

The New _____ **INTERNATIONAL**

MARCH • 1946

The Eruption of Bureaucratic Imperialism

A Contribution to the Discussion on the Russian Question

By **DANIEL LOGAN**

HENRY JUDD:

FRANCE IN 1946

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MIRIAM GOULD:

PROFITS AND THE HOUSING SHORTAGE

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LEON SHIELDS:

ROLE OF THE INDONESIAN LEADERSHIP

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TWO REPORTS ON RUSSIA BY OBSERVERS

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**REPORT ON GERMANY'S FIRST
POST-NAZI ELECTIONS**

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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NICOLA DI BARTOLOMEO

Nicola di Bartolomeo, National Secretary of the Partito Operaio Comunista (Workers Communist Party) Italian section of the Fourth International, died at Resina (Naples province) on January 10.

He was only 44 years old, but with a record of 25 years of struggle in the revolutionary movement. Only in the last two years was he able to appear under his own legal name. Before that in many countries he was known as FOSCO and then as ROLAND.

In France, in Belgium, in Holland, in England and in Spain, he participated in the struggle. During the Spanish civil war he fought in the Lenin Column and later in Barcelona, rifle in hand, he defended the workers' rights on the barricades which rose in the famous May Days of 1937.

Jailed in France under the Vichy régime, he was handed over to Mussolini and returned to his native land after long exile—to a prison. It was in the prison-isolator of Tremiti that he and a group whom he had gathered around him wrote the first program of the new revolutionary party which they were to found.

That program, and much else that he wrote in the less than three years that remained to him, was necessarily preoccupied with the central importance of democratic demands as the crucial means to mobilize the masses for revolutionary struggle. These writings were directed against the ultra-lefting Bordigha and his followers. Comrade Di Bartolomeo emphasized that we must not repeat the error which the Communist International made even in its best days when it permitted the reformists to pose as the sole defenders of democracy.

He had the satisfaction, in the weeks preceding his death, of knowing that at last the party had won the right to a legal newspaper, three issues of which had appeared before his death. *IV Internazionale*, as the paper is called, has enabled the party to turn toward the masses urging them to fight for the republic and a government of the Socialist and Communist parties in order to end the present political paralysis.

Despite the terrible conditions prevailing in southern Italy, he insisted on remaining there because of his close connection with the workers of Naples, although meanwhile the national center and the press had been moved to Rome in order to serve the industrial North. A pulmonary congestion, aggravated by the lack of proper food and medical treatment, killed him after a few days of intense suffering.

An indefatigable organizer, and with his vast international experience, his loss is a great blow at a time when the Italian section of the Fourth International has weathered its initial tasks of establishing itself and is growing rapidly.
Rome, January 25, 1946

On behalf of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL and the Workers Party we can add: not only the Italian party but the whole world Trotskyist movement has suffered a great loss in the passing of Comrade Di Bartolomeo. One of the oldest remaining comrades who go back to the days of the Left Opposition, his great international experience gave him an especially authoritative voice in the Fourth International not only on European but also on world questions. To his bereaved widow, Rosa, his worthy companion in the revolutionary fight, we send our heartfelt condolences and pledge of comradeship.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

VOLUME XII

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EDITORIAL COMMENT—

THE STRIKE SETTLEMENTS

Labor's Objectives and Labor's Gains Role of the Government and Labor's Politics

The first great post-war trial of strength between American labor and capital is drawing to an end. The over-all result is a defeat for labor.

The efforts of the labor leaders to point with pride to the wage increases of twelve per cent to nineteen per cent and claim a victory avail them little against a sober analysis of the nature of the struggle. Such an analysis must begin by noting that the 1946 strike wave was not a repetition of the 1919 struggles. In the latter, it was capital which took the offensive to rid itself of the grip which labor had achieved on many industries during the war. Capital's offensive proceeded under the general slogan of "The Open Shop." Other struggles of that period were for the elementary demand of union recognition, as in the steel strike.

The strike wave just being concluded began with organized labor at the peak of its strength in the history of the movement. The combined membership of the CIO, AFL, the railroad brotherhoods and the miners totaled some 14,000,000. The unions took the offensive to close the gap between wages and prices which had developed during the wartime wage freeze and no-strike pledge. The bulk of them set a thirty per cent increase as the amount necessary to achieve this. The statistics they produced made out an airtight case for the justice of this demand. They further aggressively declared that they wanted forty-eight hours' pay for forty hours' work in order to maintain the purchasing power necessary to provide full employment. In most cases they denied that a price increase was required to meet their wage demands. In the case of General Motors, they demanded that the corporation "open its books" and make available to the public all information pertaining to its financial situation.

The demands of labor were regarded as elementary justice by the rank and file. The airtight case made out for them by the unions' spokesmen in collective bargaining were viewed by the ranks as a matter-of-fact presentation of the workers' minimum needs. The ranks of labor were everywhere solid. Not a single major strike showed evidence of internal wavering, not even in the record-long GM strike.

Objectives Not Achieved

Yet the mighty offensive of labor nowhere reached its objectives. In most cases the settlements secured only a half to two-thirds of what labor struck for. Labor did not get its war-

time "take-home" pay demand. It did not get what its spokesmen had proved was necessary to again bring wages up to a pre-war parity with the cost of living. If an army that takes the offensive and fails to dislodge the enemy from its positions has suffered a defeat, then labor suffered a defeat in the present strike struggles.

Nothing so underscores the correctness of this verdict as the fact that most strikes settled down to a struggle over one, two or three cents per hour between the maximum offered by capital and the minimum acceptable to labor. Capital recognized from the outset that some increase in wages was unavoidable. The issue in the strikes was not, therefore, nothing or nineteen cents. It was the thirteen to fifteen per cent offered by capital and the thirty per cent demanded by labor.

Labor's effort was the imposing one. Its blows struck both successively and concurrently in the most basic industries—steel, auto, packing, electrical goods, communications, aluminum and scores of local strikes. The strike movement carried into its wake such independent unions as that of the telephone workers, long regarded as being a company union. It produced such offshoots as the tugboat strike, which cut off New York's fuel and brought the entire city to a standstill, the solid walk-out of the Galveston, Texas, municipal employees, the tie-up of the Philadelphia transportation system and the long and stubborn strike of the San Francisco-Oakland machinists. During the course of the steel strike the number of strikers topped the million mark by a wide margin. Behind them stood the largest labor movement in the world. They enjoyed a widespread sympathy in the ranks of the unorganized and the middle class. But the best which the labor leadership could achieve was to squeeze an additional nickel out of the corporations, a nickel that looks all the smaller when compared with the manifest justice of labor's original demands.

Labor Defeated by Government

Yet labor was not defeated on the picket lines. Its ranks held solid. Nowhere did a struck industry succeed in operating. Labor received its defeat at the hands of the government. The two factors that decided the strike were (1) the government's tax rebate scheme and (2) the Administration's intervention through so-called fact-finding agencies.

The tax rebate provisions of the 1945 tax law have been previously described in these columns as to how they affect

strike-bound plants (THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, December, 1945, page 261). The operation of this law in the case of the United States Steel Corporation caused Philip Murray to protest to Secretary of the Treasury Vinson that the corporation could afford to defy the strikers to the extent of remaining closed all year and still "earn" profits of \$149,000,000 through the tax rebate provisions. Compared to such financial subsidies for industry, the strikers could not even collect unemployment insurance, except in a few states where they became eligible after eight weeks.

The second decisive factor that told against labor was Truman's fact-finding intervention. The rôle of the Administration was one integrally associated with all forms of "labor conciliation"—to maneuver between the two contestants, to confuse the issues, to apply "pressure," to browbeat and threaten, to trick and cajole. The Administration's specific tactic in the major strikes of the recent wave was a trick that is hoary with age and is the first one every small-fry conciliator uses when injecting himself into a strike situation. This trick consists of a widely-heralded refusal to comment upon the issues until they have been submitted to a scientifically impartial fact-finding. The next step is to ascertain labor's minimum demand and the corporation's maximum offer. Having determined this, the conciliator makes a firm announcement that labor is entitled to an amount which is usually slightly above the maximum which capital is ready to concede. The corporation knows its cue and belligerently rebukes the government conciliator for seeking to browbeat industry, charges that the conciliator is pro-labor and with a great show of stubbornness declares it will not go a penny beyond its original offer. At this point the gullible labor leaders beat their breasts and begin a big campaign of demagogical denunciation of the corporation for "defying the government." The conciliator states that he has done his best, that the corporation is unreasonable and makes an appeal to its sense of fair play. By this time the labor leadership has retired to the sidelines and becomes all but spectators as the conciliator and the corporation go through a sham battle over two or three cents. If the conciliator is one who operates in the grand manner, he will even tell "the boys" to leave it to him, that he can get more for them if they stay out of the limelight, etc. At one point the corporation finally "capitulates." It either agrees to an increase somewhere half way between what the conciliator asked for and what the corporation originally offered or, if hard pressed, even accepts the conciliator's recommendation. The labor leaders then announce a "great victory" over a stubborn enemy.

Is not this just about what happened in the steel strike?

The best of the labor militants already realize this. As time goes by and the mass of workers try to measure up their increased pay envelopes against their grocery and clothing bills, they too will discover that the "great victory" left them far short of their objectives set at the beginning of the strikes.

The Original Demands and the Progressives

Above all do the strike settlements look paltry and threadbare in contrast to the bold demands about "ability to pay," "open the books" and "no price increases because of wage increases" with which the CIO leadership entered the fray. The revolutionary implications of these demands proved too much for the labor leadership when the reactionary press and the full-page ads of the corporations began to drive them home by pointing to their logical conclusions. Yet, as it was developed in these columns in our December and January issues, these demands were not accidentally adopted by labor. They

were implicit in the very situation in which labor found itself at the end of the war. The basis upon which the strikes were settled does not alter this situation. The way out for labor which was indicated by these demands will again and again present itself as the obvious and logical choice. It has become the indicated program for the progressives in the unions. "Open the books" and "Make profits and prices subject to collective bargaining" must be an integral part of any progressive program that seeks to keep abreast of labor's needs in this period.

However, the crowning demand of every *progressive* program, and without which it hardly can lay claim to that distinction any more, is the demand for an independent Labor Party. The first great strike experience of the American labor movement since the organization strikes of the CIO in 1935-37 revealed that the relations between the labor movement and the Administration had undergone considerable change. The magnitude of the strike crisis forced Truman to make his "cooling off" proposal as a major step toward an over-all solution from the point of view of capital and, in turn, brought down upon him the angry denunciations of not only the CIO but the AFL and railroad brotherhoods as well. Rumor has it that Robert Hannegan, Democratic Party strategist, is hard at work to save the Democratic Party-PAC alliance, at least for the Congressional elections of 1946. It may have been this consideration that caused the tone of the Administration to change during the course of the strike wave from the initial "cooling off" message to the more subtle strike-breaking rôle of "fact-finding" and "labor conciliation." However, a note of dissatisfaction with labor's political strategy is everywhere apparent in the trade unions. To some measure it reflects the cautious moves of the Stalinists toward "third party" alignments. However, in the main, it represents the growing awareness on the part of the rank and file that the PAC strategy has failed, that labor's politics have reached an impasse, that the Democratic Party is more than ever the instrument of the Southern reactionaries and the Northern big city machines and that its traditional "friends at court," like Henry Wallace, are themselves barely tolerated in Democratic Party circles. It appears that Hillman and Murray are prepared to again go through the farce of electing a Congress "friendly to labor" in the 1946 elections. It is highly probable, however, that the political lessons of the strike wave will bear fruit in a series of local moves toward independent labor politics on a municipal and state basis before the November elections roll around.

THE TRUTH ABOUT INDIA:

'INDIA IN REVOLT'

By **HENRY JUDD**

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France in 1946

A Balance Sheet of Two Years of Liberation

"You ask me, monsieur, what the French in general think about you, the American soldier, a year after you have come to Europe? I will answer you frankly, monsieur. Nous sommes tellement déçu! (We are so disappointed.) Many of your soldiers are good fellows (braves gars), but most of you are, to us, les grands enfants et les gros égoïstes (big kids and very selfish). You are now leaving Europe and we are happy to see you go. Best for Europe that it be left to itself, without you. Your soldiers understand nothing about Europe, they know nothing about France and our history. You treat the Germans too well, you keep the Nazi men in authority still. You do not punish the Germans severely enough...."

"But most of all, there is our feeling that you treat us with contempt, and look down upon us and consider us fit only to do your dirty work. Frenchmen are very proud, as you know. They consider themselves a cultured people, inferior to no one. We do not like the way your soldiers sneer at us, call us 'frogs' (les grenouilles) and treat us with nothing serious...."—Told to the author by a young French worker-soldier in 1940, member of the Resistance Militia and Communist Party supporter.

In no country of Europe has the conflict between the national sentiments of the masses of people and the narrow, chauvinistic "nationalism" of the political leaders and bourgeois class so stood out as it has in France. Out of these deep French desires for national independence and freedom from foreign domination, for peace and economic reconstruction, for popular democracy and a new social order, the revived bourgeois leadership (with the indispensable aid of the French Communist and Socialist Parties) has succeeded largely in renewing the traditional blind patriotism, restoring the old relations of peasant and working class exploitation and continuing the political régime of police Bonapartism and bureaucracy. The net result of one and a half years of Allied "liberation" is that the pre-war economic, political and social crises remain, more hopeless of solution under capitalism than ever. It is worth our while to review briefly these traditional problems of France.

The general economic decline of French capitalism can be stated in the following descriptive terms: "... that during the interim between the two wars we witness, despite certain appearances, a progressive weakening of French economy. This weakening has entailed, for French capitalism, mounting difficulties in its relations with world economy. It has entailed the breaking up of France's monetary and financial system, as well as a fundamental trade balance disequilibrium, a disequilibrium full of the weightiest consequences for the continuation of those important sections of the French industrial apparatus depending upon import possibilities." (*La Crise Française, Essais et Documents, Editions du Pavois, 1945, pp. 11, 12.*) Specifically, this weakening has taken place in the fields of industry, agriculture, foreign commerce and the monetary system. Industrially, the number of workers engaged in industry and transport grew only by 200,000 during the 30-year period between 1906 and 1936—7,225,000 (1906) to 7,415,000 (1936). A more basic symptom of industrial stagnation is the fact that the proportion of men in industry, out of the entire male population, which reached 44.4 per cent in 1931, dropped to 42.1 per cent in 1936—not much above 35 per cent in 1906. The economist, Charles Bettelheim, in *La Crise Française*, page 15, takes the year 1913 as his industrial base line for

French production. Reckoning that year's production at 100, a maximum of 140 was reached in 1930, then a steady decline to 95 in 1938, "despite the return to France of the Alsace-Lorraine industrial regions.... The 1930 production level has never again been reached, signifying a stagnation of industrial production to a level approximating that of 1913." (*Ibid.*, page 15.) Despite technical advances, reconstruction of regions devastated in the First World War, etc., the greater part of French industry has remained at this low level of productivity. In 1913 France possessed 7.2 per cent of world industrial strength, in 1937 only 5.1 per cent; in 1913 French production was 14.7 per cent of European production, in 1937 it had fallen to a mere 9.3 per cent (Russia included).

Agriculture and Foreign Trade

In agriculture, this stagnation is not so marked. Total production increased about 10 per cent between 1913 and 1933. (*Ibid.*, page 17.) But this contrasts poorly with yield increases registered by other European nations, due to the low technical level of French agronomy. Surplus agricultural products (wheat, beet sugar and wine) fared poorly on the international market due to their high prices in relation to those of competitive nations. Any brief trip through the French village and countryside reveals the sorry state of French agriculture: houses and buildings uncared for, roads and fences in poor shape, farming equipment badly worn, etc. The system of small-scale farming continues to drag French agriculture toward lower, unproductive levels and retains its traditional backwardness.

Most striking of all aspects of French economic decline has been that in foreign trade. Taking the year 1912 as a base equal to 100, the index of trade reached a high of 121 in 1929, then fell to 70, 82 and 95 for the years 1936, 1937 and 1938. "Thus, in 1936, the net total of French foreign trade was 30 per cent below what it was in 1912, despite the return to France of Alsace-Lorraine." (*Ibid.*, page 20.) Since this decline affected exports more than imports, there is an almost constant increase in the unfavorable trade balance. This deficit grew from 1½ billion francs in 1912 to 2½ billion francs in 1938, basing ourselves upon the stable gold franc. We witness "... a progressive reduction of the nation's purchasing power on the world market, entailing problems more and more difficult of solution so far as purchases of raw materials are concerned; raw materials particularly needed by French industry since it depends upon the world market for supplies." (*Ibid.*, page 24.)

The general causes behind this over-all decline in French economy are clear: (a) France proved to be one of the "weakest links in the economic world" and was therefore harder hit than other capitalist nations by the economic crisis culminating in the 1929 crash; (b) France suffers severely from a paucity of raw materials (metallurgical ores, coal, iron, oil, etc.); (c) France is extremely backward in its technological development, both for industry and agriculture, and (d) France has been burdened by monopolistic and banking formations which have limited the internal market, while simultaneously building up high tariff walls around the country. Bettelheim summarizes this economic Malthusianism as follows: "This ac-

tion of the monopolies puts an end to the spontaneous expansion of production that, in the sphere of economic competition, results from the obligation of each producer to constantly improve his means of production so as not to be eliminated from the market. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, monopoly has progressively taken the place of competition in numerous sectors of French economic life... limiting its production and investment to the immediate absorption possibilities of the market." (*Ibid.*, page 33.) This monopolistic repression by the "200 Families" is still the principal factor weighing upon the French nation; the monopolists are as powerful as ever within the country, even if they have lost ground relative to the world market.

Basic Political Problems Remain

Politically, the same basic problems remain—the twin evils of government bureaucracy and the Bonapartist state. The eternal, self-perpetuating French civil service "*fonctionnaires*," heads of government bureaus, manipulators and middle-men between the government and the top French bourgeois—this same crew that remained at its posts during the Vichy government interlude is still there. A minute fraction of this administrative caste has been touched by the so-called collaborationist purge of the de Gaullist government. It continues its mission of blocking, side-stepping and sabotaging whatever measures of a social character that the government may undertake, as well as weighing down France with what is undoubtedly the largest (in proportion to population), most cumbersome and antiquated bureaucracy of any nation. As for the de Gaullist state, established with Allied approval, suffice to state for the moment that it continues the Bonapartist police tradition known to France since parliamentary democracy entered its permanent crisis after the First World War. The first basic acts of the neo-Bonapartist state were (1) to liquidate the independent militia of the Resistance movement, along with every form, or shadowy semblance of "dual state power" that arose during the early days of liberation from the Nazis; and (2) to insure the continuity of the state machinery (stemming *directly* out of the Vichy-Pétain régime), rebuild the pre-war army and police force (Garde Mobile included), with their former officers' cadres maintained in charge. That is, the de Gaullist "liberators" concerned themselves first and foremost with the revival of all the old institutions, bulwarks and forms of violence that were linked with the pre-occupation and occupation methods of rule. We shall examine more of the "Fourth Republic's" acts in more detail below.

