

# **THE NEW INTERNATIONAL**

**A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM**

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## **The Czechoslovak Crisis**

*Walter Held and The Editors*

**Palestine**  
*L. Rock*

**Canada**  
*E. Robertson*

**The Soviet Union**  
*Maurice Spector*

**Fascism and Big Business**  
*By Daniel Guérin*

**Founding the Fourth International . . . By Leon Trotsky**

**TWENTY CENTS**

**OCTOBER 1938**

# At Home

THE PAST WEEKS have brought more evidence of the international standing and importance of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. Bombay, India, with N. M. Jain as agent, placed an order for 50 copies regularly of the magazine; comrades in Scotland have asked us to consider a special price for them so that they may handle several hundred, possibly 500 copies of the magazine. Frank Demby in another column reports on the significant role of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL in Europe. BUT, our problem is to achieve a far greater circulation in the United States, and not to be so dependent upon foreign circulation. Otherwise, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL will find itself in jeopardy for existence.

In the past weeks, accountable for in part by the summer period, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL just managed to weather financial difficulties, though incurring an indebtedness. In a few localities there were circulation drops; in others some increases. *New and increased orders* came mainly again from foreign countries. Seven hundred (700) copies of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL are now disposed of in Australia, South Africa, England, Scotland, Canada, India, China, France and other countries, and now there is the special proposal of Scotland to consider. This is fine indeed, the political significance of which cannot be overestimated. But war abroad can wipe out our foreign sales, apart from economic considerations.

Right now we are much concerned with our *domestic situation*: namely, the failure of many important cities in the United States either to handle the magazine or to dispose of the quantity we are sure they could sell with just a little more effort and organization. Upon this immediate increase in U.S. circulation is dependent the very existence—and eventual expansion—of the magazine today. It can be accomplished, and must.

The following localities, where there are small S.W.P. units, do not handle the magazine at all: Olivia, Minn.; Austin, Minn. (will take a bundle later, comrade Cliff Thompson hopes); Sellersville, Pa. Cities which are no longer sent the magazine because of non-payment of bills are: Kansas City, Mo.; Louisville, Kentucky. And unless some other cities pay up quickly, there will be no choice but to stop sending them the magazine too. This is unavoidable so long as we are dependent almost 100% on bundle payments to maintain the magazine. Such special considerations as THE NEW INTERNATIONAL can give to agents must be limited to the comrades in other countries. Payment on *Press obligations* (THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, *Appeal*, etc. have to receive first consideration).

BUT EVEN MUCH MORE IMPORTANT: A few of the large centers, where there are strong S.W.P. and Y.P.S.L. sections, do not at all circulate the magazine to an extent

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that is easily possible. The only reasons we are able to find, and they are bad ones, are—*insufficient organization of the literature department; and underestimation of the role of the press* by the Party and Y.P.S.L. units in question. Of these larger cities, Los Angeles, Calif. and New York do relatively the poorest jobs, when possibilities are considered. Los Angeles, with over 125 Party and Y.P.S.L. members, takes only 125 copies at present, and these not always disposed of; the L.A. subscription list is very low. Yet Los Angeles is fully capable, as was once the case, of being in the front ranks of NEW INTERNATIONAL circulation. An exchange of correspondence, with resulting suggestions, has brought from the new literature director, John Murphy, the definite opinion and promise that Los Angeles will soon experience a *sharp improvement* in circulation and, it is hoped, in subscriptions. Comrade Murphy impresses as one who means business and will get things done.

And New York? For a few weeks, the New York Y.P.S.L. improved steadily in their magazine circulation, but again the Circles have slumped to a new *abysmal* low. As this is written, the Y.P.S.L. had taken only 50 copies of the September issue. This is not because the New York Youth do not need and are not able to dispose of many times this number. They have shown they could in the past. The New York Y.P.S.L.'s, as a whole, do not have a sufficient responsibility generally to the Press. The Y.P.S.L. Circles expect too much for nothing. They just don't pay their bills. An increased sense of financial responsibility would result in a big increase in magazine sales. Too much leniency has been shown the New York Circles in this respect. In simple words, the Circles have to pay their bills and not expect hand-outs. The Y.P.S.L. should be able to dispose of 200 copies easily.

There is even less excuse for the *miserable* showing in the recent past of the New York Party. At this writing the New York Party Branches had taken a little over 200 copies of the September issue; for a period of time many of the New York Branches have not given the Press the attention and action the Press deserves and requires. These figures are really incredible; and the reason is, with some exceptions both of individuals and branches: *indifference*; an attitude of "let George do it". Including the Party and Y.P.S.L., newsstands, bookshops and subscriptions, about 700-750 magazines are disposed of monthly in Greater New York, not very much more than in the period of the former NEW INTERNATIONAL. At least 1500 copies, we are convinced, can be disposed of in New York through organized efforts by the Party and Y.P.S.L.: by systematic subscription campaigns, covering all outdoor and indoor meetings, schools, colleges, and so on. Upon *very great improvement in New York* by the entire Party and Youth membership is really dependent the fate and future of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. In Abe Miller, New York has a fine literature director; but he needs the membership's cooperation.

Now to less lugubrious comments. *New orders*: Bombay, India, 50 copies; Saskatchewan, Canada, 5 copies; Melbourne, Australia, May Brodney, agent, 4 copies; Cape Town, South Africa, H. M. van Gelderen, agent, 12 copies.

*Increases in Bundles*: Toronto, Canada, additional 15 copies; Rochester, N. Y., O. Stevens, agent, to 15 copies; Philadelphia (Hartman, agent, to 50 copies; Detroit, Mich., E. Panicali, agent, to 35 copies; Berkeley, Calif. Y.P.S.L., Janet Thurman, agent, to 30 copies. And the matter of what to do about Scotland's request for a special figure.

*Decreases*: Boston, Mass. to 55

(expect to increase quickly again to 75).

Agents abroad who deserve *special mention* for their good work for the magazine: Paul Koston, Cape Town, South Africa; Max Sapire, Johannesburg, South Africa; Leon Sapire, Johannesburg; N. Origlasso and L. Short, Sydney, Australia; B. Palley, Sydney, Australia; E. Sinclair, Brisbane, Australia; G. Gibson, Melbourne, Australia; Max Riske, Wellington, New Zealand; Ed. Fitzroy, London, England (Comrade Fitzroy is now the literature director for the newly united English organization); Mildred Kahn, London, England; Wm. Burrow, London; T. Mercer, Glasgow, Scotland; H. Cund, Liverpool, England; A. J. Barclay, Leeds, England; Frank Maitland, Edinburgh, Scotland. And the Canadian comrades in Winnipeg, Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, Saskatchewan and elsewhere.

*New Agents*: Lee Colvin, Lynn, Mass.; Jules Geller, St. Paul; Paul Scott, Cleveland; H. M., Portland, Oregon; Janet Thurman, Berkeley, Calif.; Margery Blackburn, Columbus; James Taylor, Newark.

OUR BIG WEAKNESS: SUBSCRIPTIONS. Many cities have not even turned in a handful of subscriptions. Subscription campaigns, or even simply visits to Party and Y.P.S.L. contacts and sympathizers would result in a large increase in subscriptions. The magazine today depends too much on bundle circulation or sales. Subscriptions are the magazine's surest foundation. Minneapolis has done the most intensive, organized work for subscriptions. New York, naturally, has the greatest number of subscriptions, but the figure is very low, considering what can easily be done. As a matter of fact, the subscription list in New York is much below what it was in the period of the former NEW INTERNATIONAL. Chicago did very well with subscriptions in the early months, but has done very little in recent months. In bundle circulation, Chicago, by relative comparison, leads all cities. Nearly all other cities have done little or nothing in the Subscription field. The comrades know what and how to do this job. Why not get busy?

We have in mind here, too, the large number of *subscriptions which have expired. Renewals have been slow.* They can be obtained, we are certain, if the Party and Y.P.S.L. comrades will visit these persons for *renewals*, and not leave it entirely to the business office to take care of. Renewal subscriptions are an important item in the finances of the magazine. Get a move on, comrades, for subscriptions—new and renewals.

Space forbids publication of the large number of commentaries on the magazine, highly eulogistic, plus good suggestions for articles, improvement, etc. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is the outstanding organ of its kind, not only in the United States, but throughout the world, as comments from all continents attest. The foreign countries magnificently support THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. But there must be faster improvement in the United States. THE MANAGER

# The Editor's Comments

IN THE GENERAL SHAMBLES of the Versailles System, it is not hard to recognize also the ruins of the doctrine of collective security. This is not a coincidence. The doctrine of collective security was elaborated by the same imperialist brigands who wrote the Versailles Treaty, and designed by them as one of the ideological props to uphold the *status quo* established by the Treaty. The two fall, quite naturally, together.

The adherence to the imperialist doctrine of collective security on the part of the reformists and Stalinists has been merely a symbol of their subordination in fact to imperialism itself. Acting as retainers of imperialism, they propagate its ideas in the working class. They have told us that collective security was the means whereby peace might be preserved. The imperialists themselves, more frank and less hypocritical, have added that it was the way in which the *status quo* of Versailles might be maintained.

To these contentions Marxists have from the beginning replied: first, that collective security will not and cannot preserve peace; but second, that even if it could preserve the peace of the Versailles *status quo*, that would not be to the least in the interest of the masses, but would simply mean the indefinite continuance in power of one group of imperialist exploiters. The critique of Marxism followed, of course, from our analysis of the internal conflicts of capitalism, which exclude any lengthy social and political stabilization. Driven by these conflicts, one or another of the great powers must try to break through the existing legality, and to accomplish by force a re-arrangement of the world's resources and territories. And the critique likewise followed from the aim of the Marxists, which is not to submit to *any* imperialist *status quo*, but to smash the whole world imperialist system and to achieve a new social order.

Faced by the insurmountable needs of Italian, Japanese and German capitalism, collective security crumbled toward the rout marked by the liquidation of Czechoslovakia. French and British imperialism, confronted with the threat of the loss of part of their own fat possessions, coldly throw one dog after another to the wolves: Manchukuo, the Saar, Ethiopia, Spain, China, Czechoslovakia. . . .

But suppose they had not done so? Suppose they had "resisted the aggressor" (as they may, of course, yet do)? What then? Would that have proved the virtues of collective security, "which has never really been tried"? That would have meant, or rather would mean, the new inter-imperialist war. Italy, Japan and Germany have not undertaken their expansion programs as a sport, or because their rulers like headlines. It is a life or death question for them, as capitalist states in crisis, and consequently they can be driven back only by superior force, by war. But such a war, like the war of 1914-18, is only an imperialist struggle over the re-division of the world. The workers are the enemies equally of both sides in such a war.

Collective security, whether it works or does not work, is the implacable enemy of all the aims and the aspirations of the masses.

## Democracy and Czechoslovakia

THE SAME COUNSELLORS who have ballyhooed the doctrine of collective security have told us that the great issue in the

world is that between the democracies and the dictatorships, and have advised us to support the democracies against the dictatorships as the cure for all our troubles. What are they going to tell us now, with democratic Czechoslovakia handed over by democratic France and England to Hitler?

We have replied that the distinction between the democracies and the dictatorships is altogether secondary, that democratic government, such of it as remains, is on the whole the luxury of the relatively satisfied nations, dictatorship the expedient of the hungry nations or nations torn by internal crisis; and we have said that fundamental policies follow not from the form of government but from economic need and interest. The Soviet Union is a dictatorship, and we support and defend it; China and Loyalist Spain are in actuality military dictatorships, and we defend and support them against their enemies; Ethiopia was a feudal dictatorship, and we defended it against Italy. England, France, the United States and Czechoslovakia are democracies, and we oppose them as we oppose the imperialist fascist dictatorships.

Democratic France and England have somehow failed to understand that the great issue is "between democracy and dictatorship". For some reason, they found no obstacle in their form of government to the sabotage of Loyalist Spain, which, in the beginning at least of the Civil War was an outstanding democracy. And, similarly, when the choice arose between the chance of an agreement with dictator Hitler and the preservation of democratic Czechoslovakia, they wasted no tears in selecting the former. Profits and colonies, after all, are more substantial stuff than governmental labels.

But the Czechoslovakian crisis affords additional comments on the hopes in democracies. Merely the threat of war provided Daladier with his pretext for smashing the Marseilles strike, abrogating the 40 hour week law, and suspending many of the democratic rights of free speech and assembly—faint foreshadowings only of the iron dictatorship which would be pressed down when the war itself begins. And Czechoslovakia, that democracy of democracies, over whom occurs all the democratic wailing, has seen fit to suppress altogether the right of assembly, to submit not merely the press but all private correspondence to censorship, to establish in short a martial law that can be distinguished with the greatest difficulty from the regime of fascism.

The reliance on democratic capitalism, the crux of the policies of reformism and Stalinism, is the most incalculable tragedy. We are now verifying the literal truth of the Marxist prediction that this strategy smooths the road for the advance of fascism, whether fascism comes from without or within.

The harsh and demonstrated truth is: democratic capitalism cannot stand against fascist capitalism. This does not mean that an Anglo-French coalition could not have defeated Nazi Germany two years ago, or could not do so today or tomorrow. In all probability Great Britain and France would have the military advantage. But the essential and dominant source of fascism is within each national capitalism, not external to it. In a war against Germany democracy would, as has already been proved, be immediately dropped, and a regime of totalitarian dictatorship instituted, in every warring power. The idea that such dictatorships would be dissolved at the conclusion of the war is completely illusory. Only two alternative outcomes are conceivable:

solution of the war through proletarian revolution, and the achievement of socialist democracy; or continuance of the war-dictatorship of capitalism for the "reconstruction period"—which, since nothing can any longer be reconstructed under capitalism, would last indefinitely.

Capitalist democracy cannot stand against fascism because, in the grinding world decline of capitalism, the bourgeoisie is faced with the choice of giving up what remains of democracy to save capitalism, or giving up capitalism to gain a new democracy. To give up capitalism would be to commit social suicide, and no class voluntarily commits suicide. Therefore, in the crisis which comes one after another to every capitalist nation, the bourgeoisie *must* go over to totalitarian dictatorship. And, since the bourgeoisie controls the state, it utilizes the democratic state apparatus itself, the democratic constitution, to make the ground ready for fascism.

To put faith, any faith whatever, in democratic capitalism as the means for defeating fascism is thus to guarantee unequivocally the triumph of fascism.

Has any lesson of history ever been so fully proved as this has been proved in the years from 1933 to today? How much more workers' blood must be shed before we learn this lesson?

### *Drang Nach Osten*

HITLER NOW DOMINATES Continental Europe as no figure has dominated it since Napoleon. The whole of Central Europe and the Balkans, the rich wheat fields, the full herds, the petroleum and coal and timber, now move within his orbit. What next?

It is still possible that England will fight Hitler, if not tomorrow then a year from now. It is possible because England may feel that the threat of a too powerful Germany to her imperial lines of communication, along which flow the billions of tribute from her colonies and dominions, is too dangerous. But it is unquestionably the case that England does not want to fight Hitler; if she fights, she wishes to fight in the East, to keep open the still hardly tapped fields of exploitation. Except to remove a threat, Great Britain has nothing to gain from war with Germany, everything to lose. Chamberlain knows the costs; he understands the meaning of the ferment in Palestine, India, Africa, and how that ferment would rise at the outbreak of war, he knows the slender ties holding the dominions to the mother country; and he doubtless also knows how the mood of the English workers would change after six months of modern war.

But the position of German finance-capitalism is still intolerable; it needs still more sources of raw material, markets for manufactured goods and capital outlets than Central Europe can provide. Chamberlain's logical conclusion, therefore, if he decides he can risk not fighting, is to grant Hitler a free hand to the East, re-arranging Western Europe under the clamp of a Four Power agreement.

Most ominously of all, then, is the liquidation of Czechoslovakia a terrible symptom of the threat to the Soviet Union. The partitioning of the Soviet Union: the one perspective which alone can make the collective mouth of every section of international imperialism water. Already the first steps are taken: the meeting between Chamberlain and Hitler at Berchtesgaden is itself such a step; and the liquidation of Czechoslovakia automatically tears to pieces the Franco-Soviet Pact.

The policy of the Kremlin, based upon the dreams of agreement with the democratic powers, is shattered into a thousand fragments. The League? A joke, for children to laugh at, hardly enough alive to benefit even the Geneva hotel-keepers. The keystone of the entire Kremlin policy—the Franco-Soviet Pact, for the sake of which Stalin stopped the French revolution, sabotaged Spain, and handed Czechoslovakia to Hitler: dissolved by a three hour conversation in the Bavarian Alps.

How grimly the cold and remorseless Chamberlain underlined the isolation of the Kremlin: Stalin had to learn of the Berchtesgaden agreement from the news services.

### **The Road Ahead**

DESPAIR IS AN EMOTION alien to revolutionary socialism. Defeats, too, must be utilized. From the analysis of defeats the working class learns the road to victory. Since our road alone leads from the gulf and can bring freedom, human decency and peace, we remain confident that mankind will follow it.

The liquidation of Czechoslovakia can be the beginning of a new era for the working class, as it is the end of the Versailles era for the imperialists. It can be such a beginning if the workers, summing up in their own minds the lessons of the twenty years, turn their eyes finally and resolutely from the will-o'-the-wisp of democratic capitalism, if they throw from their backs all those who lead them bound into the camp of the class enemy, and if, independently and with their own aims and their own leaders they close class ranks in their irresistible and world-overpowering strength. Against the united forces of the workers nothing on earth can stand. Hitler's vast pedestal will crumble like sand; and Chamberlain will remain only as a bad memory to trouble the nightmares of old men.

It is true that such a perspective, the perspective of the socialist revolution, seems "utopian" and "unrealistic" to the philistines, and to many honest workers (whose ideas have unfortunately been derived from those same philistines) as well. Your solution, it is objected, may be very splendid, and very satisfactory to achieve, but no one is listening to you. The united front, the class struggle, the united socialist states of Europe, the international revolution, all such slogans will have to be put aside until some dim and rosy future. Now there is an "emergency"; we will have to take some necessary "temporary measures" to get out of the emergency—drop the class struggle for the time being in favor of the democratic front, support Benes and Chamberlain and Daladier and Roosevelt for just a few years, fight a short, noble war for England and France, so that Hitler can be put out of the way . . . and then, maybe, later on we can come back to the subject of socialism.

We are not, alas, impressed. We have watched a quarter of a century's experiments in these temporary measures, this realistic and practical kind of politics, and we observe where it has got us: Hitler, unemployment, and the new war on the immediate horizon. Our idea of the meaning of the program of the revolution is just the opposite of that of the philistines. Our understanding is that the great slogans and the mighty strategy of the revolution is designed, not for verbal admiration and practical suspension in every historical "emergency", but precisely and above all for application and action in emergency and crisis. To state that the only way in which to defeat Hitler and Hitlerism is through the united front of all workers, through the class struggle for socialism and against the governments of all capitalist nations, with the concrete perspective summed up in the conception of the united socialist states of Europe and the world socialist revolution, this is not to shout empty abstractions, but to pose the only *practical*, the only actually realistic plan.

In the new war crisis, as in 1914, the choice is very strictly limited. You are for the war—that is, you support one or another of the imperialist camps, or you are against it, against it in its entirety. Can there, in the last analysis, be any doubt where the future lies? Does the path to socialism lead through the support of imperialism or in the struggle against it? The question is as simple and clear-cut as that.

As for us, we have chosen our side, and we will not change it.

# A Great Achievement

WHEN THESE LINES APPEAR in the press, the Conference of the Fourth International will probably have concluded its labors. The calling of this Conference is a major achievement. The irreconcilable revolutionary tendency, subjected to such persecutions as no other political tendency in world history has in all likelihood suffered, has again given proof of its power. Surmounting all obstacles, it has under the blows of its almighty enemies convened its International Conference. This fact constitutes unimpeachable evidence of the profound viability and unwavering perseverance of the international Bolshevik-Leninists. The very possibility of a successful Conference was first of all assured by the spirit of revolutionary internationalism which imbues all our sections. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to place extremely great value upon the international ties of the proletarian vanguard in order to gather together the international revolutionary staff at the present time when Europe and the entire world live in the expectation of the approaching war. The fumes of national hatreds and racial persecutions compose today the political atmosphere of our planet. Fascism and racism are merely the most extreme expressions of the bacchanalia of chauvinism which seeks to overcome or stifle the intolerable class contradictions. The resurgence of social patriotism in France and other countries, or, rather, its new open and shameless manifestation pertains to the same category as Fascism, but with an adaptation to democratic ideology or its vestiges.

Also pertaining to the same circle of events is the open fostering of nationalism in the U.S.S.R.: at meetings, in the press, and in the schools. It is not at all a question of the so-called "socialist patriotism", *i.e.*, defense of the conquests of the October revolution against imperialism. No, it is a question of restoring pre-eminence to the patriotic traditions of old Russia. And here the task is likewise one of creating supra-social, supra-class values so as thereby more successfully to discipline the toilers and subject them to the greedy bureaucratic vermin. The official ideology of the present Kremlin appeals to the exploits of Prince Alexander Nevsky, to the heroism of the army of Suvorov-Rymniksky or Kutuzov-Smolensky, while it shuts its eyes to the fact that this "heroism" was based on the enslavement and darkness of the popular masses, and that for this very reason the old Russian army was victorious only in struggles against the still more backward Asiatic peoples, or the weak and disintegrating states on the Western border. On the other hand, in conflicts with advanced countries of Europe the valiant Czarist soldiery always proved bankrupt. Obviously, the experience of the last imperialist war has already been buried in the Kremlin, just as it has forgotten the not unimportant fact that the October revolution grew directly from defeatism. What do Thermidorians and Bonapartists care about all this? They require nationalistic fetishes. Alexander Nevsky must come to the aid of Nikolai Yezhov.

The theory of socialism in one country, which liquidated the program of the international revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, could not fail to terminate in a wave of nationalism in the U.S.S.R. and could not but engender a responsive wave of the same nature in the "communist" parties of other countries. Only two-three years ago it was maintained that the sections of the Comintern were obliged to support their governments only in the so-called "democratic" states that were prepared to support the U.S.S.R. in the struggle against Fascism. The task of defending the workers' state was intended to serve as a justification for social patriotism. Today, Browder, who has been no more and no less prostituted than other "leaders" of the Stalin-Intern, declares before the senatorial investigating committee that

in the event of a war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., he, Browder, and his party will be on the side of their own democratic fatherland. In all probability this answer was prompted by Stalin. But the case is not altered thereby. Betrayal has a logic of its own. Entering the path of social patriotism, the Third International is now being clearly torn from the hands of the Kremlin clique. "Communists" have become social-imperialists and they differ from their "social democratic" allies and competitors only in this, that their cynicism is greater.

