

The

NEW

INTERNATIONAL

**THE CONGRESS OF
THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

by **MAX SHACHTMAN**



On the Russian Empire

***The Economic Drive
Behind Tito*** by Hal Draper

Socialist Policy in East Europe
by a Group of Eastern European Marxists

Szakasits of Hungary: Profile of a Turncoat
by Valentin Toma

NOTES OF THE MONTH:

Reshuffling Cabinets in France
What the Wallace Campaign Proves
Bertrand Russell's Super-Imperialism

OCTOBER 1948

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

THE POLITICAL SCENE IN HOLLAND
VICTOR SERGE . . . BOOKS IN REVIEW

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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MEMO

We've decided to continue with the publication of the most important sections of Victor Serge's *The Year One of the Russian Revolution*. . . . Next month will bring the first part of Chapter 6, which is entitled "The Truce and the Great Shift," and will deal with the Soviet occupation of the Ukraine and the events in Finland (revolution and White Terror). . . .

And now we have to repair an oversight and an injustice. . . . The translation of Serge which we have been using is one prepared some years ago by Dan Eastman, and an excellent translation it is too—smoothly written and clear. . . . Our thanks to the translator and apologies for neglecting to give this well-deserved credit. . . .

Valentin Toma has promised to send in from abroad a monthly contribution rounding up political news from the Russian satellite zone. . . . We might call it something like "Newsletter from East Europe." . . . We expect the first for the November issue and, we hope, regularly thereafter. . . .

This is in line with a policy of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL which our readers have no doubt gathered from our pages. . . . Namely, our earnest desire to pay detailed attention to the developments in, and analysis of, the new Stalinist empire in Europe. . . . We believe that no other socialist periodical has presented as much material on a subject which is undoubtedly one of the most important for understanding what is happening in the world, and that in spite of the well-known difficulties in penetrating behind the Iron Curtain. . . . Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania—these have been covered as they, occupied the spotlight. . . . Would it be boasting to say that any Marxist who wishes to understand the new Stalinist phenomena must read the NI? . . .

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946

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State of New York, County of New York, ss.

Before me, a notary public in and for the state and county aforesaid, personally appeared Max Shachtman, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is one of the owners of The New International and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (Section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations), printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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(My commission expires March 30, 1949.)

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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Notes of the Month

French Cabinets—The Wallace Campaign—Bertrand Russell

Everybody knows the French are an excitable and volatile people, in the same sense that “everybody knows” that Swedes are stolid, Germans love regimentation, Englishmen never see the point of a joke, Russians have dark brooding souls, Mexicans are lazy, Californians drive like crazy, and Italians are undisciplined and/or cowards. Not all of the above stereotypes have been made the basis of popular-culture theories of history, but most of them have been impressed into the role at one time or another.

It has lately been the turn of the French. If anyone thinks such stupid stuff is confined to lowbrow barber-shop political analysts, he should have read some of the editorials in the press on the recent reshufflings of the French cabinet. American fingers were pointed at the spectacle with a mixture of concern, contempt, condemnation—and conceit.

For implicit in the cluck-clucking of the editorialists was the thought: Thank-God-We-Are-Not-As-These-Poor-Unfortunates. What! three cabinets overthrown in a week! or was it two, or four? How can a state get along with a system of government that makes this possible? Here in America we have a *stable* government, the lord be praised. The last one endured over twelve years, almost as long as Hitler's thousand-year Reich. Democratic and all that, you understand, but stable. But gadzooks, these French!

Now, the nature of various governmental systems interests us socialists peculiarly because we have our own ideas—and aims—on the subject. A socialist government speaking for the people *as workers*, in workers' councils based upon occupational representation, appears to us to be the framework best designed for the fullest democracy. And since we believe that only a government which really represents the interests of the governed can be truly stable in any long-term sense, *democracy* and *stability* do not appear to us as antagonistic principles but as complementary.

Not so the exponents of “the American system of government,” if we are to judge by their reactions to the recent gyrations of the French cabinet. For those features of the French cabinet system which render it unstable—and exposed to American sneers—are

precisely those features in which it is *more democratic* in form than the American presidential system.

As is well known, these are primarily two. The first is the fact that a government can last only as long as it presumably represents and acts on the views of a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. In other words, the cabinet is formally responsible day by day to the elected parliament. There is no brake on the ability of the “representatives of the people” to control their executive such as is written into the U. S. Constitution in the form of the checks-and-balances system—a system devised by the Founding Fathers with malice and aforethought to prevent or delay the expression of the will of the masses (“the landless proletariat,” in Madison's words at the Constitutional Convention).

Under present-day capitalist conditions, social pressures of all kinds—if not “the will of the masses”—are far more readily exerted on the French government than on the American. And there is no honest definition of democracy conceivable which does not therefore mean that the French system is more democratic in form.

The second relevant feature of French government is the existence of a kind of partial proportional representation in the election of the deputies. Naturally, a multiplicity of parties is encouraged since even a small group has a better chance to get a foothold and make a start. The less likely it is that any one party machine has a majority of its own, the more necessary for governments to be based on inter-party agreements rather than single-party discipline. And this multiplicity of parties is likewise a more democratic form than the artificial and fraudulent confinement of the American voter's choice to two power and patronage machines which do not much bother to distinguish themselves from each other politically.

And so French cabinets fall and are patched together, as the tides of political feeling and movement swell, while in Washington the same faces remain for at least four years even if the complexion of the Congress changes in mid-reign (as it did in 1946).

Now, Marxist socialists propose in the workers' council system a governmental structure which pro-

poses to go much further in achieving a sensitive responsiveness on the part of the installed government to the elected representatives of the people—so much further as to create a different *type* of government altogether. It includes, for example, the liability to recall and re-election at any time of the council delegates, from top to bottom; and this in addition to the abolition of any and all autonomy on the part of the executive arm vis-à-vis the legislative.

It would seem that this might only intensify the evil which bedevils French politics—instability—but only on a superficial understanding of what is involved. The form of the French government makes instability more *possible*, but the French cabinets are unsteady because *French society is rent by irreconcilable conflicts of classes and sections of classes locked in battle*. This was most obvious in the recent topplings of the cabinet lists where the stubborn issue immediately involved was the workers' economic demands.

French society is riven and shaken by the class struggle of the proletariat versus the capitalist class, and as a consequence the capitalist class is itself riven and shaken by the problem of how to deal with the situation. It is before the latter problem in particular that the unfortunate cabinets fall. It is the latter problem in particular which separates De Gaulle from the "democratic" MRP, for De Gaulle has a solution to this dilemma.

The general agrees with the American finger-pointers who find the root of the evil in the parliamentary latitude permitted by the governmental structure. And so he bestrides his white horse and proclaims that salvation resides in the junking of parliamentarism and parties—in favor of authoritarianism. (In passing, the echo of this fascist wisdom filters through De Gaulle's henchman Malraux, through James Burnham, and is communicated to American socialists and liberals by Arthur Koestler as the latest in "realistic radicalism.")

The onset of social crisis and the racking of the fabric of society by class struggle inevitably produces a crisis of parliamentarism because neither the proletariat nor the capitalist class can find a way out of desperate straits solely within its framework.

So it is in France. *Socialism can "make democracy work"—degenerating capitalism cannot.*

But, contrary to appearance, we really started discussing French politics because of a backlight it throws on the American political scene today.

In spite of the comparative rigidity of U. S. forms, political and social upheavals are breaking through to the parliamentary surface. They have been delayed; they are *still* largely unexpressed; they cannot bubble up, as under French conditions—they must blast their way to the light. But there is more than enough evidence that the deep waters are running.

Precisely because of the difference between the American and the French political structures, in part, phenomena which would promptly well forth in French politics are here shut in. Today this means first and foremost the forces making for the breakup of the existing two-party system.

After all the shouting and fury of the Wallace movement will have died down, what its more permanent significance will be is already clear. *It will have shown that the two-party framework can be broken.*

This is true even if the Wallace-Stalinist combine gets only a third of the vote it claims, only a half of what it secretly hopes for, or even much less than what it has now. Up to this year, one of the more popular arguments used by labor leaders against the idea of independent working-class political action was the very "practical" one based on the peculiar American political structure and the difficulties it created for any new contender—difficulties painted as well-nigh insuperable.

This argument was not only put forward, it was believed; and not only by labor leaders but by large numbers of militants.

After this year it may still be put forward—but no longer self-confidently and impatiently, only hypocritically. It may still even be believed—but no longer by large numbers of militant workers, only by a few of the most gullible and ignorant.

For the Wallace-CP drive has provided a test run. The demonstration is all the more convincing just *because* of the manifold counts against the Wallace outfit, *because* of the fact that this movement does not merit the support of labor, *because* of the justified refusal of the labor movement to support it. And the demonstration is still there even though the Wallaceites will not be on the ballot in many states. Because the question which answers itself is:

If the Wallace party could get as far as it has— we are referring to the aforementioned "practical" question of overcoming the obstacles of America's anti-democratic electoral laws and structure—*what could have been achieved by an independent political movement powered by the brawny trade-union movement of the United States?*

Wallace has the apparatus of the CP—no feeble adjunct, to be sure—but this apparatus is a pygmy compared to what can be built in a matter of months by a politically awakened labor movement.

Wallace has the resources of enthusiastic knots of non-Stalinist supporters and delights to boast of the wonders which can be performed by devoted Jimmy Higginses as compared with the operations of the old parties' wardheelers. He has discovered, but only tapped a trickle from, the tremendous powerhouse of dynamic energy which can be unleashed by a movement which answers the yearning of large masses for independent political action.

An independent labor party based on the trade unions can set that powerhouse humming.

•

The passing reference made above to Arthur Koestler reminds us of two other things: first, the fact that this gentleman's disgraceful escapade of a few months ago has not been mentioned in our press; and second, that it is timely to mention it now in view of a recent article by a far more intelligent man, Bertrand Russell, in an issue of the social-democratic *New Leader* last month (September 4).

The occasion was Koestler's first lecture in America, at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Since the affair was sponsored by the International Rescue and Relief Committee and since this worthy organization was the beneficiary, the audience before which he spoke was predominantly liberal-labor. It was this audience—flatteringly addressed by Koestler as the “radical intelligentsia” of the city—which was subjected to the speaker's apologia for De Gaulle as the “practical” and “realistic” alternative to French Stalinism (an apologia punctuated by a literal bow to James Burnham, seated on the platform after having just returned from his enlightening experience in alternating monologues with André Malraux, De Gaulle's propaganda chief).

But that only in passing. What we wish to note, in view of Russell's article, is the fact that Koestler unblushingly—nay, aggressively—came out in favor of a *Pax Americana*, i.e., domination of the world by the United States, i.e., that which the most blatant American imperialist will deny is any part of Washington's aims, for fear of being considered . . . an imperialist. To be perfectly fair to Koestler, we should not conceal the fact that he advocated this super-imperialist program in the name of—socialism.

Koestler, of course, is not a political thinker but a novelist—we quote the very caution he directed at his audience, who, however, paid for their seats to hear his political thoughts. But while this might be interpreted as a warning against taking him seriously, the same cannot be said for Bertrand Russell.

Russell has a program. We think it is worthy of wide notoriety. Lenin was fond of saying that it was difficult to find an honest adversary; in this epoch it seems to be even more difficult to find a man who is willing to think a thought through consistently to the end. We are happy to say that in Russell we find both virtues combined. He is for Washington against Moscow; he is for the former in the third world war (which he assumes); and he is willing to follow these thoughts where they lead.

Where do they lead him?

His starting point is the well-known necessity for world government. But he will have none of the soft-headed mush which is spewed about on this fair ideal.

The United Nations is a bust. It is less of an attempt at world government than was the old League of Nations. “The constitution of the United Nations was admirably adapted to prevent all wars except those likely to occur.” But real world government is necessary to prevent the threatened destruction of civilization as we know it.

Such a world government, he says, must have overweening armed force behind it or it is nothing. But how to achieve such a consummation devoutly to be wished? There are only two possibilities: its creation by agreement and consent, or its creation by force. The former is, of course, the goal of the various world-government propagandists now operating. Russell does not believe it is realistic.

The conclusion seems to be that, while a world government by agreement should be our ultimate goal, and it is to be preferred if attainable, some more immediately practicable way of preventing wars may prove necessary if the human race is to survive. And the only practicable alternative to agreement, so far as I can see, is *the supremacy of a single power* or closely allied group of power.” [Our emphasis in these quotations unless otherwise noted—Ed.]

This former anti-imperialist (when anti-imperialism was “practicable,” naturally) follows through. “The supremacy of a single power” means that

all countries except the United States and its Allies [Russell's insistence on adding this hopeful rider should remind us that he himself is a Britisher] would enjoy [sic] much the same status as is enjoyed under the Monroe Doctrine by the countries of Latin America.

Since it is reliably reported that the Latin Americans' enjoyment of the same is not without alloy, one is reminded of the attitude which liberals used to take once upon a time toward Wall Street's forcible imposition of such enjoyment on its good neighbors south of the border. But those were the days when Washington did not require *persuasion by liberals* to swing the imperialist Big Stick. This is obviously a different world:

Assuming a third world war, and the ultimate victory of America and her Allies, *I do not think it should be impossible to persuade public opinion in the United States of the desirability of some such policy.* Other powers, at the end of the war, would have no option but to acquiesce in whatever America might demand. I think that if a world government comes about, it will probably come by such steps as I have outlined. . . . It will be to the interests of mankind that America and her Allies should, at first, impose their will upon the world in the matter of armaments.

But there is an obstacle to this scheme, Russell sees. It will run up against opposition. Whose? American liberals', who have been prejudiced against expansionism. The first task is to eradicate these backward notions, these old clichés about imperialism, the outlived formulas, the consecrated books, etc.

This may appeal to American nationalism, but would, at present, run counter to the sentiments of those Americans who consider themselves internationalists. If they are to be

won over—and without them the whole movement might become *merely* a new imperialism [Russell's italics]—it will be necessary to preach vigorously both the urgent need of a unitary government of the world, and the improbability of inaugurating such a government *except by force*.

One last point remains. If the end sought is domination of the world by a single power, won't Russia do as well for the purpose? The whole force of Russell's tough-minded argument is that single-power domination is the thing, and the way to it is secondary, albeit some roads are preferable to others if they are also possible. It follows that the only *existing* organization working realistically toward "world government" is the international Stalinist machine. It might even be argued that it is much more practicable and realistic to pitch into a going concern which is getting somewhere toward the stated goal than to publish a hortatory article in the *New Leader*.

Russell essays a reason for pinning the task on America alone, but here his tough logic wilts:

There are already only two fully independent states, the U.S.A. and the USSR. If either defeats the other, there will be only one fully independent state. *Only a small modicum of political wisdom will then be needed to prevent the world from again splitting up into a number of wholly separate units. I think America, but not the USSR, would possess this modicum*

of wisdom; I think also that, if a world war occurs, America and her Allies will win it, and will establish a world government.

Anyone who is willing to grant the modicum to both contenders would be in a quandary at this point—and in any case we are not told what this modicum of wisdom is that will exorcize the specter of national resistance against super-imperialist domination. Russell's opinion that America will win the war is on file, but a small question intrudes: *Suppose* Russia wins—will Russell and his ex-internationalist band of realists seek to persuade the exponents of national resistance to tyranny that "splitting up into a number of wholly separate units" is the greater evil—i.e., preach submission as the alternative to war?

We are reluctantly forced to modify our previous hasty compliment. Russell is no more completely consistent than the rest of his neo-imperialist tribe, for the philosopher-politician refuses to face these consequences.

Yes, harder than Diogenes' or Lenin's task is the job of finding the man who, while willing to advocate support of imperialist war in the name of liberalism, socialism or the "interests of mankind," is also willing to think through and accept the consequences. . . .

The Economic Drive Behind Tito

Issues in the Break Within the Stalin Empire

The *general* driving motivation behind the Tito-Stalin split is fairly clear now—though naturally not to everyone.

It was not merely a personal spat between tinseled marshals, as some of our contemporaries put it in first reaction. It did not mean that the Yugoslavs were going over to Wall Street. There were other attempts at the "real lowdown" on Tito, ranging from the merely ignorant to the fantastic.

There was Henry Wallace (at his press conference in Philadelphia on July 23) who opined that Yugoslavia had been suffering from a "semi-feudal" land-ownership system and that the Cominform was wroth because Tito was slow in reforming it. This congenital blunderbuss simply did not know that wellnigh the last remnants of feudal relations had been wiped out after the *First World War*, even in Croatia where they hung on longest.

There was Louis Adamic, the Stalinist bedfellow who before June 29 was Tito's chief horn-tooter in the U. S. Torn between his Stalinoid fellow-traveler mentality and his Yugoslav nationalism, the best Adamic could do was this:

Then, what is the rift? On the one side, *poor manners* which go with the idea on the part of some Soviet and/or Cominform leaders that Yugoslavia ought to do so-and-so and thus-and-thus; on the other side, resentment of such manners

. . . Essentially, the crisis between the Cominform and the Yugoslavs is not political but in human relations. [*Trends and Tides*, July-Sept. 1948.]

There was the egregious Rebecca West, whose recent concern with world affairs has sadly deprived the literary world of her contributions without any visible benefit to politics: her theory was that the split was a jointly staged affair designed to give Stalin an excuse to march troops through Yugoslavia to Italy's gates. . . .