And finally, the great *social* problems peculiar to the French nation have maintained their traditional sharpness. To begin with, the well-known problem of France's declining birth rate and gradual depopulation (small number of youth; progressive aging of the population) is far from a possible solution.* The narrow backwardness of French provincial, village and rural life; the general insecurity of the city people before the dangers of unemployment, illness, old age, etc.; the very physical appearance of the cities and villages, lacking the simplest refinements of modern community living—all these testify to the acuteness of these old social problems. The recent struggle over control of the national educational system and its subsidization (*l'école laïque* of the state versus *l'école libre* of Catholicism), with its complementary issue of

*For a brilliant theoretical study of the Marxian approach to the problem of population, we refer the reader to the essay, "L'enfant et le Titre de Rente" by Pierre Bessagnet, contained in *La Crise Française*, Editions du Pavois, Paris, page 153.

separation of church and state is another instance of the tenacity with which reaction holds fast to France and refuses to let the people lift themselves out of the old ruts. The rigid hierarchization of the classes of French society into exclusive castes and sub-castes, so often forming the psychological basis of great French literature, has been largely untouched, even by the catastrophic events of defeat, occupation and liberation. The petty nobility, the aristocracy of the Parisian *fau-bourgs*, the cliques of bureau chiefs, the officers' caste, the industrial and banking monopolists of the "200 Families," the infinitesimal shadings of the petty bourgeoisie so elaborately described by Jules Romains, the privileged workers' aristocracy, the proletarians of Paris, Lyons, Lille and Clermont-Ferrand, the landlords and vineyard capitalists, the small landholding peasant mass, the sharecroppers, the agricultural laborers... All classes, castes and cliques engage, as before, in an exhausting and uncreative struggle for the limited national wealth and production of a nation in decline, whose economic weakness lies at the heart of every political and social problem.

French War Losses

But we must examine and describe the more *specific* features of this long French decay and decline, as they are today. Obviously, the Six Years' War can only have forced this downward tempo, and piled on additional burdens and hindrances. To begin with, we shall summarize the war losses of France. During four years of occupation, the Germans requisitioned, according to the French Ministry of Agriculture, eight million tons of grains and meat; 643,000 horses; 40¼ million tons of food products; nine million cubic meters of wood and lumber; one and a quarter billion liters of wines and liquors. This includes only those items officially requisitioned, exclusive of stolen goods, packages sent home by German soldiers, black market operations, etc. A plundering of France's wealth on a mass scale! It is also estimated that the Germans imposed a total occupational cost of 1,000 billion francs (\$20 billion, if we value the franc at its war value of two cents) upon the nation!

Then came the actual destruction caused by bombings and the fighting in Normandy and Southern France. The magazine, *La Quatrième Internationale*, summarizes this destruction as follows: 1,400 miles of railroad lines destroyed; more than 3,000 bridges blown up; about two-thirds of the nation's locomotives and one-half the trucks destroyed; 1½ million homes damaged (of which 163,000 were entirely destroyed) as contrasted with one million in the war of 1914. The global cost of reconstruction (merely to bring the country back to its 1938 level) is estimated at 2,000 billion francs! The French merchant fleet has disappeared from the seas, while the famous fishing fleets of Brittany and Calais have dropped from a 1929 tonnage of 150,000 to 8,500 today. In October of 1945, France had 78,000 freight cars in service, a drop from a pre-war total of 434,000. In capital losses, France has suffered far beyond its losses in the First World War.

To what extent has normal production been resumed? Charles Bettelheim estimates that "industrial production at the beginning of 1945 represented only 30 to 35 per cent of 1938 production, while in agriculture there has been a considerable drop in the principal crops as well as livestock." (*Op. cit.*, pages 55-56.) This percentage of 1938 production has now gone up (one year later) to approximately 50 per cent, i.e., half of its pre-war total. But bearing in mind those requirements of French economic life not fulfilled by home produc-

tion (e.g., prewar France only produced 60 per cent of its required coal), as well as the fact that import trade has resumed only on a minute scale, we see how desperately below normal is the country's economic production. Actually, the situation signifies that no real *national* economy exists, but that economic life has been thrown back to a local (city and village), departmental and provincial basis. While it is estimated that 75 per cent of the nation's productive capacity is still available, idle factories and machines are not solving the great struggle for national production. *Le Monde* (October 20, 1945) cited the great needs of French industry as follows: coal and lignite; electrical power; coke, steel and all metal ores; oil gasoline and carburants; glass, jute and textiles, etc.

But what of France's import trade, clearly necessary for revival? Has that not resumed? We summarize a recent article by Marcel Tardy, from *Le Monde*: "Can we import? Our program of imports has caused great disappointment in France. Three million two hundred thousand tons of imports planned up to September, 1945, but even this is uncertain due to shipping problems. In 1938 we imported *forty-seven* million tons; *fifty-seven* million tons in 1937. But to repair our damages we must import even *more* than before the war. Our import possibilities are and will remain greatly reduced for a long time. Today we are poor. What can we offer abroad in exchange for what we lack? Our agriculture barely feeds us; our luxury articles no longer exist; what remains of our credits abroad would hardly suffice for our exchange needs. Before the war, one-fourth of our imports came from continental Europe. What can a devastated Europe sell us? We need raw materials, and machines, but every other European country will keep for itself whatever it can produce. Aside from some coal and the return of some machinery and material, shattered Germany can give us nothing. North Africa and our colonies only furnished seven million tons annually before the war. They have little industrial raw materials to furnish us, aside from phosphates." This gloomy passage sums up the import situation, both reality and potentiality... With an import program of \$21½ billion designed for 1946, the Finance Minister further underscored this reality by remarking that France "must draw largely on foreign credits, notably in dollars, and without these credits our convalescence will drag on and we run the risk of vegetating in autarchy." Pointed remarks directed at President Truman, who displayed his customary dull-wittedness and heard nothing.

The Financial Situation

And financially, how does the nation stand today? A 50 per cent devaluation of the franc has just taken place, making the franc equivalent to one miserable copper American cent! The once proud franc, with its 1913 value of approximately 23 cents, can now be purchased at 100 for the dollar (200 or more for a dollar on the black market). The *sou* and *centime* sub-divisions of the franc have disappeared from sight; worthless and meaningless. And already voices warn of a further possible devaluation. Mendès-France, former Minister of National Economy, wrote in the January 12 *France-Soir*: "unless France organizes a defense of the franc by internal and external recovery," there might be a second devaluation within the year. Today, France, even after a reissue and partial confiscation of inflationary currency, there are 450 billion francs circulating, compared with 150 billion in 1939—a tripling. The same financial madness applies to the basic question of the government's budget deficits. This debt, which increased from 409 billion francs in 1939 to 1,000 billion francs in 1944, has

been covered up to the end of 1944 in the following manner (*La Quatrième Internationale*, No. 20-21, 1945):

- 30 per cent of debt paid by taxes,
- 47 per cent of debt paid by short-term borrowing,
- 23 per cent of debt paid by Bank of France advances.

In other words, the government runs at a 70 per cent deficit! Mendès-France has stated, to top the picture, that this year's expected deficit of 200 billion francs is, really, 300 billion francs because "the railway deficit, those of the departments and communes and the costs of liquidating lend-lease," plus subsidies for bread and meat, are not shown in the budget at all! But the master show of de Gaulle's coalition government are not nettled by the mere addition of another 100 billion francs to their country's debt...

During the war, and while laboring in German enslavement, 350,000 Frenchmen lost their lives. A weakened nation like France could ill afford this loss of some of its best youth and popular leaders. The 2,000,000 who emerged out of the German wreck were in a weakened state, morally and physically. They returned to a homeland whose living standards were little superior to those of the German labor camps and prisons. Of clothing, decent housing and comforts, they found nil; a national black market sucked up the limited production and turned the best of everything over to those possessing the inflated francs of the Vichy-Nazi occupation. Food was drab, unvaried and as colorless as was the daily life, without recreation or cultural activities, except for Paris. Even the Parisian cannot find his beloved *vin rouge et blanc*, except on the black market! Present official rations represent, from a scientific dietary standpoint, about half the necessary minimum. The French today gets about 1,750 calories average, 200 more than the German, who is admittedly on a starvation diet, and 700 below the minimum required (the American GI in Europe averages 3,500 per day). In addition, he is spending his second winter without any heat, and bread rationing at a standard lower than during the German occupation is to be resumed.

Thus we have the war consequences, heaped upon a national economy and life already in a sad state of decline. "Increased deterioration of equipment which, already antiquated before the war, has not been renovated for six years and which has been used under conditions that have not even allowed for normal maintenance; pillaging of means of production and articles of consumption by the Nazi occupants; massive destruction, notably in fixed properties; reduction in industrial and agricultural production, due to lack of labor and raw materials; lowering of living standards; aggravation of the financial and monetary situation." (*Ibid.*, page 53.)

The Governmental Crisis

The elections in October, 1945, brought about a contradictory political situation, reflected in the creation of the present coalition "Popular Front" government that rules France. The masses of people, by their overwhelming, two-thirds support to the working-class parties of France (Communist Party and Socialist Party), indicated clearly enough the nature of their political and social aspiration, as clearly as the British people had done earlier. But on the issue of a Constituent Assembly having full, untrammelled powers while drafting a new Constitution, these same masses split, with half following the line of the reformist Socialist leadership by voting real political power to be retained by the régime of de Gaulle. At the same time, the MRP (Mouvement Républicain Populaire) emerged as the new political face of de Gaulle and the French bourgeoisie he represents, François Mauriac,

in the MRP paper *Figaro*, tells us the nature of this new political center of French reaction: "The clichés about trusts, nationalizations and *laïcism* are a sort of smokescreen that hides a heedless conflict in which there is no truce. We feel that what is at stake touches our very essence. It is the totalitarian spirit locked in battle with the Christian spirit in the whole world." Little wonder that every discredited politician, de Gaullist functionary, ex-collaborationist and the Catholic hierarchy have rallied to the MRP!

After a brief political crisis marked by the capitulation of the Communist and Socialist Parties to the General, a coalition cabinet including the three large parties was formed. The world press proclaimed the revival of living French democracy, but the new mixture refused to jell. Instead, as time approached for the general elections scheduled to be held in May of this year (under the new Constitution supposedly being drawn up by the present Constituent Assembly), the Cabinet became increasingly a battleground of the three big parties (MRP, Communist and Socialist), and the flimsy coalition rocked on its feet. De Gaulle's position finally became untenable and he preferred to rid himself of governmental responsibility rather than risk further discredit prior to the elections.

We have already described how the historic roots of the de Gaullist régime led back, by way of Nazi-Vichy-Pétain, to the traditional régimes of decadent French capitalism and the "200 Families." We know, likewise, the energetic consistencies of the General in resurrecting all the institutions of exploitation and oppression traditional to France (bureaucracy, police, army, courts, etc.). The Boulanger of today is out of office but not out of politics. He quietly mobilizes his forces, rebuilds and enforces his instruments of reaction, and prepares his future candidacy as the third Bonaparte seeking to strangle the not-yet born Fourth Republic.

Foreign Policy

Foreign policy reflects internal policy, so that we find this government strictly in line with all specific aspects and drives of traditional French imperialism. The North African colonies are held, by the same methods, as before. The nationalist uprising of the Indo-Chinese is bloodily suppressed, by tanks borrowed from the anti-colonial "lend-lease" pool of Britain, America, China and Japan. The "Socialist Youth" of Léon Blum's party, prematurely aged young cynics, announce the undying cultural and moral debt of the Indo-Chinese people to France; the Communists call upon the North Africans to produce more food for the motherland and are silent at the behavior of their imperialist generals in Syria and Lebanon. In Europe proper, de Gaullism imposes a ferocious vengeance upon those sections of Germany turned over to it by the Allies.* Too weak a victor in the Allied war camp to lay outright claim to the Ruhr district of Germany, neo-French imperialism has had to be content with the badly damaged Saar coal and iron ore districts. The General has stated tersely his program of European expansionism by his reiteration of the crude slogan of the ultra-chauvinist Marshal Foch: "The Rhine must become a French river." He thereby affirms his heritage and places himself alongside the henchmen of Allied victory, whose efforts are directed toward maintaining a divided Europe, and a high-pitched degree of racialism and nationalism.

But de Gaulle has an orientation in still other directions than that of Europe. Recognizing the pivotal position of

France as the only nation of Europe proper that has emerged from the war with any strength or stability left, he desires the country to become the continental leader of the Western European "bloc." England, of course, must be the acknowledged supervisor and organizer of this "bloc," but France can find a suitable substitution for its shattered, pre-war Versailles system in this rôle of subordination to England; an orientation commensurate with its weaknesses and current abilities. Furthermore, there is the question of the relations between French imperialism and America. For de Gaulle, this is of vital significance since French economy admittedly can never recover without the fullest material support from the United States.

The political struggles over foreign policy proceed within this area of a strictly limited national independence, with its varying orientations of subordination to England's future Western European "bloc," and dependency upon American imperialism. Clearly, France has little elbow room. Léon Blum's Social Democrats wish to point the nation toward England and its Labor Government; de Gaulle is primarily concerned with America; while the French Stalinists are violently opposed to both these orientations (particularly the former) and, naturally, can only see Stalin's Russia. But the treaty of alliance with Russia, against Germany, is largely meaningless—since Germany is about as much a threat to either power as Léon Blum is to French capitalism—and the building of a Western European "bloc," along with dependency upon America, are becoming harsh realities. Therefore, the French Communist Party can only tend to become more and more an opposition party—opposition in the sense that it wants to subordinate France's national independence to Russia; while de Gaulle and the Socialists have chosen other foreign masters. But all alike are caught in the same net of imperialist entanglements. None of these parties foresees any other future for France and its people than subordination to a stronger power, one or more of the Big Three, or a bloc organized by one or more of the Big Three. It is in this sense that the problem of national freedom for the French people is still a live issue and has not vanished with the ousting of the German occupant.

Historic Significance of the Resistance

The broad Resistance movement sprang from the depths of the French people, as their response to the German oppression and conquest. Yet, as is well known, this movement was no abstraction. It was no mystic order of patriots bound together by a romantic idealism, but a many-sided movement, with numerous (and conflicting) trends, currents and ideas. These trends, in turn, reflected through the prism of the national freedom slogan the underlying class struggles within the national entity that is France. Those who attempted to grapple with the Resistance as though it was a unified whole made the grave error of lumping together all tendencies under the self-same heading of "patriotism," "*la Résistance Sacrée*," as was designed by the self-appointed leader, General de Gaulle. How blind it was to consider one and the same thing the de Gaullist leadership (spokesmen of French, anti-German capitalism); the Communist-Socialist leadership; the petty bourgeois leadership (best expressed in the Resistance newspapers, *Franc-Tireur*, *Combat*) and, finally, working class leadership from the pre-occupation labor movement. Obviously, only the worst political errors could be committed by those who considered the French worker, to whom national liberation meant freedom from Gestapo oppression and exploitation by German imperialism, on a par with the French bourgeois, to whom this same slogan of national liberation

*Part IV of this series will contain a description of French occupational methods.

meant a return to a full, unshared control of his factory, property and profits.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL has often stated its understanding and position on the "national question" and has candidly criticized the sectarian and dogmatic attitude adopted, in theory and practice, by the European (including French) sections of the Fourth International. We shall not repeat here the arguments and material contained in these easily available articles, but we cannot resist stating our belief that the history of France, occupation and post-occupation period, confirmed our basic position of the necessity for participation in the Resistance movement, as its revolutionary wing, by the French Trotskyists, under the slogan of national liberation instead of their sectarian policy which resulted in isolation and sterility, despite their heroic sacrifices in the struggle against the Nazis.

Nor does it improve matters by reverting to the other extreme and now denying the "existence" of any Resistance movement, or calling it "a metaphysical formula." (*La Quatrième Internationale, ibid.*) What is needed is an objective analysis, a study of this movement for what it was and what it remains today; a clear differentiation of its various currents and ideas; a recognition of errors committed by its supporters and abstainers—in order words, an historic evaluation. Nor are we proposing an interesting but abstract lesson in history. We have already tried to make clear (in Part I) our opinion that the "national question," while it has shifted its ground, emphasis and specific relations of forces, still retains its vital urgency and importance for Europe. It is time for the European revolutionists, now emerging from their most difficult period, to recognize this. Neither "metaphysical formula" nor a Gallic shrug of the shoulders, but analysis and estimation. . .

Assembly in Impasse

What of the present Constituent Assembly, parliamentary (that is, cretin-like) expression of the decline and break-up of the Resistance movement? What a pitiful contrast this body makes with the classic Assemblies of revolutionary France, when live issues were debated and real social forces contended with one another for popular support! It bears a far greater resemblance to the impotent and multi-divided parliament that led France to disaster in the war; its show of unanimity on secondary measures is shattered by its utter division on basic questions of framing the new Constitution, the question of the army and military credits, the question of division of power between the Bonapartist pretender de Gaulle and the Assembly itself, the question of foreign affairs and orientation, the question of just how to revive French economic life, the question of the colonies and Empire, etc., etc. The Assembly, elected in October, 1945, and meeting since November (3 months) has made little progress on the problem for which it was ostensibly elected—the drawing up of a new Constitution for the Fourth Republic, and the preparation of the general elections to be held under the new Constitution in May of this year. During its brief career, this "supreme body of the French nation" has idly watched a worsening of France's food situation to an extent that has brought the nation's diet to levels never known during the worst days of Nazi occupation! Even the program of "nationalization," in the style of the British Labor government, proposed by the Socialist and Communist parties have not been advanced (yet these two parties have a clear majority in the Assembly). The one important social measure adopted has been the alleged nationalization of the Bank of France. Shares in the nationalized Bank are

being exchanged for "dividend-bearing instruments" yielding 2 per cent annually, to be bought back later by the government; the new National Council of Credit (to direct banking and credit) is composed of representatives of industry, business, finance and the former Governor of the Bank of France, with the inevitable handful of labor representatives thrown in. The measure no more breaks the financial hold of the "200 Families" on the national economy than did the similar measure in England.

In summary then, the Constituent Assembly—while reflecting the vague and generalized aspirations of the people by the very fact that the left-wing parties constitute its overwhelming membership—is a dangerous failure. It has opened up no new and independent paths, but has limited itself to being a pliant tool of the various political parties and a rather revolting spectacle of petty chicanery and maneuvering; "politics" in its pettiest sense. It has proven itself inescapable of fundamental solutions and has, therefore, contributed in its own way to a prolongation of the decay and decline which has so deeply permeated every pore of French life.

Most important of all, the atmosphere of disillusion, incapacity and helplessness which such an Assembly spreads provides the perfect yellow fog in which a militarist-Bonapartist candidate, à la de Gaulle, can plot and build his reactionary cadres for an attack upon the revived French labor and revolutionary movement. Nobody will dare predict when and in what form a right wing coup will be attempted, but it is absolutely inevitable. Under the slogan of "down with the Assembly-Parliament of do-nothing talkers; up with the National Hero of Action," the Bonapartist apostle will attempt to accomplish what the German conqueror failed in. It is in light of this that one must follow the new activities of the French Fourth Internationalists (PCI) as they stubbornly but surely attempt to emerge from their semi-illegal status, and advance their political ideas in the light of full, open public life.* More than one encouraging sign—(election vote, growth, recruitment among Communists, etc.) exists to indicate that the trend of revolutionary opinion is moving toward this party which, despite our open differences with it, commands our respect for its courage under the Nazi occupation and its vigorous efforts to gain influence among the people. It has bright possibilities to become an important factor in France, to lead the struggle against de Gaullist *coup d'état* attempts.

January, 1946

HENRY JUDD

*Let it never be forgotten that André Malraux, the de Gaullist Minister of Public Information who has till this day denied the quest of the Trotskyists to publish their paper, *La Vérité*, legally, is the same André Malraux who authored "Man's Fate" and "Man's Hope"! Bleak indeed would France's hope and fate be if such a type's influence were to remain decisive.

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The Eruption of Bureaucratic Imperialism

A Contribution to the Discussion on the Russian Question

The Russian armies, after their victory over Germany, have occupied Eastern Europe and, in great part, Central Europe. Nobody, of course, expected that they would stop at the borders of the U.S.S.R., and the mere fact of crossing borders, in the last act of a gigantic war, has no independent political significance in itself: its military necessity is obvious. The problem to be examined is not the mere crossing of borders, but the policy followed by the occupying authorities.

