day revolutionary politics. This applies above all to you, Comrade Burnham. Impotence in the face of great events manifested itself in you as well as in the entire opposition most glaringly in the questions of Poland, the Baltic states, and Finland. Shachtman began by discovering a philosopher’s stone: the achievement of a simultaneous insurrection against Hitler and Stalin in occupied Poland. The idea was splendid; it is only too bad that Shachtman was deprived of the opportunity of putting it into practise. The advanced workers in Eastern Poland could justifiably say: “A simultaneous insurrection against Hitler and Stalin in a country occupied by troops might perhaps be arranged very conveniently from the Bronx; but here, locally, it is more difficult. We should like to hear Burnham’s and Shachtman’s answer to a ‘concrete political question’: What shall we do between now and the coming insurrection?” In the meantime, the commanding staff of the Soviet army called upon the peasants and workers to seize the land and the factories. This call, supported by armed force, played an enor-

mous role in the life of the occupied country. Moscow papers were filled to overflowing with reports of the boundless "enthusiasm" of workers and poor peasants. We should and must approach these reports with justifiable distrust: there is no lack of lies. But it is nevertheless impermissible to close one's eyes to facts. The call to settle accounts with the landlords and to drive out the capitalists could not have failed to rouse the spirit of the hounded and crushed Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian peasants and workers who saw in the Polish landlord a double enemy.

In the Parisian organ of the Mensheviks, who are in solidarity with the bourgeois democracy of France and not the Fourth International, it was stated categorically that the advance of the Red Army was accompanied by a wave of revolutionary upsurge, echoes of which penetrated even the peasant masses of Rumania. What adds special weight to the dispatches of this organ is the close connection with the Mensheviks and the leaders of the Jewish Bund, the Polish Socialist Party and other organizations who are hostile to the Kremlin and who fled from Poland. We were therefore completely correct when we said to the Bolsheviks in Eastern Poland: "Together with the workers and peasants, and in the forefront, you must conduct a struggle against the landlords and the capitalists; do not tear yourself away from the masses, despite all their illusions, just as the Russian revolutionists did not tear themselves away from the masses who had not yet freed themselves from their hopes in the Czar (Bloody Sunday, January 22, 1905); educate the masses in the course of the struggle, warn them against naive hopes in Moscow, but do not tear yourself away from them, fight in their camp, try to extend and deepen their struggle, and to give it the greatest possible independence. Only in this way will you prepare the coming insurrection against Stalin." The course of events in Poland has completely confirmed this directive which was a continuation and a development of all our previous policies, particularly in Spain.

Since there is no principled difference between the Polish and Finnish situations, we can have no grounds for changing our directive. But the opposition, who failed to understand the meaning of the Polish events, now tries to clutch at Finland as a new anchor of salvation. "Where is the civil war in Finland? Trotsky talks of a civil war. We have seen nothing about it in the press," and so on. The question of Finland appears to the opposition as in principle different from the question of Western Ukraine and Byelo-Russia. Each question is isolated and viewed aside and apart from the general course of development. Confounded by the course of events, the opposition seeks each time to support itself on some accidental, secondary, temporary and conjunctural circumstances.

Do these cries about the absence of civil war in Finland signify that the opposition would adopt our policy if civil war were actually to unfold in Finland? Yes or no? If yes, then the opposition thereby condemns its own policy in relation to Poland, since there, despite the civil war, they limited themselves to refusal to participate in the events, while they waited for a simultaneous uprising against Stalin and Hitler. It is obvious, Comrade Burnham, that you and your allies have not thought this question through to the end.

What about my assertion concerning a civil war in Finland? At the very inception of military hostilities, one might have conjectured that Moscow was seeking through a "small" punitive expedition to bring about a change of government in Helsingfors and to establish the same relations with Finland as with the other Baltic states. But the appointment of the Kuusinen government in Terrijoki demonstrated that Moscow had other plans and aims. Dispatches then reported the creation of a Finnish "red army." Naturally, it was only a question of small formations set up from above. The program of Kuusinen was issued. Next the dispatches appeared of the division of large estates among poor peasants. In their totality, these dispatches signified an attempt on the part of Moscow to organize a civil war. Naturally, this is a civil war of a special type. It does not arise spontaneously from the depths of the popular masses. It is not conducted under the leadership of the Finnish revolutionary party based on mass support. It is introduced on bayonets from without. It is controlled by the Moscow bureaucracy. All this we know, and we dealt with all this in discussing Poland. Nevertheless, it is precisely a question of civil war, of an appeal to the lowly, to the poor, a call to them to appropriate the rich, drive them out, arrest them, etc. I know of no other name for these actions except civil war.

