

# Fourth International

## POLITICAL TRENDS IN THE U. S.

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*PEACE ON THE BARGAIN COUNTER---*An Editorial

March 1949

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## Manager's Column

Our readers did not tarry in responding to our request for comments on *Fourth International*. Here are some of the suggestions, criticisms and bouquets (which we didn't ask for but which we certainly appreciate):

From E. M., New York: "I enjoyed the February issue very much . . . especially 'A Forgotten Fighter Against Plutocracy.' And after reading 'Winston Churchill, Tory War-Dog' I couldn't stomach his serial now appearing in the *N. Y. Times*. Every article was very good.

"Although the magazine is very good it would not hurt if there were regular articles on the ABC of Marxism, including economics, politics, etc.—something like Leon Trotsky's '90 Years of the Communist Manifesto.' Although members of the party may be well versed in basic theory it seems to me that others could also profit. The material in 'From the Arsenal of Marxism' does not seem to fulfill the purpose."

From A. S., Roxbury, Mass. to William F. Warde: "Just read your article in the January issue 'A Suppressed Chapter in American History' and think it's one of the best written articles that I've read in a long time. Keep up the good work and try to bring out more articles of a similar nature in future issues."

From M. W., Cleveland: "I have been so pleased with the last two issues that I felt impelled to tell you so and urge you to continue the improvement. They are something we can be proud to sell to anyone. On the February issue, in addition to high praise I have one criticism and a suggestion or two. First before saying anything else I am sure that no further issues will appear with the incorrect crediting to the author on the cover. (The editor—and the printer—give

# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Volume 10 March 1949 No. 3 (Whole No. 93)

Published Monthly by the  
Fourth International Publishing Association

116 University Place, New York 3, N. Y. Telephone: Algonquin 4-9330. Subscription rates: \$2.50 for 12 issues; bundles, 20c for 5 copies and up. Foreign: \$3.00 for 12 issues; bundles 21c for 5 copies and up.

Re-entered as second-class matter May 27, 1948, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Managing Editor: GEORGE CLARKE

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their solemn promise it will never happen again—BM.)

"Criticism: the excerpts published under 'Arsenal of Marxism' in the Feb. issue seemed to me to be far below standard. The whole thing was sort of pointless, and would seem especially so to a new reader. We should have some better weapons in our 'Arsenal' than the above and here I come to the suggestion.

"Would it not be a good idea to publish under this heading some excerpts of the lesser-known and less widely circulated works of Lenin and Trotsky. Some of these are

known to very few comrades but are theoretically very important and the writing often brilliant. Offhand I would suggest excerpts from 'Defense of Terrorism' and some of the essays in 'Proletarian Revolution in Russia' by Lenin and Trotsky. There are many others."

From Grace Carlson, Minneapolis: "We thought the last issue (January) of the magazine looked very good. Ray used it in his report on the Plenum (SWP National Committee meeting) to demonstrate how we plan to carry

on the fight against the renegades, etc. The success of the venture has been reflected in a modest but gratifying increase in FI subs. We plan to have FI articles reviewed as part of the branch educational program. In short—we plan to turn more attention to the magazine than ever before."

D. Woods of San Francisco ordered 25 copies of the December FI featuring J. Meyer's speech on a 'Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Question' for sale at their celebration of Negro History Week. D. C. of St. Louis also ordered extra copies of the same issue for contacts active in Negro work.

We believe an excellent idea is embodied in the note above. FI agents and others will find excellent material in back numbers of the magazine that can be of service in daily activity. New readers and contacts can profit by reading this material. Write us and we will be glad to supply the issues needed if we have them in stock. From time to time we hope to advertise some of the main features in preceding issues.

Since the last issue, New York has undertaken an experiment in increasing circulation and approximately 150 newsstands are carrying the FI, many of them featuring a poster reproduction of the front cover. We hope the results will be good. Now how about some reports from other centers on what is being done to increase newsstand sales and sales at meetings?

COMING IN APRIL!  
**PLEKHANOV  
ON HEGEL**

Published for the first time  
in the U. S.

See page 95 for other  
features in the  
April issue.

# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 10

MARCH 1949

NUMBER 3

## EDITORIAL REVIEW

### *Peace on the Bargain Counter*

Nothing has been so symbolic of the decadence of the mightiest and most prosperous capitalist power in the world as the expressions of pain and alarm with which leading American statesmen and publicists greeted Stalin's proposal for a conference with Truman. The very thought that the points of friction and antagonism which rasp the nerves of an unsettled world might be mitigated, is anathema to the Yankee Caesars. For them, the peace danger has replaced the war danger. Truman's flimsy pretexts for rejecting the proffered meeting were a bad joke calculated to stir the mirth of cynical politicians and to dash the hopes and yearnings for peace of the peoples of America and the world.

The "cold war" is not only a tactic in the grand strategy of American imperialism for the destruction of the Soviet Union and world domination; it has become a way of life. The prosperity of American capitalism depends ever more directly upon a wasteful armaments economy supplying the sinews of war to the military machine at home and its satraps abroad. Wall Street has lost confidence in the works and profits of a peaceful order as is so frequently shown these days by the "jitters" caused by the slightest tremor on the stock market, the faintest sign of a contraction of the consumers market, the most infinitesimal drop in the price index. A cataclysmic crisis lurks in the shadows.

How to prevent this catastrophe from enveloping the United States and the world—and in the process laying low the designs of America's rulers—is a problem that baffles the wisest heads of the bourgeois intelligentsia. One thing they know: a termination of the "cold war" will embarrass and possibly upset the armaments and military aid program and thus hasten the coming of the crisis. That's not the least reason for the indecent haste of Truman and Acheson in rejecting Stalin's proposal—it sounded to them like a proposal to cut their own throats.

**The chorus of scepticism in Stalin's sincerity** provoked by his answers to correspondent Kingsbury Smith is propaganda that can fool only schoolboys and social democrats. A conference would soon reveal the hoax if one was intended. Moreover sincerity is as rare among diplomats as oranges in the Arctic Circle—discounted from the beginning in negotiations. The plain truth is that there is nothing that Washington could gain from a deal that would offset the advantages they now derive from their aggressive economic and military intervention in the af-

fairs of Europe.

A settlement of the German problem? The question is being decided by the re-industrialization of the Ruhr under Anglo-American auspices and by the incessant pressure on the Eastern Zone through the airlift and other measures. A reduction in armaments? The very proposal has a preposterous ring in the ears of the State Department not only for economic reasons but because it could undo the major diplomatic *coup* they are about to achieve with the signing of the North Atlantic Defense Pact. Trade with Eastern Europe? For this a deal is unnecessary: the satellite states need American exports and trade with Marshall Plan nations far more than America needs theirs, as witnessed by the number of trade pacts now being signed without an over-all political agreement.

### **The biggest impulsion for a deal --- not even**

hinted at in Stalin's statement or in the Truman-Acheson replies—comes not from Europe but from Asia, i.e., China. The disaster which has overtaken Chiang Kai-shek at the hands of the Stalinist peasant armies is above all a disaster for American imperialism. The nationalization of Eastern European industry is hardly worthy of notice compared with the possibility of the closing down of the untapped Chinese markets to American capital investments. Without the Asiatic market, billions in idle American capital will rot in the bank vaults and, as in pre-war Germany, ever-expanding industry will strangle within the confinement of national boundaries.

There are too many imponderables in the civil war in China for it to become the subject of diplomatic haggling—let alone public discussion between Stalin and Truman. It would be a different matter *if* Stalin held a whip-hand over Mao Tse-tung as he does over Rakosi and Dmitrov. But the evidence is contradictory. Despite his public professions of support to Stalin against Tito, Mao continues to resemble Tito in his political complexion, his independent strength and military power. What Washington wants in China is not a promise that its present inconsequential private capital will not be nationalized—Mao has already given that assurance. It wants a guarantee of "safe" and "stable" conditions for investment and exploitation. That requires not a verbal, or even a written agreement, but a political regime suitable for the purpose.

Can Stalin prevail upon Mao to share administrative and military power with the Kuomintang or its successor and to permit them solid controls, not merely the facade of office in a "coalition" cabinet? Does he exercise that much power over Mao? Or will Mao, the vulgar

agrarian democrat who is nimbler with Marxist phraseology than he is with Marxist politics and strategy, break his head on the dynamics of the Chinese revolution? Will the State Department find it more appropriate to wait until Mao's reactionary and utopian theory of stages—first feudalism, then capitalism, then socialism—crashes on the rocks of reality and once again permits imperialism to build a praetorian guard and let loose another white terror upon the Chinese people?

Washington's refusal to be rushed into negotiations indicates among other things that the answers to these questions are not ready to hand. That it has not closed the door entirely reveals the importance it attaches to a "Chinese deal" if Stalin can demonstrate more power over the course of events in that country than he now appears to possess.

When Washington demands "proofs" of Stalin's sincerity, it is not speaking of obvious concessions. These, it is now winning by force and intends to keep winning that way. It is demanding fundamental concessions which would undermine the Kremlin not only in its sphere in Eastern Europe but in the Soviet Union itself. Naturally, Washington is prepared to accept such an offering as the condition for a peaceful settlement, but its basic foreign policy is founded on the cold-blooded proposition that such far-reaching concessions can only be won as the trophies of war.

**It is inconceivable that Stalin is unmindful** of these facts of life. Why then did he take the extraordinary step of publicly proposing a conference with Truman? It is superficial to write off his proposal as "peace propaganda" alone, although he obviously counted on its impact upon the war-stricken peoples of Europe and even upon the European bourgeoisie which is not at all enthusiastic about their countries becoming a battleground once again. Perhaps Stalin was yielding to pressure from Eastern Europe in order to prove to them it is not he but Washington which is hostile to a deal.

The strength acquired by Stalin by the addition of the satellite countries is now turning to weakness. The Kremlin is discovering, once direct plunder became impracticable, that it is increasingly difficult to create healthy economic relationships with Eastern Europe that will favor the privileged Soviet bureaucracy and its nationally limited economy. Unable to supply these states with needed capital or even to fulfill elementary barter arrangements, Stalin has resorted to the most brazen exploitation.

The extension of peasant ownings, resulting from the division of the large estates in the Balkans, has given rise to new demands upon the states, exacerbating discontent with Stalin's depredations. Titoism is thus no accidental "Yugoslav" phenomenon but the most consummate form of a general and growing resistance to economic piracy. Moscow cannot hope to deal with this problem by force alone; it must find capital which is possessed only by its mortal enemy.

Beset by difficulties and crises on every side—from which the Soviet Union is by no means excluded—Stalin

once again turns to the formula by which he averted disaster in the past. For twenty years Stalin relied on diplomatic maneuvers, on abrupt shifts from one group of capitalist powers to another. Veering from an orientation based on the anti-Versailles powers in the Twenties to "collective security" pacts with the "democracies" in the mid-Thirties, then to an alliance with Hitler and finally back to the "peace-loving" nations, Stalin managed to save his bureaucratic regime. But at what tremendous cost!—the victory of Hitler in Germany, Franco's rise to power on the bleached bones of the Spanish proletariat, a second world slaughter, the saving of European capitalism after World War II and the degeneration of the Soviet Union into a loathsome caricature of the workers' state created by the Russian Revolution.

**Since the end of the war Stalin's formula has** lost its magic. The area for maneuvering between capitalist powers has been drastically curtailed if not eliminated altogether. There are still many capitalist nations but there is only one capitalist power—the United States. England, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland and the rest could no more move out of the American orbit and maintain capitalism in their countries than Stalin could abandon the monopoly of foreign trade and maintain his bureaucracy.

The deals consummated by Stalin in Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam were therefore more limited in character and more temporary than any of those cited above. Stalin's bargaining power rested upon the military victories of the Red Army and above all upon his influence over the insurgent proletariat of Europe. His trumps were played after the Stalinist parties succeeded in throttling the revolution in Italy and France and American imperialism began building its military counter-force in Europe. There in a nutshell is Stalin's present dilemma.

Where before the war Stalin could combine diplomatic maneuvers between the powers with the pressure of native Stalinist movements, since 1945 he has been limited almost exclusively to pressure. But the class struggle sets specific limits to this game which thwart the plans even of the arch-Machiavelli in the Kremlin. Thorez and Togliatti have discovered that the revolutionary momentum of the masses cannot be turned on and off at the bidding of the Kremlin like a water tap.

When, with the active aid of the Stalinists, the revolutionary tide was turned back, the traitors found that their position was not improved but worsened. Apathy and disillusionment gripped the masses when American-sponsored reaction mounted its offensive—directed in the first place against the Stalinists themselves. Therewith Stalinist pressure lost its force. The workers could not be stirred into action against "the American party" to safeguard "national sovereignty," i.e., the Kremlin. The "rotating strikes," resisted by the broad masses and draining the energy of the vanguard, in the end have helped only to buttress America's position in Europe.

Then too, the Stalinist parties, particularly those in France and Italy, have undergone profound changes. Al-

though still "border guards" for the Soviet bureaucracy, they have become mass parties of the proletariat not so easily maneuvered as the more compact pre-war Communist parties. The pseudo-left turn proclaimed in 1947 coincided with an upsurge of the masses in France and Italy and led to struggles which took on revolutionary proportions surpassing the bounds set by the Stalinist leadership. Alarmed at this development the bureaucracy was obliged to openly betray the insurrectionary general strike in Italy last July and to ruthlessly suppress the movement for a general strike in France at the cost of a shattering defeat for the miners' union.

When Cachin and Togliatti now speak of the peaceful co-existence of socialism and capitalism they speak from the bottom of their reformist hearts. They are perfectly at home in the role of loyal oppositionists to capitalist regimes or—in extremity—as underground agents for an advancing Red Army. But playing with the socialist revolution is causing disquiet and apprehension among them—too costly and too dangerous. Trotsky wrote in 1940 that Stalin traded the Communist parties like wheat and manganese. Unfortunately for the Kremlin traders, however, the price of Stalinism unlike that of wheat and ore has seriously declined on the world market.

**Does this mean that no agreement between Stalin and Truman is possible?** Such a conclusion underates the tremendous popular sentiment for peace which Washington cannot leave out of its considerations. American imperialism is obliged to resort to such maneuvers until the road to war is cleared of its main obstacle, i.e., until the workers of Western Europe are decisively defeated and reaction is firmly in the saddle. Furthermore, there is still the likelihood that Stalin's counter-revolutionary policies may still be of service to Wall Street in Western Europe and in regaining a foothold in China.

It does mean, however, that Washington will give far less for such a deal than it did at Yalta and Potsdam. It may extend some sorely needed loans to Stalin and his vassals to enable them to purchase American tools and machinery. It may alter the form but in no case will it change the essence of its world policy of anti-Communist aggression. The military bastion it is now building to encircle the Soviet Union will be strengthened, not dismantled. The "cold war," however rebaptized, will continue.

But for Stalin, who so sorely needs a breathing spell, even such "concessions" are not trifles. Pursuing a policy of the blindest empiricism, he will pay for them with the only coin he has—the servility and capitulation of the Communist parties in Western Europe. True, such a policy will be difficult to execute and will cause greater friction within the parties in the event of an economic crisis and sharpening class conflicts.

During the Renault strike in Paris when the workers defied the Stalinist union leaders, Thorez declared, "We will not permit ourselves to be outflanked on the left." The bureaucrat gives himself credit for an omnipotence he does not possess. The Stalinist higher command are not

free agents; they are reformist leaders of big mass movements which have a class logic of their own and—to make matters worse—they are tools of the Kremlin which is contemptuous of the domestic needs of the Communist parties. Despite their better judgment, another "right turn" may very well impose the role of Scheidemann and Noske, the Social Democratic butchers of the German revolution of 1918, upon the Thorezes and the Togliattis.

Will they succeed in this role and thus hasten a victory of reaction and the outbreak of war? Or will such a counter-revolutionary policy lead to deep convulsions within the Communist parties and large-scale splits resulting in the formation of mass revolutionary parties which will alter the entire course of world history?

In the depth of the crisis, the intensity of the class struggle, the revolutionary determination of the masses, the experience and perspicacity of Trotskyist leadership lies the answer to these fateful questions.

## *The Military Welfare State*

Since the "Big Upset" in the November 2nd elections, the people have been waiting with great expectation for the changes promised by the victorious party. They were told by Truman and associated liberals, labor leaders and social democrats that the "reactionary Big-Business" 81st Congress was effectively defeated and now the "common man" would be "restored" to his rightful place in Washington. To be sure, Truman was in no rush to get on with the "house-cleaning" and a couple of months passed before he would even reveal his plans. Questions and rumors began to circulate.

The doubting Thomases were quickly put to rout, however, when the President delivered his State of the Union message to the brand-new, "people's" 82nd Congress. The new administration, he pledged, would inaugurate a "fair deal." A middle course would be steered between Hoover's "trickle-down concept of national prosperity" and the "tyranny" of communism and collectivism. Not only would the corporations be curbed for the benefit of the people who would enjoy the benefits of liberal labor and social legislation among other good things, but America would demonstrate to the whole world that private enterprise could serve the masses as well as the profiteers. In brief Truman was outlining his plan for what Chief Justice Douglas called the "social welfare" or "human welfare" state. And just to make sure that his services would be properly appreciated, the President put in right away for a \$25,000 raise.

Sufficient time has now elapsed for the noise and excitement to die down to permit a preliminary investigation of what has happened. That Congress has only begun its deliberations is no bar to this review because its decisions will in no case exceed the limits of Truman's message on the budget, in most cases they will not even come up to his proposals.