There was the Spanish Anarchist underground radio which figured out on July 1: "Tito . . . was in the Spanish [civil] war, and may well have contracted the shortcoming of classical Spanish indiscipline." We admit to throwing this in for comic relief.

In the first issue of *Labor Action* after the news broke, we put the spotlight on the general driving force behind Tito's apostasy: his aim "to blackmail Russia into accepting him *within the Russian war bloc* with a status similar to that which, for example, Churchill hopes to attain for a Western Union within the American-dominated war bloc."

"Tito is in reality asking for promotion from the status of branch manager to that of junior partner with Stalin." The question of national independence involved—and it *is* involved—is for him the independence of the native Yugoslav ruling bureaucracy from

control by the Russian; the conflict between the Yugo and the Commissar is over who is to benefit from the exploitation of the masses.

Essentially, this is the same kind of impulsion that drives the rising bourgeoisie of a colonial country to seek increasing independence from the bigger capitalist nation that rules it. It has been demonstrated once again that this is not the era for the building of new stable empires over the bent backs of the peoples, and that Stalinist imperialism falls heir and victim to the same disintegrative forces which are also tearing capitalist imperialism apart.

This general impulsion means that there is an *inherent conflict of interests* between the Russian imperialist colossus and its satellites—an inherent contradiction leading to national resistance, which opens the door to the revolt of the masses against both the foreign and the home-grown oppressor.

But in what form did this general conflict *concretize* itself in Yugoslavia? It is precisely when we seek to inquire into the more *immediate* wellsprings of the Yugo-Stalinist heresy that the view clouds; the materials for an analysis are fragmentary and misleading. I certainly do not have the intention of putting forward any all-embracing hypothesis under the now-common title "The Real Truth Behind the Tito Break."

It is possible, however, to throw a spotlight on one aspect of the struggle as it took shape in Yugoslavia—its *economic basis*, the economic issues underlying the general motivation of national autonomy.

This is *not* the economic question which has come into most notice in the charges pro and con—the dispute over collectivization of agriculture—although there is a relationship. The issue in Yugoslavia was and is: *the industrialization of the country*.

Since this is by no means obvious from the fragments of information published in this country, we are forced to ask the reader to bear with a detestably statistical but necessary preliminary.

1

Yugoslavia, according to Robert St. John's books, is "The Land of the Silent People." The "silent people" are the peasants. It is their land par excellence.

Yugoslavia is the most agrarian country of all Europe, the most thoroughly peasant land on the continent. Here in a mountainous area about the size of Oregon, 77-80 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture. (Significantly as we shall see, the runner-up—Bulgaria with 74 per cent—is the other country in Stalin's empire which first publicly raised the proposal for Balkan federation.)

This was the picture at the time Tito took over:

Among its 15½-16 million people (10½ million on the land) there are two million separate peasant holdings. It is a land of small peasants. Only every

second one of them even owns a plow of his own. The overwhelming majority of them own the land they work—92.5 per cent of the area under cultivation belongs to the peasants who till it.

There are few large estates and still fewer "great landowners." Only 7 per cent of the cultivated land is in farms of 200 acres or more, and many of these are worked by large peasant families. The average family holding is only 13 acres; two-thirds of the farms are smaller than this.

Among the Serbians, fully 80 per cent are peasants. Here, among the dominant nationality of this multinational state, there is one city of over 100,000, one other of over 50,000 and a sprinkling of towns; the rest is village. In Macedonia there is a single more or less modern city. In Montenegro (which is, with Croatia, the basis of the CP's strength) there is nothing that can be called a city, and only two towns of 10,000. Croatia and Slovenia are the *most* industrialized sections, but still mainly village, farm, forest and countryside.

Now pre-1917 Russia, as is well known, was also a predominantly peasant land, but it would be deceptive to equate the two. Russia had its sector of big industry, its giant plants, in which the revolution incubated. Yugoslavia does not.

In all Yugoslavia there are only 475,000 industrial and transport workers, a majority of whom are in Croatia and Slovenia. In 1929 Charles A. Beard wrote that "according to recent figures only twenty-two [factories] employ more than one thousand workers." Ten years later the figure would be somewhat higher but not enough to change the picture. What manufacturing industries there are engage in producing mainly consumers' goods, but 75 per cent of the manufactured products required are imported.

Zagreb in Croatia is a big Balkan banking and financial center, but "the organization of domestic commerce in Yugoslavia could be compared more or less to that prevailing in the smaller communities or rural districts of the United States."

Of the less than a half million industrial and transport workers—constituting less than 3 per cent of the population—perhaps 63,000 belong to trade unions. (That was 1940; even today Tito's compulsory "trade unions" claim a membership of only 622,000.) And of this number a large proportion work in small family shops, or at handicrafts; others are semi-proletarians eking out miserable peasant incomes with miserable factory wages.¹

This then is the face of Yugoslavia, the country

1. Bogdan Raditsa, a former press-service director for the Tito government and also for the pre-Tito government-in-exile, claims that "as a matter of fact, the working class was far from being a vital factor in the resistance, as the Communists allege in their propaganda. For the workers remained in the big-city factories or were sent into Hitler's labor camps." (*New Republic*, Sept. 16, 1946.) It is indeed likely that it was largely the peasants who took to the hills they knew. This is not because the workers were any less anti-fascist, to be sure! An urbanized proletariat is not conditioned to carry on the class struggle as guerrillas in rugged mountains.

whose people first took up arms against the Nazi conqueror and which now is also the first to revolt against the new Russian conqueror.

2

It might seem that in this, *the most economically backward country of all Europe*, the question of industrialization is the most utopian or at least furthest removed from the top of the agenda, at any rate least pressing.

The contrary is true, for three reasons which point to a single end. The first of these reasons applies to most peasant countries; the second applies especially to a peasant country on the European continent; and the third applies to a European peasant land within the Stalin empire. All three are not merely "objective forces" at work but consciously held drives and motivations.

(1) *Industrialization is the only basic solution of the key peasant problem of this peasant country.*

Western Marxists tend to think of the peasant question in the old world in terms of the slogan "Land to the peasants"—the breaking up of the large estates—as a result of the revolutions in Russia and Spain. But this program is almost irrelevant in Yugoslavia.

The peasants already had the land. Yet they sank deeper and deeper into poverty and misery.

The operative cause is the phenomenon of agrarian overpopulation, which "has been recently the most important economic problem of Yugoslavia . . . [and] agrarian overpopulation . . . will remain the central economic problem of Yugoslavia in the near future."²

This phenomenon, common to backward peasant economies, arises from the tendency for the increase of population on the land to outstrip the capacity of the land to support them under the given technological conditions. Even where an excess can still be fed, they are not needed for production and depress the standard of living proportionately. Where the excess grows huge, the problem assumes overwhelming importance.

In Yugoslavia the problem is huge. The situation is exacerbated by two conditions:

(a) Yugoslavia's high rate of natural population increase. Taking the 1935 birth rate in all European countries—the figures being available for that year—next to Russia's 44.1 per thousand comes Rumania's 30.7 and Yugoslavia's 29.0; but because of the higher death rate in Rumania, Yugoslavia's natural increase of population is higher.

(b) Because of its mountainous character, Yugoslavia belongs among those countries of Europe which have the smallest percentage of arable land (about

2. *Jugoslav Postwar Reconstruction Papers*, Vol. 3, No. 5, ed. by Nicholas Mirkovic; published 1942-43 by the Office of Reconstruction and Economic Affairs of the pre-Tito bourgeois Yugoslav government-in-exile; a 4-volume collection of studies of Yugoslav economy as a guide to post-war economic planning.

46 per cent of the total area). This sharply limits extensive expansion of agriculture to take care of the excess.

In Yugoslavia over one third of the agricultural population is surplus, 4.5 million. This is the highest percentage in Europe, four times as high as neighboring Bulgaria, for example.

The effects are devastating. Yugoslav economist Bicanic traces them; of his list we shall mention only two:

(1) The standard of living is low because 100 hectares [less than 250 acres] of cultivated land has to support 90-150 peasants in Eastern Europe, whereas it does not provide a living on an average for more than 16 in U. S. A., and 20 in the Argentine. . . .

(7) The great rural overpopulation represents in fact a "hidden unemployment" which becomes manifest in a great pressure of the rural population on the labor market in towns and industries. This pressure keeps the wages low³ and is one of the reasons for the small purchasing power of the working class in Eastern Europe. [JPRP, Vol. 1, No. 3.]

Industrialization the Solution

What is the way out of this automatic poverty-producing mechanism? The Yugoslav economic study we have quoted comes to the conclusion that it lies only in intensified industrialization, other solutions being very limited in effect.

Agrarian overpopulation came to an end in the countries of the Northwest only when they became strongly industrialized. Yugoslavia will have to look for a lasting solution in the same way. [JPRP, Vol. 3, No. 5.]

The durable solution of the economic problems can be found only in the widening of the urban and industrial sector of the economy. [Ibid., Vol 1, No. 1.]

This conclusion was the acceptance among the bourgeois specialists even before the war; it is not new. The fierce economic drive behind industrialization is therefore, from this point of view, not peculiar to the Tito bureaucracy. The latter inherited it. On it, however, are superimposed two others.

(2) *Industrialization is the key to national sovereignty.*

The important point is not merely that this is true but that the truism plays a leading role in the thinking of the Yugo-Stalinists. Naturally they must recognize that even an industrialized country can enjoy only a limited national sovereignty in Europe today, but an agrarian backwoods can enjoy little if any.

Back in 1944 Edvard Kardelj, No. 2 man in the Tito apparatus, was already laying stress on this point as a guide to post-war reconstruction. In an article in the then Tito organ *New Yugoslavia* he gives it first place among the "general questions concerning the present position of small nations."

3. In 1939 the average monthly earning in industry was \$24.58 (1229 dinars). According to the government in 1937 the minimum cost of living for a working-class family of four was 1500 dinars a month. Only three out of twenty-one industries reported paid wages equal to this minimum. By 1940 wages had risen 26 per cent above the 1937 level but the cost of living was up 47.5 per cent.

Nationalist Dynamics

The Nazis' economic penetration, he explains, meant—

the "reorganization" of the economy of the small nations in accordance with the economy of the larger industrial countries such as fascist Germany. In practice this meant preventing the independent development of the industrialization of small countries and transforming the existing industries of the small countries into mere appendages of the industry of fascist Germany.

Such a plan means keeping us

down to the level of agrarian countries available to feed the industrial countries, and in the first place Hitlerite Germany. According to this plan, therefore, the whole of Southeastern Europe would have become a sort of agrarian appendage to Germany.

This means, he concludes, reducing us "to the level of colonial countries."

Change "Germany" to "Russia" and we have (as we shall see) the underlying economic basis of the dispute which later proved irrepressible. The general motivation of national independence is translated in economic terms into the aim of industrialization; and contrariwise, opposition to industrialization will raise fundamentally the question of national independence.

A year before the break with the Cominform, a British fellow traveler testified to this tie-up. Speaking of "the enthusiasm, the almost fanatical zeal" with which the Tito government was pursuing the industrialization plan, he explains that

the real dynamic which is driving the Plan forward is the determination that Yugoslavia shall never again be dependent on the capitalist Powers of the West . . . the key point in the government's policy is that only by large-scale industrialization can the standard of living be raised and assurance found that Yugoslavia will finally emerge from the inter-war phase in which she was a backward, semi-colonial dependency of Western capitalism. [Aylmer Vallance, in *New Statesman and Nation*, July 26, 1947.]

This Stalinoid did not suspect, of course, that this same dynamic was operating against Russia.⁴ Yet the reader will have to keep this in mind in order to understand that the role this question played in the later break was not peripheral but central.

Nature of Tito Bureaucracy

(3) *The third reason* behind the dynamic of Yugoslav industrialization concerns the nature of the new ruling group of Yugoslavia, the Titoist bureaucracy. We shall have more to say about this later. At this point, however, it is necessary to point out that the

4. Taking space for only one more reference on this point, it is interesting to read Ella Winter's account of an interview with Tito. "I asked, naturally, about the Marshall Plan," she writes, and equally naturally the reader expects the answer that the Marshall Plan threatens the small nations' national sovereignty. But Tito's reply does not even use the phrase "national sovereignty"—he translates into Yugoslav: "He [Tito] said that . . . they want to develop their own industrialization, and under the Marshall Plan they might be forced not to, because the Marshall Plan might require them to develop only their agricultural production. They want their industry developed." [*Yugoslavia Today and Tomorrow*, Spring 1948.] To Tito national sovereignty and industrialization are interchangeable concepts.

relationship between the bureaucratic-state economy and the goal of industrialization cuts both ways. Just as the bureaucratic collectivism of Titoist Yugoslavia makes possible a perspective of rapid industrialization as compared with private capitalism, so also the objective necessity of industrialization pushed even the pre-Tito bourgeois governments in the direction of the bureaucratization of economy (statification specifically).

Thus Mirkovic, the bourgeois editor of the *Jugoslav Postwar Reconstruction Papers*, concludes his "Problems of Industrialization":

The public (the State in the first place) has played and will play an increasingly important role in all industrialization schemes (which is true of all countries of the East). The State (the public in general) remains the only significant investor in an economy where private savings are relatively insignificant and where the role of foreign investment is as yet uncertain. [Vol. 4, No. 1.]

The bourgeois state recognized that the road to industrialization lay through statification:

Public planning will have to play an essential role in post-war reconstruction of the region. The fact that Eastern Europe is just at the beginning of its industrialization process will help toward that effect. Even prior to the war most of the essential enterprises (posts, telegraphs, railways, power plants, steel mills, forestry resources, steamships) were in the hands of the public (state, communities, cooperatives). [Vol. 1, No. 6.]⁵

If for the bourgeoisie industrialization meant statification, then for the bureaucratic-collectivist ruling class under Tito, the terms of this equation are multiplied and transferred right to left: *thorough statification requires thorough industrialization.*

Otherwise the ruling bureaucracy can never transform itself into an indigenously rooted ruling class but is doomed to remain merely a proconsular apparatus for the foreign exploiter—even if the foreign exploiter is a bureaucratic-collectivist state.

When the Tito machine took power, it was not yet a class in its own right. What we are witnessing are its strivings to achieve the status of the ruling class of Yugoslavia, to become a Yugoslav class in the first place. It can achieve a distinctive role in the process of production only in proportion to the industrialization of the country. The rulers of a land of small-

5 In Yugoslavia specifically, statification under the pre-Tito bourgeois governments had already reached substantial proportions. Though timber constituted one of the major industries, only a third of the total forest area of the country was private property—the state owned 37.8 per cent and communities 27.9 per cent. And the state had a very large share in the lumber industry (the "Sipad," which is one of the largest of its kind in Europe). It owned thirteen coal mines yielding about a quarter of the total coal output; all the salt mines; most important of all, the two iron mines yielding some 90 per cent of the total output. It owned completely the tobacco, salt and raw-silk industries. It controlled the production of iron and steel (through the Jugo Steel Company) and armaments. It had a very large share in the cellulose and sugar industries. In 1938 a company formed by the state erected a number of storage elevators for agricultural products. In 1939 a ministerial decree looked toward extensive participation by the state in the future erection of electric power plants. In addition (this according to R. H. Markham) the state owned the railroads and telephone and telegraph systems, and public utilities were owned by the cities.

holding peasants can only be either bourgeois or tax-farmers for a foreign conqueror.

The dynamic social forces behind the question of industrialization should be clear. In this single economic question are wrapped up—

(1) the solution to the overriding economic problem of the country;

(2) the key to Yugoslav national-independence sentiments;

(3) the *sine qua non* for the transformation of the bureaucracy into an indigenous ruling class.

We shall be prepared, then, to see in its proper light the actual industrialization program which the Titoists put into effect leading up to the split with the Cominform.

3

The Yugoslav Five Year Plan was adopted on April 28, 1947. Its sweep and scope were unexpected.

The Stalinist Doreen Warriner (a British version of Louis Adamic), writing in the *New Statesman and Nation* for April 11 on the eve of its unveiling, rhapsodizes about the bold goals set by the Polish Three Year Plan—why, this writer exclaims, it aims at increasing the total national income to *sixteen* per cent higher than pre-war, “a very ambitious target.” And in contrast—

Yugoslavia's industrialization will be a long process, for 75 per cent of the population are still in agriculture, as against 60 per cent in Poland and 50 per cent in Czechoslovakia.

Three weeks later Yugoslavia announced its own target—an increase of the total national income over pre-war of 93 per cent!

Later, writing in the British Stalinist Tito-toting quarterly *Yugoslavia Today and Tomorrow*, the same author rhapsodizes about the way in which Yugoslavia's plan is *different* from those of the other satellites:

... of all the East European plans, Yugoslavia's is the most ambitious. It aims, not as the other plans in the main do, at the restoration of production to pre-war levels, but at the complete transformation of the country from a backward and undeveloped area to a modern industrial economy. [Winter 1948.]

This distinction is correct. The best way to underline it is to glance at the following comparative table of the economic plans adopted by the Stalinist satellites. The figures are percentages representing the proposed increase at the end of the plan over the pre-war level (remember that in all cases the plans *start* at a level below—in most cases far below—the pre-war level). The number after the country's name is the number of years the plan runs.