"But, after all, the civil war in Finland did not unfold," object the leaders of the opposition. "This means that your predictions did not materialize." With the defeat and the retreat of the Red

Army, I reply, the civil war in Finland cannot, of course, unfold under the bayonets of Mannerheim. This fact is an argument not against me but against Shachtman; since it demonstrates that in the first stages of war at a time when discipline in armies is still strong, it is much easier to organize insurrection, and on two fronts to boot, from the Bronx than from Terrijoki.

We did not foresee the defeats of the first detachments of the Red Army. We could not have foreseen the extent to which stupidity and demoralization reign in the Kremlin and in the tops of the army beheaded by the Kremlin. Nevertheless, what is involved is only a military episode, which cannot determine our political line. Should Moscow, after its first unsuccessful attempt, refrain entirely from any further offensive against Finland, then the very question which today obscures the entire world situation to the eyes of the opposition would be removed from the order of the day. But there is little chance for this. On the other hand, if England, France, and the United States, basing themselves on Scandinavia, were to aid Finland with military force, then the Finnish question would be submerged in a war between the U.S.S.R. and the imperialist countries. In this case, we must assume that even a majority of the oppositionists would remind themselves of the program of the Fourth International.

At the present time, however, the opposition is not interested in these two variants: either the suspension of the offensive on the part of the U.S.S.R., or the outbreak of hostilities between the U.S.S.R. and the imperialist democracies. The opposition is interested only in the isolated question of the U.S.S.R.'s invasion of Finland. Very well, let us take this as our starting point. If the second offensive, as may be assumed, is better prepared and conducted, then the advance of the Red Army into the country will again place the question of civil war on the order of the day, and moreover on a much broader scale than during the first and ignominiously unsuccessful attempt. Our directive, consequently, remains completely valid so long as the question itself remains on the agenda. But what does the opposition propose in the event the Red Army successfully advances into Finland and civil war unfolds there? The opposition apparently doesn't think about this at all, for they live from one day to the next, from one incident to another, clutching at episodes, clinging to isolated phrases in an editorial, feeding on sympathies and antipathies, and thus creating for themselves the semblance of a platform. The weakness of empiricists and impressionists is always revealed most glaringly in their approach to "concrete political questions."

### **Theoretical Bewilderment and Political Abstentionism**

Throughout all the vacillations and convulsions of the opposition, contradictory though they may be, two general features run like a guiding thread from the pinnacles of theory down to the most trifling political episodes. The first general feature is the absence of a unified conception. The opposition leaders split sociology from dialectical materialism. They split politics from sociology. In the sphere of politics they split our tasks in Poland from our experience in Spain—our tasks in Finland from our position on Poland. History becomes transformed into a series of exceptional incidents; politics becomes transformed into a series of improvisations. We have here in the full sense of the term, the disintegration of Marxism, the disintegration of theoretical thought, the disintegration of politics into its constituent elements. Empiricism and its foster-brother, impressionism, dominate from top to bottom. That is why the ideological leadership, Comrade Burnham, rests with you as an opponent of the dialectic, as an empiricist, unabashed by his empiricism.

Throughout the vacillations and convulsions of the opposition, there is a second general feature intimately bound to the first, namely, a tendency to refrain from active participation, a tendency to self-elimination, to abstentionism, naturally, under cover of ultra-radical phrases. You are in favor of overthrowing Hitler and Stalin in Poland; Stalin and Mannerheim in Finland. And until then, you reject both sides equally, in other words, you withdraw from the struggle, including the civil war. Your citing the absence of civil war in Finland is only an accidental conjunctural argument. Should the civil war unfold, the opposition will attempt not to notice it, as they tried not to notice it in Poland, or they will declare that inasmuch as the policy of the Moscow bureaucracy is "imperialist" in character "we" do not take part in this filthy business. Hot on the trail of "concrete" political tasks in words, the opposition actually places itself outside the historical process. Your position, Comrade Burnham, in relation to the Dies Commit-

tee merits attention precisely because it is a graphic expression of this same tendency of abstentionism and bewilderment. Your guiding principle still remains the same: "Thank you, I don't smoke."