The first striking impression of the "new" administra-

tion is its physical similarity—not difference—with the old one. With few exceptions the executive personnel remains unchanged. Forrestal—whom we were assured by Truman's left wing would get the gate, if not for his Big-Business-Brass-Hat policies then at least for his political "disloyalty" in the election—Forrestal remains as he says "to serve his country" (read: investment bankers) as Secretary of Defense. Witchhunter Clark, millionaire Harriman, banker Snyder, Generals Clay and MacArthur, to mention but a few of the gold-braid-monopolist crowd which ran the last administration, are still doing business at the same official stand. The only notable exceptions are Marshall and Lovett, replaced by Acheson and Webb for reasons that are still obscure although we can guess that the new window dressing is presumed to be more pleasing to domestic and foreign eyes.

None are as perplexed and dismayed by the unchanging character of the administration as the labor leaders and social-democratic advisers, although they hasten to reassure their following that the program is decisive. A half-truth. Roosevelt junked the New Deal with almost the same "liberal" personnel that inaugurated it. But it is unlikely that Truman's reactionary personnel can do the reverse. The physical composition of the executive power is symbolic of the unbroken unity of the government, the military and finance capital. It is not the program which determines Truman's actions but the omniscient trinity which determines the program. Let us see what—if anything—in the program has changed.

**The militarization of the nation proceeds un-**interrupted. Truman's request for the appropriation to cover expenditures for past and future wars reaches astronomical sums and hogs the lion's share of the budget. This fact alone should suffice to reveal the character of the administration for, in the first place, military expenditure strengthens the big trustified industries like steel, chemicals and oil while it weakens the competitive consumer goods industries and places intolerable burdens on the people. The placid reception of the stock market to Truman's budget quickly confirmed that the "people's" President had given Big Business no cause for alarm.

U. S. foreign policy will undeviatingly follow the pre-election design. This was made unambiguously clear in the inaugural speech where the President seized the occasion to proclaim that there would be no let-up in the "cold war" against the Soviet Union and its satellites. Two months after the election, by his brusque rejection of Stalin's plea, he has shattered the peace illusion created by his vote-catching rumor that Vinson was to be dispatched to Moscow for talks with "my friend Joe." The Atlantic Pact, the first military alliance in American history—an alliance moreover which takes the war-making powers out of the hands of Congress—is awaiting only a few correct legal formulas before it is rushed through the "people's" Congress. What better atmosphere could serve such belligerent actions than the raging anti-Communist hysteria surrounding the Mindszenty incident!

The administration continues to foster the steady drift

toward a police state. Only the form is changed to give the regime a "new look." The notorious Un-American Committee is to be "civilized" a bit but not abolished—for this audacious move we can thank the "liberal" Democrat Holi-field backed for reelection by Wallace and the Stalinists. The witchhunt has changed its locale and its methods, from the Klieg-light hearings in Washington to the trial of the Stalinists on Foley Square; but it continues just the same. The loyalty purges, minus screaming headlines, proceed as before. Despite the protests of some of Truman's most ardent supporters in the labor bureaucracy, the "subversive" blacklist and James Kutcher's dismissal stand as decreed. To complete the picture, Truman announced to a startled nation that regardless of the new labor law he reserves the right to invoke injunctions against the unions. The Murrays, the Reuthers and the Greens promised greater democracy if the Republicans were run out, government by the people; they are getting government by decree.

**Running counter to its general program of** undiminished reaction is the apparent liberalization of the attitude of the administration toward labor. Truman has proposed to remove the most baneful sections of the Taft-Hartley law, legislation for a government-subsidized health insurance plan, a public housing program, more federal aid to education, a larger old-age pension and a higher minimum wage.

Yet if these proposals are carefully scrutinized it will become obvious that they scarcely scratch the surface in meeting the needs of the people. The appropriations requested to implement this program account for the smallest share of the new budget whose major expenditures are intended for military purposes. It is precisely the ratio between militarization and social reform that contains the nub of the question. *A change has occurred in the attitude of the ruling party toward the labor bureaucracy—but not toward labor.*

This change was determined by the election which so to speak summed up the failure of the two-year Taft-Hartley era. The bourgeoisie found it increasingly difficult to rule without the active support of the labor bureaucracy. Not the least of the troubles to emerge from this iron-fisted regime was a tendency for the domestic discontent to coalesce with opposition to foreign policy. The danger was that the labor bureaucracy—fervid in its support of the Truman-Marshall doctrine and eager to acquiesce if shown the slightest consideration—would lose control over the workers or be compelled to take the road of active political opposition to the government. The election provided the bourgeoisie with a happy solution to this problem.

Although labor's votes were decisive in the Democratic victory, there was no *independent* mobilization of the masses on their *own* program and for their *own* party. Lacking a reasonable alternative the workers, without enthusiasm and without conviction, followed the road charted by the labor bureaucracy which once again har-

nessed labor's strength to a capitalist party. It is therefore not without reason that the bureaucracy feels itself strengthened by the Truman triumph for which it takes a large share of the credit. The savage attacks on internal union democracy in the CIO convention, described elsewhere in this issue, give the measure of this newly acquired self-confident arrogance. On their side, the organized workers, by their failure to develop an insurgent movement to force the government to realize its promises and go beyond them, have indicated an acceptance of the self-glorifying analysis of the election returns made by the bureaucracy.

**If the bourgeoisie looks more kindly on the labor bureaucracy** it is because of the recognition of its role in saving the two-party system and preventing the emergence of a powerful and uncontrollable labor party movement. The concessions now being offered in Washington are only incidentally intended to alleviate the hardships of the people—and in fact they are too trivial to serve that purpose. These sops are primarily intended for use by the labor bureaucracy in maintaining and consolidating its control over the workers. They are intended for use by labor demagogues in selling the Truman-Marshall doctrine to workers at home and in convincing the European proletariat of the virtues of American imperialism. In brief, these "concessions" constitute a thinly concealed bribe which the monopolists now feel obliged to pay out of their imperialist super-profits for the upkeep of a social-imperialist bureaucracy, as Lenin so aptly described it.

This bribery is not a new phenomenon, as Bert Cochran points out in his article on "The New Union Bureaucracy" appearing in another part of this issue. It is merely a continuation of the course followed by Roosevelt to insure support of the labor leadership for the last war. What is new however is the time and the conditions under which these new concessions make their appearance. The rearmament program instituted by the British bourgeoisie in the mid-Thirties was accompanied not by added concessions to the labor bureaucracy but by a gradual withdrawal of the old ones. The same development began earlier in Germany and was completed in a much more ferocious form under the Nazi dictatorship. There were not enough super-profits to divide between the military machine and the labor bureaucracy.

What is new in the United States is that the armaments-militarization program goes hand in hand with social reforms—however slight. There has arisen, to use a not exactly scientific expression, not a "social welfare" state but a "*military welfare*" state. The Keynesian theory, currently appearing as the "mixed economy," so beloved by the would-be liberal saviors of capitalism, is being realized in a new and unexpected form. The government is spending, to be sure, to fill in the gaps created by diminishing private investment. But its expenditures are going down the rat-hole of a destructive arms economy and not primarily for goods and services needed by the people.

That their theory has not been realized according to prescription does not lessen the ardor of the labor bureau-

crats and their social democratic flunkeys for the "military welfare" state. What does it matter to them that America's substance is wasted on the tools of mass murder, or that only a trickle of the vast wealth of this country reaches the poor and exploited, or that the world's millions are groaning under the oppressive weight of the monstrous American military machine, or that the inevitable outcome of this course is an atomic war? It is enough for the Murrays, the Reuthers and the Greens that capitalism survives and above all that their privileges continue.

**Unfortunately for them, however, this unique development is at best transitory.** Favored by exceptional conditions, the American bourgeoisie, emerging from the war as the solitary capitalist world power, was able to use its position to accumulate tremendous surpluses, a fraction of which it is now turning over to the labor bureaucracy for services rendered. But that surplus is rapidly being exhausted by an exigent, self-imposed obligation to preserve capitalism against revolution not only in Europe but on the planet as a whole. Trotsky wrote:

It is precisely the international strength of the United States and her irresistible expansion arising from it that compels her to include the powder magazines of the whole world into the foundations of her structure, i.e., all the antagonisms between the East and the West, the class struggles in Old Europe, the uprisings of the colonial masses, and all wars and revolutions (Third International After Lenin).

This was written almost 21 years ago when relative stability still prevailed in the capitalist world, when Britain, France and Germany were still world powers, when the colonial peoples were reasonably quiescent and when the borders of capitalist Europe still extended to the Soviet Union!

These world contradictions, now immeasurably sharpened and steadily undermining American imperialism, combined with the impending crisis at home will force the monopolists to make a choice between the military machine and social reforms. The coincidence of the periods of social reform and the armaments economy—widely separated in time in Europe—is not a sign of American uniqueness. It is a reminder that the life span of the social-imperialist bureaucracy will be drastically abbreviated. It can be predicted with assurance that the American bourgeoisie will follow its European prototypes, and the labor bureaucracy, for all its cringing submissiveness, will be shown the gate.

With equal rapidity, American workers will learn from this experience that there can be only one type of "social welfare" state—the Workers and Farmers Government.

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# New Problems of American Socialism

By James P. Cannon

*(The following is part of a speech by Comrade Cannon at the 20th Anniversary Plenum of the Socialist Workers Party, December 27, 1948.)*

A number of new developments, which have been in process for about ten years in the American labor and radical movement, have reached a point of culmination. The struggle for socialism has entered a new stage and is encountering new complications. Problems which were implicit in the earlier period of the labor and socialist movement have ripened and become actual. The main points of the new situation require analysis and the adoption of appropriate tactics and methods of work.

During the election campaign we invoked the tradition of Debs—pioneer socialist presidential candidate in the United States. We claimed to be his real continuators, and we were justified in this contention. Debs was not some sort of bloodless, neutral liberal or harmless critic of the existing order, as he is represented nowadays by so many social democrats and other charlatans. Debs was a revolutionist.

One has only to pick up his collected writings and speeches, which were recently published, to see how all of Debs' utterances were permeated with the sentiment of struggle against capitalism and capitalist war. Our candidates, and only our candidates, spoke the same language in the 1948 campaign. In addition, Debs was the most distinguished of all class-war prisoners. Our candidates were also class-war prisoners. The comparison of our candidates with Debs was appropriate, especially in the contrast with Thomas and Wallace who, each in his own way, claimed a certain radicalism, but are far removed from the spirit and the tradition of Debs.

Our campaign argument was basically correct, but it was somewhat over-simplified. If we content ourselves with the reiteration of this simple comparison, the education of our new recruits will remain defective and inadequate. The comparison must now be made more precise together with a certain differentiation, especially for the education of our youth and that great draft of a new generation which will awaken to political radicalism in the next period. Continuation of the Debs tradition cannot mean a mere repetition. Much has changed since his time. We have to take up where Debs left off. Debs symbolized and represented prewar American socialism. By that I mean pre-World War I. That was the heyday of Debsian socialism, and many things have happened since then.

## The Decades Between

To mention a few details: There have been two world wars; the Russian Revolution and its degeneration; the rise of Stalinism; the great, unprecedented crisis of the Thirties which was never overcome by the normal operation of capitalist economic laws; the accelerated breakdown of capitalism as a world system; the uprising of the colonial

world; the emergence of the United States as the first capitalist power in the world—you might almost say, the only real capitalist power in the world; and the rise of industrial unionism in the shape of the CIO in the United States, the organization of a trade union movement of 15,000,000. Now we can add: the growing consolidation of a new conservative labor bureaucracy which operates as an agency of capitalism inside the labor movement.

Two generations of communists and socialists have been devoured by these mighty events; only a small minority have stood against their weight and terror. The complexities of the times have wrought a great confusion. The events which have prepared the conditions for a great revival and expansion of the revolutionary socialist movement have temporarily demoralized it. Renegacy is no longer an individual, but a mass phenomenon. The program of Marxism—the whole idea of the socialist emancipation of the workers—has been subjected to new attacks, on a wider scale and with more variety, and with more effectiveness in many ways than ever before.

Revolutionary strategy must be adapted to the new circumstances. In prewar Debsian times, simple anti-capitalist argument was the main burden of socialist agitation. Read through the whole book of Debs. It is as simple as ABC—organize the workers, do away with capitalism, replace it with socialism. All that remains correct. But such propaganda alone will not suffice today. We must deal with new developments and new complications which were not foreseen by the movement of Debs' time.

## Pioneer Socialism

Pioneer socialism, whose tradition we rightly claim, was addressed to a working class not yet conscious of itself, and not organized. The call of pioneer socialism was a call to the workers to organize and struggle against a still-ascending capitalist class, which was still able to rule in its own name. The atomized working class was weaker then, and the ruling class was stronger, than either will ever be again. The capitalist parties in those days didn't even bother to pay any attention to the demands of the labor movement. Gompers used to go from one convention to another like a beggar, petitioning the platform committees of the Republican and Democratic parties to insert some verbal concession to the trade union movement. And almost invariably he was given the brush-off. The unions had no real mass power. The capitalist parties operated in disregard of them and felt no need of a coalition with the working-class movement.

The pioneer socialist agitators considered the industrial organization of the wage slaves of the great monopolies as the first task; this, they thought, was half and even more than half of the battle. It was no accident that Debs, Haywood and DeLeon, the best pioneer leaders of American socialism, were founders of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), heralds of industrial unionism.

Debs and Haywood were not "labor statesmen" but strike leaders of the unorganized masses—the most exploited and deprived, who had no means of organization except by strikes under conditions prevailing then—the blacklist and spy systems. Most of the great strikes took place as spontaneous revolts of the workers; organization was effected only during the strikes, and most often was lost afterward. The great concentrated effort of such men as Debs and Haywood was to organize the workers, especially the unskilled in the mass production industries. They thought that a labor movement organized in struggle against the capitalists could easily do away with capitalism.

Much of what was set by the pioneers as a goal, which they conceived would bring them to the very threshold of the social revolution—the industrial organization of the American working class—has been achieved even beyond their dreams. The organization of 15 million workers, especially the CIO section, which is the great potentially revolutionary section, undoubtedly represents an enormous step forward. I don't know whether other comrades agree with me, but I have always considered the semi-uprising of the American workers, which culminated in the sit-down strikes and the building of the CIO, as a world event equal in historic significance to anything that happened in Europe, except the Russian Revolution.

The great upsurge of industrial unionism is a mighty advance toward the socialist culmination of the class struggle in the United States. But it alone doesn't solve the problem, as many of the pioneers expected; for the trade unions, depending on their policy and leadership, can be either revolutionary instruments for the abolition of capitalism or props for its support. The vast expansion of this great trade union movement is raising new problems with burning actuality, in particular the problem of bourgeois ideology and influence within the unions. In the main, that is the problem of the capitalist-minded bureaucracy in the trade union movement and the traitor intellectuals, allied with them in the service of American imperialism. The struggle against this perfidious gang appears more and more as the central problem of the American revolution.

### **The Foresight of Lenin and DeLeon**

It is remarkable how Lenin and DeLeon, our own DeLeon, foresaw this problem of the role of reformism in the labor movement at the dawn of the modern labor movement itself, in both Russia and America. Lenin's main blows, by far the greatest volume of his polemics, were directed against the Mensheviks for influence over a mass labor movement which did not yet exist in Russia. And similarly, DeLeon fought the reformists and labor fakery—the American counterparts of the Russian Mensheviks—here in the United States when the trade union movement was much more of an anticipation and a hope than an actuality.

The new mass trade union movement in the United States now reveals in life the very same problem which Lenin and DeLeon solved theoretically in advance of the actual organization of the masses. It is clear that the

strategy of the revolution in the United States cannot consist simply of the head-on fight of the workers against the capitalist class. That would be a rather easy task. The workers, due to their strategic position in production and their overwhelming numbers, can easily overthrow capitalism—providing they act as a class for themselves. The issue hangs on that proviso. The influence of the capitalists and their ideology inside the working class is the main factor impeding the socialist emancipation of the workers. The grand strategy of the revolution, the key to the overthrow of United States capitalism, is the elimination of this bourgeois influence from the unions.

The agents of this alien class influence are the top union officialdom and their allies, the anti-Marxist intellectuals and ideologists who help to formulate their ideas and arguments. Serving their own privileges and self-interests, these two groupings, the trade union bureaucracy and this great assortment of anti-Marxist intellectuals—publicists, journalists, philosophers and professors—work harmoniously together against the rank and file of the exploited, against the aspiring youth, against the socialist revolution. The separation between these two groupings should be regarded as a division of labor and not as a real division of forces. They have numerous points of contact and cooperation and act together more and more. And at the moment they are very strong.

### **Anti-Marxism on the Offensive**

Anti-Marxism, which is only another way of saying pro-capitalism, is on the offensive in the United States, as it has been for ten years; and not only in society generally, but in the labor movement, and in what used to be the socialist and radical circles of the intellectuals. The movement of ideologists and politicians away from communism, from the whole concept of the socialist reorganization of society, has become a rout. We have witnessed a complete reversal of the trend which began in 1917 and continued up until the middle of the Thirties. Then the trend of all politically awakening people, labor activists, intellectuals and student youth, was away from reformism and toward communism, toward the Russian Revolution and what it symbolized. The exceptions were very few.

During the period from 1917 to the middle of the Thirties those who turned from communism back to social democracy numbered scarcely a dozen inconsequential people. But there was a steady recruitment from the ranks of the social democracy and all its various manifestations over to communism, either to the official Communist Party or, later, toward us. The mid-Thirties, the time of the Moscow Trials, represent the great dividing line. Since then the drift has been all the other way, back toward reformism. Social democracy, in its peculiar American form, has been receiving constant reinforcements. In the political essence of the matter there has been a social-democratic revival.