Three Aspects of the Policy of Occupation

The first point to be noted in this policy is the total absence of internationalism. The Soviet authorities sow and cultivate with great care blind chauvinism, a spirit of revenge. Internationalism and even every elementary human compassion are trampled. This fact alone would be sufficient for our condemning Stalinist policy in Europe. But in this there is nothing new. Only illusions about Soviet reality could have made one expect something else.

As the second point, it is necessary to mention the conduct of the Soviet soldiers. There is no reason to embarrassedly keep silent on this repulsive aspect of the occupation, provided that the cause of it is properly explained and the responsibility placed where it belongs. Twenty years of Stalin's political barbarism have not passed without leaving their mark. The Soviet soldier, constantly inoculated with strong doses of chauvinist hatred, treated as cattle by his officers, compensates himself by brutalities against the local population, by plunder and rape. Cars full of plundered goods were recently crossing Poland, according to an American journalist, decorated with the Soviet star (!) and with inscriptions like this one: "We belong to a nation of conquerors." This moral depravity is a direct product of the brutal régime of the bureaucracy. To keep silent on this aspect of the occupation is to keep silent on one of the most monstrous crimes of Stalin.

However, when everything has been said about the reactionary chauvinist policy of the bureaucracy, about the corruption of the Soviet army, there remains a series of facts, such as the truly fantastic indemnities, the dismantling of factories, the forced labor on a grand scale, etc., that cannot be explained except by deeper economic and social causes. The dismantling of factories, systematically practiced from Austria to Korea, is not merely due to the depravity of some Soviet general or bureaucrat. We have here a series of phenomena whose social and economic roots are to be looked for in the bureaucratic management of Soviet economy. This last aspect of the occupation I propose to name imperialism, more precisely *bureaucratic imperialism*, for a series of reasons that I will try to present.

Still more precisely, it is more correct to speak of *elements* of imperialism. We have observed these new phenomena only during a period that, historically, is still very brief. They have been until now explosions, violent indeed, but concentrated in an interval of time still very short. These elements of imperialism are playing in Soviet economy a role still secondary; they are still very far from having engendered a whole system, such as the British Empire. However, as elements, their existence is undeniable.

The imperialism that now dominates the world is finance imperialism. Bureaucratic imperialism is obviously not finance imperialism. Quite the contrary. Finance imperialism has its inner spring in a superabundance of capital, previously accumulated, in quest of investments. The distinctive feature of Soviet economy is still the low degree of industrialization, and the problem that confronts it does not at all resemble the one that confronts mature capitalism, but rather the one that nascent capitalism had to solve, namely the problem of primitive accumulation.

The country that came first in capitalist development, England, solved the problem of primitive accumulation through barbaric methods which Marx has so vividly described in the next to last chapter of the first volume of *Capital*: the laws against paupers and vagrants, the kidnapping of children, etc. In the countries that followed England on the road of capitalism the same methods were combined to various degrees, with the investment of British capital, previously accumulated, which permitted solving the task more easily.

Soviet economy is still far from having realized an industrialization of the country comparable to that of the advanced capitalist countries. However, Stalinist bureaucracy manages Soviet economy in such a way that the yearly fund of accumulation is greatly reduced. Not only does the bureaucracy appropriate a disproportionate share of the national income, but also—and that is the more important point—by its methods it retards the increase of the productivity of labor, multiplies losses and, in general, increasingly hampers the development of the economy. Thus, the bureaucracy finds itself forced, lest the rate of accumulation fall to a ridiculously low level or even become negative, to plunder means of production and labor power, everywhere it can, in order to cover the costs that its management imposes on Soviet economy. The parasitic character of the bureaucracy manifests itself, as soon as political conditions permit it, through imperialist plundering.

The policy of the Soviet bureaucracy outside the U.S.S.R. is but the continuation of its policy inside. From this fact, incontestable in itself, some may conclude that the eruption of bureaucratic imperialism hardly deserves any special attention and that it is merely a geographical extension of an already existing system; therefore, nothing politically new. This means to simplify the problem too much, for the action of the bureaucracy, inside and outside of the U.S.S.R., does not operate in the same milieu.

Russian armies have occupied in Europe regions that are much more advanced than the U.S.S.R. in the development of the productive forces and of technique, in the cultural level of the workers and of the working population in general (the extreme cases are those of the industrial regions of Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Austria).

The bureaucracy found its historical *raison d'être* in the U.S.S.R. in the barbaric condition of the country, in the necessity of transplanting foreign technique. It fulfilled these tasks in its own way, that is, very badly, and, to the extent to which it partly fulfilled them, it became a greater and greater brake on the further development of industrialization, of technique, of culture.

The extension of the power of the Kremlin bureaucracy to a backward country, such as Outer Mongolia for instance, may still signify for such a country a quicker industrial development. (Even in this case one may now be skeptical after the dismantling of factories in Manchuria and in the part of Korea occupied by the Russian army.) But in the highly industrialized parts of Central Europe, Soviet occupation has directly and terribly reactionary consequences.

The "abolition of the kulaks as a class," fifteen years ago, did not lead in horrors. According to a testimony cited by Trotsky, the troops of the GPU took away boots of young "kulak" children. However, whatever may be our indignation at such methods, the expropriation helped fulfill the first Five Year Plan.

The present situation in Europe is very different. When the Soviet bureaucrats dismantle factories in Vienna, they condemn the Viennese worker to a death more terrible than just physical death; it is the death of his class, his social death. It means to condemn the country not to get out of economic, social, political and cultural stagnation. It means to instigate the disintegration of the proletariat, the only class from which the salvation of Europe can come. It means to deal a blow at the very heart of the perspective of socialism.

Dismantling of Factories and Forced Labor

According to official figures, the Kremlin bureaucracy had already last September dismantled and shipped to Russia twenty per cent of Czech industry, thirty per cent of Polish industry. These are "allied" countries. What has happened in Austria, in Silesia, etc.? And these figures are merely quantitative: the bureaucrats have certainly not taken the least modern material. Moscow has claimed the privilege of seizing in the occupied countries, "friendly" or enemy, every machine of German make; in fact, it means to claim the right to grab all the industrial equipment of these countries. The economy of the enemy countries is, moreover, crushed by tremendous war indemnities for an indefinite period.

To the dismantling of factories must be added forced labor. War prisoners, Polish and Baltic exiles of 1939-40, political prisoners, German minorities deported from the Volga or from Rumania, etc., form a herd of unfortunate forced laborers, the number of which is certainly higher than eight millions and maybe not lower than fifteen or twenty.* The fate of these unfortunates is below that of slaves, for the owner of slaves ordinarily provides conditions that allow their indefinite reproduction. But the Soviet bureaucrat, because of his own situation, thinks only of drawing from the forced laborers all the possible labor in the shortest possible time. From one group of 100,000 German prisoners, six thousand were still alive three months ago, after three years of captivity, according to one of these unfortunates who had escaped.

Forced labor has occupied, in Soviet economy, a place which is far from being negligible compared to wage-labor. With eight to twenty millions of forced laborers side by side with the Russian working class, forced labor has not only a political, but also an *economic* importance. With the bureau-

*Official statistics are, of course, silent on this sector of "socialist" (!) economy. Light is thrown on a small bit of the reality by information which the Mensheviks have just published on one colony of the GPU. In northeastern Siberia, near the river Kolyma, there are gold deposits so rich that they can be exploited without a great amount of machinery. The whole region, an area about that of France, was given to the GPU. It exploits the deposits with the help of five million forced laborers, Poles deported in 1939-40 or German war prisoners, reduced to a régime of bread and water, deprived of all social life, treated, in the strictest sense of the word, as cattle, in a region with the most inclement weather in the world.

cratic management of Soviet economy, the problem of manpower and efficiency is insoluble. The most immediate result of such management, with its uncontrolled command and its arbitrariness, its iniquities and brutalities, is to keep the productivity of labor at an extremely low level. The worker, deprived of every right and every protection, hardly feels inclined to produce more, to take better care of his tools and of his machines, etc.†

The bureaucrat tries to solve this problem by his methods: Stakhanovism, extreme differentiations in wages and, finally, forced labor on a great scale. The latter penetrates the more easily into the system since the efficiency of wage-labor is very low, often hardly higher than that of forced labor, and therefore there are many works which are less costly to execute with forced labor than wage-labor, especially when these forced laborers are deprived of all social life and reduced to being mere givers of labor-power until their death. It would be economically impossible to use forced labor on such a great scale in the United States, for instance, where the labor-power of well-paid workers, equipped with modern machinery, usually would be cheaper than the labor-power of forced labor with a very low efficiency. Thus the bureaucratic management of the economy, while keeping the productivity of labor at a low level, calls for, and at the same time makes possible, the use of forced labor on a great scale.

The most vivid manifestations of bureaucratic imperialism—plunder, requisitions, dismantling of factories, forced labor—are thus the direct consequences of the bureaucratic domination of the Soviet economy and not the product of Zhukov's caprice, or Stalin's thirst for power, or the depravity of Soviet soldiers. The whole bureaucratic management of the economy calls for such methods. In this sense, it is fully legitimate to speak of bureaucratic imperialism as a system growing out of definite economic needs.

Every imperialism springs from difficulties in the economy of the country. What this imperialism seeks reveals what these difficulties are. Finance imperialism, in quest of investments, reveals in the metropolis a superabundance of capital that does not find a sufficient rate of profit. Bureaucratic imperialism, with its millions of forced laborers and its carrying away of machines, reveals the need of an economy suffocating under the bureaucratic management.

At this point someone will probably remark that war has destroyed so much in the U.S.S.R. that this destruction is sufficient to explain the needs of Soviet economy, independently of the disorder and waste of the bureaucracy. This remark remains too abstract. Soviet economy does not start from scratch. In the years immediately preceding the war, in 1938-40, the existence of the bureaucracy weighed more and more heavily on the economy. The rates of development of the key industries had very much decreased in those years. War, with the poverty it has wrought, has deepened, materially and spiritually, the gulf between the bureaucracy and the people. Feeling itself surrounded everywhere by the hatred, the bureaucracy can less and less appeal to emulation, to enthusiasm, to voluntary sacrifice, in order to get out of a terribly difficult situation. How could a bureaucrat ask the Czech or Hun-

†This well known aspect of Soviet economy was again underlined recently in a report of a delegation of the Iron and Steel Trades Conference at its return from the USSR: "The workers are competent, but 'in spite of the stories about USSR: the increases in production, we believe that their output per man-hour is considerably lower than ours.' The delegates were unfavorably struck by the 'little importance attached to the care of the machine.'" (New York Times, November 17, 1945.)

garian peoples to voluntarily collaborate with the Soviet people for the building of a better future? Such appeals coming out of the mouth of a parvenu do not have the accent of truth and remain ineffective. The bureaucrat, in his own way, knows that very well. Nothing remains but the way of violence and plunder.

Imperialism and the Degenerated Workers' State

Does the appearance of elements of imperialism imply the revision of the theory that the U.S.S.R. is a degenerated workers' state? Not necessarily. The Soviet bureaucracy feeds in general on an appropriation of the work of others, and we have already, long ago, recognized this fact as part and parcel of the degeneration of the workers' state. Bureaucratic imperialism is only a special form of this appropriation.

If they do not necessarily imply a revision of the theory, the various manifestations of bureaucratic imperialism force us, nevertheless, to see how far the degeneration has advanced. It is not possible any more to simply speak of workers' state and to add, as if between parenthesis, degenerated. Of the two attributes, "workers" and "degenerated," it is the latter that we must now underline with greater emphasis. The degeneration has made such an advance and the impact of this degeneration on Europe has such terribly reactionary consequences that it is impossible to automatically apply to the U.S.S.R. of today propositions that would be valid for a "normal" workers' state. The Soviet Union is as far from being a "normal" workers' state as a rotten apple is a "normal" apple, and nobody would think of biting into a rotten apple. With the present imperialist plundering, the degeneration has reached the last stage of rottenness.

As the result of historical circumstances, which we have very often analyzed, a social formation has appeared which really is a monster of history. As the biologists explain to us, a monster is due to disturbances occurring during the development of the embryo; likewise the isolation of a proletarian revolution in a barbaric country has engendered a society not only without any precedent, but also very different from all the outlined norms.

To repeat today that "fundamentally" the U.S.S.R. is a workers' state because the means of production are nationalized is to dupe oneself with words. If it were so, the Poland of Bierut would be a good approximation of the dictatorship of the proletariat! If an economic form is separated from the social and political context in which it is immersed, it becomes an empty abstraction. Trotsky saw much more clearly than all these amateurs of empty phrases when, as early as 1936, he wrote that in the U.S.S.R. "the character of the economy as a whole depends upon the character of the State power."

If the Soviet Union still remains today, in my opinion, a *degenerated* workers' state, it is because, from that monstrous society, nothing new and stable has yet come out. In the rotten apple no germ has appeared. The personal position of each bureaucrat still remains very precarious. The manifestations of imperialism that we can now observe reveals precisely the parasitic character of a bureaucracy that lives from day to day by plunderings and expediencies. If the monster would reveal itself capable of reproducing itself, it would not be a monster any more, but a new species. If the system of political absolutism combined with state-ownership of the means of production were to extend over the world, the Soviet bureaucracy would already today be, of course, the prototype of this system. But history has not yet proven that from the Stalinist bureaucracy can emerge a social system of an historical scope, in the full

sense of the word. To accept today that the proof has been given means, it seems to me, to overlook all that is monstrous, exceptional, parasitic and unstable in the Stalinist bureaucratic regime.

Questions of Terms

The various features of bureaucratic imperialism which we now observe are a new phenomenon and, like any new phenomenon, it is difficult to label them. We have to create a new term or use a term already applied to other phenomena. To create a new word is easy, but to create a new word that would be understood by everybody, that could be used in our daily propaganda and agitation, is much more difficult, and until now, nothing of that kind has been proposed. We are, therefore, reduced to using a term already used for other phenomena, that is to say, to extend its meaning to a certain degree. Two names have already been used: expansionism and imperialism, and the question of choosing between the two would be very paltry if very often deeper disagreements were not hiding behind that choice. Let us weigh a moment the relative advantages and disadvantages of the two terms.

The term "imperialism" is used most of the time to designate the finance imperialism of advanced capitalist countries. (Not only, however. Trotsky, describing Tzarist imperialism, discovers in it many features which do not belong at all to classical finance imperialism.) If we want to use the term for the Soviet bureaucracy, we are then obliged, in order to avoid confusion, to state clearly what are the economic and social roots of bureaucratic imperialism, and that is what I have tried to do above. This task once accomplished, there remains the formal argument that to speak of bureaucratic imperialism means to identify the U.S.S.R. with the capitalist countries, for it means to use the same word for the two camps. But, the same objection, if it were valid, would equally invalidate the term "expansionism" (and many other terms too, such as oppression, plunder, etc.) for the great capitalist powers also practice expansionism (and oppression, plunder, etc.). Thus, every formal argument directed against the word imperialism strikes also the word expansionism. If the disadvantages are the same, the term imperialism is the better under the heading of advantages. For, what constitutes the difference? Expansionism is a much more neutral term, equally applicable, for instance, to a peaceful expansion into a virgin continent. Imperialism designates much more precisely the oppression and exploitation of foreign peoples and is much more charged with opprobrium, considerations which, in face of the monstrous crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy, should decide us to adopt the term in our propaganda and agitation.

A Citation of Trotsky

In October 1939, after the occupation of eastern Poland, Trotsky wrote:

Can the present expansion of the Kremlin be termed imperialism? First of all it is necessary for us to agree on the social content which we put in this term. History has known the imperialism* of the Roman state based on slave labor, the imperialism of feudal land-ownership, the imperialism of the Tzarist monarchy, etc. The driving force behind the Moscow bureaucracy is indubitably the tendency to extend its power, its prestige, its revenues. This is the element of "imperialism" in the widest sense of the word which was

*In the English translation (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 26) the term imperialism is at this point placed between quotation marks, which is not the case in the original Russian. The American translator has taken upon himself the right to "correct" (and here it is where it is necessary to use quotation marks) Trotsky, who had dared mention Roman imperialism without quotation marks. What breadth of view!

a property in the past of all monarchies, obligarchies, ruling castes, medieval estates and classes. However, in contemporary literature, at least Marxist literature, imperialism is understood to mean the *expansionist policy of finance capital* which has a very sharply defined economic content. To employ the term "imperialism" for the foreign policy of the Kremlin, without explaining exactly what one means by it, means simply to identify the policy of the Bonapartist bureaucracy with the policy of monopolistic capitalism on the basis that both one and the other utilize military force for expansion.

From this citation it appears clearly that Trotsky is irritated with those who employ the term imperialism in regard to the U.S.S.R. as a simple insult in order to vent their indignation, but "without explaining exactly what one means by it." However, to demand that one explains is to accept implicitly that it is possible, once the demand is satisfied, to extend to the Soviet Union the term imperialism.

In 1940 we were entering a gigantic war that would bring an answer to many questions, and it was legitimate to hesitate at that moment to introduce a theoretical innovation. Moreover, the territories occupied then were economically insignificant, their occupation had almost entirely a military meaning on the eve of an imminent war, the few dismantlings of factories which were then carried out were not known abroad at the time Trotsky was writing. Today, however, it is a question of half of Europe, plus large territories in Asia. A little before the war we were still criticizing the Kremlin for its actions in the League of Nations, for pacifism, pacts, etc. All this appears today almost like child's play compared to the régime of violence and pillage which has been extended over Europe. Countries with advanced working classes are

being condemned to economic, social and cultural disintegration. In the eyes of large masses, communism is being discredited. The parties of petty bourgeois democracy suddenly recover prestige and votes. The very perspective of socialism is placed in jeopardy.

The oppression and exploitation, pillage on a grand scale, the millions of forced laborers, the hopeless situation of the occupied countries—all these facts are undeniable. I have tried to show that it is not a matter of simple political episodes but that it results from the bureaucratic management of Soviet economy and that it is therefore legitimate to speak of bureaucratic imperialism. The reality is so complicated that there is room for discussions on this point. But even on the exact mechanism of finance imperialism the discussions have never ceased among Marxists during a half century! With much greater reason the teratological character of the Soviet Union impels us to a constant reëxamination of our conceptions. What is necessary to ask of anyone who takes part in this discussion is, rather than immediate agreement, a desire to learn, a willingness to weigh all arguments, a firm decision to reduce to silence those who want to fetter the analysis by considerations foreign to the discussion. It is only thus that we will be able to advance.

DANIEL LOGAN.

December 25, 1945.

[*Editor's Note*—THE NEW INTERNATIONAL holds the position that Russia is not in any way a workers' state, but a bureaucratic collectivist state. We will comment on the above article from this point of view in a future issue.]

1. Wartime Moscow

Interview with a Returned American

The following interview took place upon the recent return to the United States of a young American professional man, referred to in the record as "J," who spent two years of the war on an official mission in Moscow. "J's" observations are those of an educated American who, however, has no background in the Marxist movement and no particular interest in political and economic questions. We publish his observations for their value as factual information. "J's" attempt to evaluate the Russian scene in the last paragraph, above all his references to the "new freshness" and his contrast with unemployment in the United States, is likewise of interest despite (and in some measure, because of) his political naïveté. These somewhat optimistic conclusions about the future of Russia (even if the author thinks it good only for Russians) is of interest as a clue to that aspect of the Russian scene, which sets it apart from the economic stagnation of the world of capitalism and which indicates an aspect of Russian consciousness which the Stalin régime successfully utilizes to allay the discontent of the masses with present inequalities and oppression in the interests of the "better life" that lies ahead.—Editor.

B.: Where did you live in Moscow?

J.: At the Hotel Metropole, the finest in the city. All of us lived there and the Russian government bent over backwards to make us as comfortable as we could be, considering the circumstances. The waiters, servants, etc., felt a sort of worship for Americans and treated us like lords.