## The Great Betrayal

Betrayal has a logic of its own. The Third International following the Second has completely perished as an International. It is no longer capable of displaying any kind of initiative in the sphere of world proletarian politics. It is, of course, no accident that after 15 years of progressive demoralization, the Comintern revealed its complete internal rottenness at the moment of the approaching world war, *i.e.*, precisely at a time when the proletariat is most urgently in need of its international revolutionary unification.

History has piled up monstrous obstacles before the Fourth International. Moribund tradition is being aimed against the living revolution. For a century and a half, the radiations of the Great French Revolutions have served and are still serving in the hands of the bourgeoisie and its petty bourgeois agency—the Second International—as a means of shattering and paralyzing the revolutionary will of the proletariat. The Third International is now exploiting to the same end the incomparably more fresh and more powerful traditions of the October revolution. The memory of the first victorious uprising of the proletariat against bourgeois democracy serves in the hands of the usurpers to save bourgeois democracy from the proletarian uprising. Confronted with the approach of the new imperialist war, the social patriotic organizations have joined forces with the left wing of the bourgeoisie under the label of the People's Front which represents nothing else but an attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie, in its death agony, once again to subject the proletariat to its rule just as the revolutionary bourgeoisie had subjected it at the dawn of capitalism. What was once a progressive historical manifestation now appears before us as a revolting reactionary farce. But while the "People's Fronts" are impotent to cure a capitalism that is rotten to the core, while they are incapable of even checking the military aggression of Fascism—the example of Spain is full of symbolic meaning!—they nevertheless prove still sufficiently powerful to sow illusions among the ranks of the toilers, to paralyze and shatter their will to fight, and thereby create the greatest difficulties in the path of the Fourth International.

The working class, especially in Europe, is still in retreat, or at best, in a state of expectancy. Defeats are still too fresh, and their number far from exhausted. They have assumed their sharpest form in Spain. Such are conditions in which the Fourth International is developing. Is it any wonder that its growth proceeds more slowly than we should like? Dilettantes, charlatans, or blockheads incapable of probing into the dialectic of historic ebbs and flows have more than once brought in their verdict: "The ideas of the Bolshevik-Leninists may perhaps be correct but they are incapable of building a mass organization." As if a mass organization can be built under any and all conditions! As if a revolutionary program does not render it obligatory for us to remain in the minority and swim against the stream

in an epoch of reaction! That revolutionist is worthless who uses his own impatience as a measuring rod for the tempo of an epoch. Never before has the path of the world revolutionary movement been blocked with such monstrous obstacles as it is today on the eve of a new epoch of greatest revolutionary convulsions. A correct Marxist appraisal of the situation prompts the conclusion that we have achieved inestimable successes in recent years, despite everything.

The Russian "Left Opposition" originated 15 years ago. Correct work on the international arena does not add up as yet even to a complete decade. The pre-history of the Fourth International properly falls into three stages. In the course of the first period, the "Left Opposition" still placed hopes on the possibility of regenerating the Comintern, and viewed itself as its Marxist faction. The revolting capitulation of the Comintern in Germany tacitly accepted by all its sections posed openly the question of the necessity of building the Fourth International. However, our small organizations which grew through individual selection in the process of theoretical criticism practically outside of the labor movement itself proved as yet unprepared for independent activity. The second period is characterized by the efforts to find a real political milieu for these isolated propagandist groups, even if at the price of a temporary renunciation of formal independence. Entry into the socialist parties immediately increased our ranks, although in respect to quantity, the gains were not as great as they could have been. But this entry signified an extremely important stage in the political education of our sections which tested themselves and their ideas for the first time face to face with the realities of the political struggle and its living requirements. As a result of the acquired experience our cadres grew a head taller. A not unimportant conquest was also the fact

that we parted company with incorrigible sectarians, muddlers and tricksters who are wont to join every new movement in the beginning only to do all in their power to compromise and paralyse it.

The stages of development of our sections in various countries cannot of course coincide chronologically. Nevertheless, the creation of the American Socialist Workers Party can be recognized as the termination of the second period. Henceforth the Fourth International stands face to face with the tasks of the mass movement. The program of the transitional period is a reflection of this important turn. Its significance lies in this, that instead of providing an *a priori* theoretical plan, it draws the balance of the already accumulated experience of our national sections and on the basis of this experience opens up broader international perspectives.

The acceptance of this program, prepared for and assured by a lengthy previous discussion, or, rather, a whole series of discussions, represents our most capital conquest. The Fourth International is now the only international organization which not only takes clearly into account the driving forces of the imperialist epoch but is armed with a system of transitional demands which are capable of uniting the masses for a revolutionary struggle for power. We do not need any self-deceptions. The discrepancy between our forces today and the tasks on the morrow is much more clearly perceived by us than by our critics. But the harsh and tragic dialectic of our epoch is working in our favor. Brought to the extreme pitch of exasperation and indignation the masses will find no other leadership than that offered them by the Fourth International.

August 30, 1938

Leon TROTSKY

# The Defense of Czechoslovakia

The eyes of the world are turned on Czechoslovakia. The issue of war or peace is poised at razor's edge for all of humanity in the struggle for the Sudeten mountains. The feverish undertones of pacifist propaganda are anticipating the roar of the cannon and their own transverberation into overtones of social-patriotic hysteria.

Under the circumstances, the following article written by our European collaborator, Walter Held, at the end of August, takes on a particularly striking timeliness. In the midst of an ideological confusion without precedent, the article ably analyzes the factual background of the threatening calamity, restates the revolutionary conclusions drawn from the Marxist analysis for present and future action, and settles accounts with the most dangerous breed—dangerous because "well-meaning"—of pacifist mind-poisoners in the current situation: the "ethical" philosophic opponents of so-called Bolshevik amorality.

Our magazine will deal with the specific American counterparts of Willi Schlamm on another occasion. For the time being, Held's contribution strikes at it with sufficient force and with adequate effect.—THE EDITORS.

**T**HE CONGRESS OF THE P.E.N. CLUBS, an association of bourgeois pacifist writers, which met in Prague last July attended the maneuvers of the Czech army. Present among these writers was the former Austrian Communist and one-time publisher of the "Neue Weltbuehne"\* Willi Schlamm, who in his book "Die Diktatur der Luege" (The Dictatorship of the Lie), sets himself the task of reverting socialism from the materialist dialectics to Kantian ethics.

In the "Neue Tagebuch"† of August 6 Schlamm attempts to give an accounting for the solidarization of the writers with the Czech army. In doing so he affords us a striking example of how the "ethical renovation" of socialism looks in practice. To be sure, Schlamm does have a few pacifist-ethical qualms at the

sight of the many tanks, the aircraft and the cannon. That was to be expected. But he overcomes his qualms rapidly as the general, with whose wise intellectual cast of face—we may readily concur—none of the attending writers can in any way compete, explains to him that this army fights "for the freedom of men and nations, for culture, books and democracy". Moreover, the wise general did not at all ask the ethical and pacifist writers to glorify war. Not at all. "On the contrary, he requested us to proclaim that it is honorable and wonderful to be a free and decent human being, who respects other free human beings and free, human culture." And such a request can naturally be granted without the slightest qualms by any honest writer, "for that, precisely, has ever been his honest duty".

## From Pacifism to "Democratic" Imperialism

As we have already indicated, Schlamm has exchanged materialist dialectics, which he has made responsible for the degeneration of the Soviet state among other things, for the eternal wisdom of idealist morals. It is therefore all the more astonishing for us to find that he justifies his conversion to the war aims of the Czech army with the following assertion: "It is not the moral tasks of the writers that have changed, but *actually* the state of affairs."

This formulation alone would tend to cast doubts upon the "honesty" of this newly converted moralist. What necessity is there for referring to the change in the state of affairs if the moral tasks have *not* been changed? Incidentally, Schlamm quotes a French writer who, in an after-dinner speech, remarked that five years ago the members of the P.E.N. Clubs would have

\*A magazine published abroad since Hitler's coming to power which was edited in Germany for many years as "Die Weltbuehne", by the well known pacifist and Nobel Prize winner, Carl Von Ossietzky. It has since become completely Stalinized.

†The liberal journal published in Paris by the well-known German publicist, Leopold Schwarzschild.

thrown out of the door anyone who would have dared to propose attendance at maneuvers to them, but that today they were going to the Czech army because this army protects their books.

In other words: only five years ago it was the moral task of the pacifist writers to hate and despise every war and all maneuvers as preparations for war. Today it is their task to fraternize with the armies of the "peace powers" and to accept the war "for the defense of peace and freedom". Schlamm's assertion should, in reality, read as follows: The moral tasks of the writers have changed because the state of affairs has changed.

After a brief excursion into the realm of eternal moral verities, Schlamm has thus returned, without giving himself an account of this fact, to the dialectic dependence of moral tasks upon material things. The only difference is that he has traded in the concrete criteria of the historical class struggle for several abstractions like "peace", "freedom", "culture", which serve the purpose of covering up and muffling the imperialist realities. In this manner the campaigner against the "dictatorship of the lie" is becoming transformed into a simple instrument of the imperialist lie.

Now, then, wherein lies this alleged change in the state of affairs? "Certain powers have turned against the freedom and the life and the peace of man, disputing his right to these most treasured of his possessions fundamentally and, as they say, 'philosophically'."

These bad powers are opposed by the "peace powers", presumably, who defend the most treasured of man's possessions in the most altruistic fashion. The flight of the Schlammian spirit from the depths of the dialectic into the altitudes of the absolute here produces an historic canvas of truly child-like simplicity, not to say childish simple-mindedness.

War arises because suddenly, God knows wherefrom, certain powers spring up who want war and are opposed by powers who want peace. When the Czech bourgeoisie and its generals depict history before the writers of the P.E.N. Clubs in this touchingly simple fashion, Schlamm is quite right in attributing intelligence to them. For they are exploiting the ignorance and the confusion of the writers in the field of sociology to their own advantage. We trust that Schlamm will not take it amiss if, in this connection, we incline to show less respect for the intelligence of the writers who fall victims to this deception and poison their public with it.

The Czech bourgeoisie as well as the other "peace powers", France, England, etc., does not at all defend abstractly the peace and the freedom of man, but the peace of 1918 which gave her dominion over nine million Slovaks, Germans, Ruthenians, Hungarians and Poles and the freedom to oppress and exploit these nine million as well as the proletariat of its own nation. The same holds true for the peace and the freedom which England and France, the allies of Czechoslovakia, defend.

In British South Africa, to name but one example, a type of racial legislation prevails which outstrips by far in shamelessness that of the Third Reich itself. The native agricultural laborer there earns all of, Heaven save the mark!—six pounds sterling per year, of which one pound must be deducted as taxes. For these five pounds he has to work sixty hours a week and in addition, place the labor power of his wife and children at the disposal of his boss at harvest time. (Cf. *Manchester Guardian*, August 8: "The Colour Bar in South Africa" by Sir John Davis.)

This is exactly what freedom, life and peace, those most treasured of man's possessions, look like in the domain of the "peace powers" and it is precisely this kind of a peace and no other that the so-called peace powers defend.

Let us assume for a moment that Germany came out the victor in the last war and annexed Belgium, the Baltic provinces, valuable parts of Africa, etc. Can there be any doubt that, in such

a case, Germany would today belong to the "peace powers" and France, on the other hand, to the "war powers"?

## The Status Quo as "Lesser Evil"

Granted that the present state of Europe and the world is bad, Schlamm may reply, borrowing an argument from the General Secretary of the International of Lies, but peace on the basis of the *status quo* is still the lesser evil in comparison with war. Therefore the peace powers are fulfilling a progressive task and it is our duty to step over to their side.

This type of argumentation only overlooks one little trifle: that it is intended to make palatable for us, not *peace* on the basis of the status quo but *war* for its defense. Here we see the true function of the pacifists. For two decades they have deluded humanity about the danger of the new war, telling us that a lasting peace was possible on the basis of the status quo by means of struggle for disarmament, League of Nations, collective pacts, arbitration courts, etc., only to call for a war for retention of the status quo when it has finally become clear that all that was merely bluff and sand thrown in the eyes of the masses. Without the amicable aid of the pacifists it would be quite impossible for the imperialists to prepare and to conduct their wars.

The struggle for the retention of the present, reactionary status quo is just as unworthy of the blood of a single man as the struggle for the redivision of the world, quite aside from the fact that after the outbreak of the war no one anywhere will think of reestablishing the status quo and that the "peace powers" as well as the war powers will set themselves new imperialist tasks.

The imperialist status quo means nothing else for the masses than ever new and deeper crises, greater poverty and greater despair. Since the opportunist degeneration and general paralysis of the labor movement stands in the way of a revolutionary change of affairs, the masses are, in the last analysis, more prepared to accept Fascism and war with the prospect of change than the status quo. In this manner, the pacifist defenders of the status quo once more serve war as well as Fascism and in this manner it becomes clear why the Sudeten German masses decline with thanks the most treasured possessions of man offered them by Benes and why they prefer the Fascist end with horror to the democratic horror without end. Not the gym teacher Henlein but people of Schlamm's stripe, the Czech social democrats and communists, have brought the Sudeten German masses to their present position.

## Czech Life, Liberty and Happiness

Let us examine more closely how the most treasured possessions, the life and liberty of man, fare in Czechoslovakia. Schlamm will forgive us, we hope, if we consult statistics a bit for this purpose, for in contrast to the moralists, who intoxicate themselves with phrases and forget the world beneath them, we amoral dialecticians derive our sobriety from the concrete and inexorable facts. The statistics of the League of Nations, this one and only useful achievement of the league without and against the nations, sets the index figure of production in Czechoslovakia at 100 for the fiscal year 1929. In 1937 the business cycle which is at present becoming transformed into a crisis before our very eyes reached its culminating point, but the index figure remained 3.7 points behind that of 1929. Employment figures fare considerably worse; taking 1929 as equal to 100, we only get 90 for 1937. In 1929 the percentage of unemployed was 2.2, in 1937, on the other hand, 8.8. In 1929 the "industrial reserve army" amounted to 41,630 members; in 1937 ten times that much: 408,949. In other words: the "peak" of the business cycle in 1937 represents a depression when compared with 1929. And if

war is a result of this economic decline on the one hand, it is only an acceleration of it on the other. Like capitalist economy as a whole, its Czechoslovak sector is moving at a furious pace toward the precipice. Who can still be amazed when the masses simply desert the prophets who can propose nothing on the basis of these dynamics other than the retention of status quo? Czechoslovakia has as little to offer the broad masses in opportunities for life and for a future as any one of the other highly developed capitalist countries. Its defense does not advance humanity by one single step.

That's how things stand with life. And how about freedom? We can easily refrain from recalling to the mind of the "honest" one-time Communist Schlamm such banalities as this: that the "freedom" of the overwhelming majority in this peaceful democracy consists of being free to sell their labor power to the capitalists or to starve; furthermore, that this freedom, as we have shown above, is being confined more and more to the latter alternative; moreover, that this same overwhelming majority is "completely free", that is, excluded from "free human culture", from education in the higher institutions of learning and the universities, from the possession of books and works of art, from attendance at the theaters, from participation in the scientific life, etc. We can even abstain from mentioning the fact that bourgeois freedom of the press is a lie, since it is "free" for wealthy capitalists and penurious workers in equal measure. We want to meet Schlamm halfway for the nonce and accept his, that is, the abstract, bourgeois, mendacious conception of freedom. And we ask Schlamm, the "honest" author: how do matters stand in your "peace loving" country with the highest principle of the liberal democracy, the right of freedom of expression, oral as well as written? You have published a periodical in that country yourself. You therefore know that there is a censorship in that "democracy"; that papers which refuse to submit to it are suspended and confiscated; that all criticism of abuses in this republic are most rigorously suppressed; that this censorship is exercised not only in the abstract interests of the state, but in the direct and undisguised interests of the munition magnates, the shoe kings and the landed gentry of the country.

Insofar as the German emigré press is concerned, little by little it was completely driven out of Czechoslovakia. It retains its market there only at the price of the total abstention from criticism of local conditions. That, by the way, must have caused Schlamm to feel all the more secure from contradiction. But the striking and acute significance of the problems has forced us to drop our reserve. The Czech government will probably react by prohibiting the legal circulation of our paper\* on its territory, thereby proving anew its determination to defend democracy and the most sacred possessions of mankind. Even the conservative and reactionary Paris *Temps* affirms in a survey of the freedom of the press in various European countries: "Thus we once again surprise Czechoslovakia halfway between democratic liberties and totalitarian compulsion." (*Le Temps*, August 16, 1938). The *Temps* can manifestly afford itself the enunciation of such truths all the more liberally, since the "honest" writers and "ethical renewers" are taking over the business of deceiving and betraying public opinion.†

\*This article was originally written for the German emigré organ, *Unser Wort*.

†In respect to the other democratic rights of the workers, e.g. the right of organization, it might be mentioned that the Czech shoe king, Bata, long ago erected a Fascist state within the state. In Bata's city, Zlín, the free trade unions as well as the Socialist and Communist publications and organizations are strictly proscribed. Instead, Zlín has its own company unions, company papers and a company law in the best Fascist fashion. According to Schlamm, the Czech army educates "the people for aid to the weak, for a touching respect for tenderness and helplessness". (Apparently there is only a small step from ethics to lyrics.) Question: What has the Czechoslovak republic done for the protection of Bata's victims, recruited from among the most illiterate and oppressed layers of Slovakia? It named the late Thomas Bata as the official boot-outfitter of its "peace army". The gifted writer Jaroslav Hasek, the author of that imperishable satire, "The Adventures of the Brave Soldier Schwejk in the World War", on the other hand, died of hunger in the Czech city of Leipsnik on January 2, 1923. Just another indication how culture and "books" are treasured in this cultured republic. Had there been, among the writers of the P.E.N. Clubs, a single man of Schwejk's intelligence who, in his naively ingenious manner, would have called the general's attention to the contradiction between his sweet words and the bitter realities, we are convinced that the general's face would have lost its expression of intellectual superiority instantaneously.

## War and Totalitarian Dictatorship

In the sphere of domestic policy, war will also depict a continuation and acerbation of the present policy. If, in times of peace, Czechoslovakia is forced to suppress every inconvenient opinion in bureaucratic police fashion, then this tendency will be tremendously sharpened during the war and culminate in the form of a totalitarian dictatorship of the generals.

"Granted, the liberties of the workers in Czechoslovakia are limited," our opponent will perhaps retort, "nevertheless they are greater than in Fascist Germany. Doesn't it pay to defend relative freedom against an absolute constraint of freedom? Are the Czech workers to capitulate without a struggle before Fascism? Doesn't that mean a repetition of Thaelmann's policy?" Now then, we do not by any means go so far as to deny that the Czech workers still have certain liberties of which the German workers have been completely deprived, *but these liberties are valuable for the Czech workers only insofar as they make them of service to themselves*. But in that case, what appears to common sense as the only "real" political possibility, the defense of the domestic status quo, becomes an absolute impossibility. Either the Czech workers defend with determination their own interests and rights against the Czech bourgeoisie and its generals, demand the confiscation of the war profits and workers control of production and distribution and eventually proceed to the expropriation of the Skodas, Batas and Petchecks and to the erection of their own dictatorship over them or else they renounce completely representation by means of an independent policy, submit to the totalitarian conduct of the war by the Czech bourgeoisie and thereby land upon a situation indistinguishable from that under Fascism. A middle road is entirely excluded.

## Bourgeois Responsibility for Imperialist War

"War and its instruments are a misfortune, with which the nations pay for their stupidities," Willi Schlamm declares and raises as a criterion of honesty whether writers say just that or glorify war as the destiny of mankind. An honest writer should ask, above everything else, wherein this stupidity of the nations lies and how it may be overcome. From the point of view of the oppressed, who represent the interests of mankind as a whole, this stupidity obviously lies in the fact that they have *not* done away with capitalists, dislodged the bourgeoisie, raised the barriers of state, established the united European Socialist republic.

Imperialist war is undoubtedly a frightful misfortune for humanity. But responsibility for this misfortune is borne by the Czech bourgeoisie equally with the German, French, Italian, British, Japanese and American bourgeoisies. In 1918 the Czech bourgeoisie had no other ambition but that of drawing the greatest possible profit from the defeat of the Central powers, that is, of enriching itself at the expense of the vanquished nations. It shied neither from force nor from deception in order to attain that aim and appeared to be entirely unconcerned regarding the future European conflicts that such a policy would, of necessity, provoke. A struggle for the preservation of Czechoslovakia is therefore by no means a struggle for peace. On the contrary, it is a struggle for the national and imperialist dismemberment of Europe upon which imperialist war is conditioned.

"But, whoever does not take the defense of Czechoslovakia at this time is helping Hitler," Willi Schlamm will exclaim together with the Stalinists and the other representatives of the political lie. We have already shown that it was the policy of the "people's front", on the contrary, that it was support of the Czech bourgeoisie that drove the national minorities of Czechoslovakia straight into the arms of Fascism. Only determined revolution-



ary resistance on the part of the Czech proletariat against its own bourgeoisie could have serried the toiling masses of the national minorities about the Czech proletariat. What has been true for peacetime holds true a hundred times more for the time of war, this continuation and exacerbation of the policy that proceeds war. Whoever identifies himself with the Czech bourgeoisie and the Czech state furthers, at the other end, the consolidation of the Sudeten German population around Hitler and makes possible for Hitler the national intoxication of the German workers, facilitates in every way his whole game.

## Tasks of the Czech Workers

But what shall the Czech worker and revolutionist do concretely in view of the Hitlerite offensive? Is he to refuse service in the war? Shall he practice sabotage? Naturally not. We are neither pacifists nor anarchists. The revolutionists of Czechoslovakia are an infinitesimal minority, they must submit to the majority and go to the front. *But they pursue their own policy in irreconcilable opposition to the Czech bourgeoisie and its agencies.* They say to the masses that the war is a terrible calamity, for which the Czech bourgeoisie is as guilty as the German. They show the masses that there are heaps of war profiteers in Czechoslovakia as well as in Germany who grow rich upon this mass murder. They proclaim everywhere their opposition against the war aims of the Czech bourgeoisie. They declare their opposition to the domination and the privileges of the generals and officers in the Czech army and agitate for the election of soldiers' committees. They march towards the erection of the Czech Socialist republic as a step to the erection of a Socialist Europe and they call upon the soldiers on the other side of the trenches to make common cause with them, to drive out their Krupps and Thyssens and their praetorians Hitler, Goering and Goebels, to establish a Socialist Germany and to aid in the creation of a united Socialist Europe. In this manner they will defeat Hitler with his own soldiers, for only so can he be defeated progressively. By conducting themselves in this fashion, the

Czech revolutionists will help the nations to surmount their stupidities and to create a system from which wars will disappear along with stupidity. Whoever nevertheless sides with the "peace powers" and endorses the war for the defense of the European status quo is himself a seat of contagion for that "stupidity" of the nations which, if it does not produce wars, nevertheless makes them possible.