This country produces many things uniquely. For understandable historical reasons we have had only a comparatively small workers' political movement; but this

small movement has nevertheless experienced the phenomenon of mass desertion and renegacy in the recent years. By renegades, I don't mean merely ex-Trotskyists, although when you count them up, there is an imposing number of them also. I am speaking of two whole generations of communists and socialists of all groups who have been devoured by the events of this past period. Of course, the majority simply fell aside in exhaustion and disillusionment. But many of the turn-coat labor activists and intellectuals, who have made their peace with the ruling class, remain politically active against the cause they once espoused. They have become the spokesmen of a neo-social democratic movement.

### Social Democracy in Its New Garb

Some comrades appear to be inclined to separate those whom we call the social democrats, for want of a better name—the reformist ideologists and politicals—from the trade union bureaucracy. This, in my opinion, is incorrect. These people feed ideological arguments to the labor-skates; and more than that, give them a feeling of theoretical certainty and moral righteousness in serving American imperialism. In the division of labor between the pseudo-progressive labor bureaucrats and the intellectual priests, the role of the latter is not unimportant. They are no longer polemicizing against capitalism and supplying socialist ideas to the proletariat. They are glorifying capitalism and supplying ideas to the trade union bureaucrats to justify their betrayals.

Take note of this contrast. The old social democracy of Debs was a militant anti-Gompers movement. Debs damned and condemned the AFL policy on the political field and on the economic field. He denounced Gompersism for its craft unionism, its conservatism, its support of capitalist parties, etc. The *New Leader*, which is a lineal, if somewhat unnatural descendant of the socialist movement of Debs, was invited on the occasion of its 25th anniversary to send a special representative to the AFL convention. They sent Max Eastman, who went to the convention and praised the fat boys of business unionism for the wonderful things they were doing. That meeting was symbolic of the fusion of the social-democratic politicals with the labor-fakers. The true heirs of Gompers and the apostate descendants of Debs met there and recognized each other as kindred spirits.

I believe we have been somewhat deceived by appearances. The resurgence of American social democracy has been taking place in new and peculiar forms, and we have not paid sufficient attention to it. As an independent organization, the Socialist Party, for example, doesn't amount to much. The Social Democratic Federation, likewise. It is unquestionable that the social democrats are weaker organizationally, in a party sense, than they have ever been in this country. But ideologically, and from the standpoint of propagandistic effectiveness, *and of organization in new forms*, they are far stronger than ever.

This gang of professors, writers, publicists and philosophers, who make up the staff of the *New Leader* and its

enormous supporting periphery, are integrated with the trade union bureaucracy. Dubinsky's "Liberal Party" and "Americans for Democratic Action" are in reality part of the social-democratic network. So are the Rand School, the *Jewish Daily Forward*, and a score or more of other institutions. They share a common ideology and work together quite consistently along the same lines and with the same aims.

They control thousands of well-paying jobs in the various unions, organizations and institutions, which constitute a firm material basis for an informal organization of people who work together without paying dues and without formal discipline. They are sometimes divided on incidental questions. But as against the proletarian revolution, as against the rank and file of the working class, they have a very effective coordination of thought and action.

The trade union bureaucracy and its allied ideological wing is a petty-bourgeois class formation, with a firm material basis of privileges and jobs. They are conservative to the marrow of their bones. When they talk of "labor," they are thinking primarily of themselves and the privileged aristocracy. And if they have little thought or concern for the lower strata, the most oppressed and deprived section of the American proletariat, and the homeless and landless peasantry, they think nothing and care nothing for the hundreds of millions of people in Europe and Asia, in Africa.

They are more or less conscious in their allegiance to American imperialism's program of world conquest; what they ask in return is privileges for themselves. They are pretty timid in everything except the defense of their own privileges. Before the power of American imperialism, they never think of making a real struggle. They bestir themselves only, as in the case of the Taft-Hartley law, against those infringements which undermine the basis of their existence, the trade unions. But they fight with great viciousness and venom any movement from below, from the rank and file. Historical experience has revealed to perfection this veritable trait of the reformist labor bureaucracy—both trade union and political—that they are capable of fighting with unparalleled ferocity against proletarian revolution and those who represent it, but they are never capable of overthrowing capitalism, or fighting against what they consider a superior power.

The attitude toward the reformist bureaucracy, in all fields of the labor movement, economic and political, is an infallible test of the real quality of any political party or group. Those who support this bureaucracy, recommending it as an agency for the advancement of socialism, or giving the danger of Stalinism or anything else as an excuse, can only succeed in exposing the falsity of their revolutionary pretensions and discrediting themselves. The only possible role for a revolutionary party is that of opposition to the conservative bureaucracy.

The complication introduced into the labor movement by Stalinism is well known to everybody present here. There is a right way and a wrong way to fight against it. It is very clear to us now, I think, or should be, that our

blocs with the reformist bureaucrats in the trade unions against the Stalinists could only be of a temporary and provisional nature. They were useful and necessary to break the apparatus control of the Stalinists. We have enough experience to know that in order to establish even a semblance of democracy in a union you have to smash the Stalinists' control of the apparatus. But that is about the maximum value there is in an anti-Stalinist combination with reformists.

The Stalinists are on the run now, losing control in one union after another. But organizational defeats do not necessarily mean their elimination, either from the political scene or from the trade union movement. Far from it. A worsening of social conditions will quickly impel a new wave of radicalization; the youth will turn against the traitor intellectuals; a new opposition to the conservative bureaucracy is bound to arise. Unless genuine revolutionists head this opposition, the Stalinists will get another chance. If we make a mistake in our analysis and in our attitude toward the trade union bureaucracy, which is growing more and more conservative, the Stalinists will again unfailingly get hold of the masses when they begin to move in a radical direction.

The combination of trade union bureaucrats, social-democratic politicians and anti-Marxist intellectuals is very strong at the moment. But their prosperity depends on the prosperity of American capitalism which itself has not a very firm foundation. They are products of a certain conjuncture, of an unhealthy and artificial prosperity, based almost entirely upon the expenditures for the war and the preparations for a new one. With the collapse of this prosperity, or a serious shaking of it, their position will be undermined. The rank and file will begin to stir and assert themselves. The unavoidable crisis will break the grip of the bureaucracy and discredit the anti-Marxist ideologists.

The AFL bureaucracy once seemed to be all-powerful, not only to control the AFL, but also to prevent the masses of the unskilled and most deprived from ever forming unions for themselves. But when the social crisis forced the masses into motion, they found a way to organize. And they found new leaders out of their own ranks. That will be the case the next time too, and on a far greater scale. The struggle against the conservative bureaucracy is the training school for the leadership of the future.

# The Priests Bore from Within

## *Roman Catholicism in the Trade Unions*

By Art Preis

The Vatican and its vast priest-caste pursue as their most immediate objectives: 1. the destruction of the Soviet Union; 2. the preservation of the capitalist profit system. With its incalculable wealth and its centralized, professional army of clerics the Vatican is attempting to dragoon its 350 million followers into imperialism's "cold war" against the Soviet Union and to divide and disorient the working-class struggle for socialism.

These aims coincide directly with those of the ruling American capitalists, mainly Protestant. Although capitalism rose to power in centuries of revolutionary struggle against the Catholic hierarchy and its feudal order, today the capitalists recognize in the Vatican an aggressive, ruthless, cunning and immensely potent force for the defense of capitalism. These two once-mortal enemies are linked now as allies.

The Vatican is an especially welcome ally of American imperialism because of the Roman Church's ideological sway over hundreds of millions. It is using its religious influence today to compete everywhere for hegemony of the working class and control of the labor movements. Under the banner of "anti-communism," the priests are attempting to bore from within the labor unions, divide them along religious lines, crush the proponents of class struggle and place an iron clerical grip on the workers' mass organizations. In the United States too, the Catholic

hierarchy is concentrating its major efforts on the unions.

The deep penetration of the Catholic hierarchy into the American unions, particularly the CIO, is receiving favorable attention in the Big Business press. Under the title of "The Labor Priests," the Jan. 1949 *Fortune* magazine reports: "The new campaign launched by Pres. Philip Murray to drive out the Communists also brings to the fore another development within the CIO—the rising force of Catholicism in American labor."

Noting that a quarter of all American union leaders are Catholics, *Fortune* states:

"Most of these men, and even non-Catholics such as Walter Reuther of the United Automobile Workers, have welcomed Catholic support in battling Communists. Yet all of them carefully avoid *public* support of *organized* Catholic labor activity. Even without such approval the open influence of individual Catholic clerics has been considerable, especially in the CIO."

*Fortune* does not fail to note the duplicity of the top CIO bureaucrats who pretend not to recognize this organized "outside influence" in the CIO while they work hand-in-glove with it. The national CIO convention last November affords a striking illustration of this.

The convention was opened with an "invocation" by Rev. Thomas Tobin, Vicar General for Archbishop Howard of Portland, Ore. This "invocation" was a lengthy exposi-

fion of the Catholic hierarchy's program of "industry councils," called "corporative units" by Pope Pius XI and first established by Mussolini in his "corporative state." The most brazen part of Rev. Tobin's performance was when he said, "The philosophy of the Industrial Council program are thus admirably summarized on the masthead of a Detroit paper," and then he read from this "anonymous" paper the full program printed in the *Wage-Earner*, official publication of the Detroit chapter of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU).

Far from expressing resentment at this, Murray opened his keynote address by declaring his "grateful acknowledgment of the most remarkable and inspirational address" of Rev. Tobin, adding, "His speech encompasses the program of the CIO." Thus did the CIO head publicly link the program of the industrial unions, built by workers of every creed united in titanic class battles, with the ultra-reactionary program of the priest-ridden power machine, the ACTU.

That power machine which operated so conspicuously at the CIO convention, where a squad of priests roamed the convention and steered their faction, today boasts of significant influence and, in some instances, outright control in at least a dozen international unions, mainly CIO.

In the United Automobile Workers, where the ACTU has been in a bloc with Walter Reuther since 1947, its members or close associates hold posts on the International Executive Board, a number of top appointive posts and many offices in local unions. The *Wage-Earner*, Detroit ACTU paper, acts as the unofficial voice of the Reuther-ACTU bloc.

ACTU'ers are a force in the Steelworkers, where they are coddled by Philip Murray and hold important posts. They are dominant in the American Newspaper Guild. Paul Weber, founding editor of *Wage-Earner* and former head of the Detroit ACTU, is executive secretary of the Detroit Newspaper Guild and a vice president of the Michigan CIO. ACTU'ers hold top posts in the New York Guild local. They control the CIO Utility Workers and the independent Communications Workers, organization of telephone employes.

### Worming into the TW

Their most recent triumph is in the CIO Transport Workers Union where they formed the motive power of the Quill machine that broke the control of the Stalinists who had ruled for 14 years. A Nov. 1948 *Harper's* article, "Priests, Workers, and Communists" by Jules Weinberg, is devoted to a description, based on interviews with ACTU leaders in the TWU, of how they operated.

Catholic office workers at the New York Omnibus Company, on the "advice" of Rev. Philip A. Carey, S. J., director of the Jesuit Xavier Labor School in Manhattan, set up an independent union in competition with the "communist" TWU in 1944. After a year of "special speed-up courses" at Xavier, they took their outfit into the TWU. Here they began building a "tight, tough, trained unit" and "a stream of these men attended the Xavier Labor School.

Every one of the present officers of the New York Omnibus unit is a graduate."

Now the ACTU, backed by top CIO circles, particularly Secretary-Treasurer James Carey, is going after bigger game—the 400,000-member, Stalinist-ruled United Electrical Workers. The Jan. 17, 1949 *Labor Leader*, ACTU national organ, reports new triumphs of the "anti-Communist wing," which in recent local union elections captured 13 more locals, including large General Electric and Westinghouse units.

### The Catholic "Labor" Schools

Jules Weinberg, in his *Harper's* article, glowingly describes the mechanism of this "most militant and successful labor program ever engaged in by the Catholic Church in the United States." The Catholic hierarchy, starting in 1935, began a system of "labor" schools. "They have been established in every industrial city in the nation: one hundred permanent schools, twenty-four directed by Jesuits, thirty-two by diocesan authorities, and the rest sponsored by Catholic fraternal organizations, colleges and the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists," reports Weinberg. "Most of the schools came into existence between 1936 and 1944 . . . . And each year 7,500 men and women . . . are graduated into the ranks of labor." The *Fortune* article says that the Catholic "labor" schools "have grown up since 1934 through the active interest of 'labor priests.'"

The "labor" schools and the ACTU are part of the same machine, but have separate functions. The schools provide selected and trained cadres for colonizing the unions. The ACTU operates inside the unions to put the Catholic hierarchy's program into action. Rev. William J. Smith, Jesuit priest and director of Crown Heights "labor" school in New York, described the division of function in the Jan. 1947 *Labor Leader*. The ACTU is for "direct action," he said, while the Jesuit schools are "confined" to "indirect action, education technique, labor school organization and over-all indoctrination." He added, "There is plenty of work and plenty of room for both movements and both methods."

An elaborate pretense is maintained that there is no connection between the schools of the priestly orders and the ACTU, which is represented as an "independent" organization, run by its members without hierarchic direction. Roger Larkin, editor of *Labor Leader*, even goes so far as to publish a special statement in the Jan. 17, 1949 issue, trying to disassociate the Jesuit "labor" schools from the ACTU by falsely claiming that "the first Catholic labor school was established . . . by the ACTU" and "antedated any other Catholic labor school by at least one year." However, the first school was the Xavier Labor School in New York City, established by Jesuits in 1911 as the Xavier Institute of Social Studies, and reorganized under its present name in 1935. The ACTU was founded in 1937 and its first school was established in Jan. 1938, "with the kind assistance of the Jesuit Fathers of Fordham," states John C. Cort, one of the ACTU founders, ("Nine Years of the ACTU," in the Jesuit weekly, *America*, April 6, 1946.)

Larkin's petty fraud is part of the bigger fraud systematically perpetrated by the ACTU to fool unionists about whose hand directs the ACTU. *Labor Leader* describes the ACTU as an "association of Catholic unionists" that "does not believe in Catholic unions in America" and "does not seek to divide the workers on religious grounds or create a Catholic bloc." It does add, however, that its purpose "is to promote the teachings of Christ and His Church in the American labor movement"—that is, to promote Catholicism in the unions.

In a more forthright way, the Jesuit weekly *America*, Jan. 7, 1939, in an article, "Leadership in Labor a Goal for Catholic Workers," instructs Catholics on how to build a "Catholic bloc" in the unions. It states: "All the tricks of organization, of pressure politics, of dissent, of 'controlled bloc' voting can be readily absorbed by any willing labor student." It calls for "the erection of a strong philosophy within the union which will bear heavily upon union leaders, so heavily as to be at last controlling . . . the admonition of the Encyclicals, that Catholics should form Christian unions, as far as possible, is morally obligatory upon us . . ."

The ACTU *Articles of Federation* (*Labor Leader*, July 25, 1947) states: "The Association takes as its charter the following mandate of Pius XI in the Encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*: 'Side by side with these unions, there should always be associations zealously engaged in imbuing and forming their members in the teaching of religion and morality so that they in turn may be able to permeate the unions with that good spirit which should direct them in all their activities.'" It deceptively omits the first part of Pope Pius XI's injunction, which stated, "*Wherever it (is) impossible for Catholics to form Catholic unions . . . they (Catholics) seem to have no choice but to enroll themselves in neutral unions . . . Side by side with these trade unions, there must always be associations, etc. . . .*" (*Michigan Catholic*, Nov. 28, 1946.) It is clear that the ACTU was set up under a papal mandate as an expedient where the Church finds it "impossible" to keep Catholic workers from joining "neutral" unions. But Catholic doctrine insists on the ultimate objective of separate Catholic unions.

No one is eligible for ACTU membership without specific approval by a priest. The ACTU national constitution provides for a chaplain—a priest—to "advise" all local chapters on all matters, and states: "All members of the ACTU shall be Catholic and *the Catholicity of members shall be determined by the Chaplain of the chapter.*" By his authority to decide who shall belong or who shall be blackballed, the priest is the real power in the ACTU.

The constitution of the Detroit ACTU makes the controlling power of the hierarchy even more explicit. Article V, Section A, begins: "The officers shall be: a Chaplain appointed by the Archbishop," and then enumerates all the other posts. Article V, Section G, states: "It shall be the duty of the secretary-treasurer to . . . submit a financial report each month to the Chaplain . . . The Chaplain shall act in an advisory capacity and as a spiritual director of the association. He or any other priest designated by him shall be an ex-officio member of all committees."

Finally, Article VII states: "In the event of insoluble dispute over any question of policy, tactic, principle or leadership, *the counsel of the Archbishop shall be the final determinant.*"

While to non-Catholics or indifferent Catholics the ACTU emphasizes that it is an association of Catholic trade unionists, to the devout Catholic workers it stresses that it is a *Catholic* association of trade unionists. Thus, all ACTU literature bears the *imprimatur*—official sanction—of a high Catholic cleric. Its leaflets to the Wall Street strikers last year even boasted that the ACTU was "blessed by Pope Pius XII."

Any claim that the ACTU is "democratic," "independent" or "American" is proved spurious by the very oath all members must sign: "I hereby pledge to abide by *all* the teachings and practices of my Catholic faith, including those teachings expressed in the social Encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII *in their entirety.* (ACTU *Articles of Federation.*) In short, the ACTU is an arm of the Catholic Church.