	<i>Industrial Production</i>	<i>National Income</i>	<i>Agricult. Production</i>
Bulgaria (2)	67	44	34
Czechoslovakia (2) ...	10	—9	0
Hungary (3)	26.5	1	0
Poland (3)	52	16	—20
Yugoslavia (5)	223	93	52

(Foreign Policy Reports, April 1, 1948)

What stands out is that Tito's plan is way out of line. To be sure, it is (unlike the others) to run for five years, but it is still proportionally the “most ambitious”; and the difference in range itself reflects the feverish vaulting ambition behind it.

Here are some details: The total capital expenditure will be \$5.57 billion. The value of industrial production is to be raised almost five times. The share of industrial production in the total national income is to be increased from less than 20 per cent in 1939 to almost 50 per cent in 1951. Among the main industrial targets are: increase in electric power by almost 300 per cent; coal and coke by 175 per cent; iron ore by 150 per cent; steel by 223 per cent. . . .

Let us admit for the sake of argument that the Cominform's charge of “adventurism” is justified—still, the Cominform did not break with the Yugoslavs *because* of their adventurism. Rather, this adventurism is like a reading glass magnifying and exaggerating the drive behind Tito until it becomes visible to the naked eye even from this distance from the Iron Curtain.

4

It is clear that Russia set its face against this perspective *for Yugoslavia*.

It thereby fell afoul of the feverish ambitions and hopes boiled up by the forces we have described, and unleashed the full fury of Yugoslav nationalism as filtered through the special needs and aims of the Yugo-Stalinist bureaucracy. (Like other national-resistance movements and tendencies today, this is not *merely* the continuation of the “old” Balkan nationalism but is the old spirit of nationalist resistance given new forms, motivations and drives.)

Leaving aside temporarily the reasons why the Russians took this line, let us see how the question figured in the actual dispute, both openly and incognito.

Like many other things, it can be seen in the Cominform resolution itself as in a glass darkly; but we are frank to admit that there is scarcely an hypothesis to be invented which can *not* be read into that dark glass. The resolution is written in the spirit of the Book of Revelation, the verses of Nostradamus and the Delphic oracle; and any conclusions from it must be independently checked by other evidence.

No ingenious interpretation can possibly eliminate the notorious contradictions between Point 3

and Point 6 of that document (the only points dealing with economic questions); but if we cancel out the irreconcilable accusations, what is left adds up to this:

You have gone too slow—with respect to the “sharpening of the class struggle in the countryside.”

You have gone too fast—with respect to your industrial policy.

And this much is *not* contradictory. Both reflect—not disinterested advice to the Yugoslav government on its planning, to be sure, but—a single motivation of *Moscow's* planning for Yugoslavia itself.

Case of Zujovic and Hebrang

Point 6 is the section discussing industrial policy, which is what we are concerned with. And this passage of the resolution begins by accusing the Yugoslavs of “concealing from the party and the people the real reasons for the brutal measures against Comrades Zujovic and Hebrang.”

The case of these two men is a key to the split; that has been clear from the beginning. The first was the minister of finance in the government and the second was the minister of light industry up to May 5, when both were kicked out (and later jailed). *With the split, it immediately became evident from the fulminations of both sides that these two were the leading mouthpieces of the Russians (the Cominform) in the internal fight.*

The Cominform resolution itself, characteristically, says nothing more about “the real reasons” for the Zujovic-Hebrang crackdown, not directly. But in the speeches at the Fifth Congress of the Yugoslav CP and in long articles in *Borba*, the CPY organ, the Titoists obliged with more detail.

What emerges from this side, in long invectives, is the accusation that: *these spokesmen for the Kremlin opposed and sabotaged the policy, and particularly the tempo, of industrialization and “socialist construction.”*⁶

When the pair were expelled from the National Front on June 19, Minister of Agriculture Stambolic, reporting on reasons, explained that they were “doubledealers, who camouflaged their destructive activities with the theory that the Five Year Plan was unrealistic and could not be implemented; therefore a brake must be applied to the building up of socialism in Yugoslavia. . . .”

At the Fifth Congress the main economic report, made by Boris Kidric, included a whole section de-

6. In the vocabulary of the Yugo-Stalinist speakers and writers, “socialist construction” is a locution standing for the current policy of rapid nationalization and rapid industrialization and is to be regularly thus translated.

voted to Zujovic and Hebrang⁷ and how “they endeavored to retard the socialist construction of our country.” His formulation of their crime makes the issue patent:

Their struggle against the increase of the productive forces of our country, against the abolition of contradictions between our inherited wealth [resources] and the backwardness of our techniques inherited from pre-war semi-colonial Yugoslavia—this struggle of theirs could be reduced to a policy of economic dependence of our country on abroad—that is, on imperialism.

It is of course absurd to consider that these men, looked on by both sides as *Kremlin* agents, are really being charged with desiring Yugoslavia's dependence on *Western* imperialism. And the Cominform's charge, that the Titoists were speaking *sotto voce* about Russia's imperialism, is quite believable.

Russia's “Higher Interests”

But no one at the Congress hit home any closer than Kidric in openly pointing the finger in the right direction. In the next paragraph of his speech Kidric accuses them of masking their “wrecking” policies with references to “Soviet experience,” and even quotes Zujovic as justifying his opposition with talk of the “*higher interests of Soviet policy*”! For public consumption the curse is taken off this revelation by the immediately following assurance that Zujovic thus “shamefully slandered” Russia.

While it was Kidric who pointed most openly, the explanation of the nature of the conflict is to be found put down in the plainest language elsewhere. The Fifth Congress was preceded by the publication in *Borba* of a series of long articles by party leaders, each devoted to a different phase of the Cominform attack (“pre-convention discussion”). The article dealing with the defense of the industrialization plans was written by Vlajko Begovic (“Construction or Treason to Socialism,” *Borba*, July 20). Begovic writes:

Until recently there was [this is a reference to Zujovic and Hebrang—H. D.] and there still can be found, *the opinion that Yugoslavia is an agrarian country and would remain such; and that it should deliver to industrially developed countries raw materials and food, and they to Yugoslavia finished industrial consumer goods.* This for us would mean renouncing industrialization of the country. We know that without industry and with the old-fashioned technique, socialism cannot be constructed. We know, as Stalin teaches us, that industry leads the whole national economy, including agriculture as well. This is why we cannot renounce industrialization of our country . . . Ours is the historic path of development from which nobody can hold us back. [My emphasis—H. D.]

The italicized words describe Russia's plan for its Yugoslav satellite.

HAL DRAPER

(Continued next month)

7. For that matter, scarcely a speech went by without a kick in their direction. At this congress devoted to counterattack, this duo were set up as whipping boys for the Cominform. There was one whole speech devoted to them alone, made by Radosavijevic, along the same lines of accusing them of “preventing the strengthening and broadening of the socialist sector” of the economy.

The Congress of the Fourth International

An Analysis of the Bankruptcy of "Orthodox Trotskyism"

The Second Congress of the Fourth International held in Europe earlier this year did not receive a good "press." In fact, except for an indifferent comment in one or two journals, resulting from an indifferently attended post-congress conference for correspondents, it received no newspaper notice at all.

This lack of interest is understandable. Practically everywhere the Trotskyist organizations exist only as isolated, uninfluential and unknown sects. The congress itself was held under unwarranted pseudo-conspiratorial conditions, so that its deliberations were known to the delegates and to the police authorities of the United States, Britain and France, at the least (as we had occasion to establish from different sources), but could not be observed by the interested public.

The poor "press" that the congress received in the Trotskyist periodicals themselves is less understandable. An official statement on the congress was prepared with the maximum of care in order to give the minimum of information on what occurred at the congress. This statement or a paraphrase of it is all that has appeared to date in the international Trotskyist press.

From it the reader can learn that the Congress reaffirmed the traditional position, as interpreted by the present leadership, and also reaffirmed its confidence in itself, the working class and the victory of socialism. This information, while it has a limited interest, is not very illuminating about what happened at the congress, not even about how the traditional position was reaffirmed.

Although months have passed since the congress ended, no report of its sessions is available. There is not even a summary account of the actual proceedings of the representatives, of the motions and counter-motions, or of the voting record of the delegates. There is, to be sure, the text of the resolutions adopted at the congress. But the text of the resolutions which were defeated, which contain the views of various oppositional tendencies in the Fourth International on questions of central importance, are not available and, so far as I know, their publication is not contemplated. A strange congress! We will not dwell on the ludicrous "secrecy" which the police evidently found no difficulty in piercing. But it is hard to recall a single case of an international working-class conference which did not publish so much as a condensed version of its minutes.

The ingenious innovators who are responsible for all that has been published about the congress do not even refer to the existence of oppositional groups or opinions at the meeting, or to the kind of resolutions

they presented—not even to the fact that there were any such resolutions. It is hard to believe this, but the lamentable proof is available throughout the "official" press (see, for example, the *Fourth International* of July 1948). It should be added that the Fourth International is on record as being against all the obfuscatory and disloyal methods employed against oppositionists by the Stalinists.

Let us try in the course of this review to make up for the oversight.

The congress was undoubtedly the most numerously attended and representative of all the international meetings of the Trotskyist movement. Bourgeois or Stalinist repression and meagerness of financial resources prevented many sections from sending their representatives. Yet, as never before, delegates came to the meeting not only from Europe, but from Asia, South Africa and several countries of the Western Hemisphere. Their presence was an earnest of the devotion of the Trotskyist movement to that socialist internationalism which has been abandoned by so many backsliders, cynics and tired men.

The political preparation of the congress was, however, so inadequate, not to say factionally manipulated, as to call its authority into question from the very outset. It should be borne in mind that this was the first meeting of its kind to take place since the founding congress of the International in 1938.

Not a few problems accumulated for the International in the intervening ten years. Events of the greatest historical and political magnitude crowded into the decade. There were the Second World War, the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the tremendous national-revolutionary resistance movements, the crushing military and moral defeat of fascism, the radical change in the relation of political forces in the Orient and in Eastern Europe, the victory of Stalinist Russia in the war and its imperialist expansion in the East and the West, the resurgence of both the Social-Democratic and Stalinist parties. To these should be added the fact that practically every important pre-war prediction of the Fourth International proved to be wrong, that the International came out of the war weaker than it was even before the war, and that open splits exist in more than a dozen of its sections, including practically every important one.

A real congress would have the obligation of dealing with all the created problems. To deal with them, it would have to be a real congress. Such a congress would absolutely have to be preceded by a free, democratic and thoroughgoing discussion of the main ques-

tions, all of which are in dispute, and therefore a discussion of all the documents setting forth the disputed positions. Less than that would mean a congress without real authority or validity.

It was only on the basis of the formal and solemn assurance that there would be such a preliminary discussion that our Workers Party agreed to participate in the congress with the commitment, stupidly demanded of it by the International leadership, that it would thereupon abide by the democratic decisions of the congress. (To which our party clearly and firmly added the stipulation: *if* the unity of the WP and the Socialist Workers Party were achieved, that is, if the Workers Party no longer existed as an independent organization but only as an integral part of the united party.)

Was It a Congress?

The formal and solemn assurance, given not only to our party but to all oppositional tendencies, was not worth the ink it was written in. There was hardly a pretense of a pre-congress discussion. The delegates came prepared to vote for positions they were more or less acquainted with, and to vote against positions with which they were partially or totally unfamiliar and which, in most cases, their organizations had never had the opportunity to examine in original form. To call an assembly convened under such conditions an authoritative congress is less than serious.

Therefore, a number of the delegates, at the opening session of the congress, joined in a resolution which declared that the meeting could not sit as a congress with full authority and that it should deliberate instead as an international conference. The principal sections of the resolution read:

This world congress can absolutely not be considered as having been prepared at the present time.

(A) From the standpoint of the documents placed in discussion: in spite of the publication of a number of documents, the most important positions of the main oppositions are unknown in almost all the sections:

1. In the German language, only the official positions have been published, except for a very short article by Armstrong. The positions of the other tendencies are unknown in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

2. In the Spanish language, only the documents of the leadership have been published and that quite recently.

3. No section of the International (save the English-speaking ones) knows either the policy of the SWP during the war or the document of the Spanish Group of Mexico against this policy.

4. The Internal Bulletin of the International Secretariat on the Russian question has been translated only into English, and only half of it.

5. The documents of the Workers Party and of the Johnson-Forest tendency are unknown in all the non-English-speaking sections of the International—except for an article by Shachtman published in the *IVe Internationale* and an article by R. Stone recently published in the Internal Bulletin of the International Secretariat.

6. There is not a single section of the International which

knows the differences that have led to the split in China or that determine the existence of two separate groups in Indo-China. Yet the Chinese documents were sent in March 1947. Neither does anyone know the documents of the Indian section on this same Chinese question which have existed since 1942.

7. Nobody—not even the International leadership—knows the political differences which separate the Trotskyist groups that abound in Latin America.

8. Nobody knows the documents of the Spanish Group on the national question.

9. Nobody knows the new English documents on the Russian question.

10. The “definitive” documents of the International Secretariat were not published until February 1948¹; it was thus impossible not only to reply to these documents but even simply to discuss them in the sections. These same documents are characterized by the Swiss section—which is by and large in political agreement with the I.S.—as “so compromising for the Fourth International and for the revolutionary cause in general that there is no other way for the I.S. to act except to withdraw formally its draft theses.”

(B) From the standpoint of the discussion in the sections:

Even the published documents have served for nothing in practice, for it was not possible to organize a political discussion in the sections. In almost all the sections, no discussion has taken place up to the present on the political and organizational problems of the world congress—except on the Russian question, partly discussed in some sections. Even the documents of the I.S. have not been discussed, because of their extremely tardy publication.

To cite only two examples: the Viet-Nameese section in France has never discussed the problems of the world congress. As for the French section, which passes for one of the most politicalized sections and for which the discussion is objectively easiest, since all the documents are first published in French, it has not been discussed either: at its national conference of March 28-29, only 20 per cent of the party was represented; the delegates who came from the few provincial regions that were represented all declared that the problems of the world congress had not been discussed in their regions; the Paris Region elected its delegates after three hours of discussion in all and for all the problems put together.

In the other sections the situation is worse, if possible. The conception according to which “the discussion for the world congress is nothing new but the continuation of the discussion that took place up to now in the sections,” is absolutely erroneous, above all given the exclusively national character of the problems which were discussed up to now in the sections.

(C) From the standpoint of representation:

Practically none of the delegates comes from a national congress or conference representing a political discussion in the ranks of the sections. The basis of representation recommended by the I. S., with the division of countries into three categories, the arbitrary classification of countries into one category or another, the prohibition of the transfer of mandates [proxy voting]—a prohibition without precedent in the history of the communist movement—has as its only result the manufacturing of an *a priori* majority in this “Congress.”

Consequently, this assembly can sit only as an international conference with the aim:

(a) from the political standpoint, of opening up the discussions which are on the agenda of the international discussion in order to prepare the convocation of a genuine world congress resulting from a thoroughgoing political discussion;

(b) from the organizational standpoint, of designating an Organizational Committee for the preparation of the world

1. The Congress opened toward the end of March 1948 and its sessions ran into the following month.

congress, with adequate representation of the oppositional tendencies, charged with the publication of the documents and with the organizing of the discussion in all the sections.

Any attempt to transform this assembly into a world congress would only give proof of an absolute lightmindedness and irresponsibility in the face of the extremely grave problems to which the revolutionary movement must respond today.

The resolution was signed and submitted by Munis, of the Spanish Group of Mexico; Chaulieu, of the left-wing group in the French section which bears his name; Gallienne, of another left-wing group in the French section; Antonin, of the "October" Trotskyist group in Indo-China; Armstrong, of the Irish section; and Shachtman, of the Workers Party. After a brief discussion, the resolution was defeated, the majority deciding that the congress which was not and could not be a congress would nevertheless be called a congress.

The "Conditions" Collapse

The signatories to the resolution thereupon submitted a statement, drafted in anticipation of the vote, declaring that they could not and would not accept the self-constitution of the assembly as a congress with authority to adopt conclusive decisions having disciplinary validity; that they would not commit themselves in advance to accept the decisions to be adopted by the assembly or to abide by its discipline; that they would remain bound only by the discipline of their respective organizations, but would nevertheless continue to attend the sessions in order to put forward their point of view on all the questions on the agenda. Confronted by this firm and unexpected declaration, the authors of the absurd "conditions" for attending the congress simply collapsed along with their conditions. Without daring to move for the ouster of the oppositionists, the leadership proposed to proceed with the agenda.

The first point of importance on the agenda of the congress (as we will now call it) was the report of the Executive Committee. One might think that such a report would form one of the central axes for an international meeting of the Trotskyist movement.

It would have to deal with the most important events of the ten stirring years since the preceding congress; with the analyses and the forecasts that had been made; with the policy pursued by the international leadership and the national sections; with the outstanding controversial questions which have divided the Fourth International into numerous pairs of politically irreconcilable viewpoints. It would have to serve as the necessary introduction to a broad discussion and a decision on the questions that have been in dispute especially since the outbreak of the war in 1939.