Willi Schlamm started out to fight against the Stalinist "dictatorship of the lie". Unfortunately, he did not confine himself to this task, but made Bolshevism and even Marxism itself responsible for the Stalinist regime of horrors. Without idealistic ethics, he contended, socialism was lost. And now it appears that our renovator has simply traded in socialism for imperialist "ethics". Curiously enough, he has landed, in the process, within the closest proximity of that "dictatorship of the lie" the struggle against which had been his point of departure.

Stalin and his ilk today defend the Czech republic and the rest of the "peace powers" with exactly the same arguments as their ethical opponent Willi Schlamm, and it is precisely in the interests of this lie that the atrocity trials are staged. The noble Czech humanists of the type of Benes and Masaryk understand these interconnections better than their adept, Willi Schlamm. For, while they pointed an accusing finger at Lenin and Trotsky because of their alleged cruelty and amorality and themselves organized a military campaign against revolutionary Russia, they have kept entirely quiet about the Moscow trials and obliged the official and officious press of Czechoslovakia to do likewise, that is, in fact, to take the trials as good coin. The banal aphorism: "One hand washes the other" appears to retain its validity even in the sphere of idealistic ethics. Benes, Daladier, Stalin, Roosevelt, the Second and the Third Internationals and their camp-followers of Schlamm's stripe "are honored" to sponsor the ethical swindle of the defense of Czech democracy. We are honored to reject this swindle with thanks and to prefer to remain true to our irreconcilable opposition to idealistic ethics.

August 23, 1938

Walter HELD

# Fascism and Big Business

The following article is an excerpt from Daniel Guérin's book on Fascism, the English translation of which is soon to be released by Pioneer Publishers. It is a study of the roots and destiny of Fascism, at once so factual and so thoroughly Marxist in its approach, that no apology for giving it the widest possible publicity is necessary. EDITORS.

A PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS ILLUSION consists in regarding fascism, despite the horror it inspires, as a *progressive* political phenomenon—as a *passing* and even *necessary*, though painful, stage. Rash prophets have announced ten times, a hundred times, the imminent and inevitable crumbling of the fascist dictatorship in Italy or Germany under the blows of the victorious revolution. They have asserted that fascism, by driving class antagonisms to their highest degree of tension, is hastening the hour of the proletarian revolution, even going so far as to contend that the proletariat could conquer power only by passing through the hell of the fascist dictatorship. Today it is no longer possible to keep up such illusions. Events have demonstrated with tragic clearness that the moment the working class allows the fascist wave to sweep over it, a long period of slavery and impotence begins—a long period during which socialist, even democratic, ideas are not merely erased from the pediments of public monuments and libraries but, what is much more serious, are *rooted out of human minds*. Events have proved that fascism physically destroys everything opposing its

dictatorship, no matter how mildly, and that it creates a vacuum around itself and leaves a vacuum behind it.

This extraordinary *power to survive* by annihilating everything except itself, to hold out against everything and everybody, to hold out for years in spite of internal contradictions and in spite of the misery and discontent of the masses—what is behind it?

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## Excessive Centralization

The strength of the dictatorship rests first of all in its excessive centralization. Such a regime cannot "by its very nature endure the slightest trace of federalism or autonomy. Like the Convention, like Napoleon, it must seek complete centralism, the logical consequence of its system and the necessary means to insure its permanence." Mussolini and Hitler strengthen to the utmost the authority of the central government and suppress even the faintest trace of individualism. In Italy the powers of the provincial governors have been considerably increased. "It must be clear," a communication from the Duce informs them, "that authority cannot be divided. . . . Authority is single and unified. If it were not, we should fall back into a disorganized state." In Germany the seventeen "states", whose rights to their own governments and parliaments were preserved by the Weimar

Constitution, have been gradually suppressed and transformed into mere provinces of the Reich, directly administered by representatives of the central government, the *Statthalter*. Extolling his centralizing work, Hitler boasts of having "given the people the Constitution that will make them strong".

Marx in his time was able to rejoice because the executive power, while becoming ever more concentrated, simultaneously concentrated against itself all the forces of destruction. And certain of our contemporaries, with a somewhat too simple conception of the dialectic, imagine that by centralizing to the utmost, fascism is working automatically for the Revolution. They would be correct if fascism did not, at the same time as it centralizes, *destroy in the most radical fashion the "forces of destruction" themselves.*

Fascism, in fact, has brought to the highest degree of perfection the methods of police repression used in modern states. It has made the political police a truly scientific organization. The Italian *Ovra*, the German *Gestapo*—real "states within the state", with ramifications in all classes of society and even in every dwelling house, with enormous financial and material resources, and with limitless powers—are in a position literally to annihilate at birth every attempt at opposition wherever it appears. They can arrest at any time, "put away" on a remote island or in a concentration camp, even execute without a semblance of a trial, anyone they wish. Consequently it is possible to say that such a regime is *a smooth block of granite where no hand can find a hold.* Gentizon is not far from the truth, unfortunately, when he says of Italy: "Opposition has completely disappeared. . . . With the system of the totalitarian state, no hostile propaganda is possible." And Goebbels too when he asserts: "The enemies of the regime are completely put down; there is no longer in the whole country any opposition worthy of the name."

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## Dispersal of the Working Class

Added to these methods of police repression is the state of "forced disunity, dispersion and helplessness" in which fascism keeps the working class. Certainly in neither Italy nor Germany can the regime boast of having all the proletariat with it; quite the contrary. Mussolini himself is forced to confess: "I cannot say that I have [with me] all the workers. . . . They are perpetual malcontents." In Germany, the elections to the factory "confidential councils" have twice (April, 1934, and April, 1935) constituted a stinging defeat for the regime. According to the later admission of Dr. Ley himself, scarcely 40 per cent of the electors voted in 1934. In 1935 at least 30 per cent of the electors abstained or voted against. In 1936, 1937, and 1938 the elections were "postponed" as a precautionary measure, and in June, 1938, it was decided that the "confidential men" would no longer be "elected" but appointed by the head of the company.

This latent discontent, however, finds it almost impossible to express itself or to organize. The working class is atomized and disintegrated. It is true that protest movements have appeared here and there, but they are stifled immediately. They are restricted to isolated plants and known to few workers outside the plants where they occur; in each factory the workers believe they are alone in their resistance. Not only are the ties broken between the workers in different factories, but even inside large enterprises contacts no longer exist between the employes of the various departments, and it is very difficult to re-establish them. Even when the embryos of illegal unions are formed, with heroic efforts, they are almost always crushed in the egg.

No doubt there are militant socialists and communists who distribute illegal leaflets at the peril of their lives, but they are only an heroic and constantly decimated phalanx. The workers lose their passivity only when an event *abroad* reveals to them that they are not alone, that beyond the frontiers other workers

are struggling. Thus the great strikes of June, 1936, in France, in spite of the care of the fascist press to minimize their importance, had a profound echo among the workers of Italy and Germany.\*

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## Fascist Education

And while fascism puts its adult opponents in a position where they can do no harm, it imposes its imprint on the young and shapes them in its own mold. "The generation of the irreconcilables will be eliminated by natural laws," Mussolini exults. "Soon the younger generation will come!" Volpe speaks lustingly of this "virgin material which has not yet been touched by the old ideologies." "Our future is represented by the German youth," Hitler declares. "We will raise it in our own spirit. If the older generation cannot become accustomed to it, we will take their children from them. . . ." "We want to inculcate our principles in the children from their most tender years." And Goebbels asserts that as long as the youth are behind Hitler, *the regime will be indestructible.* At the age of four in Germany and at six in Italy, the child is taken from his family, enrolled in the militarized formations of fascism, and subjected to an intensive stuffing with propaganda. The dictatorial state puts in his hands a single newspaper, a single textbook, and educates him in an incredible atmosphere of exaltation and fanaticism.

This training accomplishes its aim. Although the regime in Germany has not been in power long enough to enable us to formulate valid conclusions, in Italy the results are tangible: "The youth can no longer even conceive of socialist or communist ideas," Gentizon writes. A militant worker, Feroci, confirms this: "A youth that has never read a labor paper, never attended a labor meeting, and knows nothing of socialism and communism . . . that is . . . what makes for the real strength of Mussolini's regime."

Doubtless there is something fascist education cannot stifle, and which does not need to be taught—the class instinct. No amount of propaganda will ever prevent the young worker from feeling he is exploited. Pietro Nenni, while far from claiming that the Black Shirt youth has already succeeded in freeing itself from the fascist grip, states that in Italy "many young people are socialists without knowing it and without wanting to be." *Il Maglio*, the weekly paper of the fascist unionists of Turin, complains that among the youth there is a certain lack of understanding of fascist "unionism": "It is natural that there should be a few young people who, while recognizing that the abolition of all forms of class struggle is an absolute necessity . . . still believe that labor's material interests can be better assured by strikes and the methods of struggle used up to yesterday in labor conflicts. . . ." In Germany as well, countless young people who believed literally that the Third Reich would be *their state*, and whom the Third Reich has condemned to forced labor, are bitterly disappointed. But it is extremely difficult for the youth in either country, in view of the mental training they are given, to get rid of the false ideas with which they are indoctrinated, to clarify their revolt, and without guidance do for themselves the work of a century of socialist action and thought. The confused awakening of their class consciousness leads some of them to the "left wing" of fascism or National Socialism; it does not make them into militant revolutionists.

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Another illusion about the duration of fascism must be dispelled. Certain people try to deduce from the economic and political contradictions which have developed in the fascist

\*On April 18, 1937, Rudolf Hess made a violent anti-communist speech at Karlsruhe, which the Berlin correspondent of *Information* commented on as follows: "Inside Germany this speech tends to put a stop to the discussions which have arisen among the popular masses of the Reich, despite the censorship, as a result of the promulgation of the forty-hour law and new social laws by the Blum cabinet."

regime that the days of the dictatorship are numbered. These contradictions do exist, and we have analyzed them. They are important enough possibly to bring about profound changes in the structure of the regime. But such changes can occur *without the dictatorship itself collapsing*.

## Dissatisfaction of Big Business

A few supplementary explanations are necessary here. The fact is undeniable that the industrialists who subsidized and put fascism in power are not entirely satisfied with their own creation. In the first place the regime is terribly expensive. The maintenance of the excessive bureaucracy of the state, the party and the numerous semi-governmental bodies costs unheard-of sums and adds to the financial difficulties of the government. In their memorandum of June, 1937, to Hitler, the industrialists wrote: "It used to be estimated that there was one functionary for every twelve persons in productive occupations. Today, if the official party organizations and the semi-official and corporative services with their functionaries and employes are included, *it is estimated that there is one person on the state payroll for every eight persons in productive occupations.*" Abandoning any attempt to "estimate the amount of personal and material expenses required by the administrative machine," the authors of the memorandum complained of the "incalculable losses arising from a lack of contact between the old and the new authorities, and the overlapping of functions between the old and new state services and the party."\* They wished the day would come when "in accordance with a definite principle, *a final organization of the internal political apparatus of the state will be possible. . . .*"

While the state must carry huge incidental expenses, the big capitalists themselves have to stand a certain number: "voluntary contributions" extorted by the party and its "welfare" undertakings; various subscriptions; "graft" and seats on the boards of directors of big companies for the "upper crust" of the fascist leaders, etc. But these incidental expenses, the importance of which must not be exaggerated, are less annoying to big business than the demagogic agitation indulged in by the fascist plebeians—agitation which, despite purges and repressions, periodically reappears, though within constantly narrower limits.

Again, while big business approves of an aggressive policy that brings it new armament orders, it is afraid lest the fascist leaders, in seeking a diversion from the wretchedness of the people, provoke a premature war which will result in the isolation of the country and its defeat. It is especially significant that in the autumn of 1935 it was the fascist leaders, Farinacci, Rossoni, and others, who urged Mussolini into conflict with England, while the big bourgeoisie, the General Staff, and the Crown, on the other hand, advised moderation and caution. Likewise in Germany, when Hitler decided in March, 1936, to remilitarize the Rhineland, it was the Nazi top bureaucracy—Goering, Goebbels, and others—who urged him on to the adventure, while the big capitalists and their representative, Dr. Schacht, as well as the Reichswehr Generals, were wary, not as to the act itself but as to the rash form it took. At the end of December of the same year, General von Fritsch pointed out that neither the Reich nor the German army could undertake any action that might lead to war in a short time, and he went so far as to threaten to resign his command if his expert advice was disregarded.

## The Cult of the Leader

Neither does big business look without a certain amount of anxiety on the symptoms of "delusions of grandeur" displayed ever more obviously by the dictator. This development is really

inevitable, for in proportion as the plebeians are eliminated and the party relegated to a secondary position, it is necessary to inflate the "Man of Destiny" all the more in order to conceal behind his person the real nature of the fascist state: a military and police dictatorship in the service of big business. It is necessary to follow Spengler's advice: "Nothing has meaning any more but the purely personal power exercised by the Caesar [in whom] the omnipotence of money disappears." Thus in Italy, the dictatorship of the fascist party has gradually given place to the personal dictatorship of the Duce. In Germany, during the last electoral campaign, "there [was] very little question of National Socialism and much—to the exclusion of almost everything else—of Herr Hitler." But the dictator himself is taken in by this "booby-trap". The same mishap befalls him as befell Louis Bonaparte: "Only . . . when he himself now takes his imperial role seriously . . . does he become the victim of his own conception of the world, the serious buffoon, who no longer takes world history for a comedy but his comedy for world history." Mussolini and Hitler end by literally becoming egomaniacs. And the big capitalists must increasingly reckon with the boundless pride, the changing humor and whims, of the Duce or the Führer. This means a loss of time and has certain drawbacks.

And finally, the economic policy of fascism, however favorable to themselves it may be, is not entirely satisfactory to the big capitalists. Although they eagerly pocket the fabulous profits from armament orders, they are terrified at the possible consequences of this policy. They are haunted by the thought of a financial catastrophe. They likewise complain, as we have seen, that the "war economy" regime is constantly imposing on them more burdensome state regulations, that it is forever eating away at sacrosanct "private initiative".

Therefore the industrialists are not wholly content, and in the minds of some of them the idea begins to germinate of throwing overboard once and for all the fascist plebeians and *their leader himself*, and of completing the already far-advanced transformation of the fascist totalitarian regime into a purely military dictatorship.

But they hesitate. They dare not deprive themselves entirely of the incomparable and irreplaceable means of penetrating into all cells of society which they have in the fascist mass organizations. Above all, they hesitate to deprive themselves of the services of the "Man of Destiny", for the mystic faith in the Duce or the Führer, though declining, is not yet extinct. "The present order in Germany," the *Temps* states, "exists and continues only thanks to the popularity of the Chancellor and the faith of the German masses in Herr Hitler's actions. . . ." "The Führer is unquestionably more popular than the regime." The "Man of Destiny", however much a nuisance he may be, is still necessary. Even his madness is useful; he alone can still perform the psychological miracle of turning the discontent and wretchedness of large strata of the people into enthusiasm and faith.

But most of all, the industrialists are apprehensive lest a radical change in the regime, such as they desire, should cost much bloodshed. They dread a civil war, even a short one, in which "national" forces would oppose one another; they fear nothing so much as what in Germany is called, in anticipation, a "new June 30". Hence they hesitate.

The hypothesis is not absolutely excluded that some day they will come to feel that the advantages of a purely military dictatorship outweigh its shortcomings. But a change of this nature would not necessarily open up the way to a revolution. It is true that for the middle classes, suddenly deprived of their daily mythology, the awakening would be a cruel one, and that it would be harder, with only the aid of a military and police apparatus, to keep the proletariat enslaved. Yet the authoritarian

\*"All the chief administrative bodies of the state," the Berlin correspondent of the *Temps* has observed, "are duplicated, so to speak, by the organs of the National Socialist Party. . . . The party penetrates into the Ministries, but it also preserves, on the fringes of the traditional administrative bodies, its own organs. . . ."

state, strongly supported by bayonets, might still endure for a time in this new form; it might find new "mysticisms" (the nationalist mysticism, the dynastic mysticism, etc.) to keep large strata of the population under the spell; in a word, even without Mussolini or Hitler, the "strong state" might survive.

## 3.

If fascism is not progressive *politically*, it is no more so *economically* — notwithstanding what certain people think. Stripped of all appearances, all the contradictions which dim its real face, all the secondary aspects which hide from so many its essential character, and all the circumstances peculiar to any one country, fascism is reduced to this: a strong state intended to prolong artificially an economic system based on profit and the private ownership of the means of production. To use the picturesque figure of Radek, fascist dictatorship is *the iron hoop with which the bourgeoisie tries to patch up the broken barrel of capitalism*. Here some clarification, however, is necessary: the "barrel", contrary to what many believe, was not broken by the revolutionary action of the working class; fascism is not the "bourgeoisie's answer to an attack by the proletariat" but rather "an expression of the decay of capitalist economy". The barrel fell apart of its own accord.

Fascism is, to be sure, a defensive reaction of the bourgeoisie, but a defense against the disintegration of its own system far more than against any proletarian offensive—alas, non-existent. The crisis of the capitalist system itself is what shook capitalism to its foundations by drying up the sources of profit. The working class, on the other hand, paralyzed by its organizations and its leaders in the hour of the decay of capitalist economy, did not know how to take power and replace dying capitalism with socialism.

## Capitalism in Decay

As to the nature of this crisis, fascism itself has no illusions. "The crisis," Mussolini admits, "has penetrated the system so deeply that it has become a systemic crisis. It is no longer a wound, but a chronic disease. . . ." In spite of the fact that fascism demagogically promises the reabsorption of unemployment and the resumption of business, it knows perfectly well that it will not set the economic machine going again. It does not seek seriously either to bring back to life the vanished consumer, or to stimulate the long interrupted investment of private savings in production. Others are free to cherish utopias if they wish, but fascism knows what it wants and what it can do. It merely tries to check, through artificial means, the fall in the profits of a private capitalism which has become parasitic. In spite of its verbose demagogy, it has no great designs; it lives from week to week; it aspires to nothing more than to keep alive—through wage cuts, state orders and subsidies, seizure of small savings, and autarchy—a handful of monopolists and big landowners. And in order to prolong the latter's reign (though limiting their liberty and without insuring them their pre-depression income), it has no hesitation in hastening the ruin of all other layers of the population—wage earners, consumers, savers, working farmers, artisans, and even industrialists manufacturing consumers' goods.

Those naïve people who, outside Italy and Germany, fall into the trap of fascist demagogic lies and go around saying that fascism is a "revolution," and that fascism has "gone beyond" capitalism, are advised to study the following letter from a worker published by the Nazi daily, the *Völkische Beobachter* (June 7, 1936):

"Nobody concerned with economic questions will believe the capitalist system has disappeared. Although it is true that methods of public financing have assumed a different character

—a character of coercion—capital, or at least what is generally understood by this word, has never been so powerful and privileged as at the present time. . . . The Economy accumulates enormous profits and reserves; the workers are invited to wait, and to console themselves while waiting by undergoing a whole series of preliminary conditions. The big ones make profits, and the little one receive drafts on the future. If that isn't capitalism in the specific sense of the word, I would like to know what capitalism means. . . . One group is making formidable profits at the expense of the rest of the population. That is what used to be called capitalist exploitation. . . ."

"This isn't National Socialism; this is simply capitalism," another correspondent wrote to the *Völkische Beobachter* on June 13. And the official organ of the Nazi party cynically replied that if the government had wanted to divide among the workers the two billions or so of big business's increased profit, it would have placed itself "in flagrant opposition to the Economy, and its energy would have been entirely paralyzed in a struggle to maintain its position."

## 4.

Moreover, on the international plane, fascism merely aggravates the tendency of the whole capitalist system to national isolation and autarchy. By detaching the Economy from the international division of labor, by adapting the "productive forces to the Procrustean bed of the national state," fascism brings "chaos into world relations". For the future work of socialist planning, it creates "colossal additional difficulties".

At the same time fascism aggravates and brings to their highest degree of tension the contradictions resulting from the uneven development of the capitalist system, and thus hastens the hour of a new division of the world by force of arms—the hour of that "relapse into barbarism" which Rosa Luxemburg foresaw in case the proletariat should be slow to fulfill its class duty and achieve socialism.

Nevertheless, it is not correct to say that *fascism means war*. Bela Kun not long ago attacked this self-interested lie: "The slogan that fascism, which is *one* of the political forms of bourgeois rule . . . means war, is designed . . . only to free again and always from all responsibility one of the groups of imperialist powers that mask their war preparations under democratic forms and pacifist phrases. . . . The old slogan of Marxist anti-militarism—that of the revolutionary struggle against imperialist war—was differently expressed: *capitalism means war*." War is the product of the capitalist system as a whole. Tomorrow's war will not find the *democracies* opposing the *dictatorships*. Behind ideological pretexts, imperialist realities are concealed. Tomorrow's war will find the *satisfied* nations, who long ago got their "places in the sun" and divided the planet among themselves through blood and iron, opposing the "*proletarian*" nations—the late-comers who also demand their share in the feast, if need be through blood and iron. One group is ready to make war to force a new division of the world; the other is ready to make war to prevent this division. This is an elementary truth that can never be repeated too often in these troubled times when, for many people, anti-fascism has become synonymous with *chauvinism*. Fascism must be fought not from the outside by imperialist war but from within by proletarian class struggle. There is only one way to put an end to Mussolini and Hitler: that is to help the Italian and German workers to fight at home. And how can they be helped? By example! By fighting in our own countries!

Daniel GUERIN

The economic and political union of Europe appears to be the sine qua non of the possibility of national self-determination. . . .

Leon TROTSKY, 1918

# The Soviets and Democracy

**I**MMEDIATELY AFTER the accession of Hitler, Trotsky wrote that the issue presenting itself to the masses was no longer Bolshevism versus Fascism but Fascism versus Democracy. Our subsequent critique of the Popular Front might make it appear that we had perversely abandoned this view when Moscow adopted it. That would be a complete misunderstanding. We rejected the whole conception of the Popular Front precisely because it was impotent to combat fascism. The struggle for the democracy vital to the workers could not be waged in a bourgeois alliance for the maintenance of a corrupt parliamentary regime and decaying capitalist social order. The Popular Front was a gigantic piece of political blackmail. The liberal bourgeoisie of France said to the workers: we shall collaborate with you and keep de la Roque and Doriot out, we shall let you have your unions and political parties, provided only that you quit the militant struggle against private property and the wage system, against militarism and imperialism. Otherwise we shall have to let the fascists restore order.

The sweep of Totalitarianism in Central Europe was appalling. At the stage of social development when humanity seemed to have reached the scientific mastery of nature, when the expansion of the productive powers seemed to have made possible the world state, a counter movement arose to set back the clock of civilization, a reaction against the ideals of humanitarianism and libertarianism, against the best traditions of the classical bourgeois revolutions. But especially was this counter revolution directed against the proletariat, as the social class which by its origins and position was the bearer of the internationalist, humanitarian, egalitarian society of the future which had been heralded by the Russian revolution.