### The Power and Program of the Pope

To know the real aims of the ACTU and its program, we must examine the structure, methods, activities and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church itself, particularly its authoritarian head, the Pope. The Catholic Church is ruled by its priestly hierarchy. The inner structure of this hierarchy is totalitarian, with the priest chosen by the bishop, and the bishop chosen by the Pope on recommendation of his own hand-picked Congregation of the Consistory.

In 1870, the Pope was declared "infallible" in "defining doctrine regarding faith and morals." Faith and morals, explained Pius XII on June 2, 1948, are not confined "within the sphere called 'purely religious,' meaning by the phrase exclusion from any penetration into public life." Accordingly the popes have decreed exactly what the economic, social and political order must be.

Thus, Leo XIII ordained in his *Human Liberty* that even a "democratic" government might be tolerated, "if only the Catholic doctrine be maintained as to the origin and exercise of power." And wherever "ecclesiastical and civil" authorities conflict, says the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "the jurisdiction of the Church prevails." Pius XI, in his *Reconstructing the Social Order*, added that "the truth entrusted to Us by God and Our weighty office . . . demand that both social and economic questions be brought within Our supreme jurisdiction . . ."

First of all, "God's truth" as laid down by Leo XIII in *The Condition of the Working Class*, from which the Catholic labor program stems, is: "Our first and most fundamental principle . . . must be *the inviolability of private property.*" Pius XII, in his Sept. 1944 Vatican radio address, proscribed any social order "that denies . . . the natural right to ownership of commodities and *means of production.*"

Secondly, "The Church condemns the various forms of Marxian socialism," banned by all popes since 1848, said Pius XII; while Pius XI anathematized even socialist groups that "have abandoned class war and no longer attack

private property" because they "do not repudiate the basic socialist idea, merely repudiate it in practice."

Thirdly, Leo XIII, in his famous Encyclical, ordained fixed classes like those of feudalism under the medieval church-state, saying, "Let it be laid down . . . that humanity must remain as it is . . . There *naturally* exist among mankind innumerable differences . . . and unequal fortune is a necessary result of inequality of condition" which "must accompany man so long as life lasts." Therefore, rich and poor do not form classes "intended by nature to live at war with one another . . ."

### Basic Doctrine of the ACTU

The ACTU is an organization, therefore, to impose the following basic doctrines on the unions: 1. the Roman Catholic Church is the supreme authority on all matters and stands above all governments, and the Pope is the "infallible" authority of the Church; 2. the system of capitalist private property and profits is "inviolable"; 3. the "basic idea" of socialism and communism contravenes "God's truth"; and 4. there must be no basic social change, all classes must remain fixed and each person must stay in his class.

Since the pontiffs laid down these doctrines as nothing less than Divine Revelations, they never felt required to meet the scientific analysis of Marxism showing the internal contradictions of capitalism, its decline and decay and its replacement, through working-class struggle, by the classless socialist society. ACTU members, of course, may not examine Marxism for themselves, for the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and other great working-class teachers are on the Vatican's *Index librorum prohibitorum*. This is the list of thousands of great books that Catholics are forbidden to read, for "excommunication, specially reserved to the Holy See, is incurred, *ipso facto* . . . by those who knowingly read or keep such books without due permission." (*Moral and Pastoral Theology*, by Rev. Henry Davis, imprimatur Archbishop of Birmingham.)

But since the papal social pronouncements were all issued in times of capitalist crisis to pacify the workers and discourage class struggle, the popes had to offer a substitute for Marxism which would promise to alleviate poverty and exploitation. A major point of this substitute, as stated in the ACTU *Articles of Federation*, is: "a share in the profits after a just wage and a just return to capital have been paid."

First let us see what the popes had in mind by a "just wage" and a "just profit." According to Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, it is the "dictate of natural justice" that "wages ought not to be insufficient to support a *frugal* and *well-behaved* wage-earner." That says it all! A "just" wage is enough to keep a man alive and fit to return to work the next day—provided he is "frugal" and doesn't buy a couple of beers, go to a movie or purchase "dangerous" literature like the *Fouth International* or *The Militant*.

What is a "just" profit? The most explicit definition to be found in Catholic writings is in the book, *Distributive Justice*, published in 1942 by Monsignor John A. Ryan, who is called "the father of the church labor program in

America." He said the Church advocates "profit-sharing," whereby the worker, in addition to his "frugal" wages, would get "a part of *surplus* profits." But first of all "owners of capital must be assured the *prevailing rate of interest*. It is not feasible to give any part of profits to workers until owners of capital have obtained this *prevailing rate*." The "prevailing rate," of course, is always the average maximum rate the capitalists can squeeze out at any given time.

If there is any "surplus" profit left, says Father Ryan, this should go "to the *workers exclusively*" (original emphasis), which sounds mighty generous until we read "that is, to persons who do any work in any capacity, whether subordinate or *directive* . . . from *president* down to office boy. The distribution should be *in proportion to salaries and wages*." So—if there is any "surplus" profit after the "just" profit has been paid—the head of a corporation, who is paid \$300,000 a year would get 100 times more of the "surplus" than a worker who gets \$3,000. Some "distributive justice"!

We can understand still better the kind of "profit-sharing" schemes the ACTU has in mind when we read in *Labor Leader* (Dec. 27, 1948) praise for such anti-union propositions as those of Eastman-Kodak and other non-union firms. The June 28, 1948 *Labor Leader* praises a speech by Charles Luckman, head of Lever Bros., to the American Management Association, in which he offered a plan to raise production and wages simultaneously, saying: "American industry can well afford to increase a worker's wage by 30% in return for 30% more output . . ."

Most employers will buy that. But in the years between 1900 and 1929, the American workers got their bellies full of these phony "profit-sharing," "multiple-partnership" and similar "carrot-before-the-donkey's-nose" devices used by the employers to speed up production and keep out unionism.

### Industry Councils, the Cure-All

The ACTU's big cure-all for capitalist depressions, inflation, war, exploitation and mass poverty is "industry councils" where "representatives of management, labor and the government might sit down together and work out regulations for each industry." (Resolution of ACTU 1947 convention.) The 1948 resolution complains that ACTU opponents are "trying to pin the label of 'Fascism'" on this scheme and claims that Murray and Reuther have publicly admitted that the CIO's "industry council" plan is "similar to that proposed by Pope Pius XI."

If that is the case, it is indeed a sinister development in the CIO. That can easily be seen when we study what Pius XI and Pius XII had in mind when they proposed "corporative units"—they never used the term "industry councils," which the ACTU has employed only in the past few years to identify its scheme with that of the CIO.

Monsignor John A. Ryan, in his previously quoted *Distributive Justice*, explains that "the conflict between classes can be controlled only by the state. 'Where We speak of the reform of the social order,' says Pope Pius XI, 'it is principally the state we have in mind.'" Rev. Ryan

hastens to explain that "the Holy Father does not want state ownership and operation of the means of production." No, the vicar of Christ "would eliminate class conflict not by a futile effort to abolish classes, but by bringing them into a practical scheme of co-operation."

That cooperation, said Pius XI, must be "re-establishment of occupational groups"; and Rev. Ryan explains, "He takes as a model the guild system, which united master, journeymen and apprentices in one association."

There is one "small" difference, however, between the relations of the master, journeyman and apprentice of feudal days and the capitalist and worker of today. The apprentice and journeyman were *masters in training* and after a fixed time became masters themselves, owning their own shops. The modern worker is a proletarian—a "propertyless one"—who lives by selling his labor power to a capitalist who owns the means of production but does not work himself. Moreover, the apprentice and journeyman had no *independent* organization. They were bound by the rules of the guild. Such a system today would deprive the workers entirely of any *independent* organized power.

Further, explains Ryan, "the occupational groups would not be entirely independent of government," for the state, "says Pius XI, would perform the tasks which it alone can effectively accomplish: those of 'directing, watching, stimulation, and restraining, as circumstances suggest or necessity demands.'" By "state," of course, the Pope means the *capitalist* state.

### Spawned by Fascism

Where have we seen such a system in operation? First of all, in the "corporative state" of Mussolini, in Franco's Spain, in Salazar's Portugal. More recently, in a letter addressed to a French Catholic society and made public on July 20, 1946, Pope Pius XII expressed disapproval of proposed nationalization measures in France and called instead for "the institution of corporative associations or units in every branch of the national economy." Sure enough, the Catholic would-be Franco of France, de Gaulle, now calls for "a fundamental change in trade unionism" and for "associations of labor, capital and management." The ACTU's *Wage-Earner* greeted de Gaulle's scheme and pleaded editorially that unionists should "learn more" about it "before we go roaring out and condemning Gen. de Gaulle as the apostle of a new fascism."

But so completely identified is the papacy's "corporative units" with fascism, that it is understandable why a meeting in Oct. 1948 of 140 bishops and archbishops of the American hierarchy issued a statement saying: "American Catholic students of the social encyclicals have expressed their preference for the name 'Industry Councils' to designate the basic organs of a Christian and American type of economic democracy . . ." They "prefer" not to call these "organs of democracy" by their right name—the well known fascist "corporative units."

Writing on the "industry council" scheme in his book, *Spotlight on Labor* (published in 1946), the Rev. William J. Smith, S.J., shows what the hierarchy has in mind by citing the "5,000 successful union-management committees"

during the war. He forgot to add that most of these committees fell apart when the workers found out they were just speed-up committees to work out ways of squeezing more production out of the employes. Rev. Francis J. Haas, well known as a government mediator, in the Oct. 1944 *Acolyte* (now *The Priest*), relates the "industry councils" to the "tripartite system" which has "worked with more than average success . . . in railroads under the Railway Labor Act . . . and perhaps more dramatically under the War Labor Board." American labor has an opposite opinion about these notorious strikebreaking, wage-freezing "labor-management-government" agencies.

All such schemes of "partnership" and "cooperation" are designed to persuade the workers that they do not need to engage in class struggle, that the owning class and the propertyless class have the "same interests," that exploiters and exploited need only "sit down and plan together" under the "guidance" of a benevolent capitalist government and all the inherent evils of capitalism will disappear.

Describing the founding of the ACTU (*Nine Years of the ACTU*), John C. Cort writes: "In the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI, in the writings of Monsignor John A. Ryan and other Catholic authorities they (ACTU founders) already had a program. It was simply a question of applying it to the American scene." He adds with unconscious humor: "As it finally came out, the program was probably *the most extraordinary combination of radicalism, conservatism and plain common sense ever seen in the American labor movement.*"

Whatever the ingredients of this stew, it has a *capitalist* flavor, because the Roman Catholic Church is a *capitalist* institution—the wealthiest in the world outside of the U. S. government itself. Its mortal hatred of socialism, its frenzied defense of private profit flow not from spiritual considerations, but material self-interest. For the Vatican is a gigantic banker, landlord and industrial capitalist combined.

The poor in the slums and tenements of cities like Rome, Paris, Madrid and New York, may not know it, but when they curse the extortions of their landlord they are quite often cursing the Vatican, which is the greatest real estate owner on earth. The colonial slaves in Indonesia, Indochina, the Philippines, North Africa, and Latin America who are fighting against imperialism are also fighting the Vatican, for it owns immense tracts of farmlands and plantations in these lands, grinding profit from the poorest of the poor. In Hungary, it is not only the issue of the schools that has aroused the Vatican and its allies, but expropriation of the 1,500,000 acres of Church-owned land on which tens of thousands toiled in virtual feudal serfdom. The Church owns a third of all land in Spain, as well as a third of its industrial shares.

As a result of the scandal involving Vatican agents in the illegal manipulation of French currency, it was disclosed in the French National Assembly last year that the Vatican controls directly or indirectly scores of investment, land and credit banks in Italy and France. These banks in turn control numerous industrial firms. The disclosures revealed

that the Vatican controls one-third of all Italian savings—400 billion lire! It has investments of more than 30 billion francs in France and similar sums in Belgium, where, in addition, the Church receives state subsidies. In the United States, the Vatican collaborates closely with the House of Morgan and owns hundreds of millions worth of real estate and industrial stocks and bonds.

The Vatican publishes no balance sheets, gives no financial accountings. Its top inner circle alone knows the extent of its property and income—on which it pays no taxes. It extracts contributions of hundreds of millions each year just from its faithful. The Vatican is BIG BUSINESS.

### Fundamentally Opposed to Unionism

As an exploiter of labor with a vast vested interest in capitalism, the Vatican is fundamentally opposed to unionism. It prefers the destruction of all unions, as in Spain and Portugal, both countries where the Roman Catholic Church is a state-supported religious monopoly. Next to no unions, it prefers Catholic unions, as in Italy, France, Belgium, Holland and Canada, although only a minority of the Catholic workers are in these unions which are generally despised as strikebreaking outfits. Only when the Catholic workers flock into legitimate class organizations in defiance of the Church, does the hierarchy resort to "parallel" organizations like the ACTU.

The Church has never shown any interest in "aiding" the workers until the workers turn to class-struggle methods and threaten capitalist interests. Leo XIII's famous encyclical on labor in 1891 followed the formation of the Second (Socialist) International and the great upsurge of the eight-hour day struggle in America and Europe. Shortly before, in 1886, Leo XIII had decreed a "spiritual death sentence"—excommunication—for Catholic members of the Knights of Labor in Canada and was persuaded to withdraw the ban only when Cardinal Gibbons protested that there were many thousands of Catholic Knights in the United States and that "you cannot let thousands of Catholic workingmen be driven from the Church without trying to save them. If we allow the ban to exist, the results will be disastrous."

Neither the Catholic unions nor such outfits as the ACTU have ever been the form of organization demanded or created by the Catholic workers themselves. On the contrary, even in countries where the workers are almost 100% Catholic, as in Italy today, they have always fought for their own class organizations. Nowhere in the world has the Church been able to force more than a small proportion of Catholic workers into its priest-controlled unions.

The American hierarchy's first intensive interest in labor was in 1919, during the great postwar strike wave. Then the bishops issued their *Program of Social Reconstruction*, which included in its 12 points a proposal for the peacetime continuation of the strikebreaking War Labor Board. After the victory of the open shop in the mass industries, the bishops settled back and forgot about "social reconstruction."

It was not until millions of Catholic workers had already joined the CIO in the 1930's and fought successfully in mighty class battles, that the hierarchy again decided to intervene. But the Catholic "labor" schools and the ACTU made little headway between 1936 and 1946. Catholic unionists, both leaders and rank-and-file, looked with hostility on the Church's "labor" activity.

James Carey, when head of the United Electrical Workers, wrote strong protests against the interference of the hierarchy and the ACTU in the UE's affairs. Michael Quill, president of the Transport Workers Union, publicly denounced the ACTU as "scabs" and "strikebreakers." Philip Murray was attacked many times in the ACTU press for "playing ball with the Commies." Daniel J. Tobin, head of the AFL Teamsters and a devout Catholic, issued a blistering attack in the *International Teamster* against the interjection of religion into the unions.

How Catholic workers reacted to the ACTU is stated by Ray Wescott, ACTU leader in the TWU, as quoted by Jules Weinberg in his *Harper's* article: "I could always talk to a Jewish or Protestant worker . . . but as soon as I'd approach another Catholic, before I could say a word, he'd tell me, 'Look here, Ray, let's leave religion out of this'."

During the rise of the CIO, the ACTU's program of virulent red-baiting didn't go down with the militant CIO workers. Moreover, the role of the Catholic hierarchy in fascist Italy, Spain, Hungary, and Portugal was well known.

The fortunes of the ACTU began to turn after the war with the shift in U. S. foreign policy and the break-up of the Washington-Moscow honeymoon. As the Truman administration began to whip up the "cold war" against the Soviet Union and the anti-red witch-hunt at home, the atmosphere became more favorable for the ACTU.

For just as the top CIO leaders had collaborated with the Stalinists when it suited the State Department's policy, so they launched their own "cold war" against the Stalinists with the change in the State Department's line. And just as Truman collaborated with the Vatican and the Catholic parties in Western Europe against the Stalinists, so the CIO leaders began to collaborate more and more with the "labor" priests.

A big boost was given to the ACTU in 1947 when Walter Reuther's faction blocked with it in order to defeat the Thomas-Leonard-Addes caucus at the UAW convention. It gained further strength when James Carey's faction in the UE blocked with it in the still continuing fight for control of the UE. Finally, last November, when president Philip Murray at the CIO convention opened war to destruction on the Stalinists with ACTU support, the way was paved for the ACTU to push its program openly in the CIO. It was only after Murray's tacit approval of the ACTU and his declaration of total war on the Stalinists, that the ACTU was able to score its subsequent triumphs in the TWU and UE.

The growing influence and strength of the Catholic hierarchy in the labor movement is due not to its own

attractive power and the response of the ranks to its social program, but to the aid and comfort given the ACTU by the labor bureaucracy. Protestant, Catholic and Jewish alike, these bureaucrats have shown themselves ready to

collaborate with any "outside influence," however reactionary, in their eagerness to serve the interests of U. S. imperialism and its Department. And that is where the gravest danger lies for the American labor movement.

## A Century After the Communist Manifesto (II)

# 100 Years of Work and Wages

By C. Curtis

Making a virtue of bitter necessity, American capitalism presents itself as the champion of the American workers' living standards, relatively the highest in the world. The capitalist class carefully ignores all facts that give the lie to their hypocritical claims, such as, their ruthless opposition to every advance in wages and hours gained by the workers and the resulting strike struggles that fill every page of American industrial history. Above all, they ignore the historical conditions that created the American "standard of living."

