

THE NEW *April 1940*
INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

FOR THE THIRD CAMP!

An Editorial

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The Voice of the Third Camp Must Be Heard!

Statement by the Editors

THE CONVENTION of the Socialist Workers Party, held at the end of several months of internal discussion, has just been concluded in New York. A majority of the delegates elected to the convention voted for the resolutions on the Russian and organizational questions presented by the Majority faction, and which can be read in the post-convention issue of the Socialist Appeal.

How deep-going and vigorous was the discussion in the S.W.P. may be judged by the fact that it has brought the party to the brink of a split, the danger of which is by no means dispelled. What is important to bear in mind, however, is that