B.: How was the food?

J.: By American standards, miserable. But it was just about the best that could be had in wartime Moscow, that is for a steady diet. It consisted mostly of powdered eggs (with some fresh eggs occasionally), watered soup, meat mixed with rice or some other filler, tea or coffee, and plenty of bread. Once in a great while we had fish and on even rarer occasions, a piece of fresh fruit or fresh vegetables. Compared to what the mass of the people were getting all this was feast-food. Now all this was served at the hotel but if you had the money and the connections you could buy champagne and the rest.

B.: How much did your food bill run at the hotel?

J.: On an average of between 55 and 60 rubles a day.

B.: With your salary how could you afford to pay these prices?

J.: Simple — black market. The embassy tried to stop exchanging at higher than 12 to 1 by paying us only in checks. Then we were supposed to get rubles for our salary right at the embassy. But there were many ways to get around this. Some men had a few cash bills sent from home each month or so, although this was the toughest way. Most of us sold whatever commodities we could lay our hands on for rubles. I sold a 15-year-old wrist watch for 3,000 rubles. A carton of cigarettes went for around 300 rubles. Everything, absolutely everything, was saleable. You could sell the shirt off your back, literally, and get a real price for it. In this way all of us were always flooded with rubles. I had a suit case full and tremendous amounts under my

mattress. It soon got to a point where it was impossible to spend what we had.

B.: Who were these people that paid such prices for goods?

J.: I don't know of any particular people because I didn't sell directly. I had a fellow who did all my transacting for me. He would take a cut for himself, although I never knew what it was, and keep me well supplied with rubles. We never spoke to each other about it but all of us had our own "contacts" and went about it in the same way.

B.: Did you see any signs of what we call "free enterprise"?

J.: Not on any large, significant scale. All the stores and commodity centers are under absolute and complete government control. But the government does not discourage the people from coming to the market place and selling whatever they have. I mean this: if a Russian woman can somewhere get enough yarn to knit a scarf, she is free to come to the market and sell it for what she can get. Since material of all kinds is almost unobtainable this is not very easy to do but from what I saw I would say that after his day's work, a man could supplement his income if he had the wherewithal.

Wages and Living Conditions

B.: What is the average wage of a Russian factory worker?

J.: The lowest base rate of pay was 300 rubles per month. More skilled workers, or workers who were particularly productive received more; that is 400 or 500 rubles per month, and so on. If you could produce more you usually got more.

B.: With the prices you describe, how did the mass of the workers manage to live?

J.: The answer is—they barely managed. I would say that unless the worker had some other means of supplementing his income, such as a bit of black market, if he had anything to sell, he reached at best a little short of bare subsistence. I noticed that whenever people had to climb long flights of stairs or engage in unusual exertion they tired easily. It was really touch and go with the great majority of the people.

B.: What did a factory manager or director receive?

J.: A manager of a large factory received about 30,000 rubles a month, sometimes more. In addition they got fine living quarters, that is fine in comparison to those of the workers. Also they and their families received extra rations

and a share of whatever luxury items were available. They had the use of automobiles, boats, country villas and their children were giving preference and every advantage in the schools, trades and professions.

B.: Were you in a worker's home?

J.: Yes, a number of times. They are almost beyond description. The average "apartment" is nothing more than one room, about 14' by 16', with one window. An entire family, which I found to be usually about 5 people, live in this one room. The furnishings are what you might expect considering the rest I've already told you. If a Russian worker were to walk into this apartment, he would think he was in a palace.

B.: Were you in a factory?

J.: Yes, I was taken on tours several times. When you think of most of the Russian factories you shouldn't look to our own factories for comparison. Most are old, cold and drafty. I saw the workers working along in heavy clothing, pausing often to blow their fingers so that they could hold their tools. Even in the newest one I saw, I realized in a few minutes how far behind the Russians are. You don't get the feeling of easy, swift, mass production. Things look crude and reminded me of pictures I have seen of American factories a generation ago.

B.: How about the Russian trade unions?

J.: There are unions but they don't mean a damn thing. Those that run for the positions of leadership are appointed by the government and are no different from one another. So the workers vote but it doesn't mean a thing. The workers are supposed to come to their elected leaders when they have complaints but they seldom do—it isn't wise or healthy. For example, here is what was going on while I was there: the first time a worker was late he was fined; the second time some of his rations were taken away; the third time he just disappeared.

B.: How do the workers react to this?

J.: Most realize that it's best to say nothing and keep working. Those that do step out of line are either disciplined or arrested.

The Secret Police

B.: By the GPU?

J.: No, there is no more GPU in Russia. The new name and agency is NKVD. And they are feared by everyone. The saying I heard very often was, "every third Russian is NKVD." Everyone suspects everyone else of being

NKVD and therefore only the brave and foolish do any open complaining. Russians are accustomed to having friends and relatives—just disappear. When this happens no one asks for any explanations and shy away from those close to the victim. People who talk take their lives in their hands . . . I want to tell you two personal experiences with NKVD. To begin with I should explain that the reason I had the freedom of the city as I did was that the Russian government did everything possible to keep the Americans friendly, sympathetic and so on. Then I was able to take advantage of this freedom because I speak the language perfectly and unlike the rest of the men on the mission went out on my own whenever possible rather than hang around the hotel or embassy playing cards, etc. . . . I met a number of girls and found them very nice. They impressed me with their honesty and pride. Women in Russia, particularly the young, unmarried ones, seemed to have a greater sense of dignity and independence than American women. I took one out quite steadily when suddenly she disappeared. I asked about her but no one would tell me anything. After some time she contacted me and told me she could not see me again. I asked the reason but she said she could not tell me. Later I managed to see a close friend of hers and got the story: this girl had been reported to NKVD for being seen in the constant company of a foreigner—which incidentally is not allowed. She was picked up, her papers carefully checked and given a lecture along these lines: "You have been seen often with a foreigner. You know that is not allowed. You are not to see him again." Another story: I noticed each day as I walked back to the hotel that a young girl was always there to meet me. We became friends and I found out she was but 14 and a school girl. She was a very sweet little girl and before long I was giving her candy bars, *Life* magazines and such stuff. Then suddenly she stopped meeting me. After a time she appeared again and whispered to me to meet her in a nearby hallway. She told me that she could not walk with me to the hotel any more. She explained that the NKVD had told her that associating with foreigners was strictly forbidden. I should add that when this little girl saw the *Life* magazines she would keep asking me if this was what America was like. I told her that all of the pictures were of actual places and asked why she

was so keenly interested. She explained that in school they are taught that the USSR has as its immediate goal the equaling of American standards. But since no one knows what the American standard is they do not know how far away they are or when they will have caught up.

B.: You mentioned before the special privileges given to factory managers. Isn't this odd when in Russia there are no classes?

J.: But there are classes in Russia. The Russian papers keep saying there are no classes but anyone with half an eye can see that there are. Russia is divided, from what I saw in two classes: the mass of the people, workers, farmers, etc. and the intelligentsia.

B.: What do you mean by this "intelligentsia"?

J.: That was the name given by foreigners to the generals, factory managers, government officials, ballerinas, musicians and artists that got the little cream that was to be had in Russia.

B.: What were their privileges and advantages?

J.: As I have already said they had the best living quarters, extra and special rations, fine clothes, opportunities to push their children ahead to a similar station and salaries which permitted them to enjoy whatever cultural facilities existed. For example: theoretically speaking, everyone in Moscow could attend the ballet. Actually only this intelligentsia could afford to buy tickets considering the price. I was able to get a seat for a performance whenever I wished, having only to mention I was an American. This automatically told them I was above the rest, an "honored" guest, and could afford the price.

B.: When you say government officials were a part of this intelligentsia do you mean all government workers, such as clerks, typists and the like?

J.: No. These people were no better off than the factory workers. I mean officials fairly high up in the government, those with positions of authority. You know the Russian government did what I think is clever and correct as regards all their artists, writers, dancers and so on. Instead of placing them in the fighting forces, they allowed them to remain behind for entertainment purposes. I saw in the ballet orchestra young men, many, many young men, all of draft age. The same was true of writers, poets and dancers.

The Russian Army

B.: What was your impression of what you saw of the Russian army?

J.: Well, I think their fighting record speaks for itself. I was impressed with a few things: first it seems to be an army of officers. Every Russian soldier is an "officer." Second the discipline is even stronger than in our army. The enlisted man just doesn't rate, unless he has won a high award in the field, such as "Hero of the Soviet Union." In that case he is entitled to 60 per cent off for anything he wants to buy while on leave in the city. I should say the number of such awards corresponds to the number of Distinguished Service Cross winners in our army. When a clerk or ticket seller sees that award on a soldier's tunic, he or she immediately does everything possible to accommodate the bearer. The Russian soldier is in the classic sense of the word a perfect soldier; he accepts the worst hardships without complaining and is a real fighting man. I noticed too that the soldiers are dressed better than the civilians and wherever and whenever possible get more and better rations. All this is at the expense of the workers behind the lines but I guess the government feels it is necessary during a war.

B.: What did the other men in the mission think of Russia?

J.: They hated it. They didn't like the food, the accommodations and the entire atmosphere. They kept comparing it to America and naturally Russia didn't show up too well in comparison.

B.: And what is your opinion of the Russia you saw and the entire set-up?

J.: Well, for the first year I felt the same way as the rest did. Then I started going about on my own, meeting average Russians in the streets and so on. I like the Russian people. In spite of what they have been through and are still going through they manage for the most part to remain friendly, honest and sincere. They love America and Americans and very many that I met would give anything to get to America. It is hard to find out what they really think of their set-up since they are all afraid to talk about such things as their factory set-up or government, but they all hate the Fascists and are proud of their revolution. I felt sort of a thrill after a while. I felt as though I was seeing a country grow up. That is, they are all sure that they are going to catch up to America and some day all have autos and such luxuries. Personally I don't see how they can get that far within two generations. Anyway it seemed to me that Russia was a country with a future, a country that had some place to go. It is backward, the people are not able to grasp mechanics as Americans do, and yet there is a new freshness about the whole thing that I can't explain away. As I say, I get the impression that Russia has somewhere to go whereas I come back home and find that with all our mechanics and factories we still haven't solved unemployment. I admire the Russian people and what they are trying to do. But I will say this, and probably it's because I am an American and am used to our way of living—I would rather shoot myself than go back to Russia to live.

2. Wartime Murmansk

The following article first appeared in the *Workers International News*, the theoretical organ of the Revolutionary Communist Party, English section of the Fourth International. In the introduction to it they state the following:

"As the title indicates, this is not a theoretical article drawing sociological con-

clusions, it is a report. It is simply the observations of an eye-witness of conditions in the Northern part of the USSR. The writer is a sailor. He has made more than one voyage and more than one landing on Russian soil during the war. He has spent some weeks ashore, and being familiar with the Russian tongue has been able to make

Observations of a Seaman

the most of the opportunities to observe which have been presented to him."—Editors.

We were the last wartime convoy into Russia. What had formerly been the most dangerous run had become in the last weeks preceding the

German collapse, as safe as your own backyard. But although the sea had become aware of the end of the war, the White Sea ports in the Arctic had not. In the month of May, 1945, we came to the port of Molotovsk, about 30 miles west of Archangel, a port which is almost entirely a phenomenon of the war, having been mostly constructed since 1941, for the purpose of receiving the Arctic convoys from Britain and America. Built up mostly on an Arctic waste of sand without vegetation, it consists of a scattering of houses, some old, some new, some solidly built, some jerry-built. There is the ubiquitous Intourist Hotel for the quartering of the upper bureaucrats, army officers and Allied personnel, and the equally ubiquitous public loudspeaker that broadcasts from dawn till dusk (24 hours service in the summer), or until 1 a.m.

A working battalion of soldier-dockers came on board to unload our cargo—mostly railroad equipment, locomotives and heavy industrial machinery. But they were not Russians. They were from Bessarabia. At another port along the line—Bakaritsa—another group of workers came on board—women, not in army clothing—from Eastern Poland. At a third port an analogous situation, although more cosmopolitan: men and women from the Urals, from the South and natives of Archangel. The population is apparently suffering shifts that are at once wide and far-reaching, thousands at a time, and in movement from one end of the country to the other.

To a great extent, this was a result of wartime necessities — displacement of populations from those regions which were in the center of front-line battles in Northern Rumania, Eastern Poland and the Ukraine. Demands of housing and feeding in those areas undoubtedly demanded such shifts of non-military elements to regions not directly involved in the war, where, nevertheless, they could be of use still. However, these people are not being returned to their native soil, nor is there any intention or practice of doing so; which means that at least to a limited extent, the Soviet Union is not particularly interested in the rebuilding of the lands immediately bordering on Russia, and may mean that for the future they intend to have a self-created *cordon sanitaire*, a magnified system of defense in depth for anti-invasion purposes than even they had in June, 1941.

Strolling around the docks at Molotovsk and Archangel and the various lumber ports in the Dvina River delta,

at whose mouth is Archangel, one observes the almost absolute equality of men and women. The women do the heaviest work required by stevedoring, handling cranes, winches, standards of wood, and share the foremanship of stevedore gangs, although for the most part over groups of women only. They are not spared but work twelve hours in a row with an hour's break for meals at noon and 6, working where necessary in two shifts around the clock.

Wages and Living Standards

And for this they get, what? It is impossible to speak of money wages, for if it were said that the rouble is worth just under a shilling, or 18.8 cents or 9.5 francs, this would take into account neither the chaotic and for the moment meaningless status of international exchange nor — more important — the fact that the rouble can neither be exported nor foreign currency imported. In fact, it is only in the last few months that the Russians themselves assigned any value to a gift of a few roubles. Allied personnel permanently stationed in the USSR get a favored rate of exchange of about four roubles to the shilling or twenty to the dollar, but they claim that this is still a hardship for them. And for a reason: the almost complete lack of consumers' commodities in Russia. What does a Russian worker get, other than a rouble wage? Six hundred grams (a half-pound, English) of black bread per day. What else? Practically nothing. A bit of meat which comes irregularly, infrequently and in bits no larger than a mouthful; tea, the national drink, a bit more regularly, but never in such amounts or intervals that it can be regarded as a staple; occasional discoveries of potatoes or cabbages—for their soup—which is then set aside for festive occasions; no butter, or in microscopic amounts and very little lard. Outside of the bread, no figures can be regularly given for their diet.

This is not typical of all Russia, and it is likely that by next spring the situation as regards food will improve. Nevertheless, it is indicative that the present conditions of nutrition in Russia are probably equalled by few places in Europe and surpassed by none in the direction of misery; and any improvement must first lift them from a level which is at present sub-standard by far. It is not for nothing that there is a daily box run in the newspaper *Pravda* with a report compiled nation-wide of the status of bread and grain crops. Overt symp-

toms of malnutrition are not widespread but the population in the North is young — probably heavily weighted, as all over in Russia—a statistical fact—in favor of youth.

Wages similarly expressed in terms of housing would also be low, since there is a housing crisis throughout the USSR, even though dozens of ship loads of timber per month in the last half year (the limit of my acquaintance with the White Sea area) have left the Archangel region for United Kingdom and Western European ports. But this is a trade phenomenon that promises to dwindle to about one-tenth by next spring when ice-free navigation will again be possible.

The export of what can be ill spared is in the interest of establishing credits abroad. And this is borne out in the matter of fish exports as well. Fishing is a great industry in the White Sea and Barents Sea regions; one sees fishing smacks and yawls heading in and out continually. Yet fish is also a luxury among the people. All for export.

Money and Markets

Roubles are plentiful in Archangel. Hordes of children, for the most part in tattered clothing and blue with cold, swarm around the seamen as they leave the ship, begging for cigarettes, candy, gum, anything. And they are willing to pay fabulous prices for what they cannot obtain by begging: 30 roubles for twenty cigarettes, sometimes 40 roubles.

A black market does not exist in Russia—to the best of my knowledge. There is, on the other hand, a market place generally near the center of any town where exists the Skol'ka Market—the "How Much" Market. Here the peasant from the country, from the kolkhoz, takes the produce he has grown over and above the quota established for him to the town and sells, not for what he can get, but for prices in terms of primitive barter, which is supervised by the state economic police. For example, one egg changed hands for two packets of 20 cigarettes each. By comparison, a novel may sell for 15 to 20 roubles, a textbook on economics for a similar amount, in the state-owned bookstores; a gramophone record for 6 roubles.

A Stakhanovite worker, or a bureaucrat with influence may get supplementary rations and this is in lieu of extra pay. He takes a note to the local Skolka Market entitling him to so much butter at a reduced rate, and with fewer or no ration stamps. But there is extra pay as well, and savings are enormous in the

state banks. War-bond flotations, I am told, have been over-subscribed, especially by peasants and factory workers—certainly by bureaucrats and functionaries—and the bank deposits have risen commensurately during the war. All deposits are guaranteed by the state and pay an interest rate of 2 per cent, as compared to 1/2 per cent for private deposits in English banks and 1 per cent for American banks.

The Children

The children who inundated us as we left the ship were for the most part in rags. Their boots had holes, their coats were out at the elbow—and Archangel is Arctic in weather. They begged, demanded, wheedled and tricked, all for a piece of candy, for a cigarette—for papa, comrade, not for me. They tried to sell medals, home-made knives, rings, ornaments, a bit of colored glass, in exchange for the cigarettes, etc. But there were some of these ragamuffins who had it a little better than most. The poorer ones worked in the sawmills around the docks from 14 years onward, possibly even younger, but certainly at that age. The others, the luckier ones, possibly who had made higher marks at an elimination examination, or whose fathers had influence or a good record, for any reason, kept on in school, entered the Pioneers, then the Komsomol—YCL—then the party. Excelsior!

I had an opportunity to see some of the school texts used; these were not far different from those in any other country—the familiar barnyard animal in the book of an 11-year-old, the sly fox, the crow, and the Russian witch and scarecrow, Baba Yega. The history and indoctrination schoolbooks have sketches of Lenin, Stalin, Kalinin, Molotov. The Red Army was founded by Stalin with the connivance of Budyenny, *inter alteri*—no mention of Trotsky, which was to have been expected. There was a universal reluctance to repeat certain key words in recent Russian history (this was true both of children and adults) such as Revolution, the Left and so on.

The régime—the army officers, the higher bureaucrats—do not like Archangel very much. Those who are there are either on their way up or down. A vodka commissar who was formerly in charge of the Moscow District Vodka Trust and who could not account for certain shortages or superfluities in his line, might be dispatched to Anchangel for a while, himself a superfluity. The manager of an Intourist Hotel who had made a good

record for himself may be moved to Odessa.

Nevertheless, they have the best the region can afford: quarters with running water, electric light and steam heat, food which is only a little worse than that allotted to foreign seamen coming in (principally in the matter of the butter ration) and the thousand amenities of personal service which are associated with life in a well-run hotel, the best hotel in town.

Attitude Toward Régime

The attitude of the people toward the régime is extremely difficult to estimate. There is no grumbling, except when there are no witnesses. Those who are cognizant of conditions abroad are more on the defensive against comparisons with the outside world, the capitalist world. One young fellow, who was a bit better informed than most, a Russian, who was in a position to be, was challenged by a group of us on the question of the one-party system in Russia and the matter of free speech. "Of course we have free speech in Russia." He looked around himself quickly. "But don't tell anybody I told you."

The workers, men and women around docks, have it hard, and they know it and they tell you so. Even as in the 19th century, emigration, especially of the West, is a dream for them. But those peasants of Bessarabian origin just want to go back home; and their nostalgia is strong. Yet even this they do not want to speak of very much.