We shall now treat with the wages of the American workers, both absolutely and as a function of increased productivity. Bearing in mind the approximate character of all such estimates, particularly as regards the earlier decades, let us review the nearly 100 years from the time of the writing of the *Communist Manifesto*. It is first necessary to define productivity, real wages and relative wages, since we shall work with these concepts.

Productivity is the ability to produce a given article in a set time. For example, if one hour is required to produce a commodity at one period and one-half hour at a later stage, then productivity will have risen in this interval by 100 percent, or doubled. Although productivity in certain commodities may change from year to year owing to weather and other natural variations, productivity, taken by and large, tends to rise with improved technology.

Real wages is the ratio between money wages and the price of commodities the worker buys. To illustrate, if money wages increase by 10 percent while prices rise by 20 percent, real wages will have declined by 9.1 percent. On the other hand, if monetary wages remain constant but prices drop 10 percent, real wages will have increased by 9.9 percent.

Moreover, since the unemployed must be supported by those who are employed (leaving aside small amounts of relief), adjustment must be made in considering real wages to include this factor as well. For example, if out of a group of families with 100 workers, 75 receive \$50 a week each, or a total of \$3,750 a week, while 25 others remain unemployed, then the real wage per worker is on the average not \$50 but only \$37.50 (\$3,750 divided by 100). In the text below our reference to wages always means real wages, adjusted to the conditions we have specified above.

Relative wages, as used here, is the proportion between

changes in wages and changes in productivity. For example, were productivity to rise by 20 percent, while real wages go up only 10 percent, then relative wages would decline by 9.1 percent to an index of 90.9; on the other hand, were productivity to remain constant but wages to rise 10 percent, relative wages would be increased by 9.9 percent to 109.9.

### Productivity in the United States

The productivity of American workers and their mechanical aptitudes are not inborn biological attributes. A premium has been placed on these characteristics by class relationships in this country and the historical conditions under which the class struggle has unfolded here.

The prevalent theory of capitalist economics is that of "marginal productivity," according to which a rise in wages can come only as a consequence of a rise in the workers' "marginal" productivity. Suffice it for the moment to point out that these economists stand the matter on its head. The high productivity of American labor is historically the product and not the cause of high wages. Given the inexorable condition of relatively high wages, as has been the case in this country from the outset, profits could be maintained only on the basis of the most advanced industrial techniques. An environment favoring technology and invention was created.

A dominant factor in the development of the US up to the close of the Nineteenth Century was the open frontier with its lands available for homesteading. Under these circumstances the capitalist had to compete with homesteading to secure wage earners.

In 1865 Marx wrote, "In colonial countries (at the time Marx wrote, the US was included in this category), the law of supply and demand favors the working man. Hence the relatively high standard of wages in the United States. Capital may there try its utmost. It cannot prevent the labor market from being continuously emptied by the continuous conversions of wage laborers into independent, self-sustaining peasants."

It was this social environment that made American productivity the highest in the world.

From the book, *America's Needs and Resources*, published by the Twentieth Century Fund, we derive the following table as to the growth of productivity on a national scale:

GROWTH OF PRODUCTIVITY FROM 1850 TO 1944

1850 .....	100	1900 .....	206
1860 .....	116	1910 .....	232
1870 .....	124	1920 .....	249
1880 .....	130	1930 .....	302
1890 .....	171	1940 .....	428
1944 .....	458		

This means that in the course of 98 years American productivity has increased at least four and a half times, and still going up. Let us now trace the course of wages.

**A Ludicrous Charge**

Among the accusations leveled against the founders of scientific socialism is the canard that they held the theory of the "iron law of wages," which denies the possibility of raising real wages. This charge is ludicrous. Marx and Engels introduced historical concepts into political economy; they defended and advanced unionism as an effective means of safeguarding and improving workers' living standards. What they avoided was the fetishism of unions.

Wage standards are not determined by physiological needs alone—so and so many calories, so much rest, shelter and so on, but by "historical and moral elements" as well. Working-class "conditions of existence" are not fixed but relative. Standards of what constitutes a living wage develop with the industrial and social progress of a country and are modified by the course of the class struggle. Comforts of one period can become necessities of another as the result of successful struggles; just the opposite may take place when the workers are defeated. Gains and losses become an integral part of the workers' wage standards with the passage of time.

Workers' wages have real limits, however. The most rigid limit is the prior and superior right to profits. Wages may rise with increasing productivity, but only so long as profits remain secure.

Data relating to real wages are by no means readily accessible. Our first table is derived from Alvin H. Hansen's "Factors Affecting the Trend of Real Wages," *American Economic Review*, March 1925. It covers the years from 1850 to 1890.

AVERAGE DAILY REAL WAGE IN THE U.S.

1850-1890 (1890 equals 100)			
1850-59 .....	57	1870-79 .....	80
1860-69 .....	55	1880-89 .....	89

The next table for the period from 1890 to 1939 is based on Stanley J. Lebergott's "Earning of Non-Farm Employees," *Journal of American Statistical Society*, March 1948.

AVERAGE ANNUAL REAL WAGE, 1890-1939

Non-Farm Employees. (1890 equals 100)			
1890-99 .....	96	1910-19 .....	103
1900-09 .....	100	1920-29 .....	114
	1930-39 .....		106

Lebergott continues his series up to 1946. But his figures from the years since 1940 are useless and misleading. He makes no allowances for the distorted character of the Labor Bureau's Cost of Living Index, which understates the increase in the cost of living. As the BLS itself points out, its index failed to show "the full wartime effect of such factors as lowered quality and the disappearance of low-priced goods . . . If account is also taken of continued deterioration of quality and disappearance of low-priced merchandise . . . the over-all adjustment for the period January 1941 to September 1945 would total approximately 5 points." (*Statistical Abstract*, 1946.)

Nor does Lebergott take into account increased taxes on wages, which are likewise disregarded by the BLS indices. Yet withholding taxes in 1943-48 took about 8 percent of the workers' income. For the years from 1940 it was therefore necessary to make an independent estimate. These estimates are naturally rough, especially those for 1947 and 1948. The figures listed in the table below try to take into account additions to workers' income in this period, such as mustering out payments, GI benefits, pensions, etc., which are not properly wages. The corresponding data for these years have been taken from the Commerce Department's "Survey of Current Business" for July 1947 and July 1948 ("National Income Supplement"). Total wages and salaries, plus other income, minus taxes, were divided by the total number of wage and salary earners. This average was then adjusted for the corrected Cost of Living Index. The figures thus obtained for the years 1941-48 were "spliced" on to Lebergott's figure for 1940. I make no pretensions to minute accuracy, but the estimates thus made, in my opinion, do mirror the general trend.

ESTIMATED REAL AVERAGE EARNINGS, 1940 TO 1948

All Wage and Salary Earners (1890 equals 100)

1940 .....	127	1944 .....	171
1941 .....	135	1945 .....	172
1942 .....	150	1946 .....	166
1943 .....	165	1947 .....	156
1948 .....	147	(first quarter only)	

From this assembled material on productivity and wages, we are now in a position to correlate the figures along with a computation of the corresponding relative wages. This is done in the table below. For the sake of mathematical consistency all figures have been recalculated so that the average of 1850-59 in all cases equals 100.

PRODUCTIVITY, REAL WAGES, AND  
RELATIVE WAGES

Year	Average Productivity	Average Wages	Relative Wages
1850-59	100	100	100
1880-89	140	156	111
1890-99	175	168	96
1900-09	203	175	86
1910-19	222	181	82
1920-29	256	200	78
1930-39	338	186	55
1940-44	411	263	64
1948 (est.)	458	258	56

A study of this table shows wages up to 1890 increased at a greater pace than productivity. A graph, corresponding to the figures, would show two curves diverging like the blades of scissors, with the upper blade representing wages. Since that period, however, there has been a reversal. The disadvantageous position of the worker resulting from the closing of the frontier, along with the growth and dominance of large-scale capital have produced just the opposite scissor-like effect, with productivity, instead of wages, becoming the top blade, and rising much more steeply than wages. The two blades of the "scissors" draw farther and farther apart. What is more, at two points (1930-39 and 1946-48), there is a tendency of the bottom blade (wages) to sag, that is, wages even decrease in relation to previous standards.

The question naturally arises: What happens to the products resulting from the increased productivity? Where do they go? They go for the upkeep of the capitalist class. For example, corporation profits, after taxes, have taken the following course (source: "National Income Supplement," 1947 and 1948):

PROFITS, 1929-48

1929	100	1943	123
1939	59	1944	128
1940	79	1945	104
1941	111	1946	152
1942	112	1947	215
1948	262	(first quarter estimate)	

Separate and apart from profits, the fruits of productivity go to pay for war preparations, for actual and past wars. And finally, much of it remains unused. Productive potential is one thing, the continued utilization of productive power is something else again. Capitalism stands as an insurmountable barrier to the full utilization of the productive forces, as its business cycles have shown time and again. Much of the productive power remains paralyzed for a long number of years. Relations of production (capitalism) are in conflict with the forces of production.

One of the basic causes for crises is to be found in the "scissors" expressed by the foregoing table. Wages, or the value of labor power, remains relatively fixed, while productive power is constantly improved. Surpluses inevitably result, piling up and periodically manifesting

themselves in "over-production." The growth of productive forces carries with it the threat of ever more frequent and ever longer depressions. Productive power, under capitalism, thus becomes a menace. How different from socialism, under which, society, freed from capitalist relations, will gear production to use and will welcome each new addition to man's knowledge!

With regard to relative wages, i.e., wages related to productivity, the lot of the workers has deteriorated since 1890. Workers' wages sink in relation to productive power. In this sense, the *Communist Manifesto* has certainly proved its validity in this country.

Moreover, wage averages by themselves can be very deceptive, hiding much more than they reveal. They give no picture of the internal stratification of the working class: between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled; between the organized and the unorganized; men and women; whites and Negroes; white collar and production workers.

Let us try to peer behind the averages.

In 1905, the country was startled by a book called *Poverty* written by Robert A. Hunter. He estimated that between 14 and 20 percent were continually living in poverty, in conditions "denoted by inability to obtain those necessities of life which will permit them to maintain a state of physical efficiency." So disconcerting were Hunter's facts, that they were discounted and a figure of 10 percent of the population in poverty was generally agreed upon. The "submerged tenth" became a catchword.

"One-Third of a Nation"

Thirty years passed. When the depression was in its seventh year, a study was undertaken by the National Resources Committee at the behest of President Roosevelt. It was found that in 1935-36, when the worst effects of the depression were already in the past, one-third of the nation still remained ill-fed, ill-housed and ill-clothed. This one-third was receiving less than \$780 per year.

It would be instructive to learn: What percentage of the people today still are "ill-fed, ill-housed and ill-clothed"? In terms of 1947 prices, \$780 of the 1935-36 period amount to approximately \$1,300. What percentage is receiving less than this amount?

According to the *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, June 1948, income received in 1947 by the lowest 20 percent of the nation's spending units was below \$1,200. So here we have a partial answer. Amidst unparalleled prosperity not less than 20 percent of the people live in conditions of poverty. When Hunter made his estimate of 14 to 20 percent the figure of 20 percent was calculated by him for "bad" times. After a lapse of 40-odd years, this same 20 percent is characteristic of "good" times. What will happen when times are not so "good"? How far above the figure of 20 percent will the poverty-stricken then rise?

One hundred years after the *Manifesto*, the polarization of society into poverty at one extreme and great wealth at the other has not decreased but increased. Along with the "concentration of property" there has been a concentration and polarization of income. A picture of the extent of this polarization was given in 1929 by the Brookings Institute.

Here is what we find stated in *America's Capacity to Consume* which the Institute issued at the time.

"The 11,653,000 [families] with an income of less than \$1,500 received a total of about 10 billion dollars. At the other extreme the 36,000 families having incomes in excess of \$75,000 possessed an aggregate income of 9.8 billion dollars. Thus it appears that 0.1 percent of the families at the top received practically as much as 42 percent of the families at the bottom of the scale."

This concentration of income has been modified but not reversed in the course of the war and postwar boom. The trend remains the same. This is demonstrated to the hilt by the statistical tables compiled by the Economic Almanac of National Industrial Conference for the years up to 1937 and by the Federal Reserve Board for later years.

Thus, since 1910 the upper 10 percent of this country's population has consistently received about one-third of the national income. The Federal Reserve figures for 1946 and 1947 read 32 and 33 percent respectively (as against the peak figure of 39 percent for 1929).

Meanwhile, the lowest 20 percent of the population received in these same years less than one-half of the share of the national income they received in 1910 and continue to live in conditions of pauperism and semi-pauperism.

In the same 37-year period, the share of national income accruing to the lowest 70 percent of income recipients declined from 43.6 percent to 40 percent.

If the distribution of the national income is a correct guide, and it is, the rich have indeed grown richer and the poor poorer.

At the beginning of this article we asked: Is America immune from the general laws of capitalism, or at least their worst aspects? To what extent does the *Communist Manifesto* apply to the United States? We are now in a position to sum up our reply.

In the light of factual evidence, the basic laws of capitalist development, as the *Communist Manifesto* states they affect the workers, have proved valid for the US. This has been shown by:

The growing proportion of women in industry.

The tendency to diminish skill as a requisite for industrial employment and the tendency to create a typical proletarian in the "semi-skilled" machine tender.

The brutalizing effects of capitalist industrialism on the workers.

The speed-up.

The permanent pauperization of ever-growing sections of the population, especially the aged, even in prosperity.

The steady growth of a permanent semi-pauperized layer of the population; of a steadily increasing layer of workers unable to maintain themselves at adequate levels even in prosperity.

The growth of mass degradation, manifested by the increase of mental disorders and crime, especially during depressions.

The increasing frequency, intensity and duration of depressions.

The rapid increase of mass pauperization during each successive depression.

The length and intensity of the 1929-41 depression.

The fact that "normal" recovery did not take place, but prosperity resulted only through the medium of war.

The constantly declining wage in relation to productive power.

The tendency of national income to become concentrated in a thin layer at the top.

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The authors of the *Communist Manifesto* did not foresee the series of imperialist world wars, their havoc and misery. They were, however, predicted by Lenin and Trotsky, who based their teachings on the teachings of Marx and Engels. These wars only render more emphatic the prognosis of Marx and Engels regarding the fate of the workers under capitalism.

By accelerating the decline of nearly the rest of the capitalist world, the war has imparted a feverish boom to the US. Among the primary factors that have fed this boom has been the virtual elimination of European and Asiatic competition on the world markets, while Western Europe and industrialized Asia have fallen into the position of semi-colonies and subjects of the US.

Thanks to the war boom, the American workers have been able to record gains in wages, today the highest in this country's history. However, this has been accomplished only at the expense of the blackest misery for the workers throughout the rest of this world. On a world scale the sum total of misery has monstrously increased; the results of the war have acted thus far to distribute it to the advantage of the US and the double disadvantage of Europe and Asia.

This boom, achieved against the background of world ruin, is tremulous and artificial in character. This is revealed in such facts as the growth of productivity amid a decline in relative wages. Real wages have likewise declined since 1945. This is a noteworthy development. All previous booms witnessed steady increases in relative wages up to the crash; today we have a deterioration of workers' wage standards in the full flush of the boom.

War and depressions alike mean increased suffering for the masses. American development cannot escape the influence of either—or both.

The United States is no exception to the laws of capitalist development revealed with such clarity by Marx and Engels.

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**THREE GREAT WORKS BY  
 LEON TROTSKY**

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# The New Union Bureaucracy

By Bert Cochran

The Portland CIO convention brings to a conclusion one stage in the development of America's industrial union movement and formally inaugurates a new one. The whole 13-year period, in which the CIO leadership was jointly shared by the native American and Stalinist bureaucracies, has now been officially closed. The Murray machine has emerged victorious all up and down the line and as a more or less homogeneous bureaucracy will now singly rule the CIO.

It is true that the Stalinists possess many vestiges of their once formidable strength but the trend against them is so overwhelming that they cannot long hold on to their remaining posts of leadership. The Murray bureaucracy has won the battle. What is involved now is mopping-up operations.

The new stage completes a process which originated in the struggles and developments of the past period, conditioning the trade union movement and the men who now lead it.

The CIO bureaucracy was nurtured in an alliance with a "friendly" administration and became accustomed to operating through the medium of government boards, commissions, NLRB elections, etc. From the first it took on a definite social-democratic coloration in contrast to the older AFL bureaucracy, whose governing creed for decades was pure-and-simple unionism, heavily tinged with syndicalist-like suspicion of the state. The Roosevelt administration, for its part, likewise stood in dire need of the labor movement's support, first for its NRA program to lift American capitalism out of the morass of the crisis, then for its war preparations, and finally for the prosecution of the war itself.

Thus for the formative 10-year period of the CIO, the bureaucracy was molded by its coalition with the Roosevelt administration. The social trends making for this labor-Roosevelt coalition were irresistible. Even the AFL bureaucrats found themselves caught in the embrace of the capitalist government and entangled in the coalition, where they played their part with some misgivings and slightly less ardor than their CIO brethren.

## The Period of Cooperation

The appearance of the CIO on the scene happened to coincide with the Stalinist turn on a world scale toward People's Frontism. In its American application, the turn spelled a policy which was all but identical with that of the newly created CIO bureaucracy. This provided the solid ground-work for the cooperation of the two bureaucracies. In the decade of their partnership, the two bureaucracies saw eye-to-eye on all important and even not so important issues. They worked hand-in-glove in tying the CIO ever more securely to the capitalist state, in stamping out the original militancy of the ranks, in crushing all tendencies to form an independent party of labor, in inoculating the CIO workers with the poison of capitalist "pressure politics"

and in foisting their respective bureaucracies upon the unions under their control. This malevolent collaboration continued right through the war, both sides cooperating in outlawing and breaking strikes.