That is what it should have been. Actually, it was nothing of the kind. The only claim to distinction the report could make is that it was one of the most lamentable performances in the history of the move-

ment. For carefully scraped-out emptiness it remained unexcelled by any of its rivals at other sessions.

To be sure, the reporter took care to refer to the reactionary character of the Stalinist and reformist parties; he noted with pride that the centrist organizations had not become mass movements, whereas the Fourth International, in the face of great difficulties, had not disappeared; he did not forget to dwell loudly upon his unshattered faith in the working class, his confidence in socialism and his conviction that the Fourth International would overcome all obstacles—including, presumably, such reports as he was delivering.

The Unprecedented Silence

It is debatable if the speech, sodden with cheerless commonplaces, would have been appropriate even at some anniversary celebration in a mountain village. Its suitability as a report of the Executive Committee to a congress was not debatable. Consequently, it was not debated—not at all, not by anyone, and not for a single moment.

This sounds like malicious exaggeration, but it is the literal truth. The chairman of the session positively pleaded with the delegates to take the floor in the discussion scheduled to follow the report. Understandably, nobody budged. What was there in the report to discuss? Perhaps the socialist aim, to which the reporter rededicated himself with the stertorous passion of a nineteenth-century French deputy? Or his confidence in the working class which he asseverated with a belligerency that failed to provoke, or even to awaken, the delegates?

Whereupon the report, so to speak, was adopted, so to speak, without a word of discussion and by a vote which matched it in dullness. It is still hard to believe, but the minutes of the congress would confirm it to the letter, which is not the smallest of the reasons why the minutes remain unpublished. As far as can be remembered, this is the first instance in the history of the movement where a congress failed to devote a single word to a discussion of the report of its Executive Committee, and a report of ten years at that!

The kilometric articles that the same delegates would write if such a thing were to happen at a Stalinist congress are not hard to imagine. The Stalinists at least pretend to discuss the congress reports of their executives. Here there was not even the pretense.

Result: the congress met and adjourned without discussing or taking a position on—

The "proletarian military policy," particularly as pursued by the SWP during the war, which was condemned not only by our party but also by many French, English, Spanish, Mexican and other comrades;

The policy, the absence of a policy or the conflicting policies pursued by the various sections of the International (the International itself had *no* policy at all) toward the most significant revolutionary mass movements during the war, the underground national-resistance movements;

The policy of supporting China during the world war, rejected not only by our party but also by many if not most of the comrades of the Chinese, Indian, Spanish and other sections;

The way in which the International, as a functioning, *articulate*, central organism, was sabotaged to death during the world war, so that with the exception of a "manifesto on India," which it would have been better not to write at all, there is nowhere a record of what the Fourth International—not this or that section but the International itself—had to say on any one of a score of vitally important political questions that arose during the greatest crisis of our generation.

Shipwreck on the Russian Question

The discussion on the question of Stalinist Russia and Stalinism in general fared somewhat better. But only in the sense that in this question the bankruptcy of the leadership of the International was revealed positively, by direct discussion, whereas it was revealed negatively, as it were, in the question of its political course for the past ten years by the complete absence of discussion.

The traditional theory of the Trotskyist movement on Russia was completely shipwrecked during the war. Nothing worth while is left of it now.

The Stalinist bureaucracy did *not* disintegrate during the war. On the contrary, while it is not one whit freer from contradictions and internal antagonisms than any other ruling class, it consolidated its *bureaucratic* (as against a genuinely popular) hold on the country to a greater degree than in the pre-war period when it was shaken by successive purges. In any case, it emerged from the war far more intact than the ruling class of any other country in the world.

The bureaucracy did *not* prove incapable of defending its country (and that is what Russia is today: *its* country), its rule, its social system and its economy from enemy attack. On the contrary, it not only defended it aggressively, unwaveringly and uncompromisingly, but much more effectively than the ruling class of most if not all the other belligerents. The fact that it did not carry on this defense in the interests of the working class, of democracy, of internationalism, of socialism or in conformity with their principles, is entirely beside the point. It did not carry on that kind of defense and, being what it is, it could not; we did not expect it to because there was not the slightest reason to expect it. It defended itself and its rule as reactionary classes have always done

in wartime: in a reactionary way, by a demagogic exploitation of the noble sentiments of the people, by poisoning their minds and recklessly expending their bodies, by trampling coldly and brutally upon their interests and their rights, all in order to preserve and extend its own power and the bases of its power.

The bureaucracy did *not* capitulate to capitalism or its capitalist allies. On the contrary, while it made compromises and concessions to its capitalist allies of no greater number or significance than those that any ruling class is often compelled to make in a given relationship of forces, it succeeded, by a combination of physical and political strength and cunning and maneuvers, in weakening the capitalist world and, correspondingly, in strengthening its own international position, to an extent that exceeded *everybody's* expectations. The bureaucracy did *not* restore capitalism or abandon or undermine state ownership of the means of production and exchange, or develop the oft-predicted "bourgeois wing," nor did it show the slightest tendency in that direction. On the contrary, it not only fought and fights tenaciously for the maintenance of nationalized property, which is the property of *its* state and the indispensable economic foundation of *its* rule, but it managed to destroy the economic foundation of the bourgeoisie in a number of other countries and to replace it with nationalized property.

Judgment of Events

At the same time, this victorious "defense of the Soviet Union" resulted nowhere in the advancement of the cause of the working class, brought no benefit to the working class and revolutionary movements. Where Stalinist Russia and its agents did win or did extend their influence, the working class, the masses in general, suffered the heaviest blows. They were disoriented, demoralized, degraded. Where Stalinism took power, the revolutionary movement was relentlessly crushed, as in Russia, and the people reduced to the cruelest slavery.

There is no other way of judging the correctness of a political program or a slogan in the socialist movement than by the consequences which its partial or complete fulfillment entail for the working class and the struggle for socialism. By this only valid criterion, the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" in the war was and remains criminal and reactionary. Whoever refuses to see this today should be conveyed with kindly speed to an institution for the blind or be given treatment for arrested mental development.

In the face of these facts, the resolution presented to the congress by the leadership was nothing less than a disaster. If someone had deliberately planned to confuse people about a problem which is certainly not simple to begin with, and to bewilder them hope-

lessly about his own views on the problem, the result could hardly have been different.

The resolution reiterates the position that Russia is still a workers' state because the means of production are still nationalized. Then, by a simple stroke of the obedient pen, it takes it for granted that because nationalized property exists in the Stalinist state just as it existed in the workers' state (this time without quotation marks) of the Lenin period, therefore the production relations that exist today are the same as those which existed before the conquest of power by the bureaucracy. Indeed, the resolution uses the terms "nationalized property" and "production relations" interchangeably, as if they were one and the same thing. It writes without blinking an eyelash and as though it were an incontrovertible commonplace that the production relations established by the Bolshevik revolution "have not yet collapsed," that they have been "bequeathed by the October revolution" on the bureaucracy, that the "sum total [!] of the production relations" in Russia today have been "inherited from the October revolution." Naturally, with this identification of the two concepts, the contradictions and downright gibberish which follow are inevitable. The authors have simply refused to let their skulls absorb the idea that the two *cannot* be identified in Russia.

Property and Production Relations

Production relations are social relations; they are the relations between classes in the process of production. Under capitalism, the production relations are simply and clearly established. One class owns the means of production (the capital is owned by the capitalists) and the other class owns nothing but its labor power. It is on this fundamental basis that the two classes are obliged to enter into relations in the process of production. The capitalist state exists to maintain the fundamental basis and the fundamental social relations, and that is why it is, regardless of the political character of the regime, a capitalist state. For this reason it is not only convenient but correct to identify capitalist property relations with capitalist production relations.

The same identification is obviously not possible under conditions where property (that is, the means of production and exchange) is nationalized, is owned and controlled by the state and not by any class. Under such conditions, I cannot determine the character of the existing production relations by answering the question: "What class owns the property, the means of production?" for the good reason that it is not owned by any class, but by the state which is only the political instrument of a class. It can be determined *only* by asking and answering the question: "What class 'owns,' i.e., controls, the state-which-owns-the-property?" In other words, in a state which owns the means of production, the production relations are

more or less consciously determined by the class which has the state power. *Nothing* else is or can be decisive in determining the production relations under such conditions.

After the October revolution, it was not the mere fact that private property was nationalized which determined a fundamental change in the production relations, but the fact that it was nationalized by the workers in political power, by the workers' state. The relations into which men entered with each other in the process of production—in the factories, the mines, on the railroads and the land, etc.—were consciously decided, established and maintained by the state power which, however bureaucratically distorted, was in the hands of the working class. The relations of production thus established made the working class the principal economic and social beneficiary of the results of the production process. With the triumph of the Stalinist counter-revolution, the working class was expropriated politically and a new state power established which maintained and even extended the form and predominance of collective, or nationalized or statified property. *Consequently*, it established new and fundamentally different relations in the process of production—again, in the factories, the mines, on the railroads and the land. The worker, as an individual or as a class, has absolutely nothing to do with determining the production relations, with determining the relations of his class to the process or the conditions of production or the relations to it of those who, as a social group, control and decide the conditions of production. Like *all* ruling classes, the latter thereby control and decide the distribution of the surplus product extracted from the producers.

Basis for Stalinist Apologia

Anyone who does not *know* the *fundamental* change that has taken place in the production relations since the Stalinist counter-revolution, does not know anything about the concrete social relations existing in Russia today and thereby disqualifies himself from a discussion of the question on the ground of gross ignorance. Anyone who *does* know the facts, and who can write down on patient paper that the "sum total [no less!] of the production relations" existing after the proletarian revolution in Russia still exists under Stalinism today, thereby writes himself down as a Stalinist or, at the very, very best, as a high-minded and well-intentioned apologist for Stalinism who has, moreover, laid down the theoretical foundation for capitulating to it.

Since the logical consequences of this position are too palpable and, to any Trotskyist, disturbing, the authors of the resolution felt impelled to twist and squirm away from them. They must find out what is, after all, so bad about the Stalinist bureaucracy. So we learn, in the first place, that "the bureaucracy defends the essence [yes, nothing less than the essence!]

of the production relations inherited from October only as a basis for its privileges, and not as a basis for socialist development." This is both interesting and enlightening, even if not thought out. If it means anything, it is saying that the same "production relations" can be and are the basis for a socialist development or the basis for its opposite—an anti-socialist, counter-revolutionary, bureaucratic despotism. If the authors really mean production relations, they have made a unique contribution to Marxism! It is as if you were to say: A given bourgeois bureaucracy defends the essence of the production relations that underlie capitalism *only* as a basis for its own privileges, which are non-capitalist or anti-capitalist, and *not* as a basis for maintaining and developing capitalism. In other words, that production relations can simply be manipulated by a ruling bureaucratic clique against the social order for which these relations are indispensable and in the interests of the clique which is *inherently* alien and antagonistic to that social order.

New Muddles for Old

It is a crying absurdity, but not the only one. Although it defends the "essence" because the relations are the very basis of its power and privileges, we learn, in the second place, that the same bureaucratic dictatorship "undermines more and more the production relations on the basis of which it keeps alive." How in the world is it doing this? If, as the authors say, the production relations simply mean the nationalized property, then undermining them could only mean that nationalized property is being abandoned progressively and replaced by private property. As is known, that is the *only* fundamental and serious sense in which the Trotskyist movement has always referred to the role of the bureaucracy in "undermining" nationalized property. But there is not only no sign whatsoever of the bureaucracy restoring private property, but the authors themselves announce, a couple of pages further on, that "the bureaucracy has been incapable of setting up conscious political tendencies, of orienting itself toward the restoration of the private ownership of the means of production for its own benefit." There is nothing monotonous about this resolution: on each page, a bright new thought; each thought in bellicose opposition to the one before it.

Since there is no evidence presented to show that the bureaucracy is abandoning nationalized property, and plenty of evidence to show that its power and privileges are based upon it, you would therefore conclude that the two are necessarily interlinked. Not so fast! The authors, on still another page, and in the third place, firmly reject "any attempt at simplification which tries to confuse the economic basis on which Stalinist Russia is built, with the monstrous

degeneracy of its social superstructure." We are therefore back to the standpoint that the rule of the bureaucracy is in some fundamental way opposed to the maintenance of nationalized property. But only for one page. We learn, on the next page, in the fourth place, and with no little stupefaction, that "the production relations and bureaucratic management are more and more inextricably bound up. Consequently, the progressive character of the Russian *economy*, which is determined by its capacity to develop the productive forces, tends to become eliminated by the bureaucracy." Then, to make absolutely certain that the maximum of muddle is hammered into the resolution, we read on still other pages that "the policy and the very existence of the Stalinist bureaucracy constitute a permanent threat to all that is, in our opinion, still worth defending," that is, the "production relations," that is, nationalized property, "the maintenance of which imperiously demands the restoration of *workers' control*, the progressive introduction of *workers' management* of production."

Orthodox Right Wing Protests

The genius of the authors lies exclusively in their insistence that all this gibberish makes sense. The *only* reason Russia is still a workers' state and that it must be defended unconditionally, is that nationalized property still exists. The bureaucracy is reactionary and counter-revolutionary because it undermines the nationalized property. At the same time, it not only defends the essence of this property, and has produced no tendency to restore private property, but nationalized property is the very basis of its life and privileges. However, its existence is in conflict with the maintenance of this property, to which it offers a permanent threat. Nevertheless, nationalized property and the bureaucracy are becoming so much intertwined that the progressive character of this economy is being eliminated. Still, to maintain this property demands—and imperiously!—the overthrow of the bureaucracy which bases itself on the property, which is kept alive by it, and which defends its very essence. Notwithstanding our defense of "what remains of the conquests of October," namely, nationalized property, which is progressive and makes Russia a workers' state, we say in the next breath that it "is more and more losing its value as a motive force for socialist development" even though its value lies in its existence which the bureaucracy maintains, undermines, defends, threatens, sustains, destroys, etc., etc. It takes real genius, and of no human variety.

The resolution was subjected to annihilating criticism during and before the Congress. The Swiss section, rigidly "Trotskyist," called for the immediate withdrawal of the resolution as too compromising for the International. R. Johnson of the Workers Party

of South Africa² (not to be confused with J. R. Johnson) wrote a furious denunciation of it, wholly justified from the standpoint of the traditional position on the question, charging that the leadership has simply "capitulated to the petty-bourgeois tendencies which it had been resisting" up to now; that its "hatred of Stalinism, instead of being political, has become pathological" (this charge has a very familiar ring!); and that "not only are we taking over the language and vocabulary of Shachtman and Co., but of imperialism itself and are even attempting to surpass it." (This Johnson should not only not be confused with the other Johnson, but with J. P. Cannon either.)

The British Position

A more thought-out criticism came from the British section, the Revolutionary Communist Party, and its delegation. Its position was probably the most significant feature not only of the Congress but of the development of the Trotskyist movement as a whole. It was put forward in the form of a few modest "amendments" to the resolution. If these were mere amendments then we do not know the meaning of a categorical counter-resolution.

The British, who flirted for a while with the comical theory that Russia is a capitalist state and then quietly reinterred it, now start again with the premise that Russia is a workers' state because it is based upon nationalized property. Once started, they shift with hydramatic smoothness into second gear. If that is the reason and the only reason for calling Russia a workers' state, then, for the same reason, it is now necessary to consider all the "buffer" countries (Poland, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia) as workers' states as well, since in all these states the Stalinist regimes have either already nationalized the decisive sectors of the economy or are clearly on the road of all-out nationalization. On this basis, the British Trotskyist paper hailed the February coup in Prague, which installed the totalitarian dictatorship of Stalinism in Czechoslovakia, as a "victory" for the working class! It is hard to believe, but there it was, black on white, in the British *Socialist Appeal*, under the signature of the RCP leader. For this article, the RCP received a bitter letter from the Czech Trotskyists charging it simply with stabbing its Czech comrades in the back, a characterization which suffers from restraint but not from inaccuracy. While the British hailed the coup as a victory for the working class, the rest of the official Trotskyist press hailed it as a victory for the bourgeoisie which, with inexcusable perversity, was celebrating its triumph by jumping or being thrown out of high windows onto the pavement below.

2. It should be recorded that this is a deplorable misnomer. It is not a party because it has no members. It is not a workers' party because it has even fewer workers in it. It does not live in South Africa but, as its documents show, is drifting somewhere between the moon and some undiscernible planet.

If the premise is correct, the conclusion of the British is inescapable. Their argumentation is without a flaw: Only, they have obviously come to an abrupt halt half-way along the line. Yesterday, the buffer countries were capitalist states. Today, they are workers' states, degenerated or degenerating or qualified in any other sense. That means: state power has been transferred from the hands of one class into the hands of another. In all the languages of the earth, such a change is known as a social revolution (or counter-revolution). In the given cases, the British can only be saying that what has taken place is a *socialist revolution in its class type*. The socialist revolution is nothing but the transfer of power from the capitalist class to the working class, the overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment of the workers' state. Who organized and led this socialist revolution? The Stalinist bureaucracy and nobody else! But in that case, why is it counter-revolutionary? Perhaps because of its suppression and oppression of the workers? Very well, let us grant that. But the fact remains (still according to the British Trotskyists, of course) that the capitalist states were transformed into workers' states under the leadership and hegemony of the Stalinists. From this, the conclusion is absolutely unavoidable: we must introduce into Marxian politics the category of the counter-revolutionary socialist revolution or a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy that carries through the socialist revolution.