Naturally, any man, any party, and even any class can become bewildered. But with the petty-bourgeoisie, bewilderment, especially in the face of great events, is an inescapable, and so to speak, congenital condition. The intellectuals attempt to express their state of bewilderment in the language of "science." The contradictory platform of the opposition reflects petty-bourgeois bewilderment expressed in the bombastic language of the intellectuals. There is nothing proletarian about it.

## **The Petty-Bourgeoisie and Centralism**

In the organizational sphere, your views are just as schematic, empiric, non-revolutionary as in the sphere of theory and politics. A Stolberg, lantern in hand, chases after an ideal revolution, unaccompanied by any excesses, and guaranteed against Thermidor and counter-revolution; you, likewise, seek an ideal party democracy which would secure forever and for everybody the possibility of saying and doing whatever popped into his head, and which would insure the party against bureaucratic degeneration. You overlook a trifle; namely, that the party is not an arena for the assertion of free individuality, but an instrument of the proletarian revolution; that only a victorious revolution is capable of preventing the degeneration not only of the party but of the proletariat itself and of modern civilization as a whole. You do not see that our American section is not sick from too much centralism—it is laughable even to talk about it—but from a monstrous abuse and distortion of democracy on the part of petty-bourgeois elements. This is at the root of the present crisis.

A worker spends his day at the factory. He has comparatively few hours left for the party. At the meetings he is interested in learning the most important things: the correct evaluation of the situation and the political conclusions. He values those leaders who do this in the clearest and the most precise form and who keep in step with events. Petty-bourgeois, and especially declassed elements, divorced from the proletariat, vegetate in an artificial and shut-in environment. They have ample time to dabble in politics or its substitute. They pick out faults, exchange all sorts of tidbits and gossip concerning happenings among the party "tops." They always locate a leader who initiates them into all the "secrets." Discussion is their native element. No amount of democracy is ever enough for them. For their war of words they seek the fourth dimension. They become jittery, they revolve in a vicious circle, and they quench their thirst with salt water. Do you want to know the organizational program of the opposition? It consists of a mad hunt for the fourth dimension of party democracy. In practise this means burying politics beneath discussion; and burying centralism beneath the anarchy of the intellectual circles. When a few thousand workers join the party, they will call the petty-bourgeois anarchists severely to order. The sooner, the better.

## **Conclusions**

Why do I address you and not the other leaders of the opposition? Because you are the ideological leader of the bloc. Comrade Abern's faction, destitute of a program and a banner, is ever in need of cover. At one time Shachtman served as cover, then came Muste with Spector, and now you, with Shachtman adapting himself to you. Your ideology I consider the expression of bourgeois influence in the proletariat.

To some comrades, the tone of this letter may perhaps seem too sharp. Yet, let me confess, I did everything in my power to restrain myself. For, after all, it is a question of nothing more nor less than an attempt to reject, disqualify, and overthrow the theoretical foundations, the political principles, and organizational methods of our movement.

In reaction to my previous article, Comrade Abern, it has been reported, remarked: "This means split." Such a response merely demonstrates that Abern lacks devotion to the party and the Fourth International; he is a circle man. In any case, threats of split will not deter us from presenting a Marxist analysis of the differences. For us Marxists, it is a question not of split but of educating the party. It is my firm hope that the coming convention will ruthlessly repulse the revisionists.

The convention, in my opinion, must declare categorically that

in their attempts to divorce sociology from dialectic materialism and politics from sociology, the leaders of the opposition have broken from Marxism and become the transmitting mechanism for petty-bourgeois empiricism. While reaffirming, decisively and completely, its loyalty to the Marxist doctrine and the political and organizational methods of Bolshevism, while binding the editorial boards of its official publications to promulgate and defend this doctrine and these methods, the party will, of course, extend the pages of its publications in the future to those of its members who consider themselves capable of adding something new to the doctrine of Marxism. But it will not permit a game of hide-and-seek with Marxism and light-minded gibes concerning it.