Nevertheless, despite the virtual identity of their policies on a day-to-day basis, the two bureaucracies could never fuse. They were keenly aware that they were in the service of different masters whose aims might at any time diverge. The 10-year marriage was constantly marred by quarrels, bickerings, hostile maneuvers and sometimes even violent clashes. But these conflicts never reached a plane of fundamentally opposed policies. They took the form of clique fights for posts and positions.

However, the very existence of two competitive bureaucracies—even though they were united against the ranks—legitimized in the CIO a tradition of factionalism, the existence of caucuses, disputation over issues and elections. The clique struggle between the two bureaucracies, while barren and worse than barren in and of itself, helped preserve in distorted form the original democratic impulses which animated the ranks in the stormy days when the CIO was a crusade and not a bureaucratic edifice.

It is instructive in this connection to contrast the internal character of the auto union with the regime in the CIO steel and maritime unions. The existence for 10 years of two powerful factions in the leadership of the auto union—whether in alliance or in opposition—was a big factor in the maintenance of a robust internal democracy. In contrast, the Murray clique, with a monopoly of the steel union leadership, was able to fasten a centralized bureaucratic apparatus upon the steel workers which to this day has prevented the formation of any independent grouping. Similarly, the Stalinist leadership, which until recently enjoyed the same kind of monopoly control in the NMU, ruled over the maritime workers like a tyrannous power, brooking no questioning or dissent.

The evolution of the different CIO unions demonstrates that union democracy is little more than window dressing or academic sham without the right of organized factions to live, to operate, to appeal to the membership, to agitate for their special points of view. It is no accident that in one of the few old-line AFL unions where this right is recognized and practiced—the International Typographical Union—democracy exists. In most of the other AFL unions, even the United Mine Workers with its militant membership and policies, where factions are not tolerated, internal life is empty and democracy is virtually non-existent.

The Portland convention, therefore, in signaling the entrenchment of the Murray faction and the downfall of its Stalinist rival, marked at the same time a new milestone in the bureaucratization of the CIO. For while the two bureaucracies always labored with might and main to perfect their own machines, always mindful of their special interests and jealous of any and all encroachments on their factional preserves, they interfered with each other's plans

and threw up roadblocks against the monopolization of power in those unions where they both were active and especially in the city central bodies and the national CIO itself. Now with the elimination of the Stalinists from the CIO leadership, the Murray machine has dotted the i's and crossed the t's on the bureaucratization of the CIO for which they have been striving over these many years.

The Portland convention arrogated to the parent bureaucracy disciplinary powers in imposing so-called majority decisions on its various chartered affiliates, and centralized authority to reshuffle jurisdictions, withdraw charters, decree affiliations, instruct local central bodies in the positions they may or may not adopt—measures without parallel in the history of American unionism. Even the case-hardened bureaucrat, Matthew Woll, while approving the actions of the CIO convention which in his view were taken in a "good cause," was deeply disquieted by the methods employed in eliminating the Stalinists.

Why was the bureaucracy able to defeat its quondam Stalinist partner so easily and to fasten its heavy-handed grip on the broad membership? To properly answer these complex questions it is necessary to probe more deeply into the changing relationships of the coalition of the labor bureaucracy and the capitalist state, the specific character of the Stalinist movement in the CIO and the role of the trade unions in this period.

### **The Meaning of the Roosevelt Myth**

We mentioned previously that as against the old AFL bureaucracy, conditioned in the organization of skilled crafts fighting individual employers and educated in the school of reliance on the economic power of key groups of specialized workers, the new labor bureaucracy from the beginning had entered into an alliance with the capitalist state and was saturated with the philosophy that it could utilize this state to advance its own aims. This class-collaboration philosophy went deep down into the union ranks. It was the guiding trend of thought not only of the bureaucracy but of practically the whole membership.

Revolutionary socialists and class-conscious workers pointed out the meager character of the Roosevelt reforms and how they scarcely scratched the surface in solving the real problems of capitalist society. But the aspect which the radicals did not stress was precisely the one which impressed the rank-and-file workers most—the favorable political climate which helped them build their unions and the palpable improvements in working conditions, shop relationships and the rise in wages particularly in the better organized industries.

It is true that even these modest reforms were not handed down by Roosevelt but were won in pitched battles and sanguinary struggles. It is further true that Roosevelt could not have moved a step without labor support. But the working people of America, oppressed and downtrodden for generations—knowing the government heretofore only as an omnipotent foe which smashed picket lines, injured strikers and hurled union militants into prison—didn't appreciate the changed relationship of forces and looked on Roosevelt as the savior of the working man.

In the next decade every attempt of insurgent groups of workers to break out of this political straitjacket was resisted and thwarted by the bureaucracy. Thus the Roosevelt myth grew and grew until it became the unquestioned gospel of the labor movement. The Roosevelt myth was not merely faith in Roosevelt personally as the Great White Father of the laboring people but the conviction that coalition and class-collaboration politics accounted for the benefits secured by labor since 1935 and constituted the only safe and sane course on which the unions could record further advances.

From 1935 to 1941, the main bodies of the CIO were registering constant gains in the form of rising wage schedules, or organization of new groups of unorganized workers and significant improvements in working conditions. Even in the war years, when inflation and heavy taxes began cutting deeply into the paychecks of the workers, they managed to better their living standards through longer hours of work, premium pay for overtime and increasing the number of wage earners in the individual families.

This general line of development seemed headed for a crack-up after the war when the power-drunk and too self-confident plutocracy forced the unions to battle for existence again and pushed the Truman administration into sundering the coalition with labor. But the labor bureaucracy clung tenaciously to its class-collaborationist policy and doggedly insisted that capitalism could work out its problems more cheaply and more successfully by reestablishing the coalition. Finally, labor's massed demonstration at the ballot box in the 1948 elections forced the Bourbon plutocracy back into the alliance it had so brashly broken two years previously.

Despite continuing inflation, high taxes and the anti-labor offensive, the factors of full employment and the economic boom sufficed to prevent any decisive alteration of the mass political consciousness in the two-year Taft-Hartley interval. And now the workers, with a strong sense of accomplishment in the elections, are again willing to give their leaders a chance to produce results through a coalition policy.

We are aware that fierce antagonisms have flared up against sections of the bureaucracy and against individual bureaucrats in union after union; we know that these led in some cases to the ousting of a number of the more obnoxious officials or a shift of power from one section of the leadership to another, but the union ranks never went beyond ousting individuals. They were never able to replace the existing bureaucracy with a new type of leadership because they were still prisoners of the political philosophy and program of the labor bureaucracy.

The material benefits won by the workers, especially in the earlier days of the CIO, sanctified the marriage of the labor officialdom with the capitalist state. But this marriage in turn not only helped the bureaucracy impose its dictatorial rule on the unions but further shaped the bureaucracy, or, more correctly, corrupted it into the slavish and servile servant of the most powerful imperialist state in

the history of mankind. During the war years, the labor bureaucrats worked hand-in-glove with employers, government agents and military officials to weed militant workers out of the plants. After the war, this brazen partnership was systematized into a true relationship of reciprocity. Labor officials journeyed to the furthest corners of the globe as traveling salesmen of American imperialism while the concentrated influence of the government, the employers, the public press and the church—even in the Taft-Hartley period—was brought to bear to enthrone and consolidate the bureaucracy and to isolate, besmirch, discredit and hound out of the unions all opponents and dissidents.

This coalition stems from stern social necessity and represents the only possible mode of existence for the labor bureaucracy in this period. The plutocracy cannot and will not tolerate now a labor bureaucracy that attempts to practice neutrality toward its state and imperialist enterprises. The bureaucracy, ever adaptable, has swung into line. The Cincinnati AFL convention reflected the fact that even the sons of Gompers had successfully overcome all their earlier inhibitions and hesitations and are now, no less than their CIO counterparts, enthusiastic participants of the labor-government coalition.

The speakers list of the AFL convention bristled with such notables as Hoffman, head of the Marshall Plan; Harriman, Washington's roving European ambassador; Humphrey, the new head of the Americans for Democratic Action. Over half the proceedings consisted of speeches and reports on AFL activities in promoting the Marshall Plan, providing labor support for the American missions in Greece and Japan, building "free trade unions" in Germany, South America and elsewhere, and of the general yeoman services being performed for the State Department.

We can sum up by recording that in the space of a little more than a decade there has grown up in America an imposing, consciously social-imperialistic labor bureaucracy disposing of great institutions and treasuries. On the one hand it has forced a recalcitrant plutocracy back into a political coalition, in which the bureaucracy wields more influence than it ever did in Roosevelt's lifetime. On the other hand, with the aid of this same plutocracy, it has raised itself above the union membership and arrogated to itself vast powers of coercion and repression.

### **Social Imperialism -- Unifying Force**

We have witnessed the growing together of the labor bureaucracy with the imperialist state which in turn has hammered the labor bureaucracy into a more or less homogeneous social-imperialist force with a common world outlook. It is because of this new feeling of common purpose and ideological kinship that the CIO leaders were willing to relinquish some of the sovereign powers of their own international unions and invest the parent body with immense centralized authority, something the AFL craft czars would not dream of doing—so strong are the habits of a lifetime and a tradition.

Of course, there remain considerable gradations in the bureaucracy. The AFL moguls, resting on craft-ridden

unions, are less adept at broad social demagoguery than their CIO rivals who represent the modern industrial union and bargain across the table with the overlords of industry. Inside the CIO there is also a gradation between the sophisticated, socially alert, social-democratic types like Reuther, Baldanzi, John Green and the older trade unionists of the Murray, Van Bittner, Alan Haywood stamp.

But these gradations between the various sectors of the bureaucracy are not politically fundamental and not half so significant as the growing homogeneity in purpose and methods of all sections of the bureaucracy. Consider these facts: The AFL leaders have joined with the CIO in all-out support for the Marshall Plan. They have dispatched their economist and brain-truster, Boris Shishkin, to Paris to coordinate this work. None other than Jay Lovestone is the generalissimo of their forces in Europe and Irving Brown, former Lovestoneite, their European field agent. Consider that the AFL, whose most ingrained political principle was Gompers' dictum "support your friends and defeat your enemies," voted at Cincinnati to set up a political organization based upon precincts and wards similar to the CIO-PAC.

And within the CIO, what is the essential difference between a Murray and a Reuther, politically, programmatically, on basic trade union policy? None. None of the differences go beyond such matters as temperament, ambition, agility and questions of tempo. Only uninformed or blind people or the perennial Ypsels of the Shachtmanite Workers Party could classify Reuther as a left-winger in contrast to Murray.

### **Life-Cycle of the Unions**

There is another side to the bureaucratization of the CIO that is deserving of attention. It seems that the life-cycle of unions under capitalism comprises first a youthful, formative period of militancy and combativity accompanied by a vibrant internal life. In time, the original insurgency tends to thin out and then to give way to a growing conservatism of the membership and the exuding of a bureaucracy. The radicals, who are welcome and play an important part in the organizing days, are resented and often expelled in the later stages. One does not have to seek far for an explanation of this phenomenon. A union, after all, is organized for limited purposes. No sooner has it established itself in a given jurisdiction and won some concessions, which place it in a position a little above the rest of the working class, than its officials become anxious to consolidate their positions and the membership concerned with securing its advantages. Union after union in this country and abroad has fallen into this life-cycle.

True, the CIO is different in many respects. Unlike the small and isolated unions of the past, it represents the basic elements of the American proletariat. Thus, its leaders bargain for a sizable section of the working class rather than for small groups, at the expense of the broad mass. Nevertheless, even here, the conservatizing forces are at work and build up a certain aristocratic layer in the work-

ing class which has a stake in the maintenance of the status quo.

An examination of the changing character of the membership of the auto union will prove very revealing. This union is rightly considered the most militant and advanced in the whole labor movement, with a membership noted for its aggressiveness and self-assertiveness. A study completed last April for the UAW by C. Wright Mills of Columbia University, based on a representative sample of Detroit union members, finds that 57% of the men and 35% of the women are over 40 years of age, that *the general average is 42 years*. Fifteen years ago one could walk through all the big auto plants in Detroit and have difficulty in finding workers over 40 except in the capacity of janitors, stockmen or in the highly skilled departments!

Furthermore, many of the most aggressive and radical workers who manned the picket lines in '37, provided the leadership in countless strikes, built the new locals, can today be found in the new bureaucracy, or when working in the plants, in the better paying and more desirable jobs. They may not enjoy much prosperity—but they have seniority and a measure of security, pitiful though it be, as against the new workers entering the industry.

The old core of CIO militants—that remarkable leadership in the American labor movement which arose from the shops and was enriched by radicals of different tendencies—has either been absorbed into the labor bureaucracy, or smothered in the Stalinist embrace, or dispersed in a dozen different directions. And it took all the galling experiences of the last depression and the repeated sell-outs and defeats of the NRA strikes to create that new leadership!

Take the evolution of the auto union and add to it the steel union, the rubber union and the others, and you have the answer to why the working class today resembles little the class of a decade ago which seized the plants, fought the police and the troops, brought the haughty princes of American industry to their knees and converted a trade union organizing campaign into a social crusade. The leaders of these great class actions have grown ten years older and ten years more conservative. The huge national organizations that were forged out of the battles are under the direction of a puissant bureaucracy. The new young men and women who have entered the industries are still in the position of the led rather than the leaders.

There is an additional temporary but telling factor which further conspires to augment the power of the bureaucracy and to leave, for the time being, decisions in its hands. The unions are now superbly organized as truly mass battalions and bargain with a small number of capitalist trusts closely integrated with the state. Every big strike can at a moment's notice turn into a national social contest between labor and capital. The workers sense this. They sense that pure-and-simple economic strikes now have very limited efficacy. They are therefore loath to engage in sporadic guerrilla warfare on their own. They tend to leave the major decisions in the hands of their top leaders and prefer peaceful settlements because, after the experi-

ences of 1946, they do not have any faith that under the present leadership the results won by long-drawn-out strikes will be commensurate with the sacrifices required.

### Stalinism -- and Its Frankenstein

Is the monstrous growth and rise to power of the labor bureaucracy with its integration into the governmental machinery sufficient to explain its crushing victory over its erstwhile Stalinist partner? Not entirely. There is still a missing link—the disgraceful and villainous role of the Stalinists themselves and the Frankenstein they created which has now laid them low.

The Stalinists entered the CIO with the best disciplined, the most experienced and largest political cadre in the labor movement. They were able to participate actively and effectively in practically all the original major organizing campaigns and strike struggles. When the immense national union structures were set up, the Stalinists were in possession of an organization machine not too inferior to the Lewis combination. They had the decisive influence over half the auto union, hegemony of the electrical union, the East and West Coast maritime unions, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the office and government workers, a voice in the rubber and even the steel union. They were in effective control of the most important central bodies including New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles. They were further favored by an aura of militancy, appearing as the left-wingers, the fighters of the movement. How did they utilize this enormous capital of authority, administrative control and good will?

Let us recall the state of affairs in the 1936 period. The young CIO was imbued with crusading zeal and full of the vision of new great vistas opening up before labor. Those were the days of sit-down strikes. Mayors and legislatures were humbled by the massed might of a working class in action. Even though the pro-Roosevelt and People's Front current was running high, everywhere the workers were trying to "implement" the policy and "help" their labor "friends" by direct action and by reaching out for more power and more substantial concessions.

Those were the days when John L. Lewis organized Labor's Non-Partisan League and staged a determined effort to capture the Democratic Party of Pennsylvania and secured the gubernatorial nomination for the mine workers' secretary-treasurer. Those were the days when the bureaucracy had to set up the American Labor Party in New York as the only means to corral the radical labor vote for Roosevelt. Those were the days when the Detroit CIO ran a full independent labor slate to "seize the reins of government." The country was ablaze with insurgency.

Viewing the matter in retrospect, it is probably true that the Stalinists, despite their considerable strength, could not have overcome the pro-Roosevelt and People's Front current. But they could have organized a genuine left wing of huge proportions, a left wing which would have prospered after such experiences as the breaking of the Little Steel strike, the sell-outs of the Democratic "friends of labor" and the Roosevelt "recession" of 1937. The formation of

such a left wing would have turned topsy-turvy all the existing relationships not only inside the CIO but in American politics as well. Today the movement for socialism would be miles ahead.

Instead, in response to the Kremlin line of People's Front, the Stalinists stood shoulder to shoulder with Lewis and Murray. They became the most ruthless and conscienceless section of the CIO bureaucracy in hurling the most advanced workers back into the Roosevelt fold, in killing the promising labor party potentialities, in inculcating the workers with the vices and prejudices of class-collaboration politics, in isolating and hounding the union dissidents and radicals and in ramming the new bureaucracy down the throats of a turbulent rank and file.

### Left Wing Devitalized

Lined up with the bureaucracy on all essential questions, but maintaining nevertheless their own independent machinery and bases of support, the Stalinists were able to pervert the strivings of the advanced militants for a class struggle policy into degenerate clique fights for position and power. The faction fight in the CIO—now muffled, now flaring into the open—which dominated the union boards for a decade, never clarified any issues or crystallized political tendencies but only confused everything and demoralized the most sincere elements.