The more intelligent, the college educated, like life abroad very much. Paris means a great deal to the girls still. Socialism has nothing to replace it with. I found one or two sarcastic expressions regarding the change in theoretical tendencies in the régime. Not much, very little in fact. But a slight awareness that things had changed from the days when world revolution was advocated. For the most part a tendency not to think or remember at all, certainly a tremendous reluctance to express these thoughts and memories to a foreigner who might not know enough to keep his mouth shut.

The Soviet Union is still at a state of war. There are strict guards at the docks, around vessels of all nationalities. Control of all those who enter the docks and leave is strict, and passes are examined minutely. Russian money found on foreign seamen entering the country is locked up, and the customs (frontier guard) search of the ship as it is preparing to push off, is undoubt-

edly the most thoroughgoing in the world. Soldiers, when they leave the army, still wear their uniforms. This is because they have no choice, because clothing replacements, even for basic needs, like coats and dresses and suits are almost unobtainable—except for girls of pleasure and those with influence.

The stratification in terms of wealth—not capital—and position is sharp and wide and obvious; and there is no shading off between them, or middle ground. There are more jobs than manpower in the USSR and above all there is a crying need for skilled labour. The dock workers were learning, the entire country is learning. From zero they have built themselves up to a great power but with the whole country subordinated to the needs of defence. There is no unemployment in Russia, but there is also no butter.

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Germany's First Post-Nazi Elections

The Stalinists and the Four-Party Bloc

With the opening of the first general elections in Germany* we shall have a parliamentary picture of the state of political consciousness of the German people after thirteen years of unexampled oppression and terror. True, the reflection of the elections will not be that of a boudoir mirror; rather that of distorting mirrors one finds in "funny houses" in amusement parks. Only, one finds little occasion to laugh at political disfigurements.

The German people are racking their brains, trying to work out a balance of the past fifteen years. And, to whom will the bill be presented? The bill for a half generation of political terror, for the hundreds of thousands of enemies of the regime who perished under circumstances that cause even the most cold-blooded observers to blanch and mutter words of indignation? Death under this regime was not the expiation for a capital crime, but a political expedient to tear the tongue out of misery. Today the allies hold the German people *as a whole* responsible for the crimes of Nazism. How can they absolve themselves, and at the same time bring the Nazis and the forces which helped them to power to account, and infinitely more important, lay the basis for a system where fascism can never rise again?

To whom will the bill for war losses be presented? These losses exceed dry numerical calculations. But it might help understanding to present some figures.

In Mannheim, by no means the worst bombed city, out of 21,338 homes, 16,821 were reduced to rubble.

The factories were hit much worse than private dwellings, and working people lost the market where they could bring their only worldly possession: their labor power. They lost the source of common commodities we have come to regard as almost essential for existence.

Doctors lost their apparatus, musicians their instruments and notes, students must get along without their books and libraries.

Life is reduced to its barest essentials.

But that is only the beginning of the account. What of the 8,000,000 soldiers

who perished on the front? The 3,000,000 who perished during the bombings, the million who perished in concentration camps?

And what of—and this cannot be expressed in figures—and if it could, they would be astronomical—the suffering, the terror, the uncertainty, the bereavement, that was borne by all.

A house can be rebuilt. But what can replace a limb, or the mother, wife and two kids one knows are still lying under this debris. What can erase the memory of three years on the Russian front, the memory of the nightly terror and panic at the air-raid alarm, living like rats in cellars or soldiers in mud and snow.

"Who will answer for this? And how can we tear ourselves from the nightmare of the past and find a way out of the blind alley of the future."

The Parties

Here the leading working class parties step in to offer their leadership. The program of *all* parties is essentially the same. (The principal parties: Social-Democratic Party (SDP), Communist Party (KP), Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The cornerstones of their programs: The reconstruction of Germany, and the establishment of democracy. The KP calls for the expropriation of Nazi political leaders and war criminals, the expropriation of Junker landholdings and division among farmers, and the "giving up" (Ubergabe)—it avoids the words socialization and socialism—of all public enterprises and enterprises that serve consumers' needs. It also, apparently agrees with the allied contention that *all* Germans are responsible for the crimes of Hitler, for in the program stands: "10. Recognition of the obligation to make good the damages and losses caused other peoples through the Hitler aggression. Just division of the ensuing burdens according to the principle, the rich must bear a greater share of the burden."

Is this not a gross insult to the German working class?

The SDP descends from the hills like Rip Van Winkle. Having slept through the Hitler regime, it returns, ready to carry on where it left off in 1932. For the general election in Gross-Hessen it joins with the three other parties in an elec-

tion agreement: please don't laugh when you read this. It's really very serious:

Realistic election campaign.

Resolution of the four Gross-Hessen Parties.

The leadership of the SDP, KP, SDU and LDP came to an agreement to carry on the election campaign with discipline, propriety and mutual esteem (!!!) . . .

3. . . no one-sided charging of a particular party with the historical guilt for the collapse of the Weimar Republic.

4. Instructions to all speakers who address meetings to refrain from any polemic that is not to the point.

5. No casting of suspicion upon or slander against members of other parties.

6. Instead of hate, intrigue, slander, the summoning of all constructive forces for the realization of a genuine democracy.

In the same issue of the newspaper in which this resolution appears we read:

Attention! The declaration appearing below, of the KP, represents a distortion of the facts and a break from the agreement of the four parties for a fair election campaign.

And here follows the article of the KP:

Unity despite everything.

The split in the German working class has, since 1914, exclusively served German imperialism, to the harm of the entire German people and the peace of the world. The continuation of the split would serve only the same circles. And already it can be established that the reactionaries are doing everything to hinder the unity of the German working class . . . Therefore, we Communists are for unity, and nothing can bring us from the path we have begun to beat.

We do not step into this path because we received an "order" from somewhere. We do it because we have drawn the bitter lessons from the past and because we have recognized the absolute necessity of the unity of the German working class and of all democratic forces for the saving of Germany and the German people from irrevocable ruin.

Then follows a declaration that millions of German workers are standing aside because they are waiting for this unity to take place. And the resolution of the 144 SDP functionaries rejecting unity (more about this later) does not change the facts.

A Stalinist Polemic

Then follows a typical Stalinist polemic:

Against the declarations of this (SDP) resolution in which slanders and historical falsifications hold the balance in the in-

*General elections have been held in Gross-Hessen.

terest of truth and in the interest of unity we establish the following:

1. With their declaration the 144 take over the arguments of Antibolschewismus from the hands of the Nazis . . .

2. With indignation the communists criticize the attempt of the 144 through underhanded and lying allusions to the situation in the East (Russian) Zone—again like the Nazis—the drive a wedge into the ranks of the United Nations and so to support the wish of all reactionaries for a war against the SU . . .

5. Only in the interest of the creation of unity do we declare that it is unfeasible today to discuss the past . . . In the interest of unity we communists have considered the mistakes of the past only as historical facts, without forgetting, however, who forbade the Red Front Bund, a cutting weapon against Fascism. We have not unrolled the question, who was responsible for the blood-bath of May 1, 1929 in Berlin, or who chose Hindenburg, the protector of Hitler; we have not thrown into the debate the question, who, together with the Kaiser Generals let workers be shot upon, nor the question, who voted for the building of armored cruisers.

In the interest of the workers movement we have not discussed yet—but we have also not forgotten—the support of the Social-Democratic Reichstag faction in the sitting of 17 May 1933 of Hitler's foreign policies . . .

We know that Hitler would follow Hindenburg, that Hitler means war, and that total war must lead to Germany's total defeat, so exactly do we know that in spite of all sabotage attempts the United party of the German working class will come into being . . .

The struggle within the SDP on the question of unity emphasizes the fact that today there is no Germany in a political or national sense. There is just a territory inhabited by German speaking people, governed by foreign powers, and occupied by foreign armies.

The SDP and KP in the Russian zone adopted a resolution in favor of unity. This resolution was presented to a conference of the SDP of the American and British zones by the leader of the SDP in the Russian zone, Grotewohl. At the conferences in Hanover and Frankfurt these resolutions in favor of unity were decisively rejected. With indignation the SDP in the American and British zones stated they would not be dominated by the East Zone. As a matter of fact it was put even stronger. They rejected the attempt of Berlin to "dictate" the laws of party operation instead of trying to decide questions by democratic procedure.

Part of the West Zone resolution:

So long as a unified Germany does not exist politically, can there also be no organizational unity of the SDP of Germany. The Central Committee of the SDP in Berlin wields the leadership only for the eastern occupation zone. The party of the western zone will be led by its elected chief. Agreements and decisions of the SDP in the east zone are not binding . . . for the west zone. Here the action of the party will be directed by its own decisions.

Then comes the statement that made the KP blue in the face that:

. . . there is no possibility for the unity of all the workers as long as the interested parties do not show complete and actual independence from every foreign power. The SDP can and will not deny itself freedom in its resolutions and judgments. It will not let itself be robbed of the possibility, in the future, of criticism of circumstances, that, she must, out of socialist and democratic grounds, criticize. That the KP uncritically gives up this essential right, brings us to the fact, that the politics of the German people are not the politics of international socialism.

Then further on the declaration declares the KP

. . . shows everywhere the wish, through disregarding of actual prerequisites and of the relation of forces between itself and social-Democrats, without consideration, to take over the leadership. By means of force and guile it carries on a politic of splitting and playing of one against the other of the separate sections of social-democracy . . . According to the wish of the KP it is not a question of uniting the workers, but the conquering of the SDP by the KP.

The Elections

Now, I will give you an idea of how the first general election shaped up. Last Sunday 17 Kreise (a Kreis is a larger city and the surrounding smaller cities and towns) went to the polls. Today, a week later, 22, the remainder, will vote. Here is how the 17 Gross-Hessen Kreise voted:

First a preliminary vote. Only 7 per cent were excluded from the polls, most of them National Socialist activists. Of those entitled to vote 83 per cent went to the polls, a fact which surprised me very much. Perhaps I overestimated the apathy, but I had formerly only personal impressions to go by. In Kassel 90 per cent went to the polls!

Of 376,794 who voted, 151,861 (or 40 per cent) voted SDP; 99,591 voted DCV; 11,255 voted KP (4 per cent); 5,662 voted LDP. Also note: 40-45 per cent* of the votes were cast by women. Almost one-fourth of the votes were cast for splinter parties, practically all non-socialist.

HENRY MORRISON.

* I have since read in *Neue Zeitung*, Military Government paper, that the women vote accounts for 60 per cent of the total. This is a more likely figure than the above, since the female population today is larger than the male.

Profits and the Housing Crisis

Conflicting Interests of Banks, Industry and Real Estate

Way back in 1872, Frederick Engels made three generalizations about housing under capitalism, that remain the key to analysis of the problem today. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

First, he said all the sermons liberals and reformists preach to capital about the profitability of low-cost housing are a waste of time. Capital has ignored the mass housing field because *greater* profits are to be made elsewhere, and profits, not human need, are the sole criteria of whether capitalism produces.

Secondly, the second problem of housing is subordinate to the basic question of income distribution. Until the unjust and evil system we have today is ended, planned, healthful living in cooperative, functional, truly human communities, is impossible.

Third, the general problem of housing can never be solved, without resolving the "antithesis between town and country." Translated into simple terms: mass housing is impossible without city

planning, and socialist regional and national economic planning.

* * *

Since Engels wrote, capitalism has developed, and thoroughly milked its internal markets, which have always remained limited by low incomes of the vast majority of people. Following the exhaustion of the internal markets, capitalism has fought two bloody imperialist wars over the world market.

During all these years, developments in the housing field followed along the

lines of Engel's predictions. Conservative investment and industrial capital, so long as it could make six to eight per cent interest elsewhere, left housing and construction to others. Speculative building capital could make more profits (not to speak of graft) by constructing public buildings, factories, and mansions for the wealthy, than it could by housing the masses. Right up to the 1930's, the low profits to be made off workers' housing were too small to tempt even market-hungry US investment capital.

The masters of society have continued to ignore the urgent need of the people for housing, busying themselves with the business of blowing the European housing stock to bits, until at last, even here in the United States of America, the most favored of all nations, the housing scandal has reached a boiling point. Popular indignation has put the heat on the politicians to *do something*.

The growing social cost of our eight million slum dwellings; the almost complete cessation of house-building since 1929; the millions of homeless, doubled-up families, including newly returned veterans—all these factors have combined to create a problem that highlights stagnation of capitalism as a social order—even in the wealthy United States. The need for decent, sanitary, roomy dwellings is urgent among at least seventy-five per cent of the population. These millions of men, women and children live in rural slums, in city slums, or in antiquated, uncommodious buildings in congested, unhealthful, unsafe city areas.

According to the conservative estimates of the National Housing Agency in 1944, there is at present an acute need for sixteen million new dwelling units within the next ten years. *Time's* statisticians put the US need for the next decade at twenty-nine million. They figure the annual US replacement needs alone at 1,290,000, allowing the houses an average thirty-year life span. All in all, *Time* estimates that to satisfy the current demand for new houses, and to catch up on the backlog, *some 2.9 million units must be built every year for twenty years*. The newly announced US Emergency Housing Program calls for 2.7 million units for the next two years—not even half the annual rate *Time* urges. This will not quite house the three million doubled-up families expected to need homes by 1947. This program does not *begin* to solve the problem: it will just take the worst heat off the politicians.

The halting of construction by the depression and the war explains only part

% US Families	Annual Income	Av. Monthly Rent	Av. Weekly Wage
20.7	under \$1000	under \$10	under \$20
29.2	\$1000-\$2000	under \$20	\$20-\$38
20.4	\$2000-\$3000	under \$30	\$38-\$57
12.7	\$3000-\$4000	under \$40	\$57-\$77

(Income figures for 1942; from the Statistical Abstract of the US, 1943; Census Bureau)

of the source of the problem. A more fundamental cause is the backwardness of the construction industry, and the long neglect of the housing field by big capital. This "disorganized and warring group of organisms known euphemistically as the building industry" (*Fortune*) is an anachronism in this day and age of mass production. Hence, American families get less for their housing dollar than any other dollar they spend on capitalist-produced commodities.

Because it has never had any serious competition from modern big scale industry, home building still uses methods closer to those of the feudal craftsmen than modern machine production. The Industrial Revolution missed them almost completely. The one exception is the field of industrial construction, from which has developed the threatened revolution of prefabrication.

The construction industry is honeycombed with unproductive middle-men, restrictive price raising agreements, and all sorts of labor-job-stretching devices which prolong the process of putting together by hand the 30,000 separate parts of a custom-built house.

Income and Rent

Before the war, private builders could not build a good house, at a profit, for under \$5,000. They did build a few cheaper houses, but these were shoddy and flimsy. Thus, the construction industry was unable to produce new modern housing for the eighty-three per cent of families earning under \$4000 a year, and unable to afford rent or payments on a \$7,000 house, in addition to the price of land to build on.

The above table is a break-down of the lower-income families which the construction industry does *not* serve.

At present this market is served exclusively by real estate brokers, rentier capitalists, small speculators, and the mortgage companies which have foreclosed on much speculative property.

The constructive industry is not geared to produce the 2.9 million units *Time* says are needed yearly for this market. It can make top profits at a less strenuous level somewhere between its 1919-35 average of 506,000 units, and its 1925 peak of 937,000. The industry is resisting stubbornly the idea that any more than this average is *needed*.

There are other groups of capitalists who, by more modern production methods, believe they can turn the universal need for new dwellings into a profitable *market demand*. These newly-interested converts to "mass housing" represent industry and finance capital. They are preparing to upset the economics that rentier and construction interests have imposed on the housing market for so long. Now that the vast amounts of capital so profitably employed in the production of the means of destruction have been released by the end of the war and since the foreign market shows little promise for short term profits, an intensified conflict is in prospect over the internal market, specifically, over the juicy plum of billions of dollars in annual rent from the working class and middle class.

Let us consider the economic interests and relative strength of the conflicting capitalist groups to see how they are likely to influence the government, and how many houses will be produced.

Just as the peasants of France and Germany cultivate every corner of their fields, even the ditches along the roadside, so the falling rate of profits has reduced American finance capital to intensive cultivation of every possible internal market. Today it considers three per cent government bonds a good buy. This brought it into the market for US Housing Authority Bonds. Once the government had thus forcibly drawn its attention to the low-cost rental field, investment trusts began figuring how they could oust mortgage bankers and other slum rentier interests from control.

Under the guise of slum clearance,

many financial institutions are now participating in this campaign. According to their general plan, the municipality buys up slum land at its always-highly-inflated prices. It then clears the land and resells it to private development corporations or insurance companies at a price low enough to yield a profit when put to use for low or medium priced housing. Either the municipal or federal government then guarantees the profits of the new investors by tax exemption or yield insurance.

This plan hopes to buy off the mortgage companies and other slum owners with a big bribe. It also aims at a general stabilization of city property values on which so much of the country's whole financial structure is based—an important consideration to the portfolio investment interests.*

Of course such "slum clearance," aimed at preserving city congestion and property values, can never be effective in ridding the nation of slums. The extremely small area and the high cost of in-city slum land automatically limits the number of new units that can be built. Only when a vast new supply of housing, on cheap suburban land has siphoned off the tenants of slum and slighted dwellings, will the cost of this land go down enough so that it can all be cleared, and put to use intelligently for either housing or so-called greenbelts.

The actual effect of the insurance company plans will be in most cases to cut into the medium-priced market for rental housing—as any new modern low-cost housing is more attractive to renters than hand-me-down housing even if this is non-slum. The so-called slum clearance projects will just push the slums on into other blighted areas. How, for example, can any slum dweller expect to move into the \$60-\$100-a-month apartments the Prudential Life Insurance Company is planning to build on slum cleared land here in Chicago.

*Investment capital backing for "slum clearance" is seen in the so-called "New York Plan" of sales tax rebuilding. Here the city would levy a 1 per cent sales tax to cover the annual subsidy on low-cost housing. The Housing Authority would then issue bonds to cover the estimated \$1.7 billion cost of land-clearing and erection of 250,000 low-rent units. Another 200,000 units would be built on this land by private capital (higher-renting units, naturally). The \$1.7 billion bond issue would be backed up by four big Wall Street firms: Blyth & Co., Lehman Bros., Shields & Co., Phelps-Fenn. Interest would, of course, be paid out of the public pocket. What a bonanza for Wall Street and New York real estate!

Industrial Capital and Prefabricated Mass Housing

Modern technology applied to construction has opened up a new market to American industry.

The steel monopolies, the chemical and plastic industry, the aluminum trusts, the manufacturers of durable consumers goods (such as sanitary fixtures, stoves, refrigerators, etc.) are quietly going ahead with their plans for undermining the real estate and rentier interests. Consider, for example, Gunnison Hones, Inc., of Louisville, Ky., a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation, which "expects to be the biggest US producer of prefabricated homes" (*Time*); Dymaxion Dwellings of Wichita, Kansas, producing all-aluminum houses; and the Reynolds Metal Co., scheduling production of an aluminum and steel house.

There is no doubt, that, by revolutionizing house production, with new materials, mass production of standard parts, on-the-site dry construction, etc., a superior house can now be built for a lower cost than ever before. This new house may even be brought within the reach of \$2000-\$3000 income budgets.

Prefabrication will make possible any combination of rooms, and any interior arrangements desired. When perfected, it will represent the ultimate in flexibility, catering to the most varied individual tastes. It should not prove too difficult to show even the most reluctant consumer the advantages of prefabrication. The *Ladies' Home Journal* has been educating its millions of readers on this point for over a year now. Prefabrication is eminently suited for the individual free-standing house which some seventy per cent of US families seem to prefer.

However, the exact size of the market for pre-fabricated houses—that is, the extent to which the capitalist producers will fill the need for houses—depends on the total cost. To keep the over-all cost down, and tap the full extent of this newly discovered market (we socialists have known the masses needed decent houses for years!), cheap land must be found on which to locate the prefabricated communities. Thus arises the specter of decentralization of cities, which haunts both finance capital and its opponents, the rentiers.