Instinctively the workers rallied to the defence of their social conquests and their civil liberties. They felt that the immediate struggle must be for the preservation of democracy and they were right. But their true political instincts and aroused militancy were disgracefully aborted by their leaders. The revolutionary Marxist position has been that the struggle for democracy could only be successfully waged by methods of proletarian mass action that burst the confines of parliamentarism and the capitalist system. It was the class collaboration practised by the German Social Democrats that had paved the road for economic chaos and Hitler's triumph. The parties of the Second and Third Internationals, impotent in the struggle against capitalism, were powerful enough to transform the great mass movement of France and Spain into adjuncts of "democratic" imperialism. The Social Democracy, despite its name, has nowhere been able to preserve democracy and everywhere succumbed miserably either to the demands of the bourgeois democracy or the blows of totalitarian dictatorship.

The urgency of the struggle for democracy as one of the central tasks of our epoch received striking reinforcement about this time from the totalitarian transformation of the Soviet regime under Stalin. After twenty years of the October revolution, the Russian proletariat and vanguard lay prone under the iron heel of a totalitarian bureaucracy. The Soviet superstructure became indistinguishable from the Fascist. The technique of oppression and tyranny was the same, purges and concentration camps. The workers and peasants were deprived of civil liberties, the rights of the various nationalities were violated, the soviets were abolished, the trade unions were incorporated into the totalitarian state, Workers' Democracy was replaced by the hollow demagoguery of the plebiscite. The arts were stultified. The revolutionaries were killed. The ideas of Marxism were hounded and driven underground.

The critical elements of the working class are compelled to sum up the lessons not only of the failure of the Western Social Democracy but of the degeneration of the Russian revolution as well. If the experiences of the European Social Democracy prove that socialism cannot be achieved by the methods and within the framework of bourgeois democracy, the Russian experiences show that socialism cannot be established without Workers' Democracy. It was Karl Radek who asserted that socialism would inevitably follow from the expansion of the Soviet productive forces. It was Trotsky who countered that genuine socialist construction was impossible without the democratic control and creative participation of the masses. The totalitarian development of the bureaucratic regime threatens to destroy completely the foundations of the October upheaval. What would emerge would be neither democracy nor socialism. The totalitarian regime in Moscow has reached the point where it is a prime obstacle to the further development of the revolution in the West.

The Russian proletariat could never have been rallied to the revolution in the name of this new despotism. Lenin justified the dictatorship of the proletariat as a higher form of democracy. Every cook would learn to govern. The Soviets would guarantee genuine liberty to the masses, truly reflect their will, assure genuine freedom of the press, of speech, of assembly. In an earlier generation Marx and Engels had learned from the Commune that the workers could not use a state apparatus subserving capitalist ends for entirely opposite socialist ends. The coercive machinery of the old sovereignty, police, army, judiciary, bureaucracy would have to be shattered first. The transition dictatorship of the proletariat would differ as radically from bourgeois democracy as parliamentarism from monarchical absolutism. The Commune would represent a higher stage of democracy based on social equality. The Russian development has been the very opposite.

If the workers are to be organized for militant resistance to world fascism they must be completely convinced that they are fighting for the genuine democracy that Marx and Lenin held out. The Russian revolution was the beacon light in the struggle for liberation. The Russian Bolsheviks once spoke with unparalleled authority. They had, as Rosa Luxemburg said, "saved the honor of the working class". Latter-day developments have raised grave questions in the minds of militants most thoroughly convinced of the bankruptcy of social reformism. What brought about the Russian degeneration? In this and subsequent articles we hope to analyze the various elements of this question.

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For the Soviet Union the year 1923 was big with fate. Lenin was stricken down. A creeping economic crisis threatened to paralyze the ties of city and countryside. The hopes of a revolution abroad were dimmed when the German communists rehearsed their subsequent capitulation to Hitler. The arrogant encroachments of the party and government bureaucracy were provoking widespread discontent in the masses. It was at this crucial period that the first of the great "discussions" between Trotsky and the bureaucracy broke out. In a series of articles entitled *The New Course*, Trotsky opened fire on the bureaucracy as a menace to the aims and future of the proletarian revolution. *The New Course* is necessarily less graphic and more oblique than the analysis given in *The Revolution Betrayed* many years later. But even so brilliant a Marxist as Trotsky could not anticipate the full ravages of the coming Totalitarianism. The main question, however, is clearly defined: could the proletarian dictatorship survive to achieve the socialist society in

the absence of Workers Democracy, economic planning and the international revolution.

Adopted under the pressure of strikes, peasant uprisings, and the Kronstadt Rebellion, the New Economic Policy\* was a frankly acknowledged retreat. War communism, imposed as a military necessity had not proven an economic success. It was "systematic regimentation of consumption in a besieged fortress". Only the material aid of a victorious German revolution could have facilitated the direct transition to planned socialist economy. The Soviet power had otherwise to change its policy or invite destruction. "It was the first and I hope the last time in the history of Soviet Russia," Lenin reported, "that we had the great masses of the peasantry arrayed against us." The peasants had come to associate the gift of the soil with the "Bolsheviks" but the confiscation of its fruits with the "Communists". With no tangible industrial goods in exchange for grain surrendered to the bayonet, the peasantry declared a virtual sit-down strike. In 1920 Trotsky had submitted a project, then unacceptable to the Central Committee, for replacing the food-levy by a grain tax. The economic deadlock continued until a year later Lenin himself sought a way out by introducing the N.E.P. Forcible requisitioning of grain gave way to a fixed tax and free trading. The area under cultivation rose by several million desiatins, and industry received a marked impetus.

But in the summer of 1923 the N.E.P. revealed its limitations. At first the farm surplus was small, the city was hungry, and to obtain working capital, the state trusts sold available stocks at bargain prices. The peasants consequently netted a profit of some 200,000,000 gold rubles. The abundant harvest of 1922 forced agricultural prices down, thus reversing the situation. Aided by the State bank and the stable chervonetz, industry had freed itself from immediate dependence on the sales market. The brightly-colored paper ruble fell rapidly and the peasant was left holding the bag. In Trotsky's metaphor, the prices of industrial and of farm products, like the blades of an extended pair of scissors, tended to draw ever more widely apart. The reaction on the city was inevitable. Trade began to dry up. The banks shut off further credits. Industry slowed down and paid out wages irregularly. Strikes broke out and unemployment increased.

Since only thirty per cent of the pre-war level of industrial output had been reached, the crisis could scarcely be ascribed to overproduction. The contrary was indeed the fact. Should industrial development continue to lag, there was every indication that a better harvest might spell a more acute crisis. So decisive for the stability of the Soviet power, the "link" between the workers and peasants depended upon the capacity of state industry to produce machinery and consumers' goods of good quality and at low prices. But the problem of prices was bound up with the productive efficiency not of the individual factory alone, but of industry as a whole. Slashing prices and extending the benefits of the stable currency to the village would relieve the immediate tension. Unless however, there was far-sighted industrial coordination and planning, the costs of production would again be driven upwards, the chervonetz undermined, and agriculture retarded. An inadequate state industry would throw the peasant mass into the hands of the kulak (big peasant) and the Nepman (private trader). Twenty-five million small farms would constitute too fertile a breeding ground of capitalist relations. The socialist revolution must justify itself in terms of superior productivity. A socialist economy was only possible on the basis of large-scale machine industry and modern technique capable of collectivizing agriculture. But without long-term economic planning this perspective would be impossible of achievement.

This substantially was Trotsky's analysis of the crisis to the Twelfth Party Congress (April 1923), which officially adopted his proposals in the form of a resolution. But like the concur-

rent resolution on Workers' Democracy, it was destined to remain a dead letter. With Lenin's approaching death, the party bureaucrats were mainly pre-occupied with conspiring for power. Planning was all very well but they did not want Trotsky in charge of industrialization. Lip-service to Workers Democracy was unavoidable but they did not want their grip on the party machinery shaken.

With its limited outlook the party bureaucracy more naturally preferred to muddle along. Summing up the "discussion" as spokesman Zinoviev jeered at "the obstinate persistence in clinging to a beautiful plan. . . . We want transport affairs managed by Dzerzhinsky, economics by Rykov, finance by Sokolnikov; Trotsky on the other hand wants to carry out everything with the aid of a 'state plan'." Lenin had sharply rebuked those who attacked Trotsky's methodical restoration in 1920 of the transport system. "We have before us a real plan," declared Lenin, "worked out for a number of years. Decree No. 1042 looks five years ahead. . . . This is also how to work in other spheres of industry." The bureaucracy, however, continued to underestimate the resources of planned economy. When Trotsky wrote\* in 1925 that even with an independent reproduction based on socialist accumulation an annual coefficient of 20 per cent was possible, this was greeted with ridicule. As late as 1928 Commissar of Agriculture Yakovlev contended that collectives would for years to come remain "little islets in the sea of private peasant farms". The prevailing outlook was Bukharin's "socialism at a snail's pace". Trotsky was stigmatized as a "super-industrialist". *Pravda* urged that "the economic possibilities of the well-to-do peasant . . . of the kulak must be unfettered". Bukharin exhorted the peasants to "enrich yourselves". Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the theory held, there was nothing to fear from the kulak; he could peacefully be fitted into the framework of socialism. The bureaucrats were equally hostile to the Opposition's demand for a swifter pace of industrialization. The 1927 Five Year Plan provided for a growth of industrial production annually declining from the first year's coefficient of 9 to 4 in the last; consumption to rise 12 per cent over the whole period. A year later the "general line" was patched up to provide for an annual average increase of 9 per cent. Only the third project of the plan approximated the platform of the Opposition.

It took the "grain strike" of 1928 to demonstrate that the kulak danger was no figment of Trotsky's imagination. The catastrophically low grain collections necessitated rationing and encroaching on the "untouchable reserves". Unemployment in the cities reached the two million mark. With the aid of the Right element, Stalin had crushed the Left Opposition. The force of the crisis now drove him to appropriate its economic platform. Socialism at a snail's pace gave way to socialism at a frenzied gallop.

Suppose that Stalin did "steal" Trotsky's program would it not be more principled to swallow mere pride of authorship? This more or less was the argument of every former Oppositionist who took the road of capitulation. Thus did Karl Radek write in 1929, "We may be dissatisfied with the tempo, we may suggest this or that often very important amendment but we have no distinct general line; consequently Trotsky must either take a step towards the party or think up a new platform. . . . In returning to the party we do not surrender a single Leninist principle for which we fought." The fate that befell Kamenev, Zinoviev and Radek is itself an eloquent answer. What separated Trotsky from Stalin was not a matter of tempo but principle. The economics of state planning could be properly and creatively applied only under conditions of Soviet democracy and revolutionary internationalism. For this reason the question of the party regime was crucial.

\*Tenth Party Congress, March, 1921.

\*Whither Russia, International Publishers, N. Y.

That the issue of Workers' Democracy should have been linked up in 1923 with the question of planned economy was therefore inevitable. The economic crisis stirred widespread political discontent. While war communism had been abandoned as an economic policy, it survived in the party regime. Lenin had grown acutely conscious that "we have bureaucratism not only in the state but in the party". To check this menace, he had sponsored the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This organ of control, in turn, succumbed to the dead hand of bureaucracy. Of Stalin who was at its head, Lenin was writing in his famous Testament that "he has concentrated an immense power in his hands" and was urging that he be replaced in the post of General Secretary of the party by somebody wiser, less rude, more loyal. "Above all," Lenin had been stressing, "freedom of criticism in the party. We have always stood for that in theory, we must now put it into practise." But instead the party regime met criticism by the rigid enforcement of an emergency resolution of the Tenth Congress adopted in the emergency of the Kronstadt uprising, which proscribed factions. Nevertheless secret groups began to form. The "Workers' Truth" demanded freedom of working class press and association and attacked the privileges of the "new bourgeoisie". The "Workers' Group" criticised the dictatorship of the Triumvirate (Kamenev, Zinoviev, Stalin) and called upon the workers to strike. Actual dissatisfaction extended far beyond the limits of these semi-menshevik or anarchist circles. Anxious to preserve the authority of the party and to achieve all necessary reforms through its channels, Trotsky was not satisfied however that the way to stop factions was to call in the police. In 1922 the Twelfth Congress had passed a resolution in favor of Workers' Democracy; unfortunately it had never taken on the least semblance of reality. Trotsky's letter of October 8, 1923 to the Central Committee begins with a reference to Dzerzhinsky's proposal that all party members having knowledge of groupings in the party must communicate the fact to the G.P.U., the Control Commission and the Central Committee. "In the fiercest moment of war communism the system of appointment within the party did not have one tenth of the extent it has now. Appointments of the secretaries of provincial committees is now the rule. That creates for the secretary a position essentially independent of the local organization. . . . This present regime which began to form itself before the Twelfth Congress . . . is much further from workers' democracy than the regime of the fiercest period of war communism. . . . A very broad strata of party workers has been created, entering into the governing apparatus of the party who completely renounce their own party opinion, before whom every decision stands in the form of a summons or command." Why did Trotsky not protest sooner? "It is known to the members of the Central Committee that while fighting with all decisiveness within the Central Committee against a false policy I decidedly declined to bring the struggle within the Central Committee to the judgment of even a very limited circle of (outside) comrades. . . . I must state that my efforts of a year and a half have given no results. This threatens us with the danger that the party may be taken unawares by a crisis of exceptional severity. . . . In view of the situation created I consider it not only my right but my duty to make known the state of affairs to every member of the party whom I consider sufficiently prepared, mature and self-restrained, consequently able to help the party out of this blind alley without factional convulsions."

Under pressure, the ruling group now operating as a tightly-bound caucus drafted a new resolution for workers' democracy. It warned of the danger of a "loss of perspective of socialist construction and of the world revolution" and degeneration of the party workers as a result of their activities in close contact with a bourgeois milieu. Workers' Democracy was defined as a regime of "free discussion and the election of governing officials

from top to bottom". The governing organs were not to treat every criticism as a manifestation of factionalism. Momentarily it looked like a triumph for Trotsky, but these concessions proved purely formal. The bureaucracy embraced democracy the better to strangle it. Seizing on Trotsky's comment on the resolution as some sort of breach of cabinet solidarity, the Triumvirate launched a savage attack. Trotsky was accused of attempting to pit the youth against the Old Guard, of wanting to shatter the party apparatus, and encouraging factionalism. The carefully oiled machinery of calumny and repression was set in motion. The Central Conference of party officials meeting in January 1924 formally condemned the Opposition "with Comrade Trotsky at the head of it". Stalin's control of the secretarial hierarchy now made itself fully felt. Trotsky's supporters were removed from every position of influence, and subjected to intimidation in office and factory. Students were expelled from the universities. The Red Army was "purged". Rakovsky was sent to London, Krestinsky to Berlin. A couple of hundred thousand raw recruits, watchfully shepherded by the bureaucracy, were immediately given the vote. The Thirteenth Party Congress of May 1924 was a foregone conclusion, packed by the apparatus men. A few days before, Krupskaya had transmitted to the Central Committee the Testament in which Lenin proposes Stalin's removal from the position of General Secretary. It was a culmination of a sharpening struggle with Stalin covering the last half year of Lenin's life. He had successively attacked Stalin's national policy, his tampering with the foreign trade monopoly, his bureaucratic stultification of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This did not prevent the cynical bureaucrats from setting themselves up as Lenin's only true disciples. The handpicked delegates would not hear of Stalin's resignation—though the latter made the hypocritical gesture. Unscrupulously exploiting the reverence of the masses for Lenin, the bureaucracy conjured up the spectre of Trotskyism. There began that unparalleled falsification of history that has continued without let-up and has been reinforced by the monstrous technique of frame-ups, "confessions", and bloody executions. Every effort was strained to make the masses forget the political accord which united Lenin and Trotsky—their cooperation in the October insurrection, the years of civil war, the organization of the Red Army, the development of the Communist International. Instead they were served with a steady diet of polemical quotations torn from their context of time and circumstance. "You must understand," Zinoviev later confessed, "that it was a struggle for power. The whole art of the thing was to combine old disagreements with new questions."

Zinoviev was later to rue his part in the conspiracy, to state that the struggle against Trotsky had been the greatest mistake of my life, more dangerous than the mistake of 1917. Amid the menacing outcries of Stalin's henchmen, Kamenev was to exclaim: "We are against the elevation of a 'Leader'. . . . We are opposed to the Secretariat setting itself up above the party organization." Bukharin was to cry out "What can we do, what can we do in the face of an adversary of this kind, a debased Genghis-Khan of the Central Committee." For the defeat of the 1923 Opposition platform of Workers' Democracy eventually led to the complete political despotism of Stalin. The old Bolsheviks were mercilessly exterminated. But first, as the price of membership in the party they were compelled to disarm not only organizationally but ideologically.

Maurice SPECTOR

"IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST Imperialism, the proletariat cannot set up as its political aim the return to the old European map: It must set up *its own program of State and National relations*, harmonizing with the fundamental tendency of economic development, with the revolutionary character of the age and with the Socialist interests of the proletariat."—Trotsky in 1918.

# Is French Canada Going Fascist?

AT A POW-WOW in Kingston, Ontario, on July 12, an assortment of self-confessed Canadian fascists announced their fusion into a "National Unity Party" and for their Big Chief picked Adrien Arcand, henchman of Premier Duplessis of Quebec. The unification ceremonies were punctuated by war-whoops so dreadful the American "liberal" press was aroused to almost a fortnight of jitters before relapsing into the usual somnolence regarding affairs Canadian. The *New York Post*, in a series of reportorial alarms and excursions, calculated 100,000 armed pogromists in the new party, assumed underground links between it and all the goose-stepping Bunds and assorted Shirts of the U.S., and solemnly pictured an imminent uprising of all North American fascism, with bombers taking off from Canadian fields, subjugating Washington, and so, at one swoop, destroying the beloved democracies of Roosevelt and MacKenzie King.

Although the press reaction was mainly an illustration of liberal hysteria adapted to the game of circulation-boosting, it is true that the stock of the heil-boys and their ideas is on the way up in Quebec. The facts can be with difficulty gleaned from the boasts of the various führers. Only a month before the Kingston potlatch even the imaginative M. Arcand claimed but 15,000 members for his own blueshirt tribe; yet this was the largest of the groups making up the new N.U.P. This has not prevented him from announcing 80,000 adherents to the latter already. It is likely that its total active, disciplined membership is less than 6,000, the great majority confined to Quebec; but even this is a force large enough for nuisance value. The various Anglophile grouplets, such as the Victoria Young Citizens' League and the Vancouver Canadian Guards, which for the moment toss in the same bed with the French-Canadian fire-eaters, are scarcely more than paper names tacked to Arcand's publicity hokum, and the same may be said for the shadowy bands of his "lieutenants", Farr of Toronto and Whittaker of Winnipeg. The truth is that Arcand concocted his N.U.P. in desperation after his own buddies had thrown him out of the French-Canadian separatist movement, in order to re-establish his usefulness for big business. Rival demagogues are outshining him in his own language and he has led whatever dupes he could into an unstable affiliation with any little western jew-baiter who would bow to his duceship.

The simon-pure Quebec separatists continue on their English-hating way, coached chiefly by Canada's aspiring Coughlin, a learned fraud branded with the name of Abbé Groulx, who professes history at the benighted Catholic University of Montreal. The Abbé has a simple formula: drive out the bloodsucking "foreigners" (i.e., Anglo-Saxons), cut loose from the pagan British Empire, and make Quebec a corporate Catholic state at last fit for "Canadians" (i.e., French-Canadians). These views are given the magic of print by *L'Unité*, circulation 30,000, and *La Nation*, circulation 15,000. Paul Bouchard, editor of the latter, is said to take down his back hair weekly with Charpentier, head of the Catholic unions (membership 45,000). Ideologically akin is the National Corporatist Movement with 33,000 supporters in 1245 Quebec parishes, which aims at a separate fascist state administered by the Roman Church. In such a political manure-heap it is natural to find four flourishing youth organizations of the same genus. Although one of them takes its name and program from the Jeunesse Patriote across the water, most of the younglings echo their parents in a repudiation of modern France, that den of republicans, reds, atheists, and church-taxers, and in a compensatory enthusiasm for those great Catholics, Franco and Mussolini.

## Arcand, Fascist Chameleon

Arcand, with his more indiscriminate admirations, embracing the rulers of Portugal, Poland, and Germany (where Catholics haven't had everything they wanted), and his willingness to play ball with the Anglo-Saxon scum, would be a minor figure in Quebec politics if it were not that his eclecticism itself makes him at present very valuable to Duplessis. For the latter is premier of a province which contains in addition to most of Canada's French, a clustre of her very richest Anglo-Saxon bankers and bond-clippers—and contributors to his campaign chest. Hence Arcand continues to edit Duplessis' big official daily, *L'Illustration Nouvelle*, and is in turn protected and encouraged in his own little affairs. These include the publishing of an official fascist muck-sheet, *Le Combat National*, which, under the emblem of a flaming torch, continues to smoke out "international Jewish finance and international Jewish communism". Periodically it befouls the mails with supplements reprinting the fake Protocols of Zion (formerly made accessible to America by Henry Ford) and similar inflammatory anti-semitisms.

When he is not editing, Arcand peddles the same line in silvery lectures to hand-picked police-guarded audiences free of Annie Oakleys, or drilling his plug-uglies in "street-fighting tactics", or getting his lady-like profile photographed for the newspapers. Interviewed earlier in the year by David Martin, he declared with disarming simplicity that he and his boys stood for "God, family, private property, and personal initiative. . . . We believe the Jews are responsible for all the evils in the world today". Once in power, of course, it will be necessary to suppress not only Jews and Reds but "all other parties". "We" would then "declare unionism obligatory for bosses and workers, and organize the corporate state".\* Needless to say the "unionism" to be cultivated will be the hothouse variety evolved by Mussolini; trade unions and parliaments are to be replaced by "corporates" wherein a single employer has a vote equal to that of all his employees and the state stands ready to break any deadlock by casting a vote in favor of "God, family, private property, and personal initiative". M. Arcand is also interested in the lucubrations of the Imperial Fascist League in England, some of whose pamphlets he circulates, and he is rumored to be in comradely touch with Herr Kuhn of the U.S.A.

Openly the new Arcand party seems to have made little progress since its trumpeted fusion and one can expect splits any time, what with the variegated aims of the outfit and a certain lack of color and originality in the Chief. Below ground, however, Arcand is preparing for just such an emergency by strengthening his tie-up with the still powerful Conservative Party and other respectably reactionary and nationally more dangerous organizations. In the last federal election he ran the entire Quebec campaign for the Conservatives. Since then it has become an open charge that Duplessis himself is a secret adviser in Arcand's organization, and that most of his Cabinet are members, together with French Conservatives who were once in the Dominion Cabinet and now have posts in the federal Senate. Manion, the new Conservative Party leader replacing Bennett, is himself a good French Catholic, a pal of Duplessis, and, if his speeches are any indication, perhaps also of Arcand.