Downhill to "Democratic Stalinism"

Unfortunately, that is not all. If it has already been proved in life that the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy can and does carry through the socialist revolution (bureaucratically, trickily, or however else you want to describe it, but carries it through nevertheless) in a number of countries, there is no serious or fundamental reason to believe that it *cannot* carry it through in the other capitalist countries. From this, some ineluctable conclusions:

The working class is a good thing to have around; so is a revolutionary Marxian party. One or both may even be necessary to develop a workers' state, once it is established, into a harmonious socialist society. But a self-acting, conscious, democratically-organized, revolutionary working class is not *indispensable* for the carrying through of the socialist revolution. The counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy can do that job just as fundamentally (even if not as pleasantly, democratically, etc., etc.). It can establish a workers' state not only without the support of the working class but in opposition to the working class.

If it can do this, then all grounds for the separate existence of an independent revolutionary party or International immediately disappear. The Stalinist parties and International may not then be everything that is desirable or required for the establishment of socialism, but they suffice for the socialist revolution,

that is, for the establishment of a workers' state. The *only* justification for the separate existence of a Trotskyist movement is if it confines itself essentially to the role of a *democratic*, anti-bureaucratic, opposition to Stalinism and ceases to consider itself an opposition to Stalinism on fundamental principle. It can oppose Stalinism on the ground of its false theories or its bad methods, but not on the grounds that it is for preserving capitalism and against a socialist revolution.

This is what the British position, when thought out to the end, really means. If they hesitate to pursue their views to the logical conclusion, it is for the same reason that many hesitate to shift from second gear into high speed while racing down a hill with a dead end at the bottom. But downhill they are going, and they cannot remain for long in second gear without burning up the whole motor.

From the Ouija Board

The leadership of the congress was uneasily aware of the significance of the British position. The question of the buffer countries is a decisive test of any position on the Russian question as a whole, and the views of the RCP confirmed only too clearly what we have been writing for years about the Russian position of the Fourth International. Caught between the pressure of the RCP position on the one side and the position of the Workers Party on the other, the International leadership presented a positively gloomy picture. The gloomy picture was paired with a ludicrous position. Against our views, they insisted (with what arguments, we have already seen) that Russia remains a workers' state. Against us and the British, they insisted that Yugoslavia, Poland and the other buffer countries are capitalist states. What, capitalist states? Yes, capitalist states!

Every political person in the world who is in the least degree informed *knows* that this is the sheerest fantasmagoria. Everyone knows that in the countries where the Stalinists have taken power they have proceeded, at one or another rate of speed, to establish exactly the same economic, political, social regime as exists in Russia. Everyone knows that the bourgeoisie has been or is rapidly being expropriated, deprived of all its economic power, and in many cases deprived of mortal existence; that industry has been or is being nationalized, in some cases faster than it was nationalized after the Bolshevik revolution. There is not a single capitalist, capitalist theoretician or capitalist spokesman in these countries (or anywhere in the world) who considers the Stalinist states as capitalist. Everyone knows that what remnants of capitalism remain in these countries will not even be remnants tomorrow, that the *whole tendency* is to establish a social system identical with that of Stalinist Russia.

Everyone knows this, even the British Trotsky-

ist leadership knows this—but not the leadership of the Fourth International! Its ears muffed, its eyes blinkered, its mouth stuffed with cotton, its head in a blackened, soundproofed, waterproofed, unflammable and airtight belljar, its hands lightly fixed on a ouija board, it communicates to the remoter planets the following intelligence: "The capitalist nature of the economy of the 'buffer zone' countries is apparent. . . . In the 'buffer' countries the state remains bourgeois . . . the state of the 'buffer' countries defends property which, despite its diverse and hybrid forms, remains fundamentally bourgeois in character . . . while maintaining bourgeois function and structure, the state of the 'buffer' countries represents at the same time an *extreme form of Bonapartism*." (If only they could have read these consoling thoughts in time, King Peter would be asking to return to Yugoslavia, King Michael would never have left Rumania or Mickolajczyk Poland, and Masaryk would have died, if not a fully contented then at least a happier man!)

State-Capitalist Theory Undefended

A state with a capitalist economy, with a state organization of the economy, and with a regime of police dictatorship which represents an "extreme form" of Bonapartism, is commonly known as a fascist state. The British delegates did not quite agree with this analysis. Instead of fascist states, they proposed to designate the Stalinist buffer countries as workers' states in the same sense as Russia, and therefore states which must be unconditionally defended from capitalist attack. The resolution of the majority declared that the "capitalist nature of these countries imposes the necessity of the strictest revolutionary defeatism in war time." This difference of opinion was settled by the vote. The British amendments were overwhelmingly defeated. However, being religiously for sacred discipline, which they voted into the statutes along with the others, the British committed themselves to abide by the decisions and line of the congress. So, if their press henceforth puts forward the line of the International that the buffer countries are fascist states (more or less), and capitalist in any case, which must not be defended in wartime, even though they themselves strongly believe that these countries are workers' states that should be defended, there will be no ground for astonishment. After all, is the difference really so great or important, especially in face of the infinitely greater importance of —of what? Oh yes, of discipline! The resolution of the leadership carried by a pretty lamentable majority. Those of us who supported the position of the Workers Party—that Russia and the buffer countries are bureaucratic - collectivist states — voted for the resolution of the French Chaulieu group which, while not identical with our position, was sufficiently close to it for purposes of the record vote. This resolution was supported by the delegates from the Chaulieu

group, the German section, the Irish section, the Indo-Chinese October group and the Workers Party.

(The theory that Russia is a capitalist state was not really presented or defended at the congress. Munis, who holds to one version of this theory, spoke only briefly and in the most general way. The representative of the Gallienne group, which holds to another version, did not speak on the subject at all. There remained the delegate who supported the J. R. Johnson version, that Russia is a fascist capitalist state. He did not present Johnson's view at all and submitted no resolution for his specific position. Instead, he joined in a common resolution with Chau-lieu, who had, in addition, a resolution of his own defending the theory of bureaucratic collectivism for which we voted. The joint resolution, which the highly principled Johnsonite signed with a sponsor of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, for which the former professed such a detestation, mentioned neither that theory nor the theory of state capitalism. After the congress, the so-called convention of the SWP in this country voted unanimously to endorse the line of the congress, the Johnsonites supporting the vote. One side says Russia is a workers' state that must be unconditionally defended; the other side says it is a fascist state which must be unconditionally overthrown. Bah! a trifling difference among men of high revolutionary principle. Divide a vote over such a nuance? It would be preposterous. By avoiding the preposterous, the Johnsonites bravely committed hara-kiri. It was not unforeseeable or unforeseen. As Yeats wrote on the fallen Irish airman: "In balance with this life, this death.")

The Bitter Dose

In the congress discussion, I said that while the majority could defeat the British amendment by a mere vote, so long as they preserved the basic premise from which the British started, they would have to take a double dose of the amendments tomorrow. Tomorrow came much sooner than anyone expected. My easy prediction was wrong in only one respect: the leadership of the International hastily swallowed not just a double but a quadruple dose of the British position.

The hapless resolution, pointing out that "a more direct control by the Kremlin over the leadership of the various 'national' Stalinist parties has become necessary," added cautiously, "Nevertheless, one should not expect large cracks in the apparatus in the eventuality of war, because all the leading strata of the Communist parties are entirely aware that only their link with the USSR allows them to play a political role 'independent' of other reformist currents inside the labor movement." No sooner written than confirmed. Right after the congress adjourned, the Tito-Stalin conflict flared violently into the open, revealing spectacularly not only a "large crack in the

apparatus," which "one should not expect," but the largest and most significant break in the history of the Stalinist movement. We, who had already analyzed the inexorable forces working to produce such and even greater cracks in world Stalinism, were therefore not caught off guard and found no need to improvise a position in twenty-four hours. What was the reaction of those whose main happiness comes from calling us petty bourgeois and themselves Marxists—perspicacious Marxists? They stumbled and fumbled and cleared their throats and then plunged into what is probably the most disgraceful position in the history of the Trotskyist movement.

The resolution of the congress said over and over again that while Russia is a workers' state, Yugoslavia is a capitalist state; and that while Russia must be unconditionally defended in any conflict with a capitalist state, its defenders must adopt a defeatist position toward a country like Yugoslavia—not just plain ordinary defeatism, but "the strictest revolutionary defeatism." But, after all, where was that said? In a resolution. And what, after all, is a resolution? It's a combination of the genius of an author, tolerant paper and flowing ink. Don't we still have ink that flows, paper that's tolerant, and the same author with his genius unimpaired? Of course! Then what's to prevent us from writing another document? Protests from the membership? Nonsense! All discussion is strictly prohibited after the congress. The next congress perhaps? More nonsense! Our congress does not even discuss the report of the line followed by the outgoing Executive. So the three basic ingredients were whipped together and new documents produced.

Open Letters to Tito

The new documents, over the signature of the Secretariat of the Fourth International, are a series of "open letters." To whom are they addressed? To the regime of Stalin, which heads a workers' state which we defend? No, to the regime of Tito, which represents "an extreme form of Bonapartism" and heads a capitalist state toward which we pursue a policy of the "strictest revolutionary defeatism." Do the letters to the Stalinist bureaucracy of Yugoslavia express a sympathetic attitude toward the Russian workers' state which we defend unconditionally? No, they express the most cordial and sympathetic attitude toward the Yugoslav capitalist state which must be defeated in any conflict with the Russian workers' state.

As political documents, these "open letters" are among the most revolting and shameless of our time. The line adopted by the just-concluded congress of the International is not even mentioned, which shows how much respect the leadership has for it, the same leadership which insists on everybody else complying with its official line. Nowhere do the let-

ters say that the International considers Yugoslavia a capitalist state; nowhere do they hint that the International applies to it "the strictest revolutionary defeatism in wartime."

In the congress resolution, it says clearly enough: "Likewise, from the Russian occupation forces or from pro-Stalinist governments, which are completely reactionary, we do not demand the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the setting up of a real foreign trade monopoly, an effective struggle against speculation and the black market." The minute the Tito-Stalin conflict broke out, all this was completely forgotten; more exactly, it was completely ignored.

The "open letters" are addressed to the congress, the Central Committee and the members of the Yugoslav Stalinist party. The letters are one long appeal to the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucrats to become socialists—in their own interests. What the congress resolution said "we do not demand" of the Stalinist regimes, the "open letters" do demand, and in a sickeningly ingratiating tone. The July 13 letter goes into painstaking detail on what the Stalinist regime should do. It should adopt the road of the class struggle; it should establish full workers' democracy; it should nationalize the land; it should organize a Balkan Socialist Federation; it should adopt all the principles of Leninism; it should start a "vast campaign of re-education"; there should be a "real *mass mobilization*, to be brought about by your party."

Discovering the "Revolution"

Who is to perform these modest chores? Tito and Company, the counter-revolutionary Bonapartist bureaucracy which, said the congress, "has introduced special forms of exploitation" and has established "a Stalinist police dictatorship" in Yugoslavia! And what will happen to the Stalinist gang (because that is what they are in Yugoslavia too) in the course of all this? The "open letter" is most reassuring on this score. Dear police dictators, there is nothing to worry about: "*Your party has nothing to fear from such a development. The confidence of the masses in it will grow enormously and it will become the effective collective expression of the interests and desires of the proletariat of its country.*" (My emphasis—M.S.)

In the letter of September, the Secretariat admonishes the Yugoslav bureaucracy against party monolithism; "If you cling to this conception you will head inexorably toward the foundering of your revolution and of your own party." Tito and Company have not yet headed toward it, but if they "cling" they "will" head toward it! Toward what? "The foundering of your revolution." What revolution? When did it take place and what class did it bring to power? Weren't we (and the British) impatiently given to understand at the congress that there has been no revolution in Yugoslavia and that it is still a capitalist, not to say a fascist, country? "It is your duty as well as in your

own self-interest to raise the clarification of your conflict to the plane of the true ideological reasons, which pertain to the nature of Stalinism. Only in this way will you be able to arm your party and the Yugoslav masses. . . ."

The "new line," which makes the British amendments look like a bagatelle, justifies the Secretariat of the Fourth International in taking on an additional title: "Comradely Advisers to Stalinist Police Dictators on How to Transform Totalitarianism Into Democracy, Capitalism Into Socialism, Counter-revolutionary Parties Into Revolutionary Parties, Oppressors of the People Into Progressive Leaders of the People, Rulers Into Ruled and Ruled Into Rulers, in the Best Interests of the Dictators, Oppressors and Counter-revolutionists Themselves." Admittedly, this title is long and ignoble, but it is not inaccurate.

The Fourth International has proved incapable of abandoning its role of an utterly ineffectual left wing of Stalinist totalitarianism and counter-revolution. It has a powerful impulsion to follow in the wake of Stalinism and this is caused organically by its reactionary theory that Stalinist Russia is a workers' state. It is thereby compelled to have its political course and its future determined at every stage by the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This dooms it as an independent revolutionary proletarian movement, dooms it to bankruptcy and impotence at every important political juncture, dooms it to disorient and demoralize the few thousand militants who follow it and to paralyze their revolutionary will.

The concluding article will deal with the other decisions of the congress and with the perspectives not only of the Fourth International but of the revolutionary Marxists throughout the world who are today outside its ranks.

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Szakasits of Hungary

Profile of a Social-Democratic Turncoat

To an impartial observer, several of the leaders of the Eastern European social-democracy (which is now being liquidated by the Cominform offensive) present a still unclarified problem of psychology—namely, the problem of their rapid integration into the Stalinist political machine.

Grotewohl, the representative of the German Social-Democratic fusionists, began the parade of these types; and he required several months to become housebroken in Pieck's Stalinist menage. In the case of Radaceano—who, at the socialist-Stalinist unification congress in Rumania, still tried timidly to demarcate the differences between the two groups—the sea-change in language and mentality took place more quickly. But for the speed record in accomplishing the metamorphosis from social-democrat to Stalinist, one must give the palm to Szakasits of Hungary.

Well-Earned Reward

Szakasits, the new president of the Hungarian republic, put up as candidate by the unified Hungarian Workers Party of which he is the head and which was created one and a half months ago, is a clever politician.

His career in the pre-war social-democracy was a rather modest one. During the difficult period of semi-legal struggle against the authoritarian regime of Horthy and the Hungarian reaction, he was an activist without special responsibilities.

An attempt is now being made to puff up the myth of Szakasits as a leftist element in the pre-1944 Hungarian Social-Democracy. But the truth is altogether different; Szakasits was always in accord with the Social-Democratic party leadership and its policies.

The fascist regime inaugurated

by the Nylas movement (called the Arrow Cross) illegalized the socialist party and put its leaders in concentration camps. But very quickly the dictatorship fell under the hammer blows of Russian military might. At Debreczen, under the egis of the occupation authorities, the Hungarian independence front was created. It was made up of some Horthyite high officers, some Stalinist leaders returned from Moscow, some new names representing the Social-Democratic Party, a few others from the Small Holders Party and some Stalinist sympathizers thrown together to improvise a national peasants' movement.

This was Szakasits' moment, and he seized it; as a *homo novus* he rapidly scaled the ladder of the hierarchy all the way to the top.

At the head of the Social-Democracy his position was rather precarious. The self-styled "Left," formed by Stalinist agents like G. Marosan who had been sent into the party, from the beginning rejected any necessity for an independent socialist policy. This group proposed to transform the Social-Democratic Party into a kind of antechamber for the Communist Party. In opposition to this clique of liquidators the genuine working-class elements demanded a consistent socialist policy. They thus won a growing popularity within the ranks of the party and outside of it.

Standing in the middle between these two wings, Szakasits and his circle tried to maintain a clever balance between the crypto-Communists on the one hand, faithful to every slogan of the Stalinists (no matter how absurd), and on the other the bulk of the party who were tired of the policy of tail-ending after the CP to the detriment of the working class.

These lofty tactics of compromise were put to the test after the elections of August 31, 1947. Thanks to their electoral machinations directed in the first place against the Social-Democracy, the CP became the leading party in the country. The resentment of the socialist rank and file against the rigging of the election was so great that a meeting of the Party Council had to be convened.

CP Learns a Lesson

At this conference, the rank-and-file militants rained criticisms upon the leadership. A half-hundred speakers from every corner of the country set forth their views: not a voice was raised on behalf of the leaders responsible for the party's policy. Under the impact of this attack Szakasits retired from the leadership. It was Ban, then still in emigration, who had to be brought forward to replace him.

At the last minute an old-time party member made an appeal for the conflicting forces to come to an agreement. The upshot was that a compromise was reached. Szakasits remained, but his powers were restricted. And along with Szakasits went the party apparatus he had created.

The Stalinists learned their lesson: the oppressive regime was redoubled. The old routine continued, and the "purge" began. The men who enjoyed the confidence of the workers in the shops were kicked out and replaced by Stalinist puppets.

Szakasits understood what was up: his position depended on the will of the Stalinist leadership. He accepted the aid of Rakosi [the CP leader] and his shock troops against the majority of his own party.