If prefabrication actually gets into mass production, it will further the process, already under way, of "resolving the antithesis between town and country" by

means of urban decentralization. Large economic regions, knit together by highways, telephones, radios, television and airplanes, will replace urban communities in importance.

The need for large quantities of cheap land [for the yards, roads, service areas, schools, etc., to complement millions of homes] will force prefabricators to build on the outskirts of the existing cities, or in unsettled rural areas. This tendency will be reinforced by the opposition of city property owners who pay seventy-five to ninety per cent of all city taxes. They will use their influence with the city politicians to prevent extension of schools, sanitary facilities, police and fire protection, into new prefabricated areas. Even more fundamental, they will try to prevent prefabrication getting started by manipulating city building codes and zoning restrictions against it.

It is my opinion that the trend toward decentralization of cities, and regional economic development can never come to fruition short of socialism. The strength of the rentier and finance-capital opposition is too great. There are also sections of industrial capital who find it uneconomic to re-locate outside present urban sites.

The basic economic force behind decentralization of the economy comes from the many strategic US industries that have already moved to rural or suburban areas to escape city taxes, traffic congestion, and cut costs by better location in relation to regional geography and their own markets. These groups have no objection to prefabricated mass housing; on the contrary, it would help them, by bringing their "labor supply" closer.

The budding prefabrication industry, well aware of all these complications, is easing into the market cautiously. They are starting out conservatively by planning models costing from \$3500-\$10,000, showing no hesitation about going after the high-cost construction buyers.

There is one risk, heretofore almost unmentioned, that the prefabricators want eliminated. The working class and lower middle class incomes that must pay for the bulk of this low-cost housing, are always threatened by depression or mass unemployment. The prefabricators, therefore, want the government to underwrite their proposed low-income market by FHA guarantees on small home loans. Then, for at least as long as the government is stable, their profits will be safe.

This form of mass production of homes, while it is more promising for the ill-housed, is farther off in the future, and involves many more variables and uncertainties than does the insurance investment-trust invasion of the rental housing field.

The Construction Industry

Last we come to the violently vocal real estate and construction interests who are waging a last-ditch battle for the maintenance of the housing status quo. With them in their unalterable opposition to any great volume of new housing construction are the rentier capitalists, mortgage companies, commercial interests, utilities and others who live parasitically off the congestion of cities and profitable investment in the existing, delapidated US housing stock.

"Creeping collectivism, deliberately fostered by some groups," said Arthur Binns of the National Real Estate Foundation, referring to government intervention in the housing situation. "Twenty-seven million property owners must organize within ninety days," he said last January 9, before they are "destroyed in the tide of socialism."

Boyd T. Barnard, president of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, predicts that the housing shortage will ease up in a year. Leave well enough alone, is his philosophy. Mr. Morton Bodfish, Washington lobbyist of the US Savings and Loan League, is one of the outstanding "viewers with alarm," to quote a phrase used by *Architectural Forum* (the *Fortune* of the construction field).

The National Association of Home Builders declared to President Truman, that "housing needs can only be met by private enterprise," not by legislation. Further, they stated that government estimates of five million new dwellings needed were much too high. "The construction of a million new homes in the next eighteen months, and the provision of 500,000 new units through remodeling, will relieve the extreme pressure," according to these "builders."

The Producers Council speaks for the building materials producers in tones of sheer horror at the prospect of the government building *new* houses. They want existing public housing projects turned over to private capitalists as soon as "feasible." If the government feels it *must* house families under the \$20-a-week income level (that it, 20.7 per cent of all American families), let the *local* governments remodel slum

dwellings for the owners, and then pay these owners rent every month for indigent families out of charity funds, is what their argument boils down to.

These construction associations particularly hate the OPA which is struggling vainly to force them by price regulations to produce low-income houses for veterans and stay out of the profitable \$10,000 and over homes.

As for prefabrication, the Producers Council recommends "delaying radical changes" in methods and materials "because the hazards of the immediate post-war era are believed to be sufficiently great to make out-and-out experimentation with new formulas a dangerous luxury."

The National Association of Homebuilders is a bit more subtle, but not less reactionary, in its opposition to prefabrication. It says, in a recent press release, "Prefabricated houses may be used as a stop-gap measure, but we doubt that the American public will be satisfied with them other than for temporary use. . . . (Americans) prefer to keep their individuality and have homes built to suit their individual needs rather than have all the houses look alike."

One is tempted to ask these stupid reactionaries, how many of the 83 per cent of all American families living in hand-me-downs have *they* provided with homes tailored to suit their individual needs and tastes? How many of these hand-me-downs are even decent and sanitary, let alone tasteful?

Housing Legislation

At this early stage, it is difficult to say how this struggle between different capitalist interests over America's housing dollars will turn out. The politicians reflect these struggles in the clash over housing legislation. Two bills now before Congress, the Wagner-Ellender-Taft National Housing Act and the Kilgore-Mitchell Prefabrication Bill, represent the interests of different blocs of capital. Other bills will surely follow.

The Wagner-Ellender Bill is a gift to the investment trusts. The federal government puts up \$500 million to clear city slums. There is no limit specified as to the price to be paid for the slum land. This is a blank check for the city politicians and property owners. However, even this cash gift is not enough to satisfy them because of the threat to their *steady* incomes contained in the construction of *new, modern* housing. The Mortgage Bankers Association says this Act is the "atomic bomb of the mort-

gage business." The National Association of Home Builders says it is a "threat of incalculable proportions. . . incorporating every conceivable proposal for federal aid, regulation and subsidy, it is catastrophic. . . it would spell eventual ruin for every segment of the residential construction industry."

Good features of the bill from the point of view of the working class, although completely inadequate to overcome the housing shortage, or even clear the slums, are: reduction in the interest rate of low-cost FHA home loans; special loans to coöperative and labor housing groups up to 95 per cent of the capital costs; grants for much-needed research in building materials and methods; a token program for improving rural housing; and government construction of 500,000 very low-cost rental units annually for the next few years.

A much-publicized "backstage" tussle is now going on in Washington as to what extent the government should back prefabrication. Wilson Wyatt, new NHA Administrator from Louisville, Ky., home of Reynolds Metal and Gunniston Homes, Inc., is pressing hard for a new government housing policy calling for a million new homes in '46, two million in '47 and three million in '48 as a boon to the new prefabricated housing industry.

What will all the families needing new homes get out of this *mêlée* of conflicting private interests? They are in a poor position to get anything. Labor does not have one representative of its own on the floor of Congress to defend its rights and interests, whereas each separate gang of capitalists has its own representatives and senators bought and paid for.

The answer to the question above is: the politicians will give the people as few houses as is safe in an election year, antagonizing as few capitalists as possible—*unless* labor intervenes politically through an independent Labor Party.

The best possible outcome assuming that labor does *not* organize politically in time to defend its interests on this score) is mass housing by capitalist prefabricators. These gentlemen, however, accept as God-given the present unequal division of national income. They will produce for their "newly discovered" low-cost market *exactly as is*. That is, they will try to freeze working class families to their present low living standards. A well equipped, complete, roomy prefabricated house, in an adequately

serviced community, will still cost around \$10,000. The mass low-cost housing will be graded in quality according to *ability to pay*. There will be \$1,000 units for the under-\$20 group and \$2,000 homes for the \$38-a-week group, which

will still adjust housing to poverty rather than use mass housing as a means toward ending poverty as is possible in this land of plenty.

Good housing then remains today, as for the last hundred years, a *political*

problem. However, the *solution* of the housing question is inseparable from the solution of the general question of production for use on the basis of socialist planning.

MIRIAM GOULD.

Role of the Indonesian Leadership

Capitulation of the Nationalist Politicians

Recently the struggle of the Indonesian masses for independence has seemed to slacken and has been all but driven from the pages of the newspapers. But on January 22, Sutan Sjarir, Premier of the Indonesian Republic, again broke into the headlines. As a response to British and American objections to Russia's imperialist policy in Iran, the Russians had demanded that the UNO "put an end to the present situation in Indonesia." Sutan Sjarir, alert leader of the struggle for independence, immediately utilized the opportunity — to demand that the British troops remain in Indonesia!

"If the British withdrew now, the Japanese might refuse to lay down their arms and might resist," he said.

To put it mildly, this statement is startling. Ostensibly, Sjarir is the leader of the nationalist movement, which is seeking to overthrow the oppressive rule of Dutch imperialism. In the struggle for independence, tens of thousands of Indonesian youth have sacrificed their lives, perhaps an equal number of non-combatant men, women and children have been killed in cities, and Javanese villages have been razed in a manner reminiscent of Lidice.

At first it seems incredible. This article will show, however, that from the very beginning the rôle of the leadership of the Indonesian Republic has been to restrain and sabotage the war for independence.

Shortly before their surrender, as a last gesture of revenge, the Japanese announced their intention to set up an independent Indonesian Republic, with Soekarno as President. On August 17, two days after the Japanese surrender, the Indonesians proclaimed their independence. It was not until a month later, September 16, that an Allied occupation fleet arrived at Batavia, and 1,000 Dutch soldiers disembarked.

At that time newspaper dispatches reported the existence of an irregular

army of 100,000 Indonesians, armed with surrendered Japanese weapons, ready to fight for their independence. Even after allowing for newspaper exaggeration, there still remains no question that, had the leadership so desired, it could have prevented the landing of this small Dutch detachment. The fact that this vastly inferior force was permitted to occupy Batavia, the capital of the country, unopposed, serves to indicate the irresoluteness and timidity of the official leadership of the nationalist movement.

The British Intervene

When it became clear that the Dutch, alone, would be unable to reestablish their oppression of Indonesia, the British began to take a more direct hand in the matter. On September 27, Lord Mountbatten announced that he was dispatching British troops to Java. On October 5, Maj. Gen. Hawthorn charged the Japanese with responsibility for maintaining law and order on the island. The Japanese officers arose to the occasion by calling the local nationalist leaders to a conference at Surabaya, and when these approached, opening fire on them. This resulted in a general uprising in the city in which over 100 people were killed and the Japanese garrison was overpowered and disarmed. The following day a spokesman for The Netherlands government announced that Indonesia was "not yet ready for self-government" and that his government was dispatching 10,000 Dutch troops to Java, "a sufficient force to control Indonesia in three weeks." On October 9 British troops began to arrive in Batavia "to preserve law and order."

By now the threat to the island's independence had become too ominous to be ignored. Recognizing the danger, the aroused masses disarmed the Japanese throughout most of the island and intensified the fighting around Batavia. On October 13 the Indonesian People's Army, reflecting the mood of the popu-

lation, issued a proclamation of war against the Dutch. "Weapons of war are all kinds of firearms, poison, poison darts, arrows, and arson, and all kinds of wild animals," it declared. Furthermore, natives were forbidden to sell food to the enemy.

But this vigorous policy quickly met the resistance of the official leadership. The government immediately denied that it was at war with the Dutch. "If there is going to be any shooting, we are going to let the Dutch start it," President Soekarno told the press conference (after hundreds had already been killed in skirmishes with Allied troops!). And Vice-President Hatta announced: "We will continue to seek independence, not through fighting but through world arbitration."

On October 15, Maj. Gen. Hawthorn forbade the natives to carry arms, set road blocks or refuse to sell food to the Allies upon penalty of death. Two days later, as though to underline the meaning of this decree and not permit even the wildest possibility of its misinterpretation, Prime Minister Attlee announced that it was Britain's duty to help its Dutch ally resume control over Java. At the same time the American government made its attitude clear by requesting the Dutch to remove United States labels from lend-lease weapons before using them against the natives!

Indonesians Counter-Attack

Two weeks later the Allied command felt strong enough to venture out of Batavia. On October 28 a British force of 1,600 men landed at Surabaya. Just as the policy of "let the Dutch fire the first shot" had permitted the Allies to occupy Batavia, so now this same policy permitted the British to occupy Surabaya without firing a shot.

The British immediately ordered the surrender of all arms upon penalty of death. But when they tried to enforce this order the people could be restrained

no longer. On October 29 the enraged populace attacked the imperial troops and in the first encounter killed forty and seriously wounded 110, while 200 more were later reported as missing. (This much the British headquarters admitted; actually the number of casualties was probably much higher.) The entire garrison was surrounded and on the verge of being cut to pieces.

This was the climax of the war for independence. The way that the tide turned now would largely decide the course of events in Indonesia, and perhaps in the whole colonial world, for a long time to come. In this crisis the British, completely cut off from help, fell back on the only course of action that could save them. They called for help upon—the President of the Indonesian Republic! President Soekarno was flown by plane to Surabaya, and rushed to the headquarters of Col. Crookshank of the British army. Here the Colonel feverishly informed him that “the situation was getting out of control.” He spread a map before Soekarno, pointing out the precarious position of the British troops in the city. He showed the President of the Republic a communication from a group of engineers: “We’re running out of ammunition. Send reinforcements or we’ll be overrun.”

Had the reinforcements been sent?

No.

Why not?

Because, said the Colonel, “Our headquarters are surrounded—we’re all surrounded. We’ve got to do something before more bloodshed results.”

Whereupon the courageous President got into a British truck and, carrying a white flag, persuaded the local leaders to call off the attack.

How Surabaya Fell

The British were granted safe conduct and were permitted to evacuate the city to the docks. While they remained there unmolested, the Allied command gradually built up its strength for a second try. On November 55 the Fifth Division landed, with tanks, at Surabaya. The press reported that the mood of the British soldiers at this time was “all in favor of a fight to revenge the humiliation of defeat.” As for the people of Surabaya, they understood perfectly well the terrible danger that was accumulating for them on the docks of their city. Soekarno and other national leaders complained that they were finding it “most difficult to quell the mob spirit” of the people.

And while Soekarno was “quelling the mob spirit” on the docks of Surabaya the superiority of forces had already shifted to the side of the British. On November 9 the British commander, Lieut. Gen. Christison, ordered all Indonesians to lay down their arms by 6 a.m. or face “all the naval, army and air forces at my command.” The following day, warships, artillery and the RAF opened fire on the city. Thousands of Indonesian civilians were killed. “The bodies are piled up in Surabaya and cannot be removed,” read the dispatches. “The British are moving into the city, using common people as shields and employing bombs, tanks and guns in deliberate, indiscriminate attacks on the people.” Refugees fleeing the city were strafed on the roads by the gallant RAF.

On November 13, Soekarno retired into the background and Sutan Sjarir, a “socialist,” became Premier.

If the policy of Soekarno had been irresolute and timid, then the policy of Sjarir can be characterized as being openly and consciously treacherous. His first announcement was that he would fly to Surabaya to halt the fighting. “Surabaya has hurt our cause in the eyes of the world; we want to settle all matters amicably with the British.”

But it was not within his power to put an end to the fighting. A week after the eruption of the war in Surabaya, the British were still shelling the city. On November 15, therefore, from his headquarters in Batavia, Sjarir issued a pamphlet deploring the “murder and robbery that, seen from the viewpoint of social reform, signifies nothing and is reactionary, as every fascist deed will always be reactionary.” The struggle of his people for human dignity and freedom, its heroic resistance in the face of British artillery, air and naval bombardment is—reactionary and fascist! Sjarifuddin, the Minister of Information, announced that the Indonesian government was planning to make it illegal for anyone except police to carry arms—i.e., illegal to struggle for independence!

The subsequent role of the Indonesian leadership has followed the same treacherous pattern. While British and Dutch troops, using lend-lease Sherman tanks and rocket guns were still blasting their way yard by yard through Surabaya, the national committee of Indonesia, meeting on November 28 in Batavia (still the only city securely in the hands of the Allies!) voted confidence in Premier Sjarir. Vice-president Hatta criticized In-

donesians engaged in the fighting, saying that “the fascist outlook should find no place in the national struggle.” On November 29, after Surabaya had finally been completely occupied, Premier Sjarir predicted the cessation of hostilities throughout Java.

“I have been in contact with local leaders who support my point of view and are endeavoring even now to induce the young men to give up fighting,” he stated.

Restrained, sabotaged and in its last stages slandered by its official leaders, the Indonesian struggle for independence has been gradually subsiding. There is no reason to believe that at this late date, after the series of defeats unrelieved by victory, the independence movement can again be revived unless there is a complete change of leadership. Temporarily at least the struggle for freedom has been checked.

Victory Was Possible

We must now pause to inquire: after all, given the relationship of forces, could the outcome possibly have been any different? Would not little, backward Indonesia have been overwhelmed by imperialism in any case, no matter what course its leadership had chosen to pursue?

In our opinion it is not inconceivable that the outcome might have been different. As we have pointed out, the climax of the war came shortly after the British landing at Surabaya. Had the Indonesian leadership seized this opportunity to gain a decisive victory, it would have electrified all Indonesia, inspired new confidence in the masses, and would have rallied the whole country to the movement for independence. The only remaining Allied troops at this time were concentrated around Batavia, and the people could hardly have been restrained from taking the offensive against this remaining relatively weak foothold of the oppressors.

Even more important than its effect upon Indonesia itself, would have been the effect of the Republic’s victory upon the whole colonial world. Indo-China, Korea, the Near East and India were all smouldering with revolt—one decisive colonial victory might well have ignited them into an unquenchable anti-imperialist flame. Australian dock workers had refused to load ships destined for Java, and the war was unpopular with sections of the British and Dutch workers. An Indonesian victory would have strengthened tremendously the anti-imperialist

forces throughout the world, and would have made it immeasurably more difficult for the imperialists to carry out their task of suppression.

The course which the leadership followed guaranteed the defeat of the nationalist movement. Shortly after open hostilities broke out the newspapers published a report that the Allies had occupied an Indonesian "armaments factory" which was engaged in the manufacture of bows and arrows! But with such a timid and treacherous leadership, even had the Allies been equipped with bows and arrows and had the Indonesians

been armed with tanks and airplanes, the result would not have been different.

Why did the leaders of the Republic pursue this course? The vast majority of the island's wealth is owned by the Dutch and British, and a few plantations and oil wells are owned by US corporations. A victory over imperialist troops gained by the Indonesian populace would have resulted inevitably in the demand for a more just distribution of the wealth. But this could be accomplished not through the government, but only through a system of soviets, democratically and directly controlled by the work-

ers and peasants of the island, and responding to their vital demands. It is from this prospect of a social revolution that the nationalist leaders shrank. For basically they are intellectuals drawn from and tied to the wealthy native families—the colonial bourgeoisie.

The concrete events in Indonesia show once again the necessity of the colonial proletariat to forge its own party to insure not only the proletarian revolution, but even a successful struggle for national liberation.

LEON SHIELDS.

Negroes and the Labor Movement

An Answer to F. Forrest

The National Committee of the Workers Party is conducting this discussion in *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* for educational purposes, for the education of the party and the working class readers of the party press: white and black. This is the primary consideration. In order for the discussion to be educational and informative, however, it is incumbent on all participants to practice the utmost in intellectual integrity. Any other procedure is impermissible and would only serve to confuse and not enlighten those who are interested in this extremely important question. Not only an important question but one filled with complexity and all manner of difficulties. This is not a question on which it is permissible merely to attempt to score a point against one's opponent, to ask "lawyer's questions" or even try to score more "points" than the other side. This is not the road to clarification, particularly, in any discussion of the road to political activity among Negroes in the United States. This is not to say that the discussion should not be conducted in a vigorous manner and with the greatest intellectual rigor of which the participants are capable. This manner of proceeding is indicated by the fact that the question under discussion has many facets to it. It is a historical question, it is a scientific question and it is, of course, for the Workers Party a political and organizational question.