## Canada's Sudetens

To understand the growth of both Arcand's gang and the separatist French movement it is necessary to keep in mind the

\**Nation*, Feb. 26, 1938.



fantastic character of the Canadian "nation". Isolated from a natural economic growth within the U.S.A. by a boundary line as arbitrary and illogical as Czecho-Slovakia's, Canada has also a somewhat similar minorities problem. A scant half of the population is British in origin; 20% is made up of races and creeds from all over the globe, and another 28% are French-speaking Catholic descendants of the original colonists conquered by British muskets in 1765. From 65,000 they have multiplied to 2,800,000 in a population of 11 million—a number almost exactly proportional to the Sudeten population of Czecho-Slovakia. Eighty-one per cent are concentrated in the province of Quebec, but while the general Canadian birth rate is falling precipitately,\* the French, as befits devout Catholics, reproduce as of yore, and now overflow at such a rate that the ancient Scotch Presbyterian province of New Brunswick reports with alarm a school population 40% Catholic, most of whom are French. All that is necessary to bring Europe's lunatic ward into America's back-yard is for De la Rocque or some other fascist son of the Church to secure power in France, declare a Catholic corporate state, and demand autonomy for the persecuted Gauls of Canada.

Lacking such a champion the French-Canadians are driven to find their own Henleins by much the same economic frustration, national straightjacketing, and ignorance. Almost as thoroughly as the Czechs, the Anglo-Saxons monopolize big business, freeze out the French shopkeepers of Montreal with chain stores, discriminate against Frenchmen in the civil service and in a hundred other fields. It is true the workers are equally sweated by their own Catholic capitalists when these get a chance, but so long as the latter remain a tiny minority, the basis for a fanatical separatist movement exists. Theoretically the French are protected from discrimination by the British North America Act under which the Dominion was created. This guarantees them proportional representation in the Dominion Parliament, national equality of language, religious freedom, and the preservation within Quebec of the old French civil law and feudal land system. The real result of all this, however, has been to perpetuate artificially the racial and religious barriers between the French and the rest of Canada, and to doom the Quebec masses to ruthless feudal exploitation by seigniorial landlords and an all-powerful State Church. Made the underdog nationally, the impoverished Frenchman takes meagre solace in bullying the Englishmen within his own province. Smothered by the mountainous ignorance of Catholicism he has been so far persuaded to consider his own exploiters as benevolent protectors against the heathen Saxon.

## Petrified Church-State

The power of the Church is the key to the fascist-separatist maze in Quebec today. By far the largest single landholder in the province, and perhaps in the Dominion, its wealth can be estimated only in the billions. From every inhabitant of Quebec it takes an average of \$10 yearly in direct tolls, apart from rents and mortgages. Its political control is open and virulent. The Cardinal, Villeneuve, enjoys not only the empty dignity of a joint throne with the Lieutenant-Governor, but also the real power of a backwoods Richelieu, as adviser and even intimidator of the Premier. The notorious Padlock Law was, for instance, personally "suggested" by him to Duplessis. Lesser church dignitaries have their seats in an antediluvian and autocratic Senate—the only provincial upper-house not yet abolished in Canada. The laws are naturally fashioned in the interests of these pious parasites. Church tithes have priority over all other debts and failure to pay them can lead to imprisonment. If a priest decides to build a new church, he may legally compel his parishioners to mortgage their homes in payment for it, and foreclose on them in the bargain. By contrast, foreclosures cannot be visited

upon church property, which is also free from municipal taxation and exempt from the operations of even Quebec's miserable Minimum Wage Law.

Petrified feudal privilege similarly allows Quebec's masters to dodge compulsory education, and fill the boards of what state schools there are with the usual priestly *incubi*. English, which was to have equal standing with French, is now not to be taught till the fifth grade; since probably 75% of the young poor are dragged out to work before they have reached that pathetic cultural eminence, everything is now hunky-dory for producing a generation of French-Canadians without so much as a smelling acquaintance with the general language of America. McGill, Montreal's non-denominational college, despite its illiberal governing board, looks like an academy in a world socialist state compared with the Catholic University of Montreal. The 1928-9 calendar of the latter institution expressly warns its students, and their papas, against seduction by the three great Errors: "le materialisme, le liberalisme, et le modernisme" (p. 19).

Clerical control reaches into every phase of life. Only the Church can perform marriages; there is no such thing as divorce, and annulment is extremely difficult unless you can show that your mate was a non-Catholic, when it is quite easy. Women have no vote. Films are so bowdlerized that even the innocuous *Life of Zola* couldn't get through the border. Those French classics alone are sold in open shops which have escaped the *Index Expurgatoris*. Cultural sterilization is completed by the systematic isolation of the faithful in religious clubs, by sexes and by social strata, from babyhood to senility.

As a direct result Quebec endures living standards as wretched as those in the Deep South or Newfoundland. The long-delayed Minimum Wage Law ignores governmental, church, and agricultural employees, and provides only that fulltime skilled labor should not be paid less than \$8-\$12 weekly. Since this represents a 25% increase over average wages heretofore, Duplessis is making no effort to enforce the law; it would be too revolutionary. Quebec's timber resources may be endless, but Montreal's slums are the most decrepit in a Dominion generally and chronically afflicted with housing shortage. No wonder the infant death rate is double Ontario's, and the proportion of contagious diseases nearly triple. With a population 17% less than her western neighbor, she uses only 30% the number of autos, and her book circulation is 5% of Ontario's.\* The Montreal relief roll is 135,000 in a population of a million—one in seven.

Twentieth-century industrialization of the province has simply increased the economic misery of the French without breaking the hold of feudal reaction. The backwoods Quebec farmer survived for two centuries on second-rate farms by the use of medieval tools and primitive barter; he could not save to leave or to climb out of his class, but he had a certain relative self-sufficiency. Now his sons and daughters, who used scarcely to see \$10 cash in a year, are drawn to the money-wages of the new pulp mills and power and manufacturing plants, only to find themselves sweated and starved as never before. The urban population, already 52% of Quebec by 1911, increased to 64% by 1931. Montreal, Canada's largest city, has been growing faster than either Chicago or New York in their weediest days. This has swelled the reservoir of cheap industrial labor, unprotected by legislation and green to trade unionism. Many Ontario manufacturers have actually shifted their plants to Quebec to share in the pickings of an ingenuous proletariat which still goes to mass to hear the priest tell it how to vote.

## The Revolt Against Catholicism

The long-term results which are now beginning to show are much less acceptable to the exploiters, both lay and clerical.

\*Births per 1,000: 1921, 29.4; 1935, 20.2.

\*See D. Levine, *Proletarian Outlook*, July 1938.

When the *habitant*† becomes a proletarian he frequently has to work with English-speaking heretics, perhaps even secret "reds"; from these he learns that his living conditions are worse than anywhere else in the country and that this is partly to be explained by his extra burden of perpetual tribute to the Church. If he is to remain a meek sheep for the shearing he must be taught that the wolf is somewhere else. Separatist fascism supplies the answer, and the threatened Church the money to organize it. Antisemitism is encouraged to divide the French worker from the equally exploited but more radical Jews of Montreal. It is awkward of course that there is not a single Jewish name or face on the boards of any Canadian bank or trust or utility or transportation company; this can be partly got round by references to the ultimate control by those ubiquitous Jews, Morgan and Mond, but it is eventually necessary to provide a headier propaganda wine than this. Hence non-Semitic magnates are labelled "foreigners" who have attached the French Garden of Eden to a godless Empire. In this manner even the French-Canadians' progressive resistance to British imperialist warfare is used to preserve vestigial Catholic feudalism and the economic suicide of Quebec separatism.

Nevertheless the grim wolf will still creep and intrude into the fold. As early as 1901 American trade-union scouts were slinking into the St. Lawrence valley. In desperation the Church created its own unions, a Federation of "Syndicats", to coalesce the functions of a company union and a Sunday school. For constitution the federation was presented with a papal encyclical of Leo XIII, beginning, "Yes, misery and suffering are the heritage of mankind, and should men try everything in their power, they will never succeed in eliminating them." But slave epigrams are one thing and economics another. By last year the Federation had grown to 45,000 members and its unions were actually engaging in strikes, as in the foundry and ship-repair yards of Sorel. Some of its sections risked purgatory to form joint committees with the A.F.L. to bargain for wage-agreements with Duplessis and even, in one instance, to run a joint labor candidate at municipal polls. Worse, 3000 Catholic needle-trade workers defied hell-fire and joined the I.L.G.W.U. When they also went on strike, Archbishop Gauthier threatened excommunication, but the picket lines endured and the strike was won. Most catastrophic of all, the C.I.O. climbed into the seigniorial paradise and with the help of the Trades and Labor Congress led 10,000 textile workers to another strike victory. Duplessis rushed through fake labor legislation specifically barring the C.I.O. and outlawing the closed shop, but the C.I.O., though virtually driven underground, continues to seduce the toiling worshippers of Mary, in the mines, furniture factories, offices, press rooms, fur shops and steel plants.

## The Padlock Law

A parallel reform movement swept Quebec politics but this has been quickly decapitated. After forty incredible years the rotting Taschereau Liberal regime was booted out by a new "Union Nationale" headed by none other than Duplessis and dedicated to busting the trusts, or as the French-Canadians more euphoniously say, the "trustards". Once in power Duplessis quickly made his peace with the denizens of St. James Street (Canada's Wall Street) and substituted the safer scapegoat of Bolshevism. "An Act Respecting Communistic Propaganda", generally known as the Padlock Law, was shoved through an unanimous legislature; this makes it illegal for the owner or renter of a building "to use it, or to allow any person to make use of it, to propagate communism or bolshevism by any means whatever". The definition of communism was left to the Attorney-General, a post which Duplessis took over for himself; in

any case, there is no appeal allowed from the decision of the local judge. Penalty for conviction is one year's padlocking of the building and confiscation of the literature involved and anything else the cops take a fancy to.

During the first six months of the new *carte blanche* there was an average of two raids a day, during which several thousand books and newspapers were destroyed. These included a copy of *Tom Sawyer* and some Protestant bibles which a Baptist mission had been nefariously circulating\*. Significantly the trade unions have been the victims of 80% of the raids, and the offices and homes of the Catholic Syndicalists are not exempt. But since the masses continue to be restless, and apostates multiply daily, the authorities find it necessary to muzzle even the mildest liberals. The apartment of John MacCormac, New York *Times* correspondent, was combed for bolshevism, C.C.F. professors are threatened, and even the microscopic Stalinists are not immune. In vain Tim Buck assures the peace-loving Church of his peace-loving friendship; Duplessis' men continue to carry off the Stalin hymnals and the *balileikas* from the Young Pioneers. When a highly respectable Stalinist member of the Chamber of Deputies was imported from France to speak about "peace", Duplessis arranged with the young fascists of the University of Montreal to create riots in the streets, and used the excuse to ban the meeting. Several Jewish stores were incidentally smashed in the process.

## How Not to Fight Fascism

To these open provocations of reaction the C.C.F. and Stalinites reply only with a falsetto clamor about civil liberties. Under their influence the victimized trade unions are headed off from the essential task of organizing defense squads and persuaded to substitute the telegraphing of protests to the stuffed-shirt Lapointe, Dominion Attorney-General. The latter had, for a certain period of time now elapsed, the constitutional power to nullify the Padlock Law as contrary to the B.N.A. Act, a power which he had been nimble to use when Aberhart's Social Credit government tried to clip the wings of the banks in Alberta. The 45 trades unions and the 63 other organizations, with a combined membership of 100,000, which sent Lapointe high-falutin resolutions about the Padlock Law, were however quite logically ignored.

A typical example of the "fight against fascism" as waged by Canada's self-styled Lefts was provided in July when Arcand held his first Toronto meeting. The Stalinites staged a counter-rally in a hall well removed, at which 10,000 of the faithful, the curious, and the duped were treated to an hour's slamming of Marxism by ex-Ambassador Dodd of Washington. The C.C.F., afraid to sully its petit-bourgeois fingers with any kind of united front, held its own gathering for 800 assorted pinks—also safely remote from the scene of battle. The fascists carried on unhampered; a few Fieldites, bravely cooperating with nobody and anxious for publicity at any price, managed to get themselves arrested by the cops detailed to preserve the democratic liberties of Monsieur Arcand.

Within the C.C.F. the Socialist Policy Group agitates for a united defense organization and workers' guards, but it is a voice crying in the wilderness. Instead, the C.C.F. has floated a Canadian Civil Liberties Union which naturally gets nowhere. For all the legality of the matter, Quebec might set up a fascist government tomorrow and, provided it stayed within the Dominion, receive the blessing of the Canadian Democratic State. On the other hand, if the B.N.A. Act is modified to curb provincial powers, Duplessis has already made it clear he will fight any changes with armed insurrection.

In Ontario, Premier Hepburn, persecutor of the C.I.O., tool

†French-Canadian farmer.

\*See *Montreal Gazette*, Feb. 7, 1938.

of the mining interests, and a typical Canadian Huey Long, has formed an open bloc with Duplessis to preserve the profits of the two richest provinces from the begging hands of the impoverished west. These two men are probably much more dangerous than Arcand; they may even be the real Canadian fascists of the future. They are steadily creating a reactionary boss regime inside the crumbling shell of the old Liberal party, and plainly have ambitions in Dominion politics. At the moment these provincial demagogues are putting on a strip-tease act with the rags of bourgeois democracy. Eventually they, or other troupers of the same breed, may wriggle out of the last shred and, to the applause of the capitalist baldheads, the curtain will ring down on naked fascism.

## The Proletarian Road

There is yet time, especially if Canada is not immediately involved in European war, to stop the show. Except in Quebec, fascism languishes until the workers threaten big business sufficiently. But the Augean stables won't be cleaned out with the teaspoons of the old ladies in the Civil Liberties Union. If the C.C.F. is ever to become a party of labor it must be prepared to meet the fascists physically blow for blow. It must give the lead to the unions and to the working class organizations of all kinds in the formation of joint defense squads with a permanent centre and trained worker-defenders. There must be no spreading of illusions that legislative tinkering will halt reaction. In short the party which will prevent fascism in Canada must be also the party capable of carrying the working-class to revolutionary

victory. Such a party must be itself working-class. The prairie farmers, a potential reservoir for fascist recruitment, must be won to the support of the workers not, as now in the C.C.F., by wholesale concessions to their sectionalist and anti-labor habits, but by showing them in theory and practise that only the power of labor can destroy the capitalism that bleeds all toilers alike.

The complicated Quebec problem will also be solved only by a militant workers' party willing to concede the right of self-determination to the 2½ millions with a different race, language, and traditions, but fearless also in exposing the role of Catholic religion and Catholic wealth. Such a party will need to fight the pussyfooting Stalinists and all other betrayers who cloak the economic exploitation of Quebec Catholicism with the excuse that the pious worker must not be antagonized. The fight against fascism in Quebec is today *primarily* a fight against the Catholic Church, against the poisonous drugs of its religious doctrines, against its legal and against its political hold on the masses. When that is broken, much of the "separatist" problem will disappear, as it has already evaporated in the minds of those French-Canadian workers who have thrown off Catholicism already and struck against bosses of all creeds. The militants in the Catholic unions must be roused to multiply their joint-committees with the other unions. From this it will be possible to proceed to trade union unification, and, granted a Marxist cadre, to independent political action and unification with the proletarian revolutionary forces in Canada and the United States. That is the only way to say a final "No" to the question, "Is French Canada Going Fascist?"

E. ROBERTSON

# Mahoney Bill and Revolutionary Politics

**R**ECENTLY, THE LEGISLATIVE committee of the Trades and Labor Assembly of St. Paul indorsed a bill to establish state-owned industries. This bill had been submitted to the Minnesota state legislature by William Mahoney. The bill itself is doubtless a matter of long debate in the unions. The immediate question that comes up is: What constitutes revolutionary tactics towards such a bill?

While this question is the most pressing, nevertheless it may not be answered first. First must be answered the following questions: 1) What economic and social problems does the bill aim to solve? 2) Can the bill, by its very nature and provisions, if it is put into practice, solve the problems? 3) What is the political motivation behind the introduction of the bill? Then, and only then, can correct tactics be formulated. To leap over the analysis in order the more quickly to decide on the tactics will result in nothing more substantial than hair-brained phrasemongering. It will result in revolutionary word-intoxication bereft of understanding, but never revolutionary practice.

The bill aims to solve two problems, unemployment and taxation. It aims to abolish unemployment and to reduce taxation. Both aims are stated in the title of the bill. The intention of abolishing unemployment receives almost exclusive prominence in the title. It is almost as if accidentally the words got to make an additional aim of the bill "to reduce taxation by relieving the community of the necessity of supporting the unemployed and dependent citizens on the relief rolls." We shall see later that the two aims are incompatible; that we cannot reduce taxes and reduce unemployment at the same time. At present it is enough to know that the two aims of the bill are to reduce both unemployment and taxes.

## Neo-Utopianism

The method it proposes is a system of state-owned industries which "shall strive to establish its separation, self-sufficiency and independence from the private industrial system."

In the problems it tries to solve and in the method of solution, the Mahoney Bill continues a tradition of utopian socialism and petty-bourgeois escapism that spans over a century of American labor history. It calls to mind the experiments of Owen and his followers and the cooperative ventures of the trade unions. Like them, the Mahoney Bill aims to solve the economic and social problems—abject poverty, degradation and starvation resulting from unemployment—born of the profit system. Like them, the Mahoney Bill offers a solution which evades and tries to escape the whole cause of unemployment and poverty—the profit system. The differences between the present bill and the previous experiments arise from differences in economic conditions. Owen and his followers, intellectuals predominantly, had the capital needed to open and operate their "communist" communities. The unions who entered upon producers' cooperatives also had the requisite capital to start their enterprises. Today's many-millioned unemployed, however, have not enough for self-subsistence much less for investing in factories, machinery, and the raw materials of industrialism. There are no philanthropists to grant them subsidies. If they are to become self-sufficient and independent of the profit system, the capital for achieving this must come from others than themselves. Either individual philanthropy or state aid must supply the funds. But individual philanthropy, which even at best is more showy than substantial, has dried up with the decline of capitalism. The bill provides therefore that the state shall supply the funds and the state shall own and operate the factories created by the funds.

## Conflict of Aims

From the very beginning the conflict between the two aims emerges and the desire to reduce taxation makes a sham of reducing unemployment and poverty. True, the bill proposes that the state establish factories but only such "as will require the minimum of capital investment and provide the maximum of employment". But whether the solution is adequate to the disease

depends upon the extent to which the bill provides for the expansion of state-owned industries to provide employment to all unemployed. And the bill is haunted not only by the fear of raising taxes but also by the horror of infringing upon the profits system.

This double fear hems in the bill and nullifies it as a real factor in solving unemployment by state-owned industries. On one hand it limits the type of state-owned industries that can be established, specifying that only those industries be operated "as will require the minimum of capital investment and provide the maximum of employment". The immediate effect will be to limit the arena within which the bill could function. In addition the industries that would be established would operate as a reactionary throw-back to a period of low capital in proportion to large labor power. This would result in a decreasing productivity of labor, lower total production for unemployed, lower per capita distribution of commodities and lower living standards. The second limitation is a limitation upon funds. The building of state-owned industries depends upon the amount of money spent for capital investment. The bill makes no provision for expenditures outside of an insignificant initial sum of one million dollars. Until provisions for expenditures and revenues are made in the bill, the bill remains merely a promise of action, written upon the statute books, without the money to put it into effect. Expenditures would have to be in the billions, not millions, and the taxation to get the money, if it is not to be a back-breaking burden upon the workers, small farmers and lower middle class, must fall upon the wealthy in the form of very steep income taxes, inheritance taxes, and other taxes that would wipe out almost entirely the profits of the capitalists. It can all be summed up briefly: unless expenditures are specified, the bill is only a written wish. Unless expenditures are in billions, the bill is inconsequential as a solution of unemployment. Unless the revenue is gotten from capital, the unions will be indorsing a solution which will give jobs to the unemployed by oppressing the employed.

But assuming the impossible—assuming that enough money will be spent to give jobs to all unemployed, assuming that the money is taken from the very rich only—what will be the position of the unemployed under the conditions provided for in the bill?

## Determining Wages

The amount of wages is not specified. All that is specified is the method for determining the amount. The bill states that "payment to the workers of the full value of their collective product shall be the principle to be observed". It also says that the product of the public industries shall be distributed to the unemployed who are working there "in proportion to the productiveness of each one's labor". However, the productiveness of each worker in a system so complex as capitalism is impossible. Wages cannot be determined for individual workers on the basis of productivity. They will be set arbitrarily by the Public Industries Commission, which will decide what percentage of the product was contributed by what category of workers. And in what medium will the wages be paid? The bill says in the "current medium". That may mean anything, i.e., special scrip for the unemployed. This is not the same as "legal tender" which is the medium of exchange that is considered lawful money for the settlement of debts and the making of purchases. But even if the productivity of each worker can be correctly estimated as a basis for determining wages and even if the wages are paid in legal tender, the unemployed will still be oppressed under the bill. For while wages depend upon productivity, the productivity per worker itself will be low, resulting in lower wages than prevail among workers in private industry.

The level of wages in public industries would be lower than the general wage level because the productivity per hour on public industries would be lower and the number of hours of work during a working week would also be lower. We need not take too seriously the provision calling for the installation of "the most efficient machinery and improved processes to achieve the highest degree of labor productiveness in order that its employees may obtain the highest possible compensation". This provision comes into head-on conflict with the other provision asking for a low ratio of capital to labor in industries established by the state. Efficient machinery would result in "highest possible compensation" for those employed in public industries, would result in high productivity, high standard of living—and high taxes and low profits for the capitalists. Low capital ratio would require less investment outlay by the state, less taxes—and lower standard of living for the unemployed. The clash between profits and plenty will be settled by the whole weight of the state machine in the interests of profit.

The alternative that will face the unemployed with jobs in the public industries will be: either accept the lower living standards or increase wages by increasing their hours of work. The public industries are excluded as a source of increased employment since the bill makes specific provision that no one may work more than 30 hours a week. The unemployed will therefore compete with workers in private industry, either by getting part-time employment or taking away jobs from regularly employed workers by under-bidding them.

## Avoids Collective Bargaining

Another method that workers in private industry get higher wages is through union struggles and collective bargaining. This bill, although indorsed by unions, contains no provision for union recognition or collective bargaining. Lacking these instruments for self-improvement, the unemployed will be helpless. Sole power for determining wages remains with the Public Industries Commission, which is an integral part of the state capitalist machine. The section requiring that "The Public Industries Commission shall operate all industrial projects on the basis of industrial democracy through worker councils through which the workers employed in the Public Industries shall be encouraged to manage the projects under the supervision of the Commission," will not change the situation appreciably. First, it avoids the central issue of collective bargaining and union recognition. Second, in the wider realm of managing the industry, it gives no *specific* powers to the workers' councils which they can exercise. Third, all it expresses is a pious resolve that the workers' councils "shall be encouraged" to manage the projects. What constitutes encouragement will be for the Commission to decide and the unemployed to deride. And it is certain that the same bill which does not even encourage the more limited demands for collective bargaining and union recognition will not be too great a source of encouragement to workers' management of the industries.