The Stalinist neophyte Szakasits thereupon went to the congress of

unification and unblushingly told the delegates: "The Hungarian Communist Party has followed a correct policy, for it had reasonable and far-seeing plans which it achieved boldly and resolutely; it ably utilized its forces, *sustained and animated* the left wing of the Social-Democratic Party."

And the same Szakasits in the same report recalled with horror "the revolt of the right-wing elements in September"—namely, the revolt of his own party! He recognized that "from that moment on, events led logically to the idea of unification with the Communist Party."

It is in the following terms that he spoke of his savior: "I remember with gratitude the sincere, honest and loyal support and aid given on this question by my friend and comrade Rakosi, whose support and aid made it possible for the Social-Democratic Party to enter upon the road of unification."

Speaking of the CP's generosity, he admitted the deplorable state to which the Stalinist offensive had brought the traditional party of the working class, the Social-Democracy. Thanks to this psychological slip, one learns how a movement which had more than 600,000 members could be considered "a beaten and humiliated army."

And Szakasits did everything he could to get into the good graces of the conqueror. Like a genuine "Marxist - Leninist - Stalinist" he poured epithets like "treason" on his own political past and on his friends of yesterday. On the other hand, his language with reference to Russia did not differ in the slightest shading from those of his colleagues who had been steeped in Stalinism for a longer time.

The final scene in the tragedy of Hungarian democratic socialism was marked by the election of Szakasits to the presidency of the republic, where his political role is

virtually finished. This is the curtain on the political career of a Szakasits.

But the Social-Democratic workers, employees and peasants of Hungary cannot follow the road of Szakasits, whose "climate of friendship" earned him the presidential sinecure; his counsel for unity remains a vain appeal. They cannot be bought by honors and posts. It is their party which has been sold out; it is they who have been betrayed.

On the morrow of the presidential election an old socialist worker, listening to the harangues about the "Hungarian popular democracy," commented: "That's true, the popular democracy is very fine. Only—for the first five hundred years it will not go along the way it's supposed to."

In the history of the international workers' movement the name of Szakasits will bear a dark significance. VALENTIN TOMA

Dutch Picture

Sketching the Political and Social Scene in the Netherlands Today

The first elections to take place in Holland after the liberation showed that despite the Nazi occupation the people had not changed their political line-ups.

The Catholics, enjoying an absolute majority in the provinces of Limburg and Brabant, came out on top. The Labor Party—which had been formed through a fusion of the Social-Democrats, progressive Liberals, left Protestants and Catholics and elements from the democratic resistance movement—came next. The Communist Party, tripling its votes, represented a third of the working-class electorate. The Protestant clerical parties, Anti-Revolutionary Party and Christian Historic Party, as well as the Liberals, made up the right wing of the political line-up.

The recent elections in June registered losses for the two left-wing parties. The CP suffered a 25 per cent drop especially in the working-class sections. This represented the reaction of the worker-voters against the policy of verbal radicalism, symptomatic of the fact that the proletariat of Amsterdam and the big industrial centers refused to support the line of the Cominform.

The demagogic press campaign of the official CP organ *De Waarheid* against Koos Vorrink, one of the anti-Nazi resistance leaders and head of the Labor Party, cost the CP (led by Paul de Groot) tens of thousands of worker votes; this was also the effect of the resignation of Koljemans, editor in chief of their official organ, who refused to go along with this anti-socialist campaign.

Changes in Laborites

The Labor Party also suffered losses. In its case they were less obvious, especially since they involved bourgeois elements who, three years after the liberation, slid back toward the Liberals or Catholics. The departure from the Labor Party of Dr. Oud, ex-mayor of Rotterdam who rejoined the Liberal Party, only had the effect of bringing the party closer to its pre-war working-class character, socially speaking.

If it lost to the right, it gained on the left; and a large number of CP supporters voted this time for the Laborites. In the Dutch parliament 35 socialist and CP deputies represent the working-class electorate, while the bourgeois parties have 65 deputies.

The extraordinary influence wielded by the clericalism of the various religious parties is the result of a serious mistake of the socialists and Liberals on the question of the relationship between church and state—a mistake which goes back to the beginning of the century. As a consequence of their badly understood policy of neutrality, the lay parties never made a fight against the granting of state subsidies to the religious schools.

The former students of these schools, soaked in the partisan religious spirit, are the voters of the clerical parties today. The Laborites are trying to break this clerical hold through their new policy of fusionism, which has transformed the former lay Social-Democracy into a federation of three tendencies: lay-humanist, Protestant and Catholic. Hence the name applied to the fusion—*doobrak* (breaking-through).

For the moment the fruits of the *doobrak* policy are still quite small, particularly in the Catholic sector.

The New Government

The two-party (Catholic - Laborite) basis of the government was insufficient to ensure the constitutional changes nec-

essary for the settlement of the Indonesian question. The coalition's majority was extended toward the right by the entrance of the colonialist Liberals and the reactionary Christian Historic Party. But is it possible to achieve any durable work with such a coalition?

Within the ranks of the socialists, the feeling of bitterness is at a high point and the leadership is accused on all sides of weakness and inconsistency.

The head of the government, the right-wing Laborite Drees—although not regarded as a statesman of important stature—is, however, a “hard” as opposed to the “softs.” Especially on the economic field, where the danger of a reduction in the standard of living must be fought, he is expected to hold out against the demands of the bourgeois Liberals.

The Labor Party's experience completely upset the expectations of the Marxists. The fusion of the various non-Marxist groups with the Social-Democrats—the *doobrak*—was fought by the socialist Left, which was greatly alarmed about the future of the party. “Let us remain what we have always been”—this was the slogan of the Social-Democrats who were opposed to giving up the party structure established by Troelstra, the founder of the Social-Democracy. In reality they believed that the heterogeneous elements coming from the resistance movement would change the character of the party.

But now, and this shows a good sense of self-criticism, the Left recognizes that it has acquired some of its best points of support among the newcomers, while the old Social-Democrats who put this policy over finished by lining up on the right wing of the party.

The Crisis of Stalinism

On the occasion of Secretary General Paul de Groot's resignation, the leadership of the Dutch Communist Party published (in *De Waarheid*) a rather interesting document on the causes for its electoral defeat.

The principal mistake, it said, was the fact that “the party did not fight against the Marshall Plan strongly enough,” did not make propaganda for Russia with sufficient energy, “and did not effectively unmask the right-wing socialists.”

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On the organizational field it proposes to strengthen CP ties with the workers of the free trade unions and Christian trade unions. Does this mean that the CP is going to abandon the Stalinist “unitary” trade unions, which are on the downgrade?

From the trade-union point of view the result of the experience with these dual unions has proved to be a great mistake. As before the war, the free trade unions connected with the Labor Party are the strongest, although in the South it is the Catholics who have the majority among the miners.

Under Stalinist influence the “unitary” trade unions did succeed at certain junctures in embracing a large number of non-Stalinist workers, especially those who had belonged to the former (pre-war) trade-union center led by the left-socialist party of Sneevliet. When these unions were transformed into mere appendages of the Communist Party, the crisis in relations between the Stalinists and the worker elements became inevitable. Thus, the dissension in their ranks in Rotterdam ended up by destroying completely the influence of the “red” trade unions in that port.

More than 20 per cent of the elements who broke away from the Unitary Federation are now in the process of organizing an independent trade-union movement based on shop organizations.

Prospects for the Left

The two key problems of Dutch political life—Indonesia and the economic question—demand energetic democratic measures. Peace with Indonesia can be effected if that republic is treated on a basis of equality. Dutch public opinion is extremely sensitive on this point, and the anti-colonialist spirit of Mulatili is clearly dominant.

The courageous struggle put up in behalf of liberty for the Dutch East Indies, by the weeklies *Vlam* and *Vrij Nederland* and by the dailies *Het Parool* and *De Waarheid*, has met with a favorable reception; whereas the colonial-imperialist groups have suffered serious setbacks in recent elections.

Without the constant pressure of public opinion on the government, peace with Indonesia will be delayed, and together with it the prospect for economic stabilization. While the latter (in comparison with the other European countries) is still quite favorable, the enormous expenditures for the so-called “police action” in the colonial empire are having the effect of negating the post-liberation constructive effort. Out of a total of 641,000 workers (December 1946), only 21.2 per cent are unemployed, while in 1938 there were 303,000 workless.

The balance between prices and wages has been held better than in any other country. Taking 1938 prices as 100, in 1946 the index was 191, jumping by May

1948 to 203. At the same time wages went up from an index of 100 in 1938-1939 to 163 for industry and 235 for agriculture, rising by June 1948 to 175 for industry and 259 for agriculture.

In order to ensure the purchasing power of the wage earners and masses of people, the rationalization program has been kept up for scarce goods. While the apartment developments are truly models, there is still a 10-15 per cent scarcity in living quarters for workers. But in comparison with the tragic situation in other countries, this figure seems altogether insignificant.

It is clear that the prospects for success for a left socialist and democratic policy are intimately bound up with a consistent struggle for the maintenance of the standard of living. To impress this fact on the Dutch working-class movement is the task being pushed by those Labor Party comrades who consider themselves militant socialists, as well as by others outside the ranks of the party.

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Socialist Policy in East Europe

Theses of a Group of Eastern European Marxists

The following document, whose origin is explained in the foreword below, is presented to our readers first of all because of its inherent interest as the product of a group of Marxist collaborators themselves hailing from the countries of the Russian Eastern European empire. Indeed, it is probably the first attempt by Marxist socialists from beyond the Iron Curtain to grapple with the problem of giving "a systematic presentation of the situation" in the Russian satellite zone.

While we would criticize it on the score of inadequacy if it is to be judged as a rounded analysis, the foreword emphasizes that it is only a "first contribution" toward that end by its authors. What is most obviously lacking, of course, is a clear presentation of the nature of the state and social system in the Russian satellites (and necessarily therefore in Russia itself). Naturally, to repair this lack would have required a much longer document.

We wish also to note a feature of the

document which is perhaps an example of that "assymetry" of which the foreword speaks. On the one hand, in several places the context seems to make clear enough that the "third way" proposed—against both Washington and Moscow—is that of the fight for the socialist way out. But in the explicit formulations on this point, namely those in Section IV, we find the slogan given is: "a Federation of Peoples," "a Danubian and Balkan Federation in the framework of a United States of Europe," etc. In view of the context we do not understand why the slogan of Socialist Federation and a Socialist United States of Europe is avoided—these being the accepted ones among Marxists.

The number of interesting and significant points made by the document, however, is sufficient to recommend it to the attention of our readers. We are indeed concerned to follow the development of socialist thinking on the other side of the Iron Curtain and shall take every opportunity to present it in our pages.—ED.

FOREWORD

Meeting in advance of the Congress of the Peoples of Europe, Asia and Africa in June 1948, several socialist comrades adhering to the militant Marxist movement of Eastern Europe decided to offer a systematic presentation of the situation in the Russian satellite zone before this international anti-imperialist gathering. The aim of these comrades who remained faithful to the principles of internationalism was to counterpose a rounded point of view and a socialist policy as against the so-called policy of anti-Bolshevik "union sacrée" of the émigré social-democratic groups organized in the International Socialist Bureau of Paris.

It was all the more important to make a stand in order to draw a line of demarcation between the position of real socialism and the pseudo-socialist policy which tail-ended the Green International. The socialist road in Eastern Europe as in the rest of the world is the consistent struggle for peace, against the war, for the institution of a revolutionary democracy against imperialism and totalitarianism. It is the struggle against the illusion about liberation coming from outside the international working-class forces and popular masses, from the "democratic" imperialist powers. Neither Washington nor Moscow!

Like every collective work, these theses give evidence of assymetry. But

they do not pretend to be anything else than a first contribution on one of the most important problems of international socialist strategy. The very sympathetic welcome accorded them by socialist comrades at the congress proves that they correspond to an unquestionable need for clarification.

The theses were drawn up by Comrades Paul Bartou of Czechoslovakia and Valentin Toma of Rumania, with the fraternal collaboration of comrades from Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria.

V. T.

THESES

I. Introduction

(1) The importance of Central and Southeastern Europe in world politics is underlined by the fact that twice within the lifetime of the last generation it has been the starting place of two world wars (1914—Sarajevo; 1938—Czechoslovakia and Munich; 1939—Poland).

(2) The formal independence of the small Danubian and Balkan countries has always been illusory. After the First World War the greatest continental power, France, created in these areas its own satellite system by means of two systems of alliance, the "Little Entente" and the "Balkan Entente." Only Greece remained under the direct influence of Great Britain because of its special situ-

ation, which was important for British Mediterranean strategy.

(3) But it was only with the German and then with the Russian occupation that an open subjugation of these countries took place. The premises for these two occupations were created by the mutually opposed revisionist demands of these states as well as by continuous political concessions on the part of the Western powers.

(4) The Second World War stimulated deep political and economic changes in these countries which led to a weakening of the traditional bourgeois agrarian groups. These changes were made possible by the radical change in the relation of forces between the great powers in this part of Europe. The Yalta and Potsdam conferences sanctioned the relation of forces among the states; this necessarily led to a partition of Europe and of the world into two rival blocs and to the total incorporation of Central and Southeastern Europe within the Eastern bloc.

II. The Russian Buffer Zone

(5) The resurrection of the traditional Russian policy of expansion in Eastern Europe was introduced by the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939. The defeat of Hitlerite aggression opened unlimited possibilities of development for this policy, because it gave the Soviet Union a monopolistic position in this region.

(6) Aside from the military factors, Russian power is founded on distinct problems of internal policy and on national rivalries among the victimized states.

The violent pan-Slavic reaction against oppression and danger of national suppression by Nazi imperialist policy played a substantial role in the dynamics of Stalinist expansion. This chauvinist wave is continually swelled artificially, in new forms, with accomplished art, by the Stalinist rulers. Any means, including the most barbarous, are good enough to serve this purpose.

The depopulation of whole regions entirely inhabited by Germans (Sudetenland, Silesia, Pomerania, etc.) was one of these means. The inhabitants were robbed of all their belongings and forcibly deported by the thousands to ruined Germany. Under cover of punishing Nazi war criminals, crimes of the same order were committed against defenseless people. The practice of the inhuman system of concentration camps was maintained, and indeed extended to the physical liquidation of the German minority, for example in Yugoslavia.

Deportation to slave labor in the Soviet Union and systematic expropriation were utilized against the German-speaking population in the two non-Slav satellite, Rumania and Hungary. By annexing enormous territories to Poland and by deporting the Germans from the rich regions and border territories of Czechoslovakia, there was created in these peoples a psychotic fear of revenge which tied them closely to the Russian policy. Important parts of the population were corrupted by giving them confiscated German properties.

(7) In their effort to expand their social basis in the countryside, all the governments of the Russian buffer states instituted agrarian reforms. These reforms, arising from bureaucratic tendencies, possessed progressive aspects only where they liquidated the feudal forms of agrarian property relations (Schlachta in Poland, the Junkers in Eastern Germany, the landlords in Hungary).

But in some countries, like Rumania and Bulgaria, the area of the divided lots is not even as sizable as that allotted by the bourgeois regimes after the First World War. Agrarian reform in countries with a large rural overpopulation does not solve the need for land. Rumania, for example, will have five million landless peasants within fifteen to twenty years.

When the agrarian reform destroys not the remnants of feudalism but rather the developed forms of large-scale capitalist land ownership, consciously distorting cooperative forms and creating unproductive economic sectors, technically and culturally backward, it thereby assumes a visibly reactionary character. It creates, on the one hand, the social basis for a small-peasant reaction, and on the other it repels a big section of the peasantry and pushes them in the direction marked out by their traditional self-seeking instincts and lack of political interest (Czechoslovakia).

(8) On the industrial field the Russian policy is founded on the idea of placing the whole industrial capacity of Central and Southeastern Europe at the service of the Russian war economy.

The looting methods (dismantling, excessive reparations, forcible recruiting of skilled workers for Russia, etc.) initially practised in the defeated countries gave way gradually to the incorporation of these countries within the Russian economic system. Moreover, the relations of exploitation by Russia were maintained, since—by means of preferential customs agreements and commercial treaties—mixed native-Russian corporations and purely Soviet industrial corporations were set up for Russia in the decisive branches of economy, with a de facto monopoly of the principal raw materials.

Like their German predecessors, the

Russians strive as far as possible to stifle the traditional economic relations of these countries with the non-Russian world. This policy makes the industrial reconstruction of these oppressed countries impossible; as a result, they can keep up their level of production only by means of very low wages and by lowering the standard of living of the working class.

(9) This is why the working class is systematically deprived of its most elementary rights and why all its former gains are liquidated, such as the democratically elected factory committees and the collective-bargaining agreements. The piece-work system is introduced everywhere. Production norms and working conditions are determined by governmental organs without any possible recourse by the workers. Strikes are broken up by the police. The unions are in fact statified and become state organs for raising production and spying on the workers. All these measures cannot be outweighed by the meager and sporadic gains conceded by the bureaucracy to the working class, such as, for example, improvements in the social-security system in Czechoslovakia.

(10) This destruction of the rights of the working class was made possible by the latter's political paralysis, which results in the agrarian countries from its immaturity and in the industrial countries from the new forms of the system of technique and the organization of production. These new forms almost liquidated above all the skilled-workers categories, which used to form the most powerful cadres of the class struggle. A leveling of the working class downward, and at the same time the extraordinary rise of a thin labor-aristocracy layer on the Stakhanovite pattern, resulted from these changes.