The politics of a party has a class character. Without a class analysis of the state, the parties, and ideological tendencies, it is impossible to arrive at a correct political orientation. The party must condemn as vulgar opportunism the attempt to determine policies in relation to the U.S.S.R. from incident to incident and independently of the class nature of the Soviet state.

The disintegration of capitalism, which engenders sharp dissatisfaction among the petty-bourgeoisie and drives its bottom layers to the left, opens up broad possibilities but it also contains grave dangers. The Fourth International needs only those emigrants from the petty-bourgeoisie who have broken completely with their social past and who have come over decisively to the standpoint of the proletariat.

This theoretical and political transit must be accompanied by an actual break with the old environment and the establishment of intimate ties with workers, in particular, by participation in the recruitment and education of proletarians for their party. Emigrants from the petty-bourgeois milieu who prove incapable of settling in the proletarian milieu must after the lapse of a certain period of time be transferred from membership in the party to the status of sympathizers.

Members of the party untested in the class struggle must not be placed in responsible positions. No matter how talented and devoted to socialism an emigrant from the bourgeois milieu may be, before becoming a teacher, he must first go to school in the working class. Young intellectuals must not be placed at the head of the intellectual youth but sent out into the provinces for a few years, into the purely proletarian centers, for hard practical work.

The class composition of the party must correspond to its class program. The American section of the Fourth International will either become proletarian or it will cease to exist.

\* \* \*

Comrade Burnham! If we can arrive at an agreement with you on the basis of these principles, then without difficulty we shall find a correct policy in relation to Poland, Finland, and even India. At the same time, I pledge myself to help you conduct a struggle against any manifestations whatsoever of bureaucratism and conservatism. These in my opinion are the conditions necessary to end the present crisis.

With Bolshevik greetings,

**L. TROTSKY**

January 7, 1940  
Coyoacan, D. F.

## **A Number of People —**

"Thus we see that high-sounding phrases against the ossification of thought, etc., conceal carelessness and helplessness in the development of theoretical ideas. The case of the Russian Social-Democrats strikingly illustrates the fact observed in the whole of Europe (and long ago observed in German Marxism) that the notorious freedom of criticism implies, not the substitution of one theory by another, but freedom from every complete and thought-out theory; it implies eclecticism and absence of principle. Those who are in the least acquainted with the actual state of our movement cannot but see that the spread of Marxism was accompanied by a certain deterioration of theoretical standards. Quite a number of people, with very little, and even totally lacking in, theoretical training, joined the movement for the sake of its practical significance and its practical successes."—Lenin in "What is to be Done?"

# California Agriculture—Ripe for Unionism

By C. CURTISS

## A BOOK REVIEW

*FACTORIES IN THE FIELD.* By Carey McWilliams. 334 pp. Little Brown and Company.

Highly centralized and trustified factory farms controlled by the banks, rapid elimination of the small independent farmer, a large super-exploited agricultural proletariat virtually without civil rights — this is California agriculture, ably depicted by Mr. Carey McWilliams in his book, *Factories in the Field*. And California merely shows the other states of the Union their immediate future. The adversaries of Marxism have always held up the farmers as a refutation of the Marxist concept of the centralization and concentration of industry and wealth. Once more the intellectual defenders of capitalism have been proved wrong.

The "primitive accumulation" of the main item of agricultural constant capital, the land, was accomplished as ruthlessly in California as elsewhere. The old Spanish and Mexican land grants, essentially feudal in their character, were bought for a song, or secured by force and cheating. In 1860, some 9,000,000 acres were concentrated in the hands of some 800 grantees.

The railroads were granted, in addition to a Federal subsidy equivalent to the complete cost of extending the system to California, every other section of land along the right of way. In this manner, the railroads were given 18 per cent of the State government land.

The third method of securing large stretches of land was through plain ordinary every-day swindling. For example, no limit was placed on the acreage of swamp land that a single person could buy. So one of the land barons hitched a team of horses to a rowboat and had it dragged over perfectly dry land, thereby "proving" the valuable land to be swamp and securing it for less than a dollar an acre.

That patriotism pays, was rediscovered by the growers who bought at extremely depressed prices the land which the Japanese owners were forced to sell upon the passage of the California alien land laws.