Even after he has finished with his work, the unemployed has not finished with the commission. The bill provides that "The Public Industries Commission is hereby empowered to require of workers employed in the Public Industries to spend such portion of their earnings in the Public Industries Commissaries as may be determined by the Commission in accordance with the ability of Public Industries to supply all the material needs of the workers therein". The effect of this provision is to result in a double deprivation of the freedom of the unemployed. It would deprive them of the freedom to spend their wages wherever they want, thus making their private life subject to the whims and caprices of a commission. While this is oppressive under the best of circumstances, it is worse when the commission is part of the

capitalist state trying to reduce taxes at the expense of the unemployed. It would also deprive the unemployed of the power to buy *what* they want. First they will have to spend the proper share of their earnings in the state stores, where there is certain to be real limitations on the variety of goods, since production is to be limited only to the "material needs". This will result in a lower living standard for the unemployed.

## Institutionalizing the Unemployed

The destruction of the freedom of consumption for the unemployed, which is what this bill contemplates, is planned in order to guarantee a market for the output of the public industries and to separate the public industries from private industry, making each independent of the other. To further aid the separation, the bill provides for exchange centers "in order that Public Industries employees may obtain the products of their labor at the cost of production. These distributing centers or store houses must be stocked with goods and merchandise made by or procured for the Public Industries, to meet the material requirements of all persons employed in the Public Industries to the fullest possible extent." Having previously deprived the unemployed of freedom to buy *where* they want, the bill would now deprive them of power to buy *what* they want. That, in practice, is the meaning of the bill. For under the best of circumstances, the variety of goods produced will be strictly limited, as provided in the bill, to "material needs". Result: the already low standard of living of the unemployed may go still lower.

The threat to the living standards of the unemployed is not much alleviated by the further proviso that "The Public Industries Commission may exchange the products of the Public Industries system for the products of private industry when necessary and advantageous." This provision is admission that the separation from the world of private industry, which the bill envisages, is impossible. But just as its dream of withdrawing from private industry is impractical, so is its hasty attempt to keep connections. Private industry is not interested in bartering with the Private Industries commission, product for product. It is interested in cash, not barter. The commission will be able to buy goods for the exchanges either with funds raised by the government through taxation or with funds from the public sale of goods produced by the public industries. The second alternative is forbidden. The bill specifically says that the Commission "shall not sell on the open market in competition with the products of private industry". The only alternative is increased taxation to obtain funds for purchasing commodities. But increased taxation is exactly what the bill aims to abolish. Result will be that little if any new goods will be bought for the exchanges. Savings in taxes will be accompanied by limited quantity and variety of goods. The separation between private and public industries would be at the expense of the living standards of the unemployed.

And despite all precautions, it will be impossible to separate public from private industry. The capital requirements of public industries will be met by private industry. However, since the capital requirements will be comparatively small, the stimulus to the capital goods industries will also be small. Even more important, the market to take the output of these capital goods will be the unemployed, who will get the goods in exchange centers. Private consumption goods industries will be deprived of the sustaining force of government subsidized consumption.

The removal of this subsidized consumption will have dire effects upon private industry. It will cut down the demand for consumption goods from private industry, resulting in increasing unemployment there. The contracting market will result in a contracting demand for capital goods by the consumption goods industries, bringing on greater unemployment in the capi-

tal goods industries. Depressions will increase in severity due to falling profits. Unemployment will grow, and require further expansion of public industries at the expense of private industry. The alternatives will again become glaringly evident: Either private industry must be destroyed—through expropriation of industries or confiscatory taxation—in order to save the unemployed from starvation and poverty; or the living standards of the unemployed must be destroyed and the unemployed themselves repressed—in order to save private industry and profits.

The bill is additional proof that no one can bridge the gulf between profits and plenty. Because it wants to leave private industry untouched, the bill avoids the pressing need for immediate action to solve the question of unemployment by methods that are immediately applicable—such as opening up the idle factories, expropriating them—and instead escapes into plans for the future. Because it wants to keep profits untouched it would reduce taxes and prohibit public sale of commodities made in the public industries. The result is that the present plan to solve the problem of unemployment would never be put into practice to any appreciable extent. And if it were put into practice, it would institutionalize the unemployed into a pariah sect, cut off from the ordinary economic relations of the labor movement, with wages lower, productivity lower, status lower, standards of living lower, with freedom of the market and consumption destroyed.

## Anti-Labor Boomerang

The passage of the bill, in its present form, would be a boomerang against the labor movement. The unions have fought for decades for the right to buy whatever and wherever they wanted with their wages. The bill they indorse would take that right from the unemployed. The unions fight daily for better wages for themselves. The bill they indorse does not even state the wages, and would certainly destroy the real wages of the unemployed. The unions fight for union recognition for themselves. The bill they indorse provides neither for union recognition nor for collective bargaining for the unemployed. The unions fight for control of jobs and conditions of work. The bill they indorse makes no specific provision for similar powers to the unemployed. The labor movement which indorsed and advocated the bill would bear responsibility for its evil fruits. The unemployed will curse the unions for the law they advocated. And the gap between the organized labor movement and the unorganized unemployed will grow wider and more dangerous.

Some positive stand must be taken on the bill. And it must be a stand that will use the bill as a means of linking the unemployed to the labor movement by indissoluble ties. It must be a stand that will turn the need for abolishing unemployment into another lever for the overthrow of capitalism. What stand must that be?

There will be some to say that we should go along with the bill. The reasoning will be somewhat like this: The bill is indorsed by the labor movement and represents the demands of the labor movement. True, it is imperfect, etc., etc. Nevertheless, it is a sign of awakening political consciousness within the labor movement. This consciousness is progressive even if its product is not quite satisfactory. Therefore, we must advocate the product—the bill—lest we appear as crack-pots and ultra-radicals; lest we isolate ourselves from the movement of the masses. While this is the easiest stand, it is the stand of opportunism and it has nothing to do with either revolutionary theory or revolutionary practice. No union militant who understood the bill would do this, much less a revolutionist.

Others will propose a new bill altogether. Doubtless a new bill would have a more formal perfection, but to pose it as a real alternative is evidence of sheer sectarianism. Our introduc-

ing a new bill would put us into motion against the labor movement as it gropes for a solution for unemployment. It would put us outside, and against, the movement at the very time when we should be within the movement of the masses, helping direct their gropings toward revolutionary solutions.

Practical revolutionary politics would consist, in this case, in changing the entire meaning of the bill by amendment. To do this successfully we must 1) grasp the fundamental objective of the workers—in this case it is the abolition of poverty and unemployment; 2) understand fully the steps necessary to solve it; 3) appraise accurately the level of development of the workers whom we would move to action in order to know what type of appeals could move them. On the basis of this knowledge, we can counterpose a series of amendments. The order in which they are introduced and the time of introduction is a test of political insight. Generally, the order should be as follows: 1) Amendments whose obvious effects would be to destroy provisions of the bill that would nullify the fundamental objective of the workers. 2) Amendments which would make the bill more effective an instrument in solving unemployment. These amendments should be introduced in the most effective order—beginning with those changes which would find an immediate response and approval among the majority of the rank and file workers and connect them with transitional demands which lead to the overthrow of capitalism.

## Necessary Amendments

The following three amendments every class conscious unionist would agree to: 1) That wages to workers in state-owned factories be equal to wages paid to union men for similar work in private industry. This would free the unemployed from dependence for their wage scale on the reactionary method of production that may be set up under the state-owned factories. It would also bind the workers there to the labor movement with ties of economic interest. 2) That wages in state-owned factories be definitely specified as to be paid with "legal tender". The payment by forms of scrip money which characterized the semi-serfdom of the American labor movement should not be permitted to come to life under vague legal enactment. 3) That all restrictions on how or where workers employed in state-owned industries shall spend their money be stricken from the bill. Such restrictions, also, characterize the enslavement of the workers. Whatever the actual extent of the state-owned factories, these amendments will serve to keep the unemployed from being degraded and will forge ties of solidarity between unemployed and workers.

The next amendments would insure the employment in state-owned factories of all unemployed—by methods that would involve wholesale confiscation of capitalist profits or general expropriation of idle factories. If the bill is not to be a fraud, it requires expenditures large enough to establish state-owned factories sufficient to employ all unemployed. The approximate expenditures needed could be figured out by getting the average amount of capital per worker used in private industry and multiplying this average by the number of unemployed in Minnesota. In addition, there would have to be money for wages. The sum would run into the billions. But no worker genuinely interested in abolishing unemployment would hesitate at this. Moreover, he would not hesitate at all if another amendment were introduced to require that the revenue for the state-owned factories should all be gotten by taxes on the capitalists. A further amendment could specify that if, in a given period, the state-owned factories did not give employment to all or an appreciable portion of the unemployed, the state should take over and operate as many of the closed down factories as would be required to give employment to all unemployed. The Mahoney

Bill, when handled in this way, becomes a vehicle of propaganda for solving unemployment by means of revolutionary demands of a transitional character.

Workers' control of the state-owned industries—"industrial democracy"—can be agitated among the unionists by 1) proposing an amendment making specific provision for collective bargaining and union recognition; and 2) keeping the present section on encouraging workers management pretty much as it is. Neither provision, if enacted into law, will organize workers or hand over to them management of the state-owned factories. But they will supply concrete issues about which to raise the class consciousness of the unionists during the process of union discussions and parliamentary struggles.

A further amendment could challenge the whole capitalist domination of the market. This could be done simply by striking out the provision which prohibits the sale in the open market of products made in state-owned factories. Such an amendment would raise the whole issue of the superiority of government owned factories over private industries in terms of efficiency of production, of low price to workers tormented by monopoly prices of private industry. The opposition of the capitalists to such a provision could be used as open admission of their inability to compete with government-owned products on the open market. It would be a means of putting across two telling arguments: 1) socialism is far superior to capitalism for the masses. 2) The only way to keep the wrecking activities of the capitalists and their politicians from interfering with the state-owned industries and the effective solution of unemployment is by smashing them permanently—by revolution.

David COWLES

## Argentina Group Issues Magazine

THE ORGANIZATION of the Fourth Internationalists in Argentina are issuing a monthly magazine in the Spanish language, called *Nuevo Curso* (New Course). The first number, containing numerous articles on Argentina, the Latin-American countries and problems of the Fourth International movement, recently reached the United States. *Nuevo Curso* is published in Buenos Aires. The comrades write that THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is warmly welcomed each month and that its articles are translated for use in Argentina. From the increasing number of magazines that go to Argentina and the other Latin-American countries, we too can attest to the evident interest in and growth of the Fourth International forces. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL extends warm revolutionary greetings and long life to *Nuevo Curso*.

The United States of Europe is the motto of the revolutionary age into which we have emerged. Whatever turn the war operations may take later on, whatever facit diplomacy may draw out of the present war, and at whatever tempo the revolutionary movement will progress in the near future, the formula of the United States of Europe will in all events retain a colossal meaning as the political formula of the fight of the European proletariat for power. In this program is expressed the fact that the national state has outlived itself—as a frame for the development of all creative forces, as the basis for the class struggle, and thereby also as a state form of proletarian dictatorship. Over against the conservative defence of the antiquated national fatherland we place the progressive task, namely the creation of a new, higher "fatherland" of the Revolution, of republican Europe, whence the proletariat alone will be enabled to revolutionize and reorganize the whole world.

Leon TROTSKY, 1918

# British Policy In Palestine

**T**HE THREE PRINCIPAL FACTORS in the political arena in Palestine are British imperialism, the Arab nationalist movement under its present leadership and the Zionist movement. A labor movement as an independent factor exercising influence in political affairs does not yet exist. We shall deal with each of these factors separately.

Palestine represents strategically a highly important colony. It is situated in the vicinity of the Suez Canal, the sea route to India. Across Palestine lies also the air route to the Far East. The greatest airport in the Near East is situated in Palestine. In Haifa the British government is constructing a sea base, naturally at the expense of the Palestine population. The oil of Iraq, of such great importance to British imperialism, flows through a pipe-line to Haifa. Palestine likewise serves as an important base of British policy in the Mediterranean. With the strengthening of the Italian air fleet and its Mediterranean base, the strategic significance of Malta for England was considerably reduced. The conquest of Ethiopia weakened England's position in Egypt. Both are important reasons for the fact that Palestine is today of the very greatest significance in the British military set-up. Not for nothing is Haifa called the Singapore of the Near East.

Besides the strategic significance of Palestine for English imperialism it possesses a certain economic significance. British capital is found to be invested in the important industries of Palestine, in the Ruthenberg electrical enterprise, in the Jerusalem station, in the Dead Sea potash works, in the construction of the Haifa Harbor, in the soap and oil factories of Shemen, in the Iraq Petroleum Company and many others. Clearly, however, the principal importance of Palestine for British imperialism lies in the field of strategy and not of economics.

British policy in this country is based on a system of divide and rule, the system of inciting national hatreds between the two peoples in the country in order to assure itself the position of arbitrator. The facts which indicate the extent to which the British provoke national antagonisms are too numerous to recite here. We must content ourselves with a few typical instances.

From the beginning of British rule in Palestine to the present there have been four bloody attacks on the Jews, 1920, 1921, 1929 and 1936-38. After the bloody events of 1921, the two leaders of the provocation against the Jews, Emin al Hussein and Aref al Aref sentenced to fifteen years in prison, were quickly released and the former was appointed by the government to the highest Arab office in the country, President of the Supreme Moslem Council despite the fact that his name was not even included on the Arab list of proposed candidates. The other was promoted to the position of District Commissioner of Beer-sheba to become the only Arab District Commissioner in the country. This fact alone indicates how far the English government will go to uphold the influence of the feudal elements in their incitement of the Arab masses against the Jews. In 1928 the government began to proclaim the provocative decrees concerning the juridical status of the Wailing Wall (sacred to orthodox Jews) thereby opening the door to the chauvinistic religious propaganda of a gang of Effendis and leading to the pogroms of 1929 under the slogan of "Defend the Holy places". Simultaneously the government by this means strengthened the influence of the religious chauvinist element among the Jews (at that time there arose the "Commissions for the Defence of the Wailing Wall").

The government has systematically prevented all attempts at effecting a reconciliation of the two peoples. An Arab party was

organized in Haifa which raised the slogan of "Peace between the Jews and Arabs" (it was a bourgeois liberal party) and counted among its members even the Arab mayor of the city. The British government together with the feudal Arab leadership and the Zionist organization were responsible for the defeat of this party in subsequent elections and brought such pressure to bear on its members that it was dissolved. There used to exist in Palestine an international trade union of railroad workers. The government, however, prohibited membership in this trade union and imported thousands of Egyptian laborers to work on the railroads, thus blowing up the union. An attempt was made at one time to establish an organization called Achwath Poalim (Labor Brotherhood) but the government proscribed it as illegal. Efforts to bring about an understanding between the workers of both peoples were not numerous but such as they were they encountered the strongest resistance of the English government. In Palestine this policy of divide and rule takes on special characteristics which it does not show in other colonies in the same form.

To draw a clear picture of British policy one must take up two main questions: (a) the British government and its relation to Jewish immigration and settlement and (b) the British government and the demands of the Arab masses for national self-determination.

Jewish immigration represents a basic factor in the process of accelerating capitalist development. The growth of a Jewish and Arab working-class which, considered historically, represent a serious anti-imperialist force is bound up with Jewish immigration into the country. The British government is not interested in fostering any considerable working-class population in Palestine. On the other hand if the Jewish population in the country were to become too strong its dependence on British policy could not be assured even by the threat of strong pogroms. It is therefore plain that the British are not interested in a broad Jewish mass immigration. At the same time the Government does not desire to shut off Jewish immigration completely. The government's policy is therefore to open the door to a certain extent and for a limited time and then to close it. In this way the government heightens the national tensions around the immigration question. The sharp changes in the tempo of immigration lead to sharp conflicts in the relations of Jews and Arabs. The opening of the door arouses a feeling of sympathy for the British among the Jewish masses and the Arab population receives the impression of an identity of interests between the Jews and British rule, and this fosters the growth of Arab chauvinism. The closing of the doors in turn provokes strong chauvinism in the Jewish population which interprets the immigration restrictions not as a link in the chain of British policy but merely as the result of an Arab "victory" and Arab domination over the British government.

The same duplicity characterizes the policy of the government in the sphere of colonization. For many years it professed to protect the interests of the fellahin (peasants) and from time to time decreed laws for the protection of the Arab tenantry but which gave no genuine relief to the tenant for the simple reason that there was no democratic control. By means of these decrees it also tried to foster chauvinistic tendencies. It was forbidden to evict a leaseholder from the land without assuring him of an equivalent piece of land elsewhere. It was, however, permissible to evict him if he refused to pay higher rents. The purpose of this law is obvious. The government pretended to look after the leaseholder's interests and legislate for his protection, whereas in reality the feudal landowner wasn't affected at all because the Effendis whose lands were only partly cultivated

could easily evict their tenants on the pretext that they would not work the land that was assigned them. In case the landowner should incidentally have no surplus land he could, according to the law demand a higher rent and, if the leaseholder were not able to pay, he could be evicted. If these laws were therefore ineffective against the Effendis and the speculators then they were effective for the purpose of inciting national antagonisms. The Jewish settlers have no surplus land and so do not themselves appear to the tenant as lessors who can legally evict him. It is therefore clear that the attitude of the Zionist movement which stands for unlimited purchase of land and against the laws for the protection of leaseholders only sharpen the chauvinistic atmosphere around the whole question of settlement. In any case, the British government did not pass these laws in the interests of the feudal landlords or the Jewish bourgeoisie nor yet in favor of the Arab fellahin but only for the purpose of sharpening national disputes.

From all this it is evident that the British know full well how to exploit the elementary needs of the Jewish worker, namely immigration and colonization, neither of which contradicts the real necessities of the Arab masses, in order to raise a barrier of hate between the producers of both peoples and to assure itself of the dependence of the Jewish population. This the government achieves principally through pretending to look after the humanitarian interests of the Jews in Palestine.

The government is always declaring its desire to realize the establishment of a Jewish national home. These declarations are intended to win the sympathy of the Jewish population in Palestine as well as the sympathy of the Jews everywhere. The most important of these was the Balfour Declaration. It is important to understand the motives which led England to proclaim the Balfour Declaration. It was at the time when the position of the Entente powers was very unfavorable. Russia stood on the eve of the October Revolution and her rupture with the Allies. England was interested in winning the sympathy of the Russian Jews so that they might strengthen the Russian reaction which wanted to continue the war. The British were also interested in gaining the sympathy of the American Jews so that they could

support the united war front of the United States with the Allies, morally and materially. Interestingly enough, the German government at the time, and for similar reasons, proclaimed its own "Balfour Declaration". The Balfour Declaration became the means of strengthening the chauvinistic and anti-Jewish tendencies among the Arabs and strengthened the position of Zionism among the Jews of Palestine and throughout the world, and thereby also the position of British imperialism.

The British at the same time succeeded in canalizing the anti-imperialist demands of the Arab masses for national independence. A few facts will suffice to prove this point. In 1929 the High Commissioner of Palestine declared the purpose of the trip he made to England to be the introduction of constitutional reforms in Palestine and the strengthening of democracy and independence. Directly after the outbreak of 1929 he declared that in consequence of the Arab attacks on the Jews these reforms would no longer be in accord with the real situation. This statement led to the belief of the Arab masses that if there was to be no independence or democracy in the country this was not due to the fact that the British were hostile to these demands but the Jews. The High Commissioner proposed in 1935 to set up a Legislative Council. This British proposal, made in order to obscure the real demands for independent institutions, was anti-democratic insofar as real decisions would remain in the hands of British imperialism. Even today after the British army has demolished Arab villages, blown up hundreds of peasant dwellings, killed villagers and set up concentration camps, the Arab terror is directed not against the British government nor against English soldiers and officials, but against the Jewish population. For the Government is always declaring that it undertakes its measures of suppression not to maintain its rule but out of consideration for the Jewish masses, who are the real enemy of the Arabs in their movement for liberation. The Arabs are made to see their national oppressors in the Jews, and the actions of the Arab masses are directed into chauvinist anti-Jewish channels thus consolidating the rule of the feudal leaders who are the real anti-Jewish element.

L. ROCK

## Correspondence

THE QUESTION of ends and means, raised in THE NEW INTERNATIONAL holds especial interest for a detached Marxist observer in a decaying Imperialist country where, because of haphazard and untheorised development, means are assumed to be totally irrelevant to ends. This lack of theorising, of course, is in turn due to the ease with which the rising system developed in a clear field so that no thought of the next step was really necessary. It may be—probably is—different in the New World, but in Britain discussion of ends and means never arises because the quotation of the latter in "justification" of the former is never considered. They are in water tight compartments, totally unrelated, and an occasional puerile declaration that "the end justifies the means" by some unguarded Fascist or Stalinist who has forgotten the Moscow Radio Centre wave length is dismissed as "Machiavelianism". That is all that need be said to damn a thing eternally in the country of the smug John Bull who thinks "perfid Albion" is playful kidding by the Continentals, sacks kings and re-

mains a royalist, and denounces aerial terrorism while blowing Arabs and Indians sky high in the sacred cause of civilisation.

Typically, the only revolt against this "segregation" attitude is the Huxley type of sterile intellectualism. To the Christian Pacifist (an expected form of revolt in a rotting, tyrannous Imperialism) means completely dominate ends and it becomes, in the proposition's logical conclusion, a question of the means justifying the end.

Trotsky is to be particularly congratulated on opening the question as it has been to a great extent evaded (not ignored as in Britain) by Marxists. As an illustration of this evasion one may recall Lenin's "Prevaricate gentlemen—but within reason!" We know that was ironic but it signifies an attitude of mind. As a trail blazer Trotsky had naturally to leave certain gaps in his roadway and one might have hoped that Dewey would have helped to fill those up—or at least pour the tar between the stones. Actually all he succeeded in doing was to hang out an occasional "Danger: road under repair" sign and say the road was as bad as the previous jungle because the metal was broken with a Marxist hammer. With his outlook he could not avoid dealing critically with the whole structure of Marxist philosophy and inevitably, therefore, not

only put the cart in front of the horse—but forgot the load.

It would seem axiomatic that a discussion of ends and means must have for those discussing it a common basic premise. To the Roman Catholic Church of the Inquisition the one essential for the salvation of mankind including the heretics was the triumph of the holy church. Therefore if the burning of several thousand heretics became necessary it had to be done. The salvation of the world through the triumph of the Mother Church was the overriding end.

For the Fascist there must be no interference with the profitable functioning of big business. There must be no political, industrial, economic, or religious freedom—these are bad. The state must, therefore, be purified of tainted elements for the universal (capitalist) good. Shooting and murder follow automatically.