This labor aristocracy, as well as the lack of combativity on the part of the overwhelming majority of the working class, is the basis for the total domination by the bureaucracy. The Communist Parties and the Russian occupation consciously promoted this process of weakening the working class and its trade-union organizations.

(11) The nationalizations, which were in many cases an economic necessity, were braked by the CP leaders as long as the socialist initiative and self-confidence of the working masses had not been completely broken. Meanwhile the Stalinist leadership pursued a policy of coalition with the bankrupt bourgeoisie against the working class (freezing of wages, speedup and even the lowering of real wages, abolition of workers' control, etc.). Only when the bureaucracy was sure that it would not find any resistance to its domination among the working class did it proceed to put through the nationalizations and to liquidate the bourgeoisie.

But the economic form which results from this is by no means socialist. The division between the forces of labor and the means of production persists. The differences between the standard of living of the toilers and of the ruling strata have not diminished; on the contrary, they have been increased and have brought about a real system of privilege. Every attempt of the workers to defend their traditional rights is brutally suppressed.

The nationalized industries form a collectivist bureaucratic structure. In many countries the Soviet Union owns mixed state-capitalist corporations (Rumania, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany) after the classical pattern of the imperialist policy of investment and export of capital.

(12) In proportion to the advancing liquidation of the bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy assumes the functions of the ruling class. The whole setup of the nationalizations produces many sinecures which constitute, for the different sections of the bureaucracy, a center of attraction and competition, and at the same time the crucible for its amalgamation.

With the elimination of the bourgeoisie disappears also the necessity for the bureaucracy to utilize the class struggle for its own benefit. The police apparatus comes to the forefront, and the political, trade-union and economic rulers are subjected to it. The regime rests, more and more, on clubs and bayonets.

(13) The official claim according to which Central and Eastern Europe is an oasis of peace and prosperity, notwithstanding the brutal suppression of all the internal contradictions and the ruthless exploitation of the workers, is contrary to the truth. In none of these countries does the government rest on the real confidence of the majority of the population.

None of the economic or political problems can be solved by such governments. In spite of the lowering of the working-class standard of living for the purpose of increasing the now completely worn-out constant capital, they are able to make only those investments which are absolutely indispensable, and they cannot help cutting into the very substance of the capital itself. In spite of the strictest planning, there exists a sizable disproportion between the various branches of production, manifested by different symptoms of crisis (lack of money on the one hand, inflationary pressure on the other, disorder in production, black market, etc.). In spite of the agrarian reform, the peasant problem is not solved in the countries with rural overpopulation.

In spite of police persecutions and unlimited state propaganda, numerous opposition currents are alive. These groups are strengthened by the disillusionment

of wide sections of the people. Since the existing regime presents itself as authentic socialism while any really socialist activity is forbidden, there is great danger that the disillusionment of the masses of people and workers may end up by discrediting socialism itself. That is why there is a basis for restorationist attempts on the part of the eliminated feudal and bourgeois elements and for military intervention by Russia.

III. The Bourgeois-Restorationist Tendencies

(14) A restoration, which is more and more eagerly wished for in these countries, would mean the artificial return to power of the bankrupt feudal and bourgeois forces while the present repression of the working class would be maintained. The basic economic tasks—namely, the elimination of the backwardness of these countries, most of the useful changes in the present industries, the creation of new industries, the mechanization of agriculture and the new relations between town and country—these would become, in such circumstances, incapable of solution.

(15) Politically, such a restoration would only bring nationalist solutions, and consequently again atomize this region into pygmy sovereign states. All the traditional conflicts between the different nationalities would be revived (Poles and Russians, Poles and Czechs, Poles and Germans, Serbs and Croats, Slovenes and Austrians, Rumanians and Hungarians, Hungarians and Slovaks, Czechs and Germans, etc.). One cannot even talk of democracy under such regimes, as is pertinently demonstrated by the case of Greece.

(16) The economic and political incapacity of such governments would condemn these apparently independent states to a parasitic existence. They could alleviate their economic difficulties only through extensive investments by foreign capital. They could temporarily overcome their internal and external contradictions only under the dictatorship of the great powers, after the Trieste pattern. In that way, this whole region would be transformed into a zone of conflict, not to speak of the fact that restoration would be necessarily linked with wars and interventions, which would transform Central and Eastern Europe once more into a heap of ruins.

IV. The Third Way

(17) Neither "popular democracy" nor bourgeois restoration can solve the burning problems posed by the national, political and social life of the Danubian and Balkan peoples. The only road to progress, freedom and a better life for the great masses of Central and Eastern Europe is that proposed by the consistent socialists: a Federation of Peoples. At

their Prague and Budapest conferences, the Eastern European socialist parties tried to find a way for the close economic, political and cultural cooperation of the Danubian countries. The brutal offensive of the Cominform for the destruction of these socialist parties, as well as the shameful capitulation of their leaderships, brought a premature end to this initiative.

(18) A federation of the Danubian and Balkan countries corresponds to the most vital interests of these peoples. It gives the small peoples the only possibility of keeping pace with modern progress in a world of extraordinary economic changes. By fusing them together it creates a barrier against intervention by the great powers, and, by voluntarily sacrificing illusory sovereignties preserves the intellectual and material existence and special culture of these small nations. The achievement of a federation of nationalities with equal rights, irrespective of their size, would eliminate from this part of Europe the insoluble problem of contested border regions, and would ease the relations between the federated states on the basis of equality of national rights for the citizens of all the peoples, acknowledging their rights to national culture in their own language.

(19) Economically, the entry of such a Danubian and Balkan Federation into the framework of a United States of Europe—together with a planned coordination of these backward Eastern European countries, a sort of administration for the Danubian countries—would permit all of Europe to contribute to raising the living standard of this region. An indispensable condition for economic progress is the transformation of agricultural production to a mechanized basis, by means of a general spread of cooperatives for production, distribution and consumption. Without such a planned transformation of the village into a rational economic unity, any reform would be incapable of bringing about a solution.

(20) The idea of two Europes, one agricultural and one industrial, is static, corresponding to an imperialistic reality and to a conception which built its realm of profit on the backwardness of the peoples and the countries. The Eastern European countries have to pass through a natural process of industrialization. By its nature such an industrialization should be diametrically opposed to the attempts made up to now by the national bourgeoisies in creating some state-protected key industries which brought sizable profits to their capitalist owners by means of state orders and tariff protection and isolation from the world market. These non-profitable industries have never brought a rise in the standard of living of these small backward peoples.

On the contrary, socialist industrial-

ization presupposes above all suppression of national partitions. Only after such a measure can the creation of wide markets be possible. The international character of an industrialization drive facilitates the creation of big industrial units. The creation of regional hydroelectric centers will form the basis of an investment program permitting a profitable utilization of the industrial capacities of each country. By industrialization a rise in the purchasing power of wide masses of the people is assured by their own labor.

Economic unification of the Danubian and Balkan regions on a socialist basis must not, in any case, be conceived as a regional autarchy. Any scheme of industrialization must avoid nationalist prejudices and must be conceived and realized according to the principle of choosing the most suitable location and on the basis of unlimited interregional and international division of labor. Without linking such regional units to world socialist economy, there can be no progress.

(21) The political premises for realizing these plans are: Strengthening of the socialist front in the leadership of world affairs. Guaranteeing the Labor Party regime in Great Britain and widening its socialist basis. Entry of the peoples of all the continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and America) into the socialist front of the subjugated colonial peoples and of the socialist working class. An economic and political strengthening of socialism will show clearly the people's initiative in world politics; it brings about a weakening of the totalitarian tendencies toward expansion.

(22) The political instrumentality for realizing these plans is: a people's democratic movement, the central axis of which is formed by the socialist movement of the working class. The adherence of the progressive political forces, unions, cooperatives, the agrarian democratic movements and groups of intellectuals must be realized under socialist leadership.

Within the framework of this resistance movement of the Eastern countries the following policy must be pursued:

(a) Liquidation of the conflicts of the great powers, which utilize our peoples as mere instruments for their expansionist policies.

(b) Liquidation of the Russian "buffer zone" and the dictatorship of the "popular democracy," and the re-establishment of the social gains and free organizations of the working class.

(c) Liquidation of the reactionary regimes of Greece and Turkey.

(d) Creation of a Danube and Balkan Federation, including all the peoples of this region on the basis of equality.

V. Tactical Means

(23) The only weapon with which to fight the existing regime is presented to us by a new flowering of the class struggle. The working class of the Russian buffer zone will surmount its present weakness and paralysis only if it recovers, above all, its self-confidence. It will do so only after many direct victories in daily economic struggles (against overtime of any sort, against the institution of piecework, against the abolition of social-security laws in the factories and mines, against arbitrary curtailment of vacations, etc.). The resurrection of these struggles can come from two sources:

(a) the discontent of the hardest-hit categories of workers directed against the abolition of all their gains;

(b) the enmity of the overwhelming majority of the working class against the economic bureaucracy. Of course this enmity must not be directed toward a fruitless struggle to wrest a few functions in the management of the productive forces, but to achieve its more equitable utilization in the interests of the workers.

It is only with the aid of the experi-

ence of the defeated former vanguard that these wide currents in the great masses can acquire a precise physiognomy. A unification of the two oppositional tendencies must clearly formulate the demand for workers' control of production, which alone can bring a clear-sighted perspective to the partial demands of these two tendencies.

(24) On the political field, the working class of the Russian satellites can be mobilized only to fight every provocation and preparation for war. This struggle can be closely linked with the struggle for improving economic conditions; for war preparations are the main cause of the precarious economic situation. This anti-war struggle must not be confused with whining pacifism, which is based on illusions about an appeasement policy to be derived from hagglings among the great powers. Rather, this fight must be led as a consistent class struggle unleashing unceasing activity for the enlightenment and education of the masses.

In these two fields, economic and political, the resurrection of the working class can be achieved only if the working class west of the Iron Curtain enters on the same road of consistent class-

struggle policy. Any policy of conciliation with the bourgeoisie, any attempt by democratic socialism to participate in the war preparations of the Western powers, and any weakness on the part of the Western socialist parties with regard to the oppression of the African and Asiatic peoples, thrust the working class of Central and Eastern Europe into the arms of the Stalinist bureaucracy, of its police apparatus and of the Russian war machine.

(25) Only the internationalization of the class struggle can bring the Russian working class back into the arena of the class struggle. It must not be a merely verbal internationalism which limits itself to declarations at international conventions, but an active internationalism, establishing common demands, economic, social and political, such as the demand for an eight-hour day was in its day—demands for which the working class of the whole world can fight. This is the only way, not only for the resurrection of the working class of Central Europe, but also for the resurrection of the workers' International against the permanent threat of war, for the abolition of colonial oppression and all other forms of oppression.

The Year One of the Russian Revolution

VI—The Dispute Over Brest-Litovsk

This installment of Serge's work consists of sections from Chapter 5, "Brest-Litovsk." In view of the fact that there are many sources available giving the details and story of the negotiations, we are including here only those sections discussing the "Brest-Litovsk question" as it was reflected in the internal discussions and disputes in the Bolshevik Party.

In the following, passages printed in italics and enclosed in brackets are editorial continuity inserted to connect up Serge's discussion of intra-Bolshevik affairs with the course of action.

On December 2 after the revolution, revolutionary Russia signed an armistice with imperial Germany and the peace negotiations opened on December 9 in the fortress of Brest-Litovsk behind the German lines. Trotsky became the chief negotiator for the Soviets and brilliantly utilized the parleys to expose the Kaiser's imperialists and make inflammatory speeches directed to the ears of the European proletariat.—ED.

By January 10, the negotiations had reached a deadlock. The Germans were furious with the Bolsheviks' agitation, and the Bolsheviks were

faced with the alternative of continuing a hopeless war or subscribing to a disastrous, outrageous and demoralizing peace.

There was no principle involved for the Bolsheviks, who were strangers to any pacifist illusions. Ever since 1916 Lenin had foreseen, in case of a socialist victory in one or more countries, an offensive war against the remaining capitalist countries.

In April 1917 he wrote: if the Soviets were in power "we would support a revolutionary war against the capitalists of no matter what country, for that would really be a war against the interests of all capital, and not a war in the interests of the capitalists of any one country."

But now it was not a question of principle that confronted the Bolsheviks. The army was breaking up of its own accord as the soldiers returned home. The masses did not want to fight any more. The October insurrection was carried out in the name of peace. The transportation system was crippled, production was completely disorganized, the food supply in a sad state. Famine threatened more than ever.

A report from the Tenth Army said: "The infantry and artillery left their

positions on January 15 and retired to the rear. A part of the artillery was abandoned. There is no longer any fortified zone."

Someone from the Second Army wrote: "The trenches are filled with snow. The fortifications are being used for fuel. The roads are lost under the snow; there is nothing left but a path leading to the shelters, the kitchens, and the German shops; a sector of more than six miles is now occupied by the staff and the Regiment Committee alone."

"More than two thousand cannon were abandoned at the front," said M. N. Pokrovsky. For the Russians the war was over.

But the German conditions for peace were none the less unacceptable. Besides, it was hard to tell the exact state of affairs. Information as to the actual extent of the spontaneous demobilization was lacking, and the revolutionary enthusiasm of some of the Communists carried them away.

On January 21, on the eve of the Third All-Russian Congress of the Soviets, an important meeting of Bolshevik Party leaders was held in Petrograd. Three differing points of view were presented. Lenin was for signing the peace; Trotsky considered a revolutionary war im-

possible, but wanted the Bolsheviks to break off the negotiations so that it might become evident that German violence was responsible for the peace; a third group was for revolutionary war on the Germans.

Lenin in the Minority

There were sixty-five Bolsheviks present. Lenin was in the minority on the vote after he had explained his thesis. The proponents of a revolutionary war received thirty-two votes. Trotsky's intermediary tendency sixteen, and Lenin fifteen.

The Central Committee of the party met the next day. Lenin explained the impossibility of fighting, the lack of horses, the necessity for sacrificing the artillery in case of a retreat, the ease with which the Germans would be able to capture Reval and Petrograd.

"The peace they have proposed is infamous," he said. "But if we refuse to sign we shall be swept away, and another government will make the peace." Germany is moving toward revolution, he concluded, but the socialist republic already exists in Russia and needs a breathing spell. Trotsky urged a costly international demonstration: we are already losing socialist Poland; we are also losing Esthonia. But "the salvation of the socialist republic is worth three billion [the indemnity demanded by Germany]. . . . If we believe the German revolution will burst out the moment the negotiations are broken off, we must sacrifice ourselves, for the German revolution is more important than ours. But the German revolution has not yet begun. We must hold on until the general socialist revolution, and we can do that only by making peace.

Zinoviev, Stalin and Sokolnikov supported Lenin; Lomov and Krestinsky voted for war; the formula of Trotsky, Bukharin and Uritsky—to draw out the negotiations—won a majority. The same solution in a more precise form—"Neither war nor peace"—was adopted several days later on January 14 by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik and S-R Parties in a common meeting.

The majority recognized the impossibility of carrying on a revolutionary war but thought that a German offensive, if at all possible, would provoke a revolutionary explosion on both sides of the front. The Third All-Russian Congress of the Soviets delegated all powers to the Council of People's Commissars.

Lenin was in the minority, and not only in the Central Committee. The influential committees of the Moscow District, of Petrograd, of the Urals, the Ukraine, etc., voted against his position.

So strong were the democratic traditions of this highly disciplined party that its leader inclined before the majority, but without giving up the struggle for his point of view. Once more, this

time in his own party, Lenin swam against the stream.

As was his custom at critical moments, Lenin clarified his views in the condensed, explicit and concise form of a thesis. His theses were never long and not too frequent. His thesis on peace in twenty-one articles of five to fifteen lines each is a model.

[He argued that the revolution could gain the time needed to consolidate itself only by temporarily yielding to Germany's robber demands, that there was no possibility of successfully waging a revolutionary war, that it would be suicidal to make grand gestures that could not be backed up.] Lenin's thesis was correctly called the thesis of the breathing spell.

"Too Risky"

A strong left tendency was already crystallizing in the party around the extreme leftists of the Moscow District: Yaroslavsky, Soltz, Muralov, Saponov, Ossinsky, Stukov, etc. Since the end of December, the Moscow District Committee had demanded the rupture of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations; in fact had demanded the rupture of all diplomatic relations with "all capitalist countries."

The District Committee even considered economic treaties between socialist and capitalist states impermissible. In their opinion it was better to "die for the cause of socialism than bow before Kaiser Wilhelm." Only a people's uprising could bring about a democratic peace, they said. The basis of this thesis was sheer abstract revolutionary romanticism.

Trotsky's thesis was much different. Trotsky had no illusions as to the possibility of continuing the war. But he thought that Germany, in the throes of a profound crisis, whose exhausted armies were already influenced by the Russian Revolution, would be unable to take the offensive. He thought it necessary to try out the German army and the German working class. To which Lenin replied:

"It is possible, but risky, too risky."

The Allied press treated the Bolsheviks as paid agents of the kaiser, and the difficult negotiations at Brest-Litovsk as a prearranged comedy played for the sake of appearances.