These methods together with the elimination of the small landowner by the ordinary process of concentration and centralization, have placed huge stretches of land under the domination of single companies or individuals.

From all over the world low paid workers were inveigled into toiling upon this land. In the beginning the native Indians were used; then the bindle-stiff appeared, ex-miners and ruined farmers; then followed the Chinese, Japanese, the Hindus,

Mexicans, Greeks, Italians, Filipinos, Negroes and last the "Okies" driven from the lands of Texas and Oklahoma by natural and social disasters. The growers have been able to use group against group to prevent the workers from organizing.

From 1865 to 1880 the crop of first importance was wheat. Then followed fruit, sugar beets, vegetables, and finally cotton. The transition from dry, wheat farming to irrigated farming required huge engineering projects. California's ranches and irrigation projects have been and still are a point of investment for world capital. Fifty per cent of the land in central and northern California, for example, is under the control of the Bank of America.

The organization of the agricultural industry from a capitalist point of view is highly involved. The completely parasitic ownership is entirely distinct from control and management. For example, Mr. McWilliams points out:

"... the owners of 309,000 citrus growing acres, valued at close to \$618,000,000 sell their crops through the California Fruit Growers' Exchange. The exchange picks, packs, pools, grades, ships and sells the orange crop. . . . The Fruit Growers' Supply Company, an agency of the exchange, owns vast tracts of timber and a lumber mill, and thus buys boxes and crates at cost. . . . As Mr. Stokes (a grower) pointed out: 'I irrigate my orchard with water delivered by a non-profit combination of growers. My trees are sprayed or fumigated by a non-profit partnership.' The exchange even notifies the grower when he is supposed to start the smudge pots burning to protect his crop from frost."

The hiring of labor has reached an unusual degree of centralization and organization as well. The employers cooperate to keep wages down:

"... the growers in a given area, involved in the production of a particular crop, would create an employment agency or exchange. This agency would estimate the labor requirements for the coming harvest season, fix a prevailing wage rate, and then proceed to recruit the necessary workers. . . . Under this practice, the workers more and more began to be employed by the industry rather than by individual growers."

The success of the employers in keeping wages down can be estimated by the fact that it is more advantageous for the workers to stay on the miserable relief than to work in the fields. As a matter of fact the growers have forced the relief administration to drive workers off the relief rolls, otherwise the growers could get no work-

ers at the wages they offer. This is the basis of their drive to have relief placed in the hands of the counties. In 1937, wages of a migratory agricultural family were estimated at \$350 to \$400 a year, which is an increase from 1935 when wages were \$289.

The agricultural workers, even the "Okies," are considered an inferior breed. They are not allowed to vote because of residential requirements. Labor laws do not include them as the legal fiction holds that agriculture is not an industry. Attempts at organization and strikes are met with brutal repression jointly by vigilante fascist groups and the local governments. The growers control legislation through their control of the state senate, and, with reason, oppose all moves for a unicameral legislature.

Here we have all the factors of a colony: foreign, often absentee capital, trustification, control by the banks, a super-exploited proletariat without rights.

Such is the background for the waves of desperate and heroic strikes which in the last decade have shaken the state like earthquakes. Dozens have been killed, hundreds wounded and hurt, thousands arrested, many imprisoned for years. But the strikes continue. They have been mainly under the leadership of left wing groups (I.W.W., C.P., S.W.P.) as the aristocratic craft union bureaucrats of the A.F.L., look down with disdain upon the agricultural worker.

The agricultural industry in California is over-ripe for a basic social change. While we disagree with some of the ideas expressed in the book (his estimate of the national government which Mr. McWilliams pictures as a saviour for the agricultural workers; and his estimate of the subsistence homesteads), we thoroughly agree with his conclusion when he says:

"Agricultural workers can be organized. Once they are organized they can work out the solutions for most of their immediate problems. . . . But the final solution will come only when the present . . . system of agricultural ownership in California is abolished. The abolition of this system involves at most merely a change in ownership. The collective principle is already there; large units of operation have been established, only they are being exploited by private interests for their own ends. California agriculture is a magnificent achievement: in its scope, efficiency, organization and amazing abundance."

The book by Mr. McWilliams is clearly and interestingly written, and we urge that every worker interested in one of the great tasks facing American labor, the organization of agriculture, read it.

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