For Capitalism beyond the incipient stage and before the necessity for naked Fascism becomes overwhelmingly pressing the question does not arise. There is no conscious end. It is simply the inexorable working out of a process so far in operation that those subscribing to the ruling morality can do nothing but submit blindly. Incipient capitalism is, of course, amoral

(Continued on page 318)



# BOOKS

## Marxism and Progress

THE NEXT CENTURY IS AMERICA'S. By CARROLL D. MURPHY and HERBERT PROCHNOW. Greenberg, Publisher. New York. 1928. 244 pp. \$3.

The maturation of American Capitalism and even the definite beginnings of its decline are signalized in the recent appearance of numbers of books which defend its economic structure and political organization. In those societies, which have learnt the art of book-making, there seem to be two stages during which defensive polemics are written: at their birth, when their untraditional and radical institutions need and deserve comparison and defense against decaying but long-accepted and honored institutions of an older society from which they arose, and at middle-age, when arteriosclerosis, angina pectoris, paralysis and carcinoma begin to eat at their vitals. The United States is far from senility; hale though it still appears to be, giving irrefutable evidence of enormous political and economic resources, it is nonetheless definitely past middle-age. Previously its economic and political institutions appeared so strong that the thought or need of defending them against new political and social creeds was not deemed necessary. Attacks when made, centered upon its lack of culture, its rawness, its roughness, its huge vulgarity, its economic prodigality and wastefulness, its political immorality, corruption, graft; but they were made not in order to alter its essential structure but to remedy its incidental evils and sicknesses.

The criticisms made since the war are radically different, directed at the heart of American Capitalism. They attack its inability to serve the needs of the American people. They attack it because it bases itself upon a dead creed: that profit is the sole source of social good and personal or individual initiative. They attack it for its inability to plan; its unnecessary and anti-social extremes of wealth and poverty; for its vast accumulations of economic goods and services, which are unusable by the vast majority because of outmoded and destructive productive relations. These criticisms, for a period after the social revolution in Russia, stood impregnable; and the best that American apologists could do was to assert that America was not Russia. The advances made by the Bolsheviks would be made here in an inimitable American manner without Marxism and without revolution by the will of the people and the radical intelligence of the best sections of the capitalists. In the long run, these shrewd and exploitative gentlemen would see the value of a non-exploitative collectivism and establish a golden era of health, wealth, and happiness. This argument, until recently, was a poor smoke-screen; it veiled

nothing, not even its intellectual bankruptcy or the actual intentions of those who made it.

But the most significant social experiment in modern history, the Russian Revolution, has gone the way of all flesh. Just as it outran history in its early stage, opening new horizons of opportunity and creativeness for the exploited masses, and providing telescopic sight of a new culture, not cramped by the greedy needs and philistine vision of an exploiting class, so it has outdone the bourgeoisie under the hegemony of the bureaucracy in its cruelty, rapacity, indifference to human life, and in the abortion of the sciences, literature and art.

The accelerated degeneration of the one society, Soviet Russia, on which men of good will and the masses, once without hope, had looked as the new messianic vision, and the rise of the new political phenomenon, Fascism, which from its very inception gave promise only of sterile and abominable social fruits—have created a new opportunity for those gentlemen who fear the proletarian revolution as they fear death or the loss of their incomes, to come once more to the rescue of the great American Democracy—that mightiest of imperialist powers which according to a legend, originating during the Civil War, was made “by the people, of the people, and for the people.” Messrs. Murphy’s and Prochnow’s “The Next Century Is America’s” is as its title states, a defense of American capitalism against its critics, particularly from the left; thus, in short, a polemic against the proletarian revolution in America. As a book, it is mediocre; it lacks honesty; it is superficial and clumsily put together. In fact, if the book were judged merely on its merits, it would not deserve this lengthy review. But it is a tendentious book; and it contains essentially the methodology and arguments which better informed men will use to superior advantage.

### 1.

Above all, the keynote of the “Next Century Is America’s” is not perfection but the drive towards the ideal. Its authors rule out the actuality of the perfect society, except as a critical ideal for testing present achievement. All societies contain imperfections, unsolicited evils. Our authors therefore wish to compare the relative goods and evils of various societies and nations, as they have been and are now instituted, with the stubborn intent of crowning the United States the best of all. But though it is sufficient for the Christian spirit to murmur of perfection and to dote on the images it brings up of an eternal, unspeakable happiness, scientifically it is a chameleonic word, changeable as a shadow. Therefore, we ask: what meaning do our authors give this word? What criteria of progress, i.e., of this movement towards the

realization of an ideal? It is here that our authors meet with their first serious trial.

According to Marxism, the ideal ends of men differ with changing social circumstance. Have men desired freedom? Then they have not desired freedom as such, (as such, its concrete meaning and application are indeterminate, vague), but a certain kind of freedom, the specific right and power to do certain kinds of things. Have men desired happiness? Then they have not desired happiness as such, but a specific kind of happiness, dependent upon given objects and relationships. In an ultimate concrete sense, the structure of society and each man’s place within it determine the specific ends sought after socially and individually. How far these ideal ends will suffer profound changes and how far man will be disappointed and disillusioned by them depend in every case, upon the given social structure and man’s capacity under such circumstances to shape his ideals scientifically. Thus for Marxism, there is no fixed ideal although if a word must be found which abstractly connotes man’s changing objective, it is—to use Engels’ world “Freedom”. The class struggle is the struggle of an exploiting class to remain *free* to exploit, and of an exploited class to be *free* of exploitation.

## Freedom and Production

The possibility of freedom, however, is declared by some Marxists to be entirely dependent upon the expansion of the productive forces. Thus, according to the outstanding living Marxist today, Trotsky, this necessarily becomes the Marxist’s only criterion of progress. The greater the expansion of the productive forces, the nearer do men approach the kingdom of freedom, and the looser become the chains of necessity. The Marxist, therefore, always supports that society whose productive forces are expanding. In a negative form, this criterion is indisputably true, i.e., freedom is impossible without the satisfaction of material wants. In fact, without attaining socially a certain level of development of the productive forces, i.e., without the ability to produce socially a minimum of his bodily necessities, man can not only not be free, but cannot even live.

Positively, however, it is not necessarily true. The expansion of the productive forces, under given historical conditions, does not always involve an ascent from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom for all men. It may result in the enslavement of the majority of mankind. The expansion of the productive forces in primitive times introduced exploitative and class society and transformed a society of free men and women into a majority of slaves or serfs. However inevitable and necessary slavery was as an instrument for the expansion of production, it could hardly be supported, on the above principle, by the Marxist. Greater productivity did not introduce either greater well-being or greater freedom for the majority. In fact, the wretchedness of the majority of men was enormously intensified; their life-span de-

creased by excessive labor and epidemic disease resulting from crowding into cities, terrible sanitary conditions, and little, and very bad food. Morally their condition sank from that of free men to vocal instruments of material exploitation on a level with the beasts in the field. If the mere expansion of the productive forces were the only criterion of social progress, then the Trotskyist today would support without criticism, the Stalinist regime in Russia or the feudal-capitalist regime of the Samurai in Japan, for both are at present expanding economies. But he gives, in the first case, only critical support; in the latter, he is its most implacable and deadly enemy. The actual Marxist criterion of progress—so it appears to me—includes not only the expansion of the productive forces, but also another element: non-exploitation, i.e.,—to use Engels' word, Freedom. Expanding productive forces which should involve increased exploitation without the possibility of taking over these forces by the masses for their own use would not be supported by the Marxist. In the past, he gave critical support to capitalism against feudalism as he now gives critical support to the U.S.S.R. against Capitalism only because he thought then in the former case and thinks now in the latter case that the growth of the productive forces in these cases will produce the conditions for the freeing of the masses. If it could ever have happened that a Marxist was faced with the choice of primitive communism with its low productive level and slave society with its superior productivity, it seems to me he would have chosen primitive communism. At least, Marxist literature impresses one that way!

But whether or not the expansion of the productive forces is the only criterion used by Marxists to determine progress in society, it is unquestionable that Marxists today look upon this criterion as insufficient. It is always correlated with another principle: non-exploitation. In so far as the expansion of production operates to free men from economic slavery, insofar does it receive the physical and moral support of the Marxist.

## Chart of Utopia

Do Messrs. Murphy and Prochnow give some scientific explanation of the moving historical forces to which men react from and to which driven by their dissatisfied desires they develop images, conceptions and ideologies? Obscurely they do sense some such relationship but what it is precisely they leave in the dark. Instead they draw a chart of Utopia using mathematical indices to fix the weight and importance of each of the elements without which there could be no Utopia. They find seven great categories into which all human values fit. They are a) the foundations of liberty, b) economic level and stability, c) effective government, d) prevailing ideals, religion in particular, e) education, f) brotherliness, g) gratification. The "foundations of liberty" are valued at 50%, economic level and stability, effective government, religion and education get 10%. Brotherliness and gratifi-

cation, whose meanings are not made clear, are each given an index of 5%. The "yardstick" with which achievements are measured; the woeful scale in which it is to be weighed, found wanting, doomed.

A flaw certainly not desired by our authors is immediately and ironically transparent. Theirs must be an insupportable mortification when they discover that they have given mortal offense to one of our fundamental institutions and its leaders. Were this chart to become better known through the land, what a storm it would raise in every religious tabernacle! Religion weighed like potatoes and found to be worth only one-fifth of the "foundations of liberty!", placed on the same footing with economic wealth, material goods, and effective government—these least essentials of the good life! Every pulpit must inevitably become a furnace of pious imprecation against such blasphemy.

Why select the foundations of liberty, gratification or prevailing ideals? Why not the foundations of authority and submission, self-mortification, or "atheism"? No answer is given by our "scientific" graph-makers other than that they are important. But to whom are they important? To all men? At all times? None is offered. Perhaps they mean to say these criteria are important only for Americans? But Americans represent only one-twentieth of the world's population. On what grounds, then can our authors declare that American values are preferable to those of the French, English, German, Italian, Russian, Maori or Patagonians? They seem to think that quoting that section of the Declaration of Independence which declares certain truths to be self-evident sufficient substantiation. As though the Declaration had established scientifically its so-called self-evident truths upon a solid rock foundation! What scientific sociologist or student of political theory does not know that, if there are truths today which are not self-evident, they are these self-same, self-evident truths, and furthermore that no man in Europe or America prior to the sixteenth century recognized them as self-evident.

If we cannot obtain from our authors reasons for selecting these elements as the criteria of Utopia, at least, we should expect them to be distinct and separate categories, neither part of nor including each other. In short we should expect the rules of scientific classification to be followed. But even in this low expectation, we are disappointed. With simple assurance, we are informed that the Utopian scale requires two great divisions: one which defines the "rights" of men; the other, the "conditions" of men. Nowhere are "rights" or "conditions" so defined that their significance for social interpretation can be determined. Obviously it is presumed only a foreigner, an alien who has remained impregnable to Americanism, can fail to understand this distinction. However, within the domain of "rights", strangely enough, is found stated the "conditions" of freedom, or as our authors call them: the "foundations of liberty". These "conditions" or "foundations" are free press, free speech,

free assembly, free conscience and right of petition. Without the existence of these "rights" as the "conditions" for action, there could be no freedom. The division of "conditions" is equally, strange, for within it, one finds besides such "conditions" as the spread of comfort and material things, the "rights" of minorities, the "right of happiness", the *right* to be educated. In short, it is impossible to discover any legitimate difference in meaning between "right" and "condition", which does not lead to confusion. Prevailing ideals, i.e., religion represents according to our authors, what it is that civilization seeks to attain. In the end they say, civilization must be "judged by the ideals it realizes". One would assume, therefore, that "brotherliness", "education", "economic comfort", efficient government and the "foundations of liberty", would be included under this general heading. Obviously where the ideal of liberty does not prevail, is not *realized*, there will be no liberty. Thus "prevailing ideals" should receive a mathematical value of 100%. In actuality, it is valued at only 10%.

Four countries, the U.S., Russia, Germany and Japan are selected for comparable comparison as to their approximation to Utopia. Why these countries are selected and not others is never explained. The U.S. is especially favored. It is compared for three different years, 1776, 1929, and 1938. It is considered adequate, however, to report the imaginary index of the other countries for the year 1938 only. The comparison, of course, might not have been so favorable, if a time perspective had been used. One discovers that the index for "liberty" in the U.S. rose from 10% in 1776 to 40% in 1929, but fell back for some inscrutable reason to 35% in 1938. In what respects the foundations of liberty were increased and decreased between 1776 and 1938, are left entirely to the puzzled reader to decipher. Russia is given an index of 12; Germany and Japan of 15. But assuming numbers must be used, why Russia or Germany should be given any value above 0 for the "foundations of liberty" is absolutely incomprehensible, as is also the 3% difference in favor of Germany. It is generally understood quite correctly that the foundations of liberty are non-existent in each of the totalitarian states.

## Ideals by Percentage

Let us turn to the second question: why were these elements given these mathematical values? What makes the "foundations of liberty" worth five times as much as "prevailing ideals", and ten times as much as "brotherliness"? Why should not "brotherliness", i.e., love thy neighbor as thyself, not be worth a hundred times more than the "foundations of liberty" and a million times more than "economic level and stability"? But our learned authors who are as talkative as the erudite Stroud twin about education and religion, gabbling statistics, arguments and history, are as silent as the Sphinx on this subject.

Are these elements the same, interpreted

the same, and weighted the same in importance in all societies? How simple a question, but in reality as important as the first two. Messers. Murphy and Prochnow's answer is apparently, "Yes". Now the problem of progress has become as simple to understand as the law that 2 plus 2 makes 4. We know now whether society is becoming better or taking the worst road. But while progress has become entirely simple and clear in meaning, the natures of the societies which are measured by it have become as mysterious and incomprehensible as the trinitarian formula or a spirit which has no corporeal existence, or an infinite space which shinks continually. What hidden, inscrutable forces make societies seek the abyss of corruption and ruin, when the path to a life of greater well-being, less suffering, more comfort, superior spiritual values is so clearly illuminated? Whence the blindness or contrariness? Is it the taint of original sin, introduced by the eating of the apple? The tragic fall from grace?

### Relativity of Freedom

Is it that the Utopian chart was never discovered until Messrs. Murphy and Prochnow knitted their massive brows? Thus the obvious compass to guide men through troubled seas was lacking; and societies stumbled blindly into the future. But why did the great men of the past fail, despite prodigious labors, to root out and suspend glittering like the sun so simple and obvious a device for all men to see their way? One cannot act upon principles one has never conceived or even thought of. Socrates, Aristotle and Plato did not think the Foundations of liberty—in so far as their conceptions of liberty is analogous to our authors'—good for the vast majority of mankind. Augustine, Aquinas, Scotus, preferred the life hereafter, considering complete submission to the *Kingly* authority of God and his Son infinitely superior to any kind of freedom found in this world. Moreover the foundations of liberty as understood by our authors never even existed for them. If the departed spirits of our authors were incorporeally to discuss with these sainted sons of the Church the need and importance of introducing the foundations of liberty into heaven, they would not only not have been understood, but in so far as such language was translatable into the idiom of the ancient and mediæval church, such ideas would have been denounced quite correctly as heretical. Hobbes, whose intellectual heels trod close upon our modern society, attacked Democracy, i.e., the foundations of liberty, as a source of perpetual disturbance of peace, the cause of riots, and a breeder of anarchy. But even he conceived the foundation of liberty differently from our authors. He never thought that these rights applied to the lowest classes and ranks in society, the serf, peasant, journeyman or apprentice. These were rights belonging only to people of substance, i.e., property. Not even Marsiglio, one of the most radical thinkers of the 14th

century, a man several centuries ahead of his time, who fought in defense of democracy for the "people" against the hierarchy of the church—not even he thought democracy applied to the serf, slave, poor peasant, journeyman or apprentice. Only the right people, the lord, the burgher, the squire, knight, patrician and cleric had the right to determine the cardinal canons of the living church. By the great resistance which Marsiglio and his good friend, Ockham, met in their time to their ideas one can see that the society in which they lived refused to accept them as even good.

Thus the conclusion is inevitably forced upon us that the Utopian chart does not represent the criteria which other societies either accepted or judged themselves by. Where they did accept certain of these criteria, they did not interpret them in the same way or give them the same weight in importance.

Perhaps it may be objected: one ought not to judge a society by the conscious criteria which it uses to judge itself. Judge it by the criteria it actually used; and the criteria of Messrs. Murphy and Prochnow may be the criteria by which societies really judge themselves and must be judged by. But that is exactly what has to be proven; that is exactly what they fail to do. Instead of providing the evidence to show that their yardstick is the only scientific yardstick, they simply lift like shoplifters, from contemporary American political and intellectual counters, goods which have been displayed before every American school child since the foundation of the American Republic. Clothing them with the dignity and disguise of a statistical chart, can not hide where they were gotten or make them any better as criteria.

Rubin GOTESKY

### Art by Ukase

THE SEVEN SOVIET ARTS. By KURT LONDON. 381 pp. New Haven. Yale University Press.

There have been innumerable books and articles on Soviet art, most of them definitely prejudiced, favorably or otherwise. So few of them have been genuinely objective that Kurt London's book, while presenting little that is not familiar, is most welcome.

It is a quite successful effort to examine the condition of art in all its branches after twenty years of the revolution. Of course, such an ambitious purpose requires a generalized treatment rather than a detailed review. Wherever possible, Mr. London offers the latest statistics, gives the sources of his information and names persons whom he quotes, so that the reader is given the impression of reliable reporting.

He cannot by any means be called a Stalinist or a Trotskyist, but is simply a detached liberal, and proud to be one. Frequently he is at a loss to explain various circumstances in terms of politics although he is aware that the underlying factors are political. He realizes that the bureaucracy maintains a deathly control over the arts, but, having no Marxian interest in Russia,

he is unable to discern its motives for the enslavement of art.

Without doubt no country in the world or in all history has instituted so wide and far-reaching a cultural program and accomplished as much of it as the Soviet Union. Its first task was to abolish illiteracy; a truly marvelous achievement, for today the ability to read and write is almost universal. Then, on the entirely correct theory that the proletariat enjoys art in all its forms, an astounding number of libraries, theatres, museums, and concert and opera halls have been built and are being used eagerly in all of the Soviet Republics. The Central Art Committee, the chief cultural organization, has set up subsidiary bureaus with the result that the entire Union participates in the output of Soviet art.

Such a set-up would be admirable (and is, when one considers it quantitatively) if artistic freedom and high standards were as eagerly furthered. However, today there is no single activity in the U.S.S.R. which is independent of bare politics. Art, far from being an exception, must genuflect and wait on the new "line". And when an artist is slow to apprehend, or through conspiracy is not informed of the change, he is in a very bad way. He is denounced editorially, his friends and comrades dissociate themselves from him (which is, perhaps not entirely reprehensible, since they and their dependents would suffer swift vengeance for their defiance), and he is, of course, deprived of any opportunity to make his livelihood.

Today the new esthetic line is Socialist Realism. After a good many of Russia's outstanding artists were unexpectedly tossed up and around, for alleged artistic disorders (naturalism, formalism, Westernism, and lots of others), a delegation of writers and critics visited Stalin and promised that henceforth the approach to art would be based on realism.

He replied: "Say, rather, Socialist Realism."

And so it came about. To nobody's surprise, one detail was ignored: the name for the new esthetic was delivered from on high without any definition or clue for its meaning. The various artist and critics' organizations still hold meetings and conferences to discuss it, but the answer is never determined. They know that it is not formalism, naturalism, leftism, Westernism, nor is it bourgeois, diversionist, deviationist, Trotskyist, Bukharinist, etc., because those are the names *Pravda* gives to a work of art when it is denounced for not conforming to Socialist Realism.

A reasonable assumption is that it will never receive a precise and definitive description because, unformulated, it makes a better weapon against those who fall from grace. It can be woven to fit any figure.

It is not difficult to understand why "leftism" in art is repudiated. That is in line with the current bourgeois direction of the Comintern. Also, in line with its social

patriotic policy is the condemnation of "Westernism". And since it still carries on in proletarian terminology, to label undesirable art as "bourgeois" is easy enough. The reputation of Trotsky and Bukharin with the Kremlin makes the application of such terms as "diversionist" and "deviationist" a natural for unpopular art.

But out of all these critical epithets, only two validly pertain to art, namely, formalism and naturalism.

In the West naturalism had its highly significant day in art when it represented the rebellion against concealment, understatement and the genteelizing of the bare facts of life. And while the question of naturalism is no longer a clarion call to do battle with the philistines, its tremendous value to art cannot be underestimated. Curiously enough, those artists who came into favor on the fall of the last batch are also naturalists. In fact, if there is any single art style indigenous to Russia, it is naturalism. (*Pravda* uses the word with so little comprehension—the typical politician blundering about in art.)

Gorky, whom the Executive Committee of the Comintern called "the greatest writer of the proletariat", was a naturalist. Those Russian and European artists who are considered the "classics" in the U.S.S.R., Chekhov, Andreyev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Moussorgsky, Zola, Sherwood Anderson, Dreiser, were all naturalists.

Naturalism today seems such an innocuous issue that it is difficult to understand its present low estate in the Soviet Union. It did, in the past, permit of clear exposure of injustices of society, and thereby criticized rather subtly. It is not too far-fetched to suppose that the Stalinist officials fear equally accurate portrayal of their non-revolutionary practices. Is it impossible that the combined use of naturalism with formalism (the latter representing the accumulated polish and skill of technique) constitutes a danger at a time when Russia is trying desperately to make the good lists of both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat?

But whatever the reasons for the ban on formalism and naturalism, the emphasis on Socialist Realism can result only in the creation and diffusion of mediocrity. Art is distinctly unresponsive to dictation and prescription by politicians with ulterior motives.

The outlook for art under the Stalinist subjection is utterly depressing. To quote Trotsky: "The art of the Stalinist period will remain as the frankest expression of the profound decline of the proletarian revolution."

When other social systems declined in the past, they left behind an art that, without restriction, reflected and expressed this decadence and even implied the rise of the new system. A marked quality of the music of Mozart, for example, is a sadness associated with loss or change; the extreme formality of the court, a suggestion of the doom of European monarchic absolutism, and at the same time the sharply defined

advance in the development and use of the new form, the symphony, the new importance of the large orchestra as opposed to the more intimate chamber group, these are all inherent in his music.

Soviet art will have no such importance in history. It can contribute nothing but a doughy deadweight of stagnation. Instead of moving and flowing as art always does, it must mark time impotently. Where it might have become the spearhead of a powerfully creative movement, it is now roughly frustrated and dispirited.

Edna MARGOLIN

## Magic and the Machine

A NEW ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN POETRY. Edited with an Introduction by SELDEN RODMAN. Random House. New York. 1938. \$3.