"Here are the Bolsheviks dissolving the 'democratic' Constituent Assembly in order to conclude a humiliating slave treaty with the kaiser, while Northern France and Belgium are still occupied by German armies. It is obvious that the Allied governments would find it easy in such a situation to fool the masses and perhaps even find support for armed intervention against us," said Trotsky. For several years the masses had been exposed to the poison of chauvinism; as yet the internationalists formed only small and scattered groups

in the workers' movement. If the Bolsheviks did nothing to reassure the doubts caused by a separate peace between Russia and Germany, would not the masses of the Allied countries permit armed intervention against the Soviets? On the contrary, if the Bolsheviks signed the disastrous treaty only at the point of German guns, all these doubts would be removed.

To which Lenin obstinately replied:

"Too risky. At present nothing is more precious than our revolution. We must protect it at all costs."

Trotsky appealed to the situation inside the party. An immediate peace might lead to a split; the departure of valuable leftists would automatically reinforce the right wing. Lenin replied:

"These whims will pass. A split is not absolutely inevitable. And if it does occur, the splitters will soon return to the party. But if the Germans wipe us out, we shall not return at all. . . ."

"We said that if there were only one chance in four," Trotsky later wrote, "that the Germans would not or could not take the offensive, we should nevertheless seize the chance."

The Germans Attack

Events in Germany gave reason to this position. In the middle of January, great strikes broke out in Berlin. On the 18th, *Pravda* appeared with headlines:

"It has happened! German imperialism's head is on the executioner's block. The fist of the proletarian revolution has been raised."

"Revolution in Germany! A Soviet in Berlin!"

The strike wave embraced Vienna, Berlin, Kiel, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, CasseL, Leipzig, Halle, etc. Short-lived Soviets appeared in Vienna and Berlin. The munition factories were closed.

[With Trotsky's position adopted, the Brest-Litovsk negotiations reopened. There was a strong faction among the German tops to make peace with Russia in order to safeguard their own crumbling war structure, but the kaiser made the decision for presenting the Bolsheviks with an ultimatum. Up against the wall, Trotsky made a final speech in which he announced that his delegation would refuse to sign the proposed treaty but would also refuse to recognize a state of war; the policy was to sit tight and depend upon a German attack to unleash the volcanic forces of the German revolution. But the German revolution was not yet ready, although germinating.]

The German offensive encountered no resistance. The German troops advanced along the railways without striking a blow. From February 18 to February 24, they occupied Reval, Rezhitsa, Dvinsk and Minsk; they invaded the Ukraine.

Those were terrible days. When the offensive was announced, the Council of People's Commissars wired the Germans its consent to the peace treaty. For a time they thought the Germans were not going to reply. Finally the latter answered evasively: "Send your proposals in writing."

The Bolsheviks thought the Germans were making war not on Russia but on the Soviets; that they had an agreement with the Allies for the re-establishment of law and order in Russia; that they were going to occupy a large part of the country, including Petrograd. The remaining Russian troops retired in disorder before the Germans without even taking the trouble to obey the instructions of the Council of People's Commissars to destroy all their artillery and munitions.

If the Germans refused to sign the peace treaty, there was nothing left for the Soviet but to organize guerrilla warfare on the occupied territory. On February 21, the socialist fatherland was proclaimed in a "State of Danger."

Strip for Action

Orders were given to mobilize the entire strength and resources of the country for revolutionary defense; to defend every position as long as possible; to destroy the railways before the advance of the enemy; to destroy food and munitions stocks, everything of value, rather than abandon them; to mobilize the city masses to dig trenches under the supervision of military experts: "All able-bodied adults, male and female, of the bourgeois classes must join this work; all who resist will be shot"; to suspend the publication of all papers hostile to revolutionary defense and favorable to the German bourgeois invasion or to the counter-revolution, the editors and staffs of these newspapers to join in the work of defense; "to shoot on sight all agents of the enemy, speculators, thieves, good-for-nothings, and counter-revolutionary agitators." The embryo of the Red terror was contained in this document, as during the French revolution the terror was born of foreign invasion and danger to the state.

But the peasants did not want to fight. Lenin had founded his whole breathing-spell thesis on this presumption, and it was now proved to be a fact. The Germans advanced without resistance and took possession of an immense booty. They advanced two or three hundred kilometers in one week.

The Red Guard resisted here and there, but it was a desperate resistance, doomed to failure. The passivity of the peasant soldiers contrasted with the enthusiasm of the workers, who volunteered for the defense by whole factories, together with their wives and their older children. They poured into Smolny Institute in search of arms.

As for the rabid socialist patriots of yesterday, many of them awaited the Germans as liberators.

Let us recall that the Red Guard under Antonov-Ovseyenko was carrying on a brilliant campaign in the South and had captured Rostov and defeated Kaledin, while the Red troops on the Rumanian front beat off the Rumanian attack on Odessa. The terror was not yet in force, for the masses did not favor terror to support a war they disapproved.

Lenin's Realism Carries

The capture of Pskov, 257 kilometers from Petrograd, brought consternation to the capital.

The arrival of a new Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk on March 1 did not improve the situation. The Germans refused to end their offensive until the very signatures were set to the treaty, which they delayed until March 4. . . .

When the recommencement of hostilities was announced, Lenin proposed to the Central Committee the immediate signature of the peace treaty. His motion was again defeated but by only one vote. Bukharin, Trotsky, Joffe, Krestinsky, Uritsky, and Lomov voted against him; Sverdlov, Sokolnikov, Smilga, and Stalin with him.

The Central Committee met twice the day after the German offensive began. Two speakers were allowed each side on questions where there were clearly defined differences. The speakers were limited to five minutes. There was no time for long orations.

At the first meeting, Lenin was again defeated by seven votes to six on a motion calling for the immediate resumption of negotiations, after his view had been defended by Zinoviev and attacked by Bukharin and Trotsky. At the second meeting, Trotsky informed them of the capture of Dvinsk and the entry of the Germans into the Ukraine.

"We have started a revolutionary war in spite of ourselves," Lenin said. "We don't play with war! This game has led us to such an impasse that the revolution will inevitably collapse if you continue your middle-of-the-road attitude any longer. Joffe wrote us from Brest-Litovsk that there was not even the beginning of a revolution in Germany.

"While the Germans seize our stations and our rolling stock, while our revolution is collapsing, we sit here fiddling. . . . History will say that you gave up the revolution. We could have signed the peace and been free, but now we have nothing; we can't even blow up the railways. . . .

"The peasants don't want war and they won't fight. Permanent peasant warfare is utopian. Revolutionary war must be more than a phrase. If we are not prepared to fight, let us sign the peace.

"The revolution will not be lost be-

cause we give up Finland, Lithuania, and Esthonia to the Germans."

Terribly confirmed by events, Lenin's powerful realism carried the last vote by seven to six. Trotsky's vote made the difference. The division was as follows: For Lenin's motion for an immediate peace: Lenin, Smilga, Sverdlov, Sokolnikov, Stalin, Trotsky, and Zinoviev. Against Lenin's motion: Uritsky, Lomov, Joffe, Bukharin, Krestinsky, Dzherzhinsky. One abstention, Helena Stasova.

Neither Lenin nor the Central Committee thought of accusing Trotsky of inconsistency; on the contrary, he and Lenin were charged with drawing up the radiogram to the Germans. The demonstration he wanted to make before the Western proletariat had been made; the experiment he wanted to try had been tried.

The Party Splits

The situation became worse from hour to hour. The Germans were slow to reply, but pursued their invasion with energy, collecting an enormous booty.

And the party split! The leftist partisans of revolutionary war of the Moscow District resigned their posts on February 20, "reserving the right to agitate for their point of view both inside and outside the party." Among those who resigned were Lomov, Uritsky, Bubnov and Piatakov.

It was the first step toward an open split. The part press did not report these facts. After two days those who had resigned and the remainder of the left bloc changed their attitude, but declared that they would appeal to the party congress.

On February 22 Trotsky informed the Central Committee of a proposal from the Allies: France and Britain were disposed to support Russian resistance to Germany.

He thought the proposal acceptable provided the independence of Soviet foreign policy was assured. Bukharin demanded that the Central Committee reject the offer. Lenin was not present but sent a hurried letter, a few scribbled words on a scrap of paper:

"Please record my vote for accepting the arms and support of the Anglo-French imperialist bandits.—Lenin."

The Central Committee voted six to five for acceptance.

On February 23 the Central Committee discussed Von Kuhlmann's answer. It announced new and much harsher terms: Russia was asked to sign away the Baltic countries, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, the Ukraine, and Finland!

Unshakable as ever, Lenin declared that he was through with "revolutionary phrasemongering." He threatened to withdraw from the government and from the Central Committee if it con-

tinued. "Now we shall prepare for a revolutionary war," he said.

Trotsky considered that the division of opinion in the party made a revolutionary war impossible and spoke for the peace but abstained from the vote.

Lenin's policy carried by seven votes to four, with four abstentions. Lenin, Stassova, Zinoviev, Sverdlov, Sokolnikov, Smilga and Stalin voted for; Bukharin, Bubnov, Uritsky and Lomov against; Trotsky, Dzherzhinsky, Joffe and Kres-tinsky abstained. . . .

Democracy and Discipline: A Model

All the responsibilities of the revolution rested on the party, or rather on the leading circles of the party in Petrograd and Moscow. How did it respond in this crisis?

Although it was a disciplined party without a tinge of abstract democratic fetishism, during these grave hours especially every rule of internal democracy was observed. The recognized leader of the party was put in the minority. Lenin's great personal authority did not prevent the members of the Central Committee from opposing him and vigorously fighting for their own point of view.

The most important questions were settled by vote and often by slight majorities (for example, 7 to 6), yet the minority submitted without giving up its ideas. While in the minority, Lenin patiently waited for events to bear him out and continued to agitate for his policy without once breaking discipline.

Impassioned as the discussions might be, they were always objective. Neither gossip, intrigue, nor personality played any important role. The leaders defended their ideas without a thought of attacking or discrediting their adversaries. They were purely concerned with proving them wrong. Not being taunted, the opposition showed only the minimum of nervousness compatible with events, and rapidly recovered from its excesses.

When he had won a majority Lenin did not gloat. He had too much else to do. He was at once tolerant and firm with the opposition—tolerant toward their persons but immovable toward their ideas.

Unlike liberal bourgeois parliamentarians, Lenin did not make distinctions between men and ideas. But, on the other hand, he did distinguish between methods to be used in fighting enemies of the party and methods to be used in internal party struggles, among comrades. In 1917 his policy was based on a similar distinction between struggles against enemies of the working class and struggles inside the working class.

His idea of the working-class party leader was clear: a leader whose authority was based on recognized superiority, a resolute and disciplined man, stubborn and unafraid to be in the minority and

swim against the stream; the duty of the working-class leader was not to follow the masses but to clarify and lead them, for he was the highest expression of their intelligence.

Compare this idea of the proletarian leader with the idea current in the old, petty-bourgeois, opportunist parties, in which the leaders chase after the masses in search of popularity—anti-militarists or pacifists when the masses are pacific, patriotic when the masses cheer "the war to end war," and "revolutionary" when they return in a murderous mood.

In this hour of danger the party was truly the "Iron Guard" that Bukharin later called it: miracles of initiative from the lowest to the top ranks, disciplined even to its greatest leader, admiring and respecting the leaders it had formed during years of struggle, but knowing how to contradict them and put them in the minority.

The party was equipped with a real collective leadership (always Lenin's care), had a healthy tradition, and knew how to avoid excesses both of democracy and authority. Tactical differences were minimized by collective methods,

common Marxist education, and democratic centralist organization. The center directed and was obeyed; but the center itself was the work of the party, and through the party the masses.

If Lenin had been a little more authoritarian during the days of Brest-Litovsk, or if the party itself had been a little less solid, disciplined, loyal, and unified, or if the leadership had been a little less flexible, intelligent, firm, and well-educated, the party would have split and at least temporarily¹ lost the aid of valuable leftist elements. A little more, a little less—all living equilibriums repose on those quantities; so does the equilibrium which is the health of the working-class party.

VICTOR SERGE

(Translated by Dan Eastman)

1. But can it be known? Once he has left or been expelled from the party, the best proletarian element is more likely to be lost than to return. It requires an exceptional theoretical ability and a not-at-all common strength of character to continue to serve the party outside of the party. —V. S.

Books in Review

Their Morals and Ours

AMERICAN COMMUNISM, by James Oneal and G. A. Werner. Dutton, New York, new rev. ed., 1947.

Frankly, I am not interested in reviewing this book as a whole but only in calling attention to one chapter of it. The book, by a leading light of the Social-Democratic Federation who was for long the editor of the *New Leader*, is one prolonged social-democratic scream of anguish at the bad Bolsheviki who split the nice Socialist Party in 1919, and now look at them! Its value even for rock-bottom facts will also be evident.

One of the new chapters added to this revised edition of Oneal's old diatribe is Chapter 14 on "Trotskyism in America." Oneal's almost psychopathic hatred of any form of revolutionary Marxism is well enough known—or was when I was in the SP in the '30s—and need not give pause; nor is it worth discussing. What is remarkable about the chapter is the fact that this social-democratic exponent of Honesty, Morality and Truth has put together a harangue on Trotskyism which is (literally!) rivaled only by the Stalinist garbage on the subject for unmitigated ignorance, outright falsification and slander taken right out of the CP's incinerator.

The information that Trotsky's son

was named "Gedov" and Stalin's name is "Dzkugashvili" might be passed over as typo bloopers for Sedov and Djughashvili; but we are also told that "In his threefold capacity as Chairman of the Russian Communist Party, head of the Soviet State, and Executive Secretary of the Third International, Lenin wielded dictatorial power . . ." (Lenin, of course, never held any but the second of these posts.) Oneal: "Trotsky did not accept his defeat with good grace. He retreated, 'for his health,' to a village in Turkestan, Alma Ata . . ." (One would imagine that even an ignoramus could find out that Trotsky was exiled by Stalin and did not "retreat for his health.") Oneal: "His [Trotsky's] oratory [at Brest-Litovsk] attracted the attention of the world but had very little effect on Germany." Oneal: "The Kerensky Revolution occurred in 1917 . . ." (There wasn't any Kerensky Revolution; Kerensky became head of the provisional government only after the March revolution.)

On page 240 the doddering author has a more or less accurate sentence about how the Trotskyists were expelled from the American CP but "decided to remain in the party and organized themselves into a left-wing opposition known as the Communist League of America." In writing the very next page, however, he apparently fished out a note from a different wastebasket; for we find that

these same people at the same time "decided to form an independent party," "on the advice of Comrade Trotsky," and not even because they had been expelled but because they "were convinced that the Communist Party would not follow the 'Marxian' principles as outlined in the Trotsky program."

So much for examples of plain ignorance, which is moreover the democratic right of every writer on Bolshevism. When Oneal canters on to the Moscow Trials, we get a horse of a different smell. Contrary even to the wont of his social-democratic colleagues, the reader will not find *him* charging the Stalinists with a frame-up—no sir, not when it's Trotsky who is framed up: "Trotsky was at that time in exile in Mexico, but his enemies, the Stalinists, feared that he was directing a world-wide conspiracy against the Soviet Union."

Did they indeed "fear" this so much that they invented all the details of the conspiracy themselves? Oneal won't say; he quotes the GPU's accusations, gives a bit of the floor to the Dewey investigating commission, and winds up: "Dr.

Dewey was *laboring under the illusion* that if American labor 'knew the truth, the truth would make them free.'" Such cynicism, Mr. Social-Democrat!

The smell, however, becomes overpowering in the following precious passage. If something of this sort were perpetrated by a Marxist against one of Oneal's highly moral social-democrats, it would undoubtedly reverberate down the pages of the *New Leader* as a stock example of Bolshevik dishonesty. These are Oneal's actual words:

"In the labor movement they [the Trotskyists] have gained a name for themselves as the 'Trotskyite Fifth Column,' especially among their 'friends,' the Stalinites. George Morris, a Communist, exposed their activities in the labor unions, as well as their anti-government activities during the Second World War, in a pamphlet published by the New Century Publishers [CP press—P. C.], 1945."

This pamphlet by the Stalinist hack Morris, entitled "The Trotskyite 5th Column in the Labor Movement," which is also openly and brazenly cited as the

source of other "facts" by our rabidly anti-Bolshevik author (even though he cannot even quote its title correctly), is a real curiosity for the collector. The leading "Trotskyite" lambasted in this typical piece of Stalinist filth is—Tucker Smith, the present vice-presidential candidate of the Socialist Party! Indeed, he is honored with a special appendix of three pages quoting an "exposé" of his Trotskyite wrecking activities by no less an authority than Dan Tobin's executive assistant. Two other "Trotskyites" exposed are Oneal's friends, Max Eastman and Alexander Barmine. Outside of the Minneapolis Trial defendants, there is not another "Trotskyite fifth-columnist" named in the pamphlet!

Such is the "job" done on the Trotskyists by one of the leading figures of that group which specializes in deducing the ills of the world from the detestably dishonest habits of Leninism and Leninists. No, we do not claim to be "the only moral people" in politics but . . . honestly, there aren't *very* many others!

PHILIP COBEN

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