These preliminary remarks are prompted by a reading of the discussion article by Comrade F. Forrest in the May, 1945, number of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*.* I will illustrate now what I mean in part. Comrade Forrest does some quoting from the resolution adopted by the National Commit-

tee of the Workers Party. From one section of the resolution, she quotes as follows: "While even violent struggles may take place around such issues [equality], the aim of the WP must be to lead the struggle out of these narrow confines (page 9, col. 2. My emphasis.—F. F.)" Comrade Forrest then proceeds: "Not only are these democratic struggles, according to Comrade Coolidge, hemmed in by 'narrow confines,' he displays a disregard of their significance except to the degree that they are integrated into the general class struggle."

Party Intervenes in Struggle

It is necessary to quote the whole passage referred to by Comrade Forrest. In her quotation she left out a pertinent part of the passage, the part which gives it meaning. This omission distorts the meaning of the passage from which the quotation is taken. Here is the whole passage: "While the struggle for socialism and against capitalism is implicit in the demand for equality, it is at the same time—in a sense—a struggle for immediate demands. This is especially true so far as the thinking of the masses of Negroes goes. This is demonstrated in the manner in which their demands are concretized. They make demands for jobs, for promotion to skilled classifications, for equality of treatment in the military service, against accommodation and against residential segregation." Comrade Forrest leaves out that part of the passage beginning with "They make demands..." This passage is necessary for an understanding of what follows. The passage then goes on to say that "While even violent struggles may take place around such issues... (that is, 'jobs,' etc.) the party must aim to lead the struggle for democratic rights out of these narrow confines, just as the party aims to do in the wider arena of the whole working class struggle." That is the party does not confine its propaganda among the working class to the struggle for "immediate demands" but intervenes in the struggle for immediate demands in or-

der to heighten the class struggle and give the struggle a distinctly political coloration.

Proceeding on the basis of the distorted meaning, Comrade Forrest attempts to use the passage quoted as a sort of whipping boy for all sorts of notions. "Are the tremendous struggles that Negroes are carrying on today... to be looked down upon because of the 'narrow confines?'" (bottom of page 119, left column). What does she mean by "looked down upon"? We will discuss these "tremendous struggles later but right now we are concerned with Comrade Forrest's method of debate. She lifts out a phrase, and applies it to any part of the NC resolution that suits her purpose.

On page 121, right column, Comrade Forrest continues her method. She writes: "The WP will approach Negroes and Negro organizations with an appeal directed primarily to the proletarians." The passage continues with the statement that we want to break the wage earners away from the class collaborationist Negro leadership. "This is the first step in creating a class rupture between the proletarian Negroes and the Negro leader clique—servitors of the white bourgeoisie." But Comrade Forrest leaves out a pertinent part of the passage and gives the reader no indication that she has done so. Preceding the word "the WP" is the following: "In view of these considerations..." Forrest puts in the "the" but she capitalizes the "T," thus giving the impression that this is the beginning of the sentence. (*NI, January, 1945, page 9, left column at top.*)

The Main Strategy of the WP

What are the considerations which lead the WP to approach the proletarians in the Negro organizations? The resolution states them in the paragraph before the one Forrest has quoted. This paragraph reads in part: "The main strategy of the WP in the struggle for democratic rights and in the Negro organization is to promote the class independence of the Negro proletarian

*Quotations in this article are from the following sources: Resolution of the National Committee of the Workers Party; *The New International*, January, 1945, under the heading "Negroes and the Revolution." The resolution of the minority will be found in the same issue of the *NI* under the same heading. Comrade Forrest's article is in *The New International* for May, 1945.

masses... to win the Negro toilers to the class struggle, class consciousness, the struggle for socialism and the Workers Party... The party will have as its aim, therefore, the transformation of this struggle into the struggle for complete workers' democracy." It is "in view of these considerations" and for these reasons that the WP will "approach Negroes and Negro organizations." (*NI*, January, 1945, page 9, left column, last paragraph.) No one could possibly get what it is that Forrest is objecting to from her manner of quoting. It is permissible to disagree as violently as one wishes with a position but one must be careful to quote in such a way as not to confuse and mislead the reader.

On page 121, left column, Comrade Forrest does another bit of impermissible quoting. She quotes: "The Negroes in the United States must lay their case before the trade unions. Not as outsiders seeking a united front, but from the inside as an integral and integrated part of the labor movement." In the resolution the sentence "quoted" above does not begin with "The." It begins with the word "Consequently." (January *NI*, page 10, col. 2.) Even if F. F. had not garbled the quotation textually, its content would have been distorted by her manner of quoting. Context had no meaning for Forrest. The whole passage reads: "Throughout history, the main current in the struggle for democratic rights has been the organizations of the toilers. This hold no less today than for the past. *Consequently* (italics not in resolution) the Negroes in the United States must," etc., etc.) The passage goes on to say that in the labor movement therefore the Negroes will be able to pose the question of democratic rights for the Negro "as a part of the struggle for the emancipation of the whole working class." Furthermore, "... for the first time Negroes will be consciously a component part of active and organized class struggle."

Questions of Forrest

Does Forrest deny this? Is it her opinion that the working class today is not the "main current in the struggle for democratic rights for the oppressed..."? Does she deny that this should be the locus of the activities of the Negro masses? If not here, then where? Forrest or anyone else has the right to disagree with the resolution, but they do not have the right to lift a sentence out of a passage and ignore the argument which motivates the sentence in question. *This is not the way to conduct an educational discussion.*

Although it is very vaguely stated, Forrest does seem to have a position contrary to that of the resolution. That is her right, but why be so vague and indirect about it? She writes apropos the sentence she misquotes above: "Since World War I the Negro has experienced a phenomenal proletarianization and urbanization. In addition to this, he has, since the organization of the CIO, experienced a tremendous unionization. This, however, has not solved the Negro problem because the more integrated into the trade union movement, the more the Negro resents and struggles against

his segregation outside of it. This is an organic part of the Leninist conception of the national question. Comrade Johnson has drawn from this the following conclusion: "This dual movement is the key to the Marxist analysis of the Negro question in the U. S. A." What is Forrest talking about here? The entry of Negroes into the labor movement "has not solved the Negro problem..." Has entry into the labor movement solved the problem of the white worker? The Workers Party is preaching day in and out to workers in the unions that their problems cannot be solved by the unions alone, that the main problems before the working class today are political and not even the beginnings of a solution can be made without the formation of an independent Labor Party. Furthermore, the WP has said again and again that the problems of the proletariat call for the revolutionary solution and the leadership of the revolutionary socialist party. The resolution of the National Committee opens with the position: "For the furtherance of its revolutionary aims (not its trade union aims, as Forrest seems to think.—D. C.) and in order to extend its proletarian orientation to the most exploited section of the population, the Workers Party must turn its face resolutely to the Negro masses in the United States." And further the resolution of the National Committee says: "We seek to win the Negro toilers to the class struggle, class consciousness, the struggle for socialism and the Workers Party... [through] the ordeal of agitation for democratic rights and the economic struggle of the Negro proletarians in the trade unions is provided the best means for bringing the Negro workers into class struggle and class consciousness." I ask Forrest, is this the language the Marxist uses when he is describing the trade union and the trade union struggle? The resolution says further: "We must win over the white and black workers, arm them with our program and principles and inspire them to march arm in arm against the common foe." What "program and principles" does Comrade Forrest think is meant in the resolution of the National Committee? The program of the trade unions? We are talking about the program and principles of the Workers Party. Why does the resolution emphasize this? Because, being a revolutionary Marxist party, the Workers Party is fully conscious of the fact and understands clearly that "unionization" will not solve "the Negro problem" any more than "unionization" will solve the problem of the white worker.

Effects of Joining Unions

Forrest says that the more the Negro becomes integrated into the labor movement the more he resists and struggles against segregation. That is a million times correct. That is precisely one of the main reasons why the party advocates the entry of Negroes into the labor movement. That is precisely why the party urges white workers to go into the labor movement: to struggle against the oppression of the working class by the ruling class. Why is it, I ask Comrade Forrest, that the struggle of the Negro against segregation is increased the

more he is "integrated into the trade union movement"? Forrest attempts a reply and a queer one it is. According to her, this resentment of the Negro at segregation "... is an organic part of the Leninist conception of the national question." This may impress people who have never heard of the "national question" or of Lenin. I think that it is also acceptable to Garveyites, other American advocates of Negro nationalism, as well as those who hold that the Negro in the United States is a nation. But Comrade Forrest does not put forth this position in her article. In his resolution, Comrade Johnson writes: "The Negroes do not constitute a nation..." but he holds, for reasons which he gives, "their problem becomes the problem of a national minority. The Negro question is a part of the national question and not of the 'national' question."

We should have an explanation from Forrest as to what she means by "the Leninist conception of the national question" in connection with the struggle of Negroes in the United States against "segregation" or any of the rest of their social, political or economic disabilities? If this discussion is not to sink into mere jargon and verbiage we must have more clarification and less mumbo-jumbo.

Finally on this point I should like to ask: What is this "dual movement" used in Comrade Johnson's resolution and quoted approvingly by Forrest, which is the "key to the Marxist analysis of the Negro question in the U. S. A."? Does the resentment of militant Negroes in the unions, against segregation represent a "dual movement"? What is it over against or parallel to? The trade union movement? Does Comrade Forrest approve of a "dual movement" of Negroes inside the trade union movement? Just what is it to be? Also what is and where is her evidence for the existence of such a "dual movement" in the trade unions? Although Forrest produces no evidence, she does produce something and it is something very incorrect. Commenting on the passage in the National Committee resolution about the necessity for Negroes in the U. S. to lay their case before the trade unions (page 121, col. 1), Comrade Forrest writes: "It is a fact, however, isn't it, that in Detroit, where the Negroes are most integrated into the trade union movement, the riots occurred. Precisely because the significance of this escapes Comrade Coolidge, he falls into subjectivism." This is an amazing statement to come from one who speaks of "Marxist analysis." What is Forrest's argument? Simply this, it seems to me: The Negroes are integrated into the labor movement in Detroit. But it was in Detroit that the riots occurred. Therefore the Negro problem cannot be solved by unionization. Or, therefore, it is not correct to say that Negroes should lay their case before the unions.

The Detroit Riots and the Unions

Before one ventures into analysis, Marxian or any other type of analysis, one must not only establish some facts but must be guided by the facts after they are established. Otherwise "Marxist analysis" is like the incantations of a primitive Siberian

shaman. It has been said over and over that Marxists say what is. Marxists must be concerned not only with the facts, but first of all with the *relevant facts*. If Comrade Forrest had been aware of this important rule, which is a part of the methodology of modern science, and of Marxism, she would have learned that one of the *relevant facts* in connection with the Detroit riots was that the disturbance did not penetrate the plants and the local unions. There was no appreciable interruption of friendly working class relations between Negro and white workers at the plant or in the locals. The riot was an extra-union affair and probably fomented by anti-union elements such as the KKK. This fact is certainly a necessary one to be included in a "Marxist analysis." It is significant to be sure that a riot occurred in Detroit, where the CIO is exceedingly strong. This needs further analysis. It was done in part by the WP in *Labor Action* right after the riots occurred. But Comrade Forrest's "Marxist analysis" isn't very helpful. It is necessary to point out also that Detroit is not unique. There have been many riots in the U. S. during the past 25 years similar to the Detroit riot.

Comrade Forrest writes that "...Coolidge... falls into subjectivism." Where? When? What is subjective about the position that it is the organization of the workers that must take the lead in the struggle for a democracy of active Negroes and must become "a component of that Negro organized class struggle," that "the white worker must take the lead and the offensive in the struggle for the Negro's democratic rights," that "the organized labor movement must join in this struggle of the Negro for democratic rights," that "Negroes can only attain the strength and confidence necessary to break through the thick walls of Jim Crow to the degree that they are supported by and integrated into the working class and its organizations." (NC resolution, page 10, col. 2.) Isn't this the genuine Marxist analysis of the situation? What is Comrade Forrest's "Marxist analysis"? But she continues: "Duality of propaganda in his hands becomes a duality of blame." What is the meaning of this jargon? "Where he does not blame the bourgeoisie for its 'plots,' he blames the Negro working class for its 'delusion' and he appeals to the white proletariat 'to wipe out the blot on labor's escutcheon by the shabby treatment labor has accorded the Negro since emancipation.'" Of course we do not "blame" the bourgeoisie for its plots, in the course of a theoretical analysis. We analyze and interpret. We explain and clarify the rôle of the bourgeoisie and seek to educate the working class in the understanding of how and why the ruling class functions the way it does. We explain to the proletariat that the bourgeoisie functions and orients itself in the direction of the defense of its class interests. We only "blame" the bourgeoisie in the course of an agitational procedure when we are attempting to arouse the proletariat to immediate action. In that case it is only a tactical procedure. Where does the resolution of the NC "blame" the Negro working class for its "delusion"?

On Placing Blame

The resolution of the NC points out what the bourgeoisie did in connection with the Negro after emancipation. "The debasement of the Negro in the United States has its roots in slavery.... The conscious plan of the Northern bourgeoisie was to hold the Negro in reserve in the lowest paid and meanest jobs... to provide capitalism with a mass of cheap labor... the Northern bourgeoisie" desired "to establish the ex-slave barons as an appendage of Northern capitalism... for seventy years the Negro was debased by a bourgeois-democratic government apparatus...." Does Comrade Forrest deny this? Are these instances of where the resolution "does not blame the bourgeoisie for its 'plots' "? Where does the resolution blame the Negro working class for its "delusion"? Where does Comrade Forrest get this quoted word from? The resolution reads: "The masses of Negroes today are triply deluded. They are beguiled by white politicians, traduced by the industrial overlords and misled by the Negro leaders...." Does Comrade Forrest deny this? Is this her conception of blaming Negroes for their "delusion"? What is wrong with appealing to the "white proletariat to wipe out the blot on labor's escutcheon"? Isn't there a blot there?

Comrade Forrest has a theory of what she calls the "Bolshevik solution." She writes: "The greatness of the Bolshevik solution lies precisely in knowing how to meet the danger of the division in the labor movement." And how do we do this? "We go to meet it by class struggle, and by stimulating the independent mass movement of the Negroes and turning it against the bourgeoisie. Didn't the independent activity of the Negroes stimulate the UAW to fight for Negro housing in Detroit and have a united front with labor in the elections? Independent mass activity of the Negroes is the best instrument for educating both the white and Negro workers and mobilizing the white workers in the fight for Negro emancipation." (NI, May, 1945, page 121, col. 1.) First I want to discuss what Forrest calls the "Bolshevik solution." The class struggle solution of the problem of race conflict and oppression and of "division in the labor movement" is not original with Bolshevism. The entire analysis of such questions and proposals for their solution had been made by Marx and Engels long before the emergence of the theory and practice of Bolshevism. "The greatness of the Bolshevik solution" lies rather in its contribution to the solution of the entire problem of class relations. Bolshevism is the theory and practice of the proletarian revolution in the period of capitalist decline. It is the theory and practice of the Marxist party leading the masses. Probably the greatest single contribution of Lenin to Marxist theory and practice was his conception that the working class must be organized and led by a certain kind of party, that the party is primary and that without the party, organized and disciplined for the conquest of the masses, there can be no solution to the problem of the masses.

Negro Mass Activity

What does Comrade Forrest mean by "stimulating the independent mass movement of the Negroes and turning it against the bourgeoisie?" How will Negroes carry on "independent mass activity"? What organizational form will it take? For instance the Garvey Movement was an independent mass movement of Negroes. Does Forrest agree with Comrade Johnson's resolution where it says that "The Harlem demonstration was no 'minor' strike. It was... an organized demonstration, a Negro nationalist protest..." Does she accept Comrade Johnson's statement that: "The Harlem demonstration, like the miners' strike, represents a significant stage in the development of the struggle against capitalism?" How will the hundreds of thousands of Negroes in the trade unions function in the "independent mass movement of the Negroes?" These questions require a more definitive—and above all, a more precise answer than Comrade Forrest has given them.

Comrade Forrest writes that Coolidge displays a disregard for the Negro mass struggles "except to the degree that they are integrated into the general class struggle." We don't disregard any struggles carried on by Negroes. What the Marxist party must do is to enter the struggle of the Negro with its class struggle program, direct that struggle into the labor movement (trade union and political) and effect the class solidarity of Negro and white proletarians. It is not that the struggle of the Negro for democratic rights has no significance aside from the class struggle but that these rights cannot be acquired outside the general class struggle. Does Comrade Forrest think they can? How? Comrade Forrest charges that the NC resolution contains "... vague phrases about the revolutionary potentialities of the Negro masses..." This statement is quite a strain on one's patience. I quote from the NC resolution. "The Negroes constitute a vast reservoir of potential revolutionary manpower... the WP will encourage Negroes to... [emulate] the Negro martyrs who gave their... lives for Negro liberation..." This is particularly relevant in the case of the black leaders of the slave rebellions... The Negroes who stand today in the line of succession are the militant Negroes in the labor movement and the Negroes of the revolutionary political movement. These are the real and rightful inheritors of the tradition of Attucks, Gabriel and Tubman... The Workers Party is fully aware that the Negro in the U. S. is a force of definite revolutionary potentiality. This political appraisal flows from the proletarian and semi-proletarian character of the Negro race, his role and place in capitalist society, his continuous expression of resentment against his oppression... through the struggle for democratic rights, through the struggle in unions for economic justice we will strive to attract the weight of the Negro masses to socialism and to enthusiastic support of the workers' state." What is vague about these and like phrases in the NC resolution? If Comrade Forrest were discussing this matter what would she say?

Comrade Forrest quotes Lenin: "The dialectic of history is such that small nations, powerless as an independent factor in the struggle against imperialism, plays a part as one of the bacilli which help the real power against imperialism to come to the scene, namely, the socialist proletariat." Then Comrade Forrest asks: "Does or does not Comrade Coolidge think that the Negro struggles in America are just such bacilli as Lenin refers to?" So far as the *purpose* of this "trick" question is concerned, my answer is: I do not. That isn't all. Comrade Forrest's quotation and her question add up to nonsense and spreading of political confusion. Doesn't Comrade Forrest know what Lenin was talking about and the kind of struggle to which he was really referring? I cannot believe that she does not understand. Are the Negroes in the U. S. a small nation? Is the struggle of the Negroes for democratic rights and equality a struggle against imperialism in the sense of a struggle for national independence? Does Comrade Forrest contend that the struggle of the Negroes in the U. S. is *politically* and *organizationally* comparable to the struggle of the Slovaks against the Czechs, the Serbs against Austria, the Croats against the Serbs, or the impending struggle say, of the Hungarians against Russia? Please answer.

If in saying that the struggles of the Negro in the U. S. are such bacilli as Lenin refers to; Comrade Forrest means that these struggles create or develop class struggle ferment in the ranks of the proletariat, then we are in agreement with her—and with Lenin. This however does not seem to be Comrade Forrest's meaning. Here again it is imperative that she say what she means in order that there may be no misunderstanding. The resolution of the National Committee is clear. In the sense given above, the resolution emphasizes more than once that the Negro is not a passive force and that under the leadership of the trades unions and the Marxist party Negroes will become one of the potent bacilli of the proletarian revolution.

Aim of Democratic Demands

Comrade Forrest objects to the statement in the NC resolution that "the WP does not consider the struggle for democratic rights an end in itself." She asks: "Whoever considered any struggle an 'end in itself'? Why should anyone wish to maintain any organization 'permanently'?" It is a *fact* that the great mass of Negroes conceive of the struggle for democratic rights as an end in itself. The great mass of Negroes today struggle only, only, for equality within the framework of bourgeois society. They are not carrying on a struggle for socialism. To Negroes, democratic rights are an "end in themselves." The trade unions carry on the economic struggle as an "end in itself." They do not carry on the trade union struggle in the manner of the Marxist: as a prelude to revolutionary political struggle. Negroes do not carry on the struggle for democratic rights in the manner of the Marxists: as a prelude to revolutionary political struggle. If Com-

rade Forrest does not understand this, she has no competence at all for dealing with this question.