The Stalinists' ill-deserved reputation as "lefts," their unscrupulous methods and their demagoguery coupled with their organizational might enabled them for a decade to monopolize the "opposition" to the Murray bureaucracy and to nip in the bud any independent progressive manifestations. But they could not, naturally, pursuing this cynical and unscrupulous course, construct a genuine fighting force. As a matter of fact, time and again they demoralized even their own members, disintegrated and debauched the impressive cadre which they possessed after the early strike struggles, destroyed a whole generation of revolutionists and potential revolutionists and became a new school for opportunism and a training ground of polished high-binders and careerists.

The defection of Curran, Quill and others is not a case of simple renegacy of a number of individuals. It is rather the natural fruit of Stalinist opportunism and treachery. To execute the switch, the Currans and the Quills did not have to alter by one iota the essential methods and policies learned in the Stalinist school. Stalinist People's Frontism only strengthens and consolidates the power of the authentic and consistent People's Fronters.

To the insufferable burden of their own indefensible 10-year record, the American Stalinist leaders, especially since the war, have had to carry the dead weight of the Kremlin's crimes and perfidies. For as the American working class grows politically alert, it shrinks from the representatives and defenders of a police state which tolerates no democracy, no free press, no free speech, no free trade unions.

Fifteen years ago in Minneapolis, a group of genuine revolutionary socialist—Trotskyists—built a powerful

union structure in the citadel of the open shop and showed in practice how to carve out of the struggle a fighting labor cadre composed of the best and most sacrificing men and women of the union ranks. The threefold combination of the AFL bureaucracy, the employers and the government could only smash this outcropping of radicalism in the union movement on the eve of the war by the deployment of overwhelming forces to beat the union ranks into submission. Even then, the workers remained loyal to the Trotskyist leadership to the end and gave up the struggle only when their leaders advised them that further resistance was futile.

The Minneapolis truckdrivers were certainly not Trotskyists in their political outlook. They were under the sway of the Roosevelt myth even as the rest of the American working people. But they knew the Trotskyists from long experience as men of principle, as the most far-sighted, the most intransigent battlers for the rights of labor. That is why they were willing and anxious to rally in defense of their leadership despite its extreme political complexion.

When the Murray bureaucracy, in response to its master's voice from the State Department, launched its own "cold war" in the CIO, the Stalinists had the advantage—over the Trotskyists in Minneapolis—of not being isolated in one city but representing a national power. But under what banner could the Stalinists call on the ranks to defend them? What could the Stalinists tell their union memberships? That they were the best People's Fronters, the best strikebreakers, the best bureaucrats, the best speed-up artists, the best totalitarians? Like drunken profligates, they dissipated their not inconsiderable capital and stand before the ranks today discredited and dishonored, their own cadre dispersed and demoralized. That is why they made such a pitiful showing at the Portland convention. That is why there is no fight, no spirit of confidence in their group. That is why the Murray machine was able to ride roughshod over their remaining forces.

The ignominious defeat of the Stalinists cannot blind us to the fact that it was suffered not at the hands of an insurgent membership but of a red-baiting social-imperialist bureaucracy. Previous defeats of the Stalinists, as in the auto union in 1938 and even the recent upheaval in the maritime union reflected, along with the red-baiting, honest outrage against Stalinist misdeeds and progressive rank-and-file aspirations. The Murray crew, however, carried through its purge exclusively on the plane of the "cold war" between the United States and the Soviet Union. The two planks of its political platform are simply the Marshall Plan and pro-Truman PAC policy.

But the Stalinists are not merely a trade union caucus. They are a national political party with big resources and international connections. Already they are laying their lines for a comeback as a pseudo-progressive opposition. They are banking on the inevitable and irrepressible social contradictions of American capitalism leading to a new crisis and on their ability to place themselves again at the head of rebellious masses of workers.

There is nothing quixotic or fanciful about the Stalinist

perspective. American imperialism is heading into mounting difficulties just as surely as night follows day. Not only will the composite masses of the organized industrial unions move into action, but the class itself will be renewed and reinvigorated by the additions of the doubly exploited and oppressed groups of workers hitherto untouched by the organizing drives and mass strikes. The Stalinists in Europe and Asia have demonstrated time and again that despite crimes and betrayals, they are able to recapture leadership by appealing to and rousing new generations of workers when the masses move leftward—and in the absence of an alternative radical leadership.

### Is a Stalinist Comeback Possible?

Can they stage a comeback in the United States as they did in France after the war? Leave aside the fact that the Stalinists are not their own masters and their perspectives and plans are subject to revision overnight when new orders are handed down from the Kremlin. Even their present perspective runs into a buzz-saw of obstacles and complications. First they do not have the kind of cadre they had a generation ago, a cadre hewed out of militant struggles and unemployed demonstrations in their so-called "third period." A decade of ugly maneuvers and People's Frontism has corroded their cadre with opportunism and sapped the morale of their ranks. Secondly they are a dis-

credited and despised group. It is common knowledge in the labor movement that their party is a plaything of a foreign bureaucracy. The Stalinists therefore will find it extremely hard, if not impossible, to reestablish broad moral leadership over oppositionist forces.

Finally the Trotskyists, who were preoccupied during the early CIO upheavals with gathering together a political nucleus, have today an impressive cadre of working-class leaders in a number of important industries, far superior in quality to the Stalinists and enjoying an enviable reputation in the ranks as the unwavering champions of militant unionism and class struggle policies.

This changed relationship in the labor movement has already expressed itself in a very significant manner: in the rise of noteworthy progressive groupings in unions like auto and rubber which are not only in opposition to the bureaucracy but are also anti-Stalinist. This represents an absolutely new trend. It foreshadows developments to come. It indicates that the Stalinists will never be able to seize without contest—as they did in 1936—the leadership of the nascent progressive movement. They will face the determined resistance of a trained, experienced and influential cadre resolved to build an authentic left wing and not a counterfeit formation which can again disorient, manipulate and sell out the American labor movement as a cat's-paw in the struggle between the Kremlin and Wall Street.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### *Wolfe Changes Masters*

THREE WHO MADE A REVOLUTION,  
by Bertram D. Wolfe, The Dial Press,  
N. Y. 1948. 661 pp. \$4.50.

The avowed design of this book is to explain the course of modern Russian events—from the Russian Revolution to its aftermath—in terms of the three main protagonists — Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin. But the real design is highly partisan and polemical. It is not at all, as the author pretends, to establish historical truth through conscientious and scientific research. The aim is rather to prove that Stalinism flows inexorably from Leninism; and that both Stalinism and Leninism, in their turn, flow just as "inexorably" from the soil, soul and "heritage" of Russia.

The history of Russia is pictured as the struggle between East and West for the "Russian soul." In this scheme, so beloved by many renegades from Marxism, the West stands for everything cultured, humanitarian, progressive, and, of course, for the very incarnation of

"democracy." The East—or the "Slavic"—is made synonymous with the worst of Asiatic barbarism, "authoritarianism," far-flung in its "centralism" and "ubiquitous bureaucratism" and "million-headed armies" and the like. That's what you always had in Russia; that's what you have today.

In such a historical "heritage" there is no room at all for the Russian Revolution, or for the founding of the first workers' state, and the entire world heritage contained in these decisive events of modern history. So all this is expunged. How? By converting everything into a mere episode of "Russian expansionism."

The biographer grants in passing that the Russian Revolution did not at all begin this way. But what is a mere "beginning"? "In the end," asserts Wolfe, the Russian Revolution simply provided "the greatest dynamic power of expansion that Russia had ever known." Any historian who tried to explain the Great French Revolution as a phase of "French expansionism" would be laughed out of court. But today there is a whole school of "historians"

who dismiss in this way the greatest social upheaval yet witnessed on our planet.

To make his three protagonists fit into this fraudulent pattern, the author cuts short all his "biographies" at the point where he must present his conclusive proofs. The Russian Revolution and its aftermath is likewise expunged from all three "biographies."

Lenin is made to emerge in this book as a complex blend of "Slavic" (Asiatic) and "Western" psychical traits. Trotsky is depicted as a "romantic" and "promethean" type with somewhat greater leanings toward "Westernism" who in the end makes peace with Lenin's "Slavism." Stalin, on the other hand, begins and ends as a pure Asiatic.

In Wolfe's eyes, Lenin was "by his convictions" a "democrat" with occasional leanings toward humanitarianism and other "Western" virtues. But by temperament and will and "the organizational structure of his party," he was an "authoritarian," i.e., a pure Slav.

This conflict between the barbarous Slav and the cultured Westerner was resolved in Lenin's case in 1917. "For up to his seizure of power in 1917, Lenin always remained by conviction a democrat, however much his temperament and will and the organizational structure of his party may have conflicted with his

democratic convictions." Such is the gist of Wolfe's "researches."

It is in this way that Lenin is represented as spiritually akin to Stalin; Lenin's party is equated to its polar opposite—the party under Stalin; and the Soviet regime under Lenin and Trotsky to that of the Kremlin since Lenin died. This is not history but a despicable caricature.

Lenin, as a personality and a great historic figure alike, attained full growth precisely in the years of the revolution, the Civil War, the building of the young Soviet Republic and of the Communist International. The same is true of Trotsky.

Stalin, on the contrary, did not emerge as a prominent historical figure until after Lenin's death. He was an obscure figure not only before 1917, as Wolfe concedes, but also during the entire initial period after 1917. It is impossible to squeeze Stalin into the role of the "third" protagonist in these great events, just as it is impossible to ascribe to him the role of Lenin's "second" which Stalin arrogates to himself.

If one could speak of a "third" in the Russian Revolution itself, in addition to Lenin and Trotsky, it was Sverdlov, and could not possibly be Stalin. But Sverdlov died prematurely in 1919 and no one replaced him, least of all Stalin. In the galaxy of Bolshevik leaders who did play a prominent role it is not so easy to single out any one individual after Lenin and Trotsky, the two preeminent leaders at the time. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, even Radek, played a far more prominent part from 1917 to 1923 than Stalin.

Stalin, as matter of fact, owed his rise to the post of General Secretary not to Lenin but rather to Zinoviev; and his actual rise to prominence dates back to the formation of the first real—and not fictitious—triumvirate in the history of the Russian Bolshevik Party—that of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin. This was later supplanted by still another *troika*—that of Stalin-Bukharin-Rykov.

In terms of personalities that was the actual evolution of Stalin as he was to appear on the historical scene. But all this falls away in order to make possible the bracketing together of Lenin and Trotsky—the two unchallenged leaders of the Russian Revolution—with Stalin, who rose to power and prominence only as the undisputed leader of the counter-revolution.

Wolfe is no novice at this game. He served his apprenticeship in misinterpreting Russian events under Lovestone

during the early years of the American Communist Party. He then tailored his quotations, facts and historical interpretations to suit the requirements of the Stalin-Bukharin-Rykov bloc in the Kremlin. Today, this ex-Lovestoneite serves different masters, whose requirements dictate a different approach to history. The "democratic" pattern of interpretation—in the service of American imperialism—differs in form but not in substance from the much earlier "anti-Trotskyist" pattern of this scholar. Both are equally false. But where before, posing as a Marxist, Wolfe slandered Trotsky and Trotskyism, today, as an anti-Marxist, he slanders both Lenin and Trotsky, the whole of Bolshevism, the whole of the Russian Revolution and the early history of the Soviet Union.

In this respect we have just another contribution from the pens of renegades from communism to the flood of anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist literature. The market, gentlemen, is already glutted.

JOHN G. WRIGHT

## A Fictionized Version Of Trotsky's Murder

It is already plain that the assassination of Trotsky cannot avoid becoming a *cause celebre*. Too many journalists in search of sensational articles will find copy for new revelations in the circumstances and character of the crime. They will forge testaments, describe the "forness," distort the accurate data they obtain—often with the help of the Russian propaganda machine which is so interested in covering up the tracks and so partial to everything which helps camouflage the Stalinist crime. We have already seen some of these forgeries; we shall see many others.

The most recent of these sensational revelations is of a different order. It is the outcome of an unexpected collaboration between General Sanchez Salazar, head of the Secret Service of the Mexican police at the time of the assassination, and one of the leaders of a Spanish socialist party (the POUM), Julian Gorkin. The book\* is presented as "a work which throws new light on this event." Gorkin himself writes: "I have tried to unearth the truth . . . I have assembled the most complete documentation . . .

\*Published first in serial form in the Mexican periodical *Revista de America* with the title "Asi Mataron a Trotsky" (How They Murdered Trotsky), by General Leandro A. Sanchez Salazar and Julian Gorkin, in the summer of 1948.

The principal items are in my possession." And he adds: "Obtaining and protecting this material almost cost me my life."

Now a careful reading of the book shows that for the most part it consists of the account of the police officer who conducted the investigation and of important documents which are, however, all known, having been published years ago in the Mexican and American press, in Trotskyist publications and in various works of American writers. If Gorkin really believes that he was risking his life by collecting and publishing these documents at this date, then he is the victim of a self-made and illusory danger. If there was anyone who exposed himself not once but many times to attacks and GPU intrigue in Mexico, it was Victor Serge who, through his correspondence with the *New York New Leader*, for which he received no personal gain, unmasked their maneuvers and thereby succeeded in thwarting them.

Gorkin limits himself to an examination of the files of the police inquiry and investigation. A socialist militant like he should know what this kind of information is worth. It can be utilized to find important leads, but proper use of such material can only be made, assuming one is interested in the truth, provided the facts are verified and checked wherever possible. However, Gorkin is content in his review to summarize the information and the interpretations of his police officer—who, as we shall see, was not at all disinterested in the affair—while he neglects all verification even where it is essential to discovering the truth.

After the first attempt on Trotsky's life, he does not visit Trotsky—a strange admission from one who professes so much concern with the matter. The reasons he gives for absenting himself are hardly valid; they suggest other motives. There were numerous Spanish refugees who visited Trotsky, among them members of the POUM (Gorkin's party) and socialists of various tendencies. Their visits were sometimes the occasion for heated but always cordial discussion from which everyone profited.

Better yet, while residing only a few hundred yards from Trotsky's house, he does not take the trouble to even examine the house whose precise description is not unimportant. Was this because he was thinking of sketching a scene in the approved style of the cheap novel, e.g., "high and forbidding walls," "machine-gun turrets," "impregnable for-

tress," etc. This "fortress"—which is erected in the beginning of the narrative in order to create the atmosphere of the detective story—was separated from the adjoining property by an ordinary wall, and over the whole length of another one of its sides there is a high bank which slopes into the garden and the buildings.

The allegation that I [Rosmer] "personally took responsibility" for Jacson is not more truthful. I did not know him. I had never seen him during his long residence in Paris. I met him for the first time in Mexico. I am not in the habit of getting involved lightly and, if by chance I was tempted to take responsibility for him, the impression he made upon me would have quickly caused me to change my mind.

What is most important in the narrative of the police officer is what we learn about him and the methods he employed in undertaking and carrying on his investigation.

### Planet Without a Visa

Let us recall the conditions under which Trotsky was to take up residence in Mexico. After having exiled him, Stalin hounded Trotsky from country to country and found accomplices for this task in the democratic governments of Europe. The German Social Democrats and the British Labourites, incapable of rising above considerations of petty revenge, refused the visa which would have made it possible for Trotsky to live in a country where he could carry on his work and where his friends could look after his safety. Roosevelt imitated them, even in the period when the Stalin-Hitler pact provoked almost universal disgust. The Norwegians, who were a happy exception, hastened to deport the undesirable exile as soon as Stalin made his wishes known. This was in the period of the "Moscow Trials." And as if to make everyone forget about the socialism they were so prone to espouse, they exaggerated their servility by surrounding the deportation with hateful police measures.

Removed from the cesspools of European politics, one man showed nobility of character and generosity: Lazaro Cardenas, president of the Republic of Mexico. Not only did he welcome Trotsky but he was always scornful and distrustful of the inventions of GPU agents. He never for a single day wavered in his public sympathy for the exile. Unfortunately he could not count on the loyalty of his collaborators, especially those

in high places. With a few exceptions, they all betrayed him. That was the period of the Popular Front.

The Stalinists were infiltrating everywhere. Lombardo Toledano, as the leader of the trade union federation, abused the patronage bestowed on him by Cardenas by placing the trade union movement at the disposal of Stalinist policy. Toledano was successively for the "war against fascism," then against the war when Molotov was toasting Hitler's victories, and once again in favor of the war when Hitler turned against his partner—the perfect lackey.

The GPU also had at its disposal the daily paper of the CGT (Mexican trade union federation), the press of the Communist Party; even the daily paper of the party in power, Cardenas' party, lent itself to the spreading of lies and slander. In accordance with the zigzags of Stalinist policy, Trotsky was described as the agent of Wall Street or of Hitler or of the Mikado. The supremé infamy—and the most sinister—was the allegation that Trotsky was plotting with the Sinarquistas (Mexican fascists) against Cardenas.

What could Trotsky do to protect himself against this unceasing avalanche of monstrous accusations? The Stalinists pretended to have evidence. Let them produce it! In his letters which non-Stalinist publications once in a while consented to publish, Trotsky demanded the formation of a commission to which he, the Stalinists, and the government would send representatives for a public hearing. Naturally the liars, driven into a corner, beat a quick retreat and for a time were reduced to silence. But then they started up again.

The International Commission, presided over by John Dewey, came to Mexico for the purpose of an exhaustive investigation. It held public sessions and came to the conclusion that the accusations against Trotsky were baseless. This made no difference to the GPU agents who persisted in their diabolical cabal.