Much more important, certainly, than the reprinting of any of the poems in this anthology is the editor's theoretical approach to the task of selection, an approach which suggests vividly that Mr. Edmund Wilson's essay, "Is Verse a Dying Technique?", seems, with its recent publication in book form, to have brought to a sentient head the growing suspicion of the American poetic profession that poetry needs an advertising campaign, that the poets must acquire, for the health of poetry, a new professional, distinct from a new political or economic, consciousness of himself. Toward this end, poets would begin graciously by an inflection of their accustomed extraneous oratory, with the grand-manner clichés subtly diverted. Yet two sophisticated individuals, Archibald MacLeish and the present editor Selden Rodman, have not hesitated in the first flush of enthusiasm to utter the most pretentiously inflated of bromides in behalf of their profession. In his long introduction Mr. Rodman is discovered swimming the English Channel of this heavy proposition before we arrive at the actual goods: "Does Science Conflict With It?" He breasts and passes the villainous wave of Max Eastman who "maintains that science has withdrawn intellect from literature," by this type of stroke:

"... Science does not and cannot make men feel, much less act. Nor does science as such, any more than sociology as such, give modern man that confidence in his own dignity and essential nobility which is necessary for the translation of mere animal energy into aspirations, aspirations into deeds. A great scientist must be a poet also. He must have vision to go beyond precepts and conceive what never was. But a great poet need not be a scientist, though his mind must have equal dignity, daring and orderliness."

Here Mr. Rodman focuses upon the exigent element of his critical enterprise, which would have fared much better if he had refrained in his professional heat from adopting the grandiose approach. Solemnly enough, the whole question of the scientific method and the machine in relation to poetry is raised in this section of the introduction, and confronts us as a moronic sort of ghost. Examination of Mr. Rodman's statements will lead us to the kernel of a widespread modern attitude, no less traditional in its latest guise. One cannot

be aware of but-so-much of the introduction as given above without perceiving that Mr. Rodman is at the old saw of sawing poetry into magic and science before the credulous and amazed eyes of poets and laymen. We are to believe, as we shall see, that it is no more than an illusion, and that the subject emerges whole.

"A great scientist or a great prophet or a great revolutionary," Mr. Rodman tells us, "must have a one-track mind . . . but a poet must be a whole man. . . ." It is rude to examine the mechanism of Mr. Rodman's trick, but has he not just said that "a great scientist must be a poet also"? So a great scientist who must have a one-track mind must also be a poet who is a whole man all by himself. But if we are up on our reading, we can aptly produce a source for Mr. Rodman's authority, the words of Mr. MacLeish in his salvo in behalf of the magical profession of poetry in "Poetry" for July 1938: "The failure of the spirit is a failure from which only poetry can deliver us." Mr. MacLeish makes it clear that he refers to the present world-crisis of the human spirit; therefore, if poetry can prevent fascism, as seems categorically implied, and lead us to the perfect world democracy, it can certainly turn the relatively trivial trick of sawing itself in half and remaining whole.

Somehow I for one do not believe in this trick, if only for the reason that Mr. Rodman is an inept performer. If, as he says, "a great poet need not be a scientist," we are obliged to assume that the statement is equipped with the latest devices for this type of magic, and if they do not work, something must be wrong with the magician; in brief, his science must be inadequate. How can we believe, bearing in mind that the great poet need not be a scientist, that the scientist, in order to be great in the field of exact knowledge, is required to be something or partake of something, the mastery of which has nothing to do with exact knowledge? However, Mr. Rodman has dazzled us by declaring this something to be a whole ("The poet must be a whole man"). We are disillusioned when we learn that by adding a whole to something less than a whole but more than nothing, we still do not get a whole, but only a great scientist. Only the poet is whole, for that is the necessary dénouement of the trick.

We could have warned ourselves that it is foolish to mess around magic with logic, but perhaps it is permissible to assume that Mr. Rodman, obviously not conceiving science in the sense of scientific method, conceives of it as a professional classification, a collection of professions other than poetry. In a time when the sun seems to reserve its best brightness for the sciences, we can understand Mr. Rodman's anxiety to expose the traditional place in the sun of one of the most eloquent of the arts, poetry: ". . . art, along with science, is one of the valid ways of communicating knowledge." This section of the introduction ends with the suggestion that "after materialistic conceptions have proven inadequate in the very fields where they achieved their great-

est triumphs, 'values will be regarded as inherent in reality.' As though scientific thinking were confined to "materialistic conceptions", or as though Mr. Rodman had waited for science's "greatest triumphs" to wither away before operating on the body of "values".

## 2.

I think we may be allowed now to substitute for Mr. Rodman's deceptive symbol of the poet as a Whole Man, the more illuminating and verifiable symbol of the poet as a Medicine Man, for it is only with this value in mind that we can identify with any surety the type meant by Mr. Rodman. At least, the Medicine Man is much nearer to the wholeness of mankind than the modern poet is, for it is only in far primitive times that art could be identified with the whole of the community life, when "poetry" was merely the dance, and the dance was identical with worship and prayer. We know only too well the dangerously platonic line of thinking which leads to such desperately positivistic assertions of the poet's value as Mr. Rodman's. For hundreds of years the category of poetry has received the punishment of those wishing to appropriate meanings and functions to it often purely hypothetical, or at any rate idealistic in essence. For how long has the "magic" of poetry been supposed to make the poor man rich, the degraded envision heaven, and the stay-at-home superior to the participant in Cook's Tours? The palliative, the consoling, effect of poetry is beyond question, but equally beyond question is the fact that the "palliative" is the most vulgar of poetry's practical functions, as, in relation to its creative functions, thin romantic dreaming is the most vulgar of its genres. As entrepreneur of a fat and eclectic anthology of poets, Mr. Rodman is no mere vague and inutile theorizer on the wholeness of the poet. Just as the Medicine Man was one who found the claim of supernatural power necessary to his profession, the poet, by Mr. Rodman's authority, must claim as his the realm of the absolute social type, the true leader in the search for values. Thus it is impossible to conceive of such men as Mr. MacLeish and Mr. Rodman as reasonable human beings without attaching to them in their current exercises of rhetoric the pre-eminent interest of a distinct profession, whether wisely or unwisely, consciously or subconsciously, formulated.

It would seem that they obviously represent a current state of mind, the result of a more immediate economic tension and less immediate political tension, which they characteristically interpret in a socially reactionary mode of retreating into a professional refuge and girding for combined offensive and defensive manœuvres toward "the enemy". In the case of opposing "the enemy", all kindred interests, according to this social psychology, must be integrated into one big camp. I do not think it is mere routine absolutizing for Mr. Rodman to say: "Poetry is the greatest of the arts because everyone can—and does—practise it.

The ad-man, the gag-man, the housewife and the corner grocer are latent poets." It may well be an instance of wishful thinking, hypostatizing the crude element of wit, as it invests the minor and folk arts, into the grand art of serious poetry. One will notice that here again Mr. Rodman has cut something into inept halves. The ad-man and the gag-man are professional literary practitioners, the housewife and the corner grocer are not, but form a large part of their audience. By using what is primarily an analogy to the case of serious poetry, Mr. Rodman makes a slightly more rational effort to make the body of poetry seem whole by placing the audience on the stage with the magician, and thus making it an accomplice to the action, and so binding its poetic morality to the poetic morality of the performer. But the effort is useless, for it is impossible to cram the whole of poetry into the half that is its ancient magical inheritance. After all, one must not fail to point out that it is not primarily in the interest of poetry that the housewife responds to the art of the ad-man by buying, or that the corner grocer, being crushed by a chain-store competitor, is momentarily released from his dilemma by the art of the movie gag-man.

## 3.

I think Mr. Rodman's point about the inevitable, absolute and universal subservience of science to poetry may be finally inundated with a corrective light by quoting some lines of J. G. Fraser's:

"From the earliest times man has engaged in a search for the general rules whereby to turn the order of natural phenomena to his advantage, and in the long search he has scraped together a hoard of such maxims, some of them golden and some of them mere dross. The true or golden rules constitute the body of applied science which we call the arts; the false are magic."

By this definition of the arts, poetry, modern poetry, is an applied science, and therefore a poem is a hypothetical machine, not a destined product of illusion or the pre-ordained result of a supernatural spell. It is true that as a product its field of values is not that of what we know as the sciences, but this is merely because of differences of interest, not because the sciences and the arts obey a hierarchy of values. The placing of poetry at the top of a hierarchy of values, as Mr. Rodman has placed it in his time of need, is the rarely exceptible psychological habit of the poet. But when the poet hallucinates himself at the head of the community in this sense, today, when he reverts to the psychological state of the Medicine Man, he is guilty at the best of moral idealism and at the worst of professional advertising.

A more intelligent critical precursor, because a more sensitive poet, than Mr. Rodman, is Hart Crane, who may be said, according to a quotation Mr. Rodman includes in his introduction, to represent by his individual symbol a stage halfway between the critical realization of Mr. Rodman and the critical realization of Frazer. It is with a virginal intuition of pleasure if also with a virginal sense of trepidation

that Mr. Crane mentions the Machine and its marriage to the poet:

"... Unless poetry can absorb the machine, i.e., acclimatize it as naturally and casually as trees, cattle, galleons, castles and all the other human associations of the past, then poetry has failed of its full contemporary function. This process does not infer any program nor does it essentially involve even the specific mention of a single mechanical contrivance. It demands, however, along with the traditional qualifications of the poet, an extraordinary capacity for surrender, at least temporarily to the sensations of urban life. . . ."

Evidently, Mr. Crane could not readily recognize the Machine for what it is, the concrete emergence of the principle of scientific procedure as a development of man's historical efforts to control natural phenomena, but merely advises the poet to "surrender to the sensations" provided by the Machine so that he will not think of it as foreign or hostile—namely, as a supernatural element to be propitiated as once nature was propitiated by savages. Crane's program, as usual, was too ambitious, and his own practise revealed that it was part of the operative magical inheritance of poetry to surround machines with the aura of supernatural force, because in society and religion the magical vestiges of thought still remain. Crane in "The Bridge" made superstitious, almost religious symbols of Brooklyn Bridge and the Subway.

Something like this result was inevitable as the rule, seeing that poetry, as well as other arts and sciences, have not alone or together arrived at the final conquest of knowledge. Poetry has arrived only at a certain method, limited, by its nature, in application, and there are of course moral problems today which poetry cannot solve as a method. As yet neither the techniques of politics nor economics nor sociology are perfectly fitted to their own spheres of application; each is yet to be extended in its own set of formulas; likewise with poetry.

Everyone, Mr. Rodman included, is aware of the moral and emotional atmosphere of modernity, and every poet worth his salt is to some extent aware of the place of poetry in this atmosphere. But Mr. Rodman and his poets are apt to make the one fundamental error of tending to conceive the Machine as another appurtenance in poetry's magical "bag of tricks". I need only mention in passing the climactic lines of a poem by Horace Gregory:

The facts were these:

She died in Lesbian serenity

neither hot nor cold  
until the chaste limbs stiffened.

Disconnect the telephone;  
cut the wires.

It is my idea that relating a mechanical contrivance to an elegiac emotion in this way is really magical, *not poetical*, and as such cheapens both symbol and emotion.

The problem I indicate takes its form in bringing the Machine *somehow* into poetry. This action is to be thought of in two fundamental senses: 1) Bringing in the science of the Machine as a modified technique, derived from some specific branch of scientific knowledge; as Masters brings the subjective psychological document into his "Spoon River Anthology"; as Vachel Lind-

say brings objective research in anthropology into "The Congo"; as Auden brings the vocabulary of airmanship into verse; and as Rukeyser and others bring the data of social and economic surveys, peculiar to recent times, into verse. Here the new method emerges with the new subject-matter, while in the other sense: 2) The method stands alone, and depends on a rarefied conception of the technique of verse, as in Paul Valéry's verse, with its highly precise verbal style and its mechanical discipline of composition; a poetry which, excluding the *concept* of the machine, as a form within the form of poetry, strives to be the machine, regardless of the grist.

It seems to me that in the first case poetry, far from feeling whole in itself, is self-consciously borrowing, striving to expand itself by annexing literary techniques hitherto considered alien to poetic statement. All that is now psychology's, sociology's, economics', politics', once was poetry's, in the primitive sense of poetry, and now poetry may wish to reclaim its own. But the last clause is imprecise, and the statement should be reformed to say: Poetry, or the art of verse, has come to be one of the social techniques, along with the other arts and sciences, by which man expresses, in a much more complex manner than formerly, the sum of his relations with reality. It may be prophetic to say that man wishes by the means of verse-technique rather than by any other means to reclaim a certain primitive social unity, wherein religion, art and society were practically identical; but it is one prophecy among many expressed with equal, sometimes, greater vehemence, and involving varieties of motives.

On the other hand, by taking the road of awareness of the Machine as a principle, as the poet Valéry has done, without relating it to social values, or the social uses of the machine—by conceiving of the poetic technique as a sort of external expression of this inner principle—poetry is much more concretely identified as a part of a solid modern pattern, in which a traditional form of expression, the art of verse, has, in the truest concrete sense, "kept up with the times". *Poetical science consists in ascertaining the limits of the control of verse over its subject-matter, over mental, emotional, moral concerns.* But how can modern poets borrowing the verbal and psychological means of other techniques not themselves perfected, hope for scientific certainty, a perfect form in their own medium, by following such a method? The great poet must also be a scientist . . . now.

Parker TYLER

## The Child As Scapegoat

DEATH ON THE INSTALLMENT PLAN. By LOUIS-FERDINAND CELINE. Translated from the French by John H. P. Marks. Little, Brown & Co. \$2.75.

*Death on the Installment Plan* is an inverted sequel to *Journey to the End of the Night*. It describes the childhood and

adolescence of Ferdinand, whose War experiences occupied so much of the earlier book. Writing of the *Journey*, Trotsky remarked that although it ignored the substance of politics, it dealt realistically with the "substratum" of class and party strife. This could equally well be said of *Death on the Installment Plan*; and because here Céline is concerned with his hero's origins, the social motivation is even more explicit.

Céline strains to impress us with the vileness of the whole of humanity; he convinces us chiefly of the misery of its impoverished majority. "There was only one thing the whole family in the Passage shared in common, and that was a carking fear of the wolf at the door. . . . The very walls of every house oozed with the dread of want. So we came to look askance at every mouthful, to curtail each meal that turned sour on us as we hurried around on our errands, zigzagging like fleas from one quarter of Paris to another, from the Place Maubert to the Etoile, in terror of being sold up, afraid of quarter-day, of the gas man, shrinking from the spectre of the demand-note for the rates. . . ." To this summing up of the family predicament, Céline's Ferdinand adds a personal note with considerable bearing on Céline himself: "I never had time to wipe myself properly, we were always in such a hurry."

Haste and filth—these are the peculiar properties of Céline's universe. Sometimes, in its vast animation, this universe resembles a moving-picture of which the projector has run wild; sometimes it suggests a city built on a latrine.

Ferdinand's family is of the small Parisian bourgeoisie. They inhabit a flat above Mama's lace shop in a congested and airless arcade. Mama, with her lame leg, is obliged to travel around to village fairs in order to dispose of her laces; and Papa, a frustrated gentleman and water-colorist, lives in terror of his miserable job at the insurance office. Both parents are ferocious studies in the psychology of humiliation with its attendant cruelty, and all the traditional family values are here perverted into vices. The father dominates by virtue of his weakness for hysterical invective; the wife's loyalty to her husband leads her to sacrifice Ferdinand to his father's mania for a victim; and the center of family life is the family brawl. Constantly assured that he is his father's nemesis, Ferdinand grows up in the conviction of guilt and the premonition of disaster. His swollen, Fury-like conscience, infecting his very companions and employers with a distrust of him, puts him in the wrong where actually he is innocent; and all his later ventures, in business, education, science, end in the most violent fiascos, alike for himself and for those with whom he is associated. And the book concludes as Ferdinand seeks in the army a refuge from the stormy insecurity of life as a "free" individual.

Apparently Ferdinand is Céline himself; and both in the present book and in the *Journey* there appears to be sufficient fac-

tual truth from the author's life to justify our describing them as two installments of a fantastic autobiography. But the effect of Céline's ruthless realism depends less on literal data than on imaginative distortion. As Joyce borrowed the devices of symbolism in order to extend the scope of his naturalism; so Céline reverts to the heightenings and extravagances of an earlier age of social picaresques; and Ferdinand is doubtless a throwback to the exploited apprentices of Dickens. But Joyce, regardless of his innovations, was still a philosophical naturalist of the pre-war tradition. In Céline the relative objectivity of that tradition, the solid structural mechanics, the painstaking accumulations of historical detail, give way to a new technique, fluid, episodic, prone to caricature and grotesquerie, which reflects the post-war consciousness in all its tormented maturity. Both methods, Céline's and Joyce's, conform to the needs and impulses of their respective decades, and each has its appropriate dangers. In Céline's case, the absence of a sustaining fable and the choice of a rhetoric of hyperbole oblige him to rely at every point on his own sheer power of spontaneous invention. In *Death on the Installment Plan* his power sometimes fails; he is occasionally repetitious; and the obligation to provide emotional relief has led him to introduce, in the character of Ferdinand's Uncle Edward, a rather sentimental foil to the pervading meanness and lunacy.

In recent months Céline has published a book on French Semitism called *Bagatelles for a Massacre*. His ravings on "the Jewish strain" in French culture are such that they might easily pass for a sardonic travesty of Aryan science; but if Céline is in earnest, as it appears he is, then his novel, with its insights into the workings of one type of scapegoat mechanism, tends likewise to expose the compensatory psychology involved in his own manias.

F. W. DUPEE

## Correspondence

(Continued from page 312)

for the "successful". Each striving for his own individual good benefited the community, said Adam Smith, and the strivers, with this high ideal and the red, white and blue before them, recked nothing of a little matter of swindling or child murder in the factories when it was all for the benefit of mankind.

The question of relationship of means and ends cannot arise for a man without a philosophy. Therefore any attempt to argue with anyone from outside his philosophy is pointless. Means and ends for the Marxist must essentially be means and ends in Marxism. Otherwise one simply draws metaphysical circles and would be as well engaged discussing original sin or whether one can "change human nature" without troubling first to define "sin" or for what "human nature" is to be changed.

Marxists do not discuss means and ends because they do not wish to use "wicked" means which might sin their lily white souls or stain their pristine virtue. We are not interested in "justifying" means in the abstract. We wish to justify means according to their efficacy. We do not want to know if assassination and terrorism are "bad" or "good": we want to know if they will have bad or good effects on our battle. Will the means help in the long run towards, as Trotsky says, "increasing the power of man over nature and the abolition of the power of man over man"?

It is ironic—or perhaps merely comforting—that Dewey's only contribution towards the Marxists' problem is when he uses the dialectic whose greatest historic example—the class struggle—he apparently denies. He takes the "idea of the end in view", opposes to it the means used towards that end, and shows how something entirely different may come about. From this he seems to draw the conclusion that we must therefore be seers and attempt nothing unless we are sure that the result will be such that it will justify the means we have used in an attempt to arrive at something totally different. Marxists will eagerly agree that the means used towards the "idea of an end" often bring about an entirely different "end": this end in turn has specified in history a new "idea of an end" conditioning new means. I seem to recollect somewhere in Marxist theory an explanation of the negation of the negation.

For the doubters we can take an example at random. The workers and peasants of feudal France wished freedom from the tyranny of the estates, universal freedom. (I am dealing, of course, with conscious wishes—not with the drive towards them coming from heavy taxation, low wages, desire for land, etc.) To do this they made their revolution with the bourgeoisie who also wanted "freedom". The means were the National Assembly, revolt, and liquidation of the aristocracy. The result was—Bonaparte and the restoration. There had been a change, however, and the fight was now against *class*—not estate—political tyranny and this went on, sometimes by old methods, sometimes by new, until the Paris Commune which hardly produced the desired end. From it Karl Marx and Engels had to concretise another end (which was, of course, only the means towards the further end as defined above by Trotsky and understood by Marx and Engels). This was workers' control over the state which was to be achieved by the workers building their own state and smashing the bourgeois form of government completely. Taking it even further the power of the proletariat over other sections of the community was to be negated into the "abolition of the power of man over man".

Continuing, Dewey criticises Trotsky for declaring that "the end flows from the class struggle" and makes the amazing claim that the interdependence of means and ends "has thus disappeared". Thus, he states, "means are *deduced*" from an independent source, an alleged law of history (the class

struggle—R.E.S.) which is *the* law of social development" (His italics).

It is not the means which are "deduced" but, on the contrary, the end. For Marxists the historical movement has, so far as the dialectic will take us at the moment, one end which is, for us, the finish—the free classless society. Beyond that we cannot see at the moment and can only guess what end it will in turn become the means to. In detail the means are the product, or are deduced from, the interplay of historic forces—but this by no means denies the interplay of ends and means. The class struggle, while being a broad means, is a historic force dictating the detailed means; the various methods—strikes, rebellion, terrorism, "Socialism in one country"—by which the class struggle is carried on are the means in microcosm. Only Marxists can appreciate the interplay of forces which is constantly changing relationships. As the dialectic puts it—nothing is, everything is becoming and, as Trotsky says, "dialectical materialism knows no dualism between means and end". Dewey's "independent sources" show the choice of several means which may have the desired effect,—the end, already "deduced". The end conditions the means: historic development defines them.

The basis of Dewey's error seems to lie in his assumption that the class struggle is the Marxists' "choice" for their end. Here we have illustrated how hopeless it is for those not in agreement on their philosophy to discuss means and ends as applied in their opponents' philosophy.

We wish "the increasing of the power of man over nature and the abolition of the power of man over man." Watching the historical process we see that the means to that end is the classless society. The means is conditioned by the end. The end of the classless society dictates not so much that we "choose" the class struggle as a means as that the class struggle is the means *conditioned* by the end. The methods of conducting the class struggle are the means defined by experience and revolutionary thought. We cannot change that. The process is such that we must either make for "the increasing of the power of man over nature and the abolition of the power of man over man" or lift our hands from the guiding of history and let the world smash back into barbarism. There is a conflict in society which can only be resolved in one fashion if we wish to progress beyond our present level of culture and civilisation. The class struggle is a means only in so far as it is a dynamic of history.

Experience and revolutionary thought define the methods of conducting the class struggle. Now those methods deserve consideration not because, as Dewey says, "orthodox Marxism shares . . . the belief that human ends are interwoven into the very texture and structure of existence" but because "orthodox" Marxism believes—the exact opposite! Feudal lords and peasants, merchant guilds and rising industrialists, capitalists and monopoly capitalists, imperialism and proletariat—all those, with their societies, cultures, and modes of liv-

ing, their "very texture and structure of existence" have been woven into the historic process through which the "human end" is determined. All those have taken part unconsciously, semi-consciously, and consciously, each with his own small part of the end in view, in the drive towards "increasing the power of man over nature and the abolition of the power of man over man".

Raibeart E. SCOLLER  
Glasgow, Scotland.

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