Comrade Forrest charges the resolution with exalting the trade unions so as "to elevate them to an equal plane with a revolutionary Marxist political party, the WP." Where is this done? Comrade Forrest is challenged to produce the smallest bit of evidence to support her statement. On the question of the relation of the trade union movement to the struggle of Negroes Forrest writes: ". . . Comrade Coolidge conceives of the struggle for democratic rights not as fight against the bourgeoisie but as an appeal to the trade union movement." Then she quotes that section of the NC resolution which says that the demand of the WP for equality for Negroes is not directed primarily at the bourgeoisie, but directly to white proletarians in the unions. The quotation above from Comrade Forrest is merely silly. If the Negro's struggle for democratic rights is not a fight against the bourgeoisie, then who is it a fight against? The white working class? There are Negroes, unfortunately, who believe this. Comrade Forrest asks: "Who oppresses the Negro: is it the bourgeoisie or is it the white working class?" The answer is well-known to all persons, black and white, who have any experience with the problem and knowledge about it. Both oppress the Negro: the bourgeoisie and the white working class oppress them in different ways. The class relation of the Negro to the bourgeoisie is the same, basically, as that of the white worker. That is, the Negro is the victim of class exploitation by the bourgeoisie. In addition to this, however, the Negro is oppressed by the bourgeoisie in a unique way through Jim-Crow, which makes him the victim of a *double* exploitation. The white worker also oppresses the Negro, oftentimes through the use of physical violence. The fact that the oppression of the Negro by the white worker has its roots in the structure and procedures of capitalist society in the U. S. does not wipe out the responsibility of the white working class for its disgraceful participation in the mistreatment which has been accorded the Negro in the U. S. This is what makes the struggle of the Negro so difficult and tragic. What Comrade Forrest seemingly cannot understand is precisely what the backward Negro worker cannot understand; that is the necessity for winning the white worker away from his anti-Negro attitudes, the reasons why he has these attitudes and the immediate role of the trade unions in initiating this change.

Attitude of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky

Comrade Forrest puts some questions to Coolidge. What is my attitude to "the Leninist conception of the Negro question?" The answer to this question is the resolution of NC. That resolution is based on the Leninist (Marxist) conception of such questions. Of course, it may be necessary to say that neither Lenin nor Marx ever had a Negro question to deal with such as confronts the WP in the U. S. She asks what is my view on Trotsky's conception of the

Negro question? I agree with many of the views expressed by Trotsky on the Negro question. I have quoted from them in the resolution. I quote Trotsky's conception again. "One of the most important branches of this conflict consists in enlightening the proletarian consciousness by awakening the feeling of human dignity and of revolutionary protest among the black slaves of American capital. This work can be carried out by self-sacrificing and politically-educated revolutionary Negroes. *Needless to say, the work is not to be carried on in a spirit of Negro chauvinism—but in the spirit of solidarity of all exploited without consideration of color.*" (My emphasis, B.C.) The whole NC resolution is written in this spirit and with this theoretical foundation.

Comrade Forrest asks whether or not Coolidge believes that Lenin and Trotsky thought the Negroes a nation? It is somewhat difficult to answer this question for the reason that the writings of Lenin and Trotsky on this question are far from extensive or definitive. Neither of them had a very extensive acquaintance with the problem. However, for Marxists who have a more extensive acquaintance with the question it is not necessary to know the views of either Lenin or Trotsky. If it were the view of Lenin and Trotsky that the Negro in the U. S. is a nation, then I reject their views on this aspect of the question under consideration. That is what the NC resolution does; if that was their view. It is certainly recorded in at least one place that Lenin called the Negro in the U. S. a nation and compared them with the Irish. But this is obviously incorrect. Then why should the WP accept it? Because it was said by Lenin? Lenin would certainly have excoriated such sycophancy, such toadying and such political and theoretical subservience. As for disagreement with Trotsky, our Party was founded in disagreement with Trotsky on the question of Russia: not an unimportant question. Comrade Forrest also disagreed with Comrade Trotsky on this question. On the question as to whether or not the Negro in the U. S. is a nation, it is not so much the views of Lenin and Trotsky I am concerned with right now, but the views of Comrade Forrest. Does Comrade Forrest say that the Negroes are a nation? Does she agree with the statement of Lenin that the Negroes in the U. S. are a nation? I hope that Comrade Forrest will answer.

No discussion can be carried on fruitfully or sensibly, as a battle of quotations, no matter what the source of the quotations. Lenin and Trotsky are our teachers, but we dishonor them and ourselves by burning incense in their names. Marxism is not a faith once and for all delivered to the saints. Our doctrine and theory were not delivered to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky on tales of stone as they communed with some Jehovah on Sinai.

DAVID COOLIDGE.

From the Archives of the Party

A Resolution on Organization

(We present for the time first time in these pages an important document from the archives of the Workers Party, dealing with the conflict over party organization that accompanied the 1939-40 dispute on the "Russian Question" in the Socialist Workers Party. The document, entitled *Resolution on the Organization and Tasks of the Party*, was presented to the 1940 convention of the SWP by the Minority group. It sums up its fight against the bureaucratic conservatism of the Cannon regime and lays the basis for the organizational concepts upon which the Minor organized itself in the Workers Party. The document assumes a contemporary importance today in the light of the new opposition that has emerged in the SWP against the bureaucratic character of that party.—*Editors.*)

The main task of the party in the present period has been and remains to organize and orient itself in such a manner as to enable it to meet most effectively the decisive test of the war. The party, and above all the party leadership, has thus far failed to carry out this task.

The present party leadership revealed a complete failure to respond to the problems created by the outbreak of the war. Although the war has lasted for more than six months, this failure has yet to be overcome. For the proposal to set the party in motion on a new footing, corresponding to the new situation, the leadership substituted the policy of dead calm and indifference which has kept the party in a state of paralysis for half a year. The proposal for a plenum of the National Committee to meet the war situation promptly was resisted for weeks on the most absurd of pretexts. At the plenum and since it was held, not a single serious step has been taken to adjust the outlook and activity of the party to correspond to the war situation. The party press has virtually ignored the Second World War, has given no analysis of it, no analysis worthy of the name of the new Stalinist turn, no analysis of the succession of steps taken in the war by the Soviet Union. It is significant that of all the important radical labor organizations, our party is virtually alone in not having issued a manifesto on the war to this very day. To all intents and purposes, the party continues along its road as if the Second World War had not broken out at all.

This entirely negative reaction to the war crisis has clearly disclosed existence of a party leadership permeated with routinism and conservatism. This spirit is communicated to the ranks with demoralizing effects. It is reflected in the passivity or rather in the haphazard direction and general lack of initiative of the leadership. It is concerned more with the preservation of its authority and with acting as a "court of appeals" over the branches than with

launching and carrying through systematically the indicated campaigns of the party. It displays the greatest sensitiveness to healthy criticism from the ranks and little sensitivity to political events. It leaps readily from its state of passivity whenever it is confronted with such criticism.

The painful but all-important process of making the turn from the past of the movement as a propagandist group to a movement seeking to exert growing influence among the masses, is confined to episodic advances in isolated situations and, above all, to resolutions which remain on paper. The Transitional Program, upon every single letter of which the present leadership insisted when it was formally adopted, has been put into effect spasmodically or not at all. The taking of bold steps calculated to speed the party's intervention in political events, is frowned upon. Tendencies in that direction are usually attacked as "ultra-leftist" and "adventurist," although these are scarcely the most dangerous or widespread tendencies in the party. All the failures and shortcomings of the party are usually attributed to the "objective situation."

The results have been a condition that is little better than stagnation in the party, which would be worse were it not for the numerical contributions to party membership made by the youth, and a state of constant friction and bad relationships between the members and the party (and especially of the youth), and the party leadership, which resents all serious criticism and resists it with the stubbornness of a petty bureaucracy.

The more serious the criticism of the party leadership, its policy and its regime, the more clearly does it reveal that it is dominated in actuality by a clique which was never elected by the party membership and which has not justified its existence by a separate political platform of its own. Convinced that its permanent domination of the party leadership is for its best interests, and is predestined, regardless of the political or organizational question under discussion at any given time, it consistently pays only a verbal respect to party democracy and readily violates it when it conflicts with its own clique interests.

It is necessary for the party to lay the greatest stress upon this purpose, not to the exclusion of or for the purpose of minimizing the importance of other defects and evils, but precisely in order to proceed to their correction. Without eliminating the stranglehold of bureaucratic cliquism which has imposed the present regime upon the party, it is impossible to adopt and carry out correct policies, to improve the composition and functioning of the party, or

to remedy any of the other serious shortcomings of the party.

* * *

The Second World War, the war danger in the United States, and the struggle against it—*these must constitute the central axis around which all our work revolves.* The party must be organized and oriented in this spirit, because it must stand out in the eyes of growing numbers as the party of militant struggle against war. It is therefore necessary to proceed along the following lines:

I—Root the Party Among the Workers

The change in the social composition of the party cannot be achieved by the mere assertion that such a change is needed. It is realizable only by planfully directing every branch, and every member in it, to concentration on the trade unions and other mass organizations, and on the factories. In this respect, the youth movement is our most important single instrument. It is composed of comrades with a relatively high political education who, unlike the youth of the "prosperity" period, are revolutionary-minded, are devoted to the cause. Despite the evident difficulties, they must be systematically directed to enter industry, in which they can acquire an experience and training indispensable to their own development and at the same time become the most effective organizers for the movement.

II—A Party of Anti-War Agitation

The idea of facing toward the unions and the factories can become—as it has been too often in the past—meaningless without a party activity which would realistically make possible contact with and success in these fields. Party activity in the trade unions means not so much the elaboration of grandiose "trade union policies" and maneuvers with other union groups—we are far too weak as yet to entertain such ambitions—but the popularization of our immediate demands and slogans among the masses of the workers. Chief among these must be, in the coming period, those demands and slogans which are directly related to the war danger which is so keenly and deeply felt by the working masses and the youth. This means the revival and extension of the campaign principle of party activity. It means, above all in the present stage, concentration upon the printing and distribution on a large scale of the simplest and most popular leaflets and cheap pamphlets, each pointing to a single slogan expressing and popularizing our program. These must be written and disseminated with an eye toward the industrial workers and be calculated to arouse them to political consciousness and action, and above all to the consciousness that our party is the only militant anti-war organization. If the activity of the party and youth membership, and the columns of our press are organized

in this spirit, we shall accomplish more toward rooting the party among the industrial workers than a dozen formal and detailed resolutions on trade union work. This is especially true of the work among the Negroes as a group which, as the most down-trodden and oppressed, must find in the party a consistent champion. The activity of the Negro department has already shown how fruitful this work can be for the party, and the weak support thus far given the department must be greatly increased.

III—Campaigns and Recruitment

Because of its essentially propagandistic past, which has fostered corresponding habits, the party has not developed the practice or technique of recruiting. Hand in hand with a far too high standard of political requirements for membership which has served to limit recruiting possibilities, has gone a low standard of activity requirements for those already in our ranks. The campaign principle of party activity can degenerate into a purely literary effort unless it is integrally coupled with systematic recruiting efforts. These efforts, in turn, would be nullified unless we eliminated from our minds the sectarian rigidity with which we tend to approach the potential recruit, that it, again, the far too high standard of political and theoretical qualifications we set for party membership. The development of the average recruit toward a full-fledged revolutionary position will take place during his membership and activity in the party rather than prior to it. It is not so much the program as it is written down in our fundamental documents that must—or can—attract recruits to the party, but the program as translated in the daily political activity of the party that will accomplish this end. In this sense the campaigns of the party must be recruiting campaigns as well. It is in this sense that the mass actions of the party must be conceived. An attitude of alertness and boldness, of seizing on appropriate occasions, can often make such mass actions possible and fruitful. This was demonstrated during the anti-Coughlin anti-Bund campaign of the party. Such an attitude should not be decried as “baseless in the present objective situation” or as “adventuristic,” but should rather be encouraged.

IV—Build Up the Youth Movement

The most important single section of the movement in this country is our Youth organization. The fact that the party leadership has never paid attention to the problems and development of the youth save, in most recent times, for purposes of factional advantage, is a standing indictment of this leadership. The importance of the Youth organization may be understood not only in the light of its comparatively large membership and the fact that it contributes the overwhelming majority of the party's new membership, but above all by the fact that it represents the generation that will do the fighting in the war and, therefore, constitute the main reservoir of revolutionary mass strength. The party must devote a hundred times more attention in the future than it has in the past to building and

strengthening the Youth organization. This requires not an ignoring of its mistakes and defects, but, among other reasons, in order to remedy these mistakes and defects, a comradely and serious attitude toward it and its problems. Up to now the party leadership has had a bureaucratic and contemptuous attitude toward the youth, on those occasions when it has bothered to concern itself with the organization. The critical attitude of the youth toward the political and internal problems of the party has been generally healthy and progressive, which is added reason why this attitude should be encouraged instead of rudely denounced and attacked. A party leadership can establish its authority with the youth, and with the movement generally, only by a patient attitude and one which welcomes criticism. This in turn will enormously facilitate its task of educating and training the youth for the revolutionary proletarian movement, its task of correcting the mistakes and straightening the line of the youth.

V—Political Education of the Party

The course of the present discussion in the party has revealed the need of greatly intensifying the work of revolutionary Marxian education in fundamental principles among the party membership. The educational work of the party has declined noticeably in the past couple of years, which is especially dangerous in view of the newness of many party members and the prospect of gaining still other new members. The ability of the party leadership to base its case to so large an extent upon appeals to prejudice, to “faith,” as well as the injurious effects of the party leadership's theoretical and political helplessness in dealing with new problems or new manifestations of old problems, would be greatly reduced by planned training of all party and youth members in the basic principles of revolutionary Marxism, including, especially, the question of the nature of the party and its rôle in the revolution. The discussion has also revealed more clearly the ever-latent danger of the tendency to regard “politics” and political or theoretical discussions as a luxury, particularly as a “luxury” which is *counterposed* to “practical” work. At bottom, this expresses the tendency to remove the practical, daily activity of the party membership, especially in the mass organizations, from political direction and control, which can only mean in the last analysis from the direction and control of the party. While such a tendency is often understandable, in that it represents a reaction against dilletantism or permanent “discussionism,” it is nevertheless necessary, by combatting the latter, to resist and overcome the tendency referred to. It cannot be resisted, however, by demagogic attacks upon the democratic right, and need, of discussion which only fosters this tendency.

VI—Party Democracy and Collective Leadership

The pressing problems of the party cannot be solved independently of the question of the party leadership and its régime. Ra-

ther, the first big and serious step toward solving them can be taken only frankly and fearlessly facing the question of the party régime and by changing this régime.

The passivity, routinism and conservatism of the party régime, its political helplessness which borders on paralysis, is only the other side of its bureaucratism. The party leadership is concerned above all else with its “authority” and “prestige.” It seeks to maintain these primarily by a clique formation which sedulously nurtures the reactionary idea of the Leader cult, presumably on the theory that an outstanding leader is superior to a collective leadership. Leadership is tested not so much and not in the first place by its policies and actions but, in this conception, by the degree of loyalty to the individual leader. Leading committees officially and solemnly installed by the representative institutions and bodies of the party become hollow and decorative and have a function only in so far as they agree with or accept the policies of the clique. In consequence, criticisms of the leadership, regardless of their degree of validity, are fiercely rejected as personal attacks upon the clique, above all, on its leader. A healthy relationship between the party membership and the party leadership is impossible under such conditions. Equally impossible is the normal and healthy elaboration, application, checking and revising of party policy. Under the best conditions, party democracy thus becomes a set of essentially meaningless formulas.

The sound principle of democratic centralism has been perverted in practice into a super-centralism in defense of the party leadership, that is, the clique which dominates it, and anything but centralism in the direction of the daily activity of the party. The best traditions of the revolutionary Marxian movement in this realm, especially the traditions of Lenin, are deified in the name of a “Bolshevism” which is equated with the particular interests and needs of the dominant clique.

The preservation of democratic centralism, of party democracy, requires the free and collective elaboration of party policy by the entire membership and a correspondingly free selection of a collective leadership; and, in turn, complete solidarity and discipline in action once a policy is decided upon. The present party leadership has repeatedly violated the principle of democratic centralism. The auto crisis in the party, for example, revealed the existence of a closed clique actually dominating the party leadership, deciding party policy and organization, and making it clear that the regularly elected leading committee was essentially decorative and formal. The suppression of the point of view of the minority in the present dispute, by excluding it from the regular pre-convention discussion in the columns of *The Appeal*, and also from the pages of the party's theoretical organ, is a violation of the best traditions and practices of our movement, representing at bottom a bureaucratic fear of confronting a revolutionary opponent before the militant workers.

It is imperative that the deadly grip of this group, which is a typical clique because

of the fact that, apart from the present dispute, it has continued to maintain itself without a separate political platform, be broken in the party, its monopolistic control of the party leadership eliminated, and the régime it has established replaced by a régime of party democracy. Collective leadership in the party is a meaningless phrase in the present concrete circumstances unless these steps are taken.

Above all, these steps are unpostponably urgent in view of the war danger. The war will put the party to decisive tests. Among them will be the test of the leadership's ability and desire to maintain the utmost loyalty, and the utmost party democracy compatible with war conditions. The party and youth membership must have a greater assurance than it now feels that its leading committees will not abuse their positions and powers and reduce genuine party democracy to an even greater mockery than it is today, in time of peace. The elimination of the dominance of the present clique leadership, or its replacement by the minority faction, is not sufficient. It is necessary to introduce into the leadership fresh elements, primarily genuine proletarians and the most qualified youth; and we must not substitute for genuine industrial workers those who, on the most superficial grounds, try to parade as such merely on the ground that they are part of the "proletarian" faction in the party.

It is necessary, furthermore, to have more specific assurances in the party that discussion in the party, far from being curtailed and looked upon as a "luxury," will be encouraged in the future. The fact that discussion must always be regulated by the party and its leading committees, must not be used as a pretext for suppressing discussion on the demagogic ground that "there is work to be done." All party work will be done better and more effectively and correctly if party democracy is jealously maintained. The revolutionary party cannot be a "discussion club," but neither must it be converted into a Stalinist "monolithic" organization. Only a rich inner life can make possible a fruitful life of activity in mass work. The party must therefore adopt the following rules: (a) an internal party bulletin shall be published regularly and be made available to the membership for the discussion of daily problems of party work and policy; (b) the party leadership shall be bound to open the columns of the *Socialist Appeal* from time to time for the discussion of new policies of the party, not in the sense of a factional dispute, but in order to acquaint the sympathizers of the party with our problems and the manner in which we solve them; in such discussions, party sympathizers should be invited to take part; in pre-convention periods, the *Appeal* should be thrown open to a discussion of all convention problems, with a censorship ex-

ercised essentially only over confidential party affairs or irresponsible polemical exaggeration; (c) the pages of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL shall be open the year round to discussions of theoretical and scientific problems of Marxism, of such questions as, for example, dialectical materialism or the class nature of the Soviet state—discussions in which, it goes without saying, the party shall expound and defend its own view on all those questions on which it has adopted an official position.

* * *

The special technical preparation of the party for war, though decided upon some time ago, has gone the way of our decisions, more accurately, it has remained a decision on paper. Regardless of what else is done, the first blows of the war can scatter us all in a hundred directions unless this preparation is actually set on foot. Collectively and individually, from top to bottom, the party and youth membership must be impressed with the key importance of this question, and be given the necessary preliminary training and instructions.

* * *

Only if the party is organized and oriented along the lines indicated in this resolution will it be able to pass the test of the war crisis and utilize it to build up the mass revolutionary party of socialism.

April, 1940.

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