Not a solitary meeting organized by the Communist Party or one of its front organizations took place without one of them shouting as soon as the opportunity arose: "Death to Trotsky!" Sincere types of Mexican workers, poisoned by this propaganda, echoed the Stalinists. To indicate how far this incitement had gone, it is enough to refer to the convention of the teachers union, held in early 1940 which concluded by "repeated

shouts of 'Death to Trotsky!'" This had become the required slogan to be used everywhere.

### "A Put-Up Job"

Thus the operatives of the GPU, who were known to be numerous, moved about at will without ever being molested by General Salazar—who as Chief of the Secret Police was especially designated by Cardenas to supervise Trotsky's safety—from 1936\* to May 1940, the date of the first attempted assassination. If ever a crime was labeled, it was this one. But not for General Salazar. No sooner arrived at the "fortress," his mind was made up: it was a sham attack, a put-up job. The walls are riddled with bullets: put-up job. Trotsky and Natalia are calm: put-up job. The secretaries are calm: put-up job. Finally after questioning the two cooks there is no room for doubt. Here we must quote a brief passage to demonstrate the grotesque tone of this account. Salazar questions Trotsky:

"Do you suspect anyone or any group of being the instigator of this attack?" I asked.

"Certainly!" he answered in a tone indicating the deepest conviction. "Come . . ."

Then he put his right hand on my shoulder and led me slowly towards the rabbit hutches. One of his favorite hobbies was feeding the rabbits himself. He stopped, looked around to make sure that we were alone and, then placing his right hand near his mouth as though he wanted to convey the utmost secrecy, he said in a low voice with deep conviction:

". . . The instigator of the attack is Joseph Stalin, acting through the intermediary of his GPU."

I must say that I was completely thrown off by this answer . . . My first suspicion was confirmed. Again I said to myself: "This is a put-up job. There is not the slightest doubt of it."

And since there no longer is any doubt, Salazar begins by arresting two of the secretaries. This is no innocent mistake as the stupidity of the narrative might suggest. It is very serious. The version of a staged attack is precisely the one immediately publicized by Popular, Lombardo Toledano's daily paper, the same version which the GPU agents, anxious to cover up their crime

\*The date here should be 1937, since Trotsky arrived in Mexico in January 1937.—Ed.

and their failure, were eager to circulate. Trotsky has definitely overstepped his bounds, they insist. Two of his secretaries have been arrested, but they are only accomplices. The principal instigator must be brought to book, indict him for plotting against the Mexican government for the benefit of Yankee trusts. In any case he must be deported.

Salazar's attitude is also shared by his aides, the underlings who continued the investigation. One of them asks: "Do you suspect anyone?" and then betrays the greatest surprise on receiving the answer: "Certainly, the GPU." "Then you really believe it," he then remarks in a tone of utter naivete.

The danger was grave; only an audacious move could ward it off. Trotsky then decided to draft a lengthy declaration exposing the functioning of the GPU throughout the world, demonstrating with poignant examples—the assassination of two of his secretaries, of Ignaz Reiss\*—how murder is the logical outcome of its activities. A copy of the letter, addressed to the police and the judiciary, is also forwarded to President Cardenas. Immediately everything changes. Ranking officials in the judiciary and police departments or in the embassy may deceive and betray Cardenas, and they do so often, but not in so important a matter. They cannot forget that Trotsky is on the alert.

Our policeman now manages without delay to get onto the right track which he says was "revealed" to him by chance. Trotsky will not permit him to slip away. By repeated interventions, Trotsky will help him stay on the right road. He had already designated by name the principal instigator of the attack.

We have much better evidence of the attack, its preparation and its organization than the revelations of a cop. We have the confession of the culprit himself—the painter, David Alfaro Siqueiros. Not the kind of confession concocted by Vyshinsky and the Moscow Trials but a written, freely-given confession. Siqueiros went so far as to even boast of having organized and led the attack.

### The Calumny Against Harte

There is an important but not decisive point which has not been cleared up and probably never will be. Why did Robert Sheldon Harte, one of Trotsky's secretaries, who was on guard duty the night of the attack, open the gate and let the Siqueiros gang enter the house?

\*A GPU agent who broke with Stalinism and joined the Fourth International.

The authors have not the slightest doubt on this score: he was a GPU agent. But their arguments are not at all convincing. They consist of impressions of policemen stationed at the house on guard duty who permitted themselves to be disarmed so easily; statements allegedly made by the secretary's father to which he immediately gave the lie; finally the report of a person who allegedly saw Sheldon Harte in a strange house where he was supposed to have spent several days after the attack before being murdered.

"An innocent Sheldon is a necessity for Trotskyism," so reads the heading of the thirteenth chapter of the book. What utter nonsense! Revolutionary movements of all times and all countries have never been able to prevent stoolpigeons from infiltrating into the ranks and even into the leadership. The question involved here is one of fact. Everyone who knew Sheldon is unanimous in rejecting the idea that he was associated with the GPU while in New York or that he was bought off during his stay in Coyoacan. They are convinced that he was duped by some trick which caused his dereliction. He was new to Coyoacan. He was very young, in age, in personality, in political experience; he had lived the easy life of a young bourgeois. Certainly it was no accident that the scoundrels of the Siqueiros gang chose him as an unwitting accomplice in the perpetration of their attack.

Perhaps it was a mistake to have believed him capable of fulfilling the arduous duties required of the secretaries. But then it is only too easy to criticize the American Trotskyists on whose shoulders alone rested the onerous task of recruiting secretaries, of supervising them and assuring their maintenance. There were not a few non-Stalinist revolutionists in Mexico. They knew to what lengths the GPU would go, since many of them had been victimized by it in Spain. They did little to counteract the unrelenting offensive, the permanent incitement to murder directed against Trotsky. Undoubtedly they felt they had enough to do to protect themselves or they thought that Trotsky's predicament did not concern them. I neither pass judgment nor take issue. I simply state that in view of these facts it would be more appropriate to be more modest in passing judgment.

\* \* \*

As for the second attack, the one perpetrated by the murderer Jacson three months later, Gorkin has borrowed his material for the most part from

Albert Goldman's pamphlet *The Assassination of Trotsky*. A good source. Goldman was both a Trotskyist and a lawyer. He knew the people involved. He had followed the case from beginning to end. This pamphlet was published in New York in 1940 and is available to the public at 15 cents a copy. Whatever is essential in Gorkin's new rehash can be found in the pamphlet but without Gorkin's distortions and inaccuracies, especially in connection with the way Jacson gained access to the house. Without giving them due weight, he also utilizes the revelations—real, this time—made by a leader of the American Communist Party who from the beginning was the tool of the GPU agents dispatched to New York to prepare the assassination.

### Budenz' Testimony

Abandoning Catholicism for the labor movement, then for communism, Louis F. Budenz was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party from 1939 to 1945 and then from 1935 to October 1945 he was editor and editor-in-chief of its newspaper, the *Daily Worker*. The tasks with which he was entrusted showed that he enjoyed the full confidence of the party leaders. After ten years of Stalinist activity, Budenz arrived at the conclusion that Stalinism was decidedly not in keeping with the faith of his youth and he decided to return to the bosom of the Catholic Church. He then wrote a book to relate his experiences which was published in New York in early 1947 entitled *This Is My Story*.

\* \* \*

Beginning with December 1936, Budenz was assigned as liaison with GPU personnel and there is in his book a precise and detailed report of the behavior of these agents, the kind of information they wanted in preparing their moves and particularly anything that would be useful in the assassination of Trotsky four years later.

The unfortunate dupe chosen to facilitate Jacson's establishment in Mexico was a young Trotskyist whose sister was at one time Trotsky's secretary.\* She was traveling to Europe. They arranged to have a traveling companion go along with her and to introduce her to Jacson in Paris. A friendship began which took an entire year to mature in Paris. Then they left for America.

\*Rosmer is in error here. The person referred to above was never a secretary although, like many others, she performed a few chores around the house during her visit to Mexico.—Ed.

The diabolical ruse of Stalin was not being hurried; it took its time.

Budenz, better informed than anyone on all this although he claims now to have been unaware of the operation he was connected with until after the blow was struck, is today a professor of political economy at Fordham University. Early last September he testified under oath in court to everything he had written in his book.

\* \* \*

It may be said that all the information contained in Gorkin's book was known for many years, and in superior form. But in France, where it is almost unknown, such information is better than none at all even if it appears in the unsavory form of a detective story. That is not my opinion. The police official could have told his story. Its real worth would have been obvious immediately. But it is intolerable for a militant socialist—and whatever he now says he was once a Trotskyist—to present such a book as the fruit of long research, worse yet to claim that in so doing he is serving the truth. For, while the story is basically true it is presented in distorted form and immersed in a malodorous sauce. Melodrama is substituted for tragedy, thereby giving the Stalinist fellow travelers reason to exclaim: "very interesting, captivating but not convincing." And the miserable barkers of Action [a Stalinist sheet] would have been all the more embarrassed in peddling their lies if the confessions of their comrade Siquieros had simply been shaken under their noses.

ALFRED ROSMER

—Translated from *Quatrieme Internationale* by RDV.

## Ruth Fischer and German Communism

STALIN AND GERMAN COMMUNISM. A Study in the Origins of the State Party. By Ruth Fischer. Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1948. 687 pp.

Ruth Fischer has written a valuable contribution to the documentary history of an important subject and period in the political life of Germany. As an interpretation of that history it occupies a more questionable place. Still more obscure is the purpose the author had in mind in writing it. To be sure, she avoids — sometimes with considerable care—the flagrant use of the fashionable renegade formula that describes Stalinism as the natural outgrowth of

Bolshevism. This studied effort, however, is nullified by many ambiguous passages which leave precisely that impression. The same ambiguity, bordering on confusion, characterizes her evaluation of a number of episodic questions as well as the central theme.

Perhaps this is in part explained by an attempt at self-justification which the author, not unnaturally, weaves into the book. For Ruth Fischer was an important figure in the Communist movement during the period of the crisis which led to its degeneration. Although her factional alignments at the time were quite firm (she was a staunch Zinovievist), the policies of her group in the German Communist Party veered dizzily from left to right. "Twenty years afterward," she writes today, "I am not able to identify myself with any of the groups involved."

As in those crucial days, Ruth Fischer's book reveals she has not gained in clarity with the years in distinguishing between those who fostered the degeneration of Bolshevism and those who fought against it. This lack of clarity, of political "identification" which marks her book is on a different plane today but it is no less noxious.

Stalin and German Communism begins with a well-documented review of the origins of the Communist Party of Germany in the left wing of the Social Democracy led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht and in the insurrectionary movement that toppled the Kaiser at the close of World War I. The great contributions of Rosa to revolutionary internationalism as well as the fatal weaknesses of the Spartakus Bund founded by her are given their due place in this work.

But while the corroborative data of the repeated treachery of the Social Democratic leadership is cited in voluminous detail, the author weakens the appreciation of the enormity of the betrayal in its historic significance. Of this, there is no rounded evaluation anywhere in the book.

And yet, the subsequent degeneration of the Russian Revolution, and of the Communist movement to which it gave birth, cannot be understood without taking into account the role of the Social Democracy. It was the extreme corruption of this first great labor bureaucracy that halted the extension of the Russian October and isolated the young Soviet Republic in a hostile capitalist world. The rise of Stalinism can be understood objectively only as a result of this isolation. In failing to give suf-

ficient weight to this factor, Fischer, regardless of her intentions, makes Stalinism appear as a solely subjective phenomenon. This fits in—the aims of the author notwithstanding—with the current ideological campaigns of American imperialism and its intellectual apologists. It hardly serves historical truth, particularly at a time when the true role of social democracy is obscured by the barrage against Moscow.

The section on "National Bolshevism" uncovers many new facts. It shows how dangerous for the revolutionary movement of the time was Karl Radek's confusion of the diplomatic and military needs of the isolated Soviet Republic with the development of an independent policy for the German Communist Party. It was a model in embryo for the monstrous national opportunism subsequently pursued by Stalin throughout the world. Fischer's attempt to attribute Radek's aberration to the Leninist leadership lacks documentary substantiation. On the contrary, it is well known that Radek was publicly repudiated at the time by Lenin's co-workers. The author does not deny this but she leaves the implication that this prototype of Stalinist policy was inherent in Bolshevism. Again her ambiguity and confusion lend themselves to use by the present-day propagandists of anti-communism.

In discussing the crucial years before and after the aborted revolution of 1923, Ruth Fischer often writes as though she were still engaged in the factional struggles of that time. She attributes to Trotsky an analysis of the pre-1923 situation that "was regarded as closer to Levi's than to Lenin's" (p. 177). Paul Levi was the intellectual inspirer of the inept and disastrous right wing leadership in the German Communist Party. Yet in refutation of the parliamentary illusions of the right wing she herself quotes from the manifesto of the Second Congress of the Communist International: "The German parliamentary system is a void space between two dictatorships" (p. 214). It has been common knowledge for years that this manifesto was written by none other than Trotsky!

Trotsky's monumental work *Lessons of October* which climaxed his struggle for a revolutionary policy in Germany against Stalin, Zinoviev and their allies, she dismisses as "irrelevant" only to cite passages from this work which show how correctly he evaluated this decisive period. In this regard, she makes the utterly unfounded contention that Trotsky's *Lessons of October* "fostered a

dangerous illusion of German Communists that they could seize power soon if only they would thoroughly 'Bolshevize' their party" (p. 378). The fact is that Trotsky took a diametrically opposite position and that Ruth Fischer herself falsely accused him at the time of "the loss of the perspective of world revolution, a hopeless pessimism and the liquidation of the European Revolution, etc." (Quoted from Pravda in *The Third International After Lenin*, by Leon Trotsky, p. 103.)

Ruth Fischer attributes to Trotsky her own erstwhile view which he castigated so mercilessly at the time. It was only much later that she and her faction veered to the other extreme in a parliamentary policy that out-Brandlered Brandler in its opportunism. This incident reveals how unreliable are memories clouded by attempted self-justification.

The chapters on Stalin's intervention in German Communist affairs, beginning with his injunction that the revolutionists there must be "curbed and not spurred on," are perhaps the most interesting in the whole book. They show in detail the organizational methods he employed in corrupting the cadres of the Comintern. But the most criminal of his interventions, the theory of "social fascism"—which paralyzed the German working class and opened the road for Hitler—is merely mentioned in passing.

Together with the lacunae on the role of the Social Democracy and the confusion on the events of 1923, this shortcoming reveals the woeful political weakness of Ruth Fischer's book as an interpretive work. The theory of "social fascism" is not unlike a nefarious concept abroad today, namely that Stalinism is the main enemy of the world working class. Can it be that her lack of clarity on this present problem led Ruth Fischer to skip so lightly over the theory of "social fascism" which one would assume is a major question in any work on Stalin and German Communism?

Fischer's book can be characterized succinctly as an interesting personal document, valuable for historical research, but lending itself to diverse interpretations, at best to confusion and at worst to manipulations in the current ideological campaigns against Marxism.

—PAUL G. STEVENS

**LETTERS**

Editor, Fourth International:

I have just read Ferdinand Lundberg's book, *Modern Woman*. Are you acquainted with it? The theme is that modern woman is neurotic and that is the root of the world's troubles, war, etc. His solution is a few silly things like baby bonuses, diplomas for housemakers, mass psychoanalysis. The main danger: that a social revolution will come about before the cultural revolution (i.e. before he gets everybody psychoanalyzed). I would like to see a good, thorough, annihilating job done on this gentleman. The subject seems important enough.

—M. W., Cleveland, Ohio.

Editor, Fourth International:

The prime requisite of an historian is that he should come forward with clean hands . . . and not color his facts to suit his own purposes, or distort issues which may, or may not happen to fit in with his viewpoint. These definitely are not adhered to by Winston Churchill in his book, *The Gathering Storm*. While G. F. Eckstein ("Winston Churchill—Tory War dog," *Fourth International*, February 1949) contented himself with exploratory research into the author's background, and divining his aberrations, and self-admiration, his quotations taken from the book tend only to affirm his portrait of Churchill rather than his appraisal of history.

Churchill's hatred of Communism shows itself not so much by his diatribes about it, but rather his seeming detachment, such as passing time worn cliches to the effect of Mussolini and Hitler being the legitimate offspring of Communism, and more particularly, Lenin.

His version of the Spanish Civil War is truly an epic. (He devotes all of four paragraphs to it.)

He states: "In this quarrel I was neutral. Naturally, I was not in favour of the Communists. How could I be, when if I had been a Spaniard they would have murdered me and my family and friends?" That he needs not make such a statement pertaining to the Fascists is really significant. That he makes no mention of the thousands of people slaughtered with the blessing of the Catholic Church redounds to the turpitude of this historian.

. . . His deliberate omission of the facts dealing with London's interests in Spain, particularly in Madrid where its financiers owned a large share in the street railway systems and real estate, cannot be deemed to be a mere oversight on his part. Besides the Catholic Church, he fails to mention the Spanish grandes, the absentee landlords, many of whom resided in London and had their feudal outlooks championed in the halls of Parliament.

Eckstein made the point of Churchill's warm admiration both for Hitler and Mussolini. A person with instinctive leanings such as these does not make scurrilous remarks about popular parliamentary procedure accidentally. . . On reading the book, one cannot help noticing the two-dimensional aspect of his fellow contemporaries. None of their background is brought into the light, and they, (particularly the successive leaders in France) merely goosetep to Churchill's pen. There is too much literature extant dealing with the period he covers to take much credence in his self approbation of his role as historical figure. Like Shaw, Churchill is living to see himself become a legend.

—NORMAN JOHNSTONE  
Westville, N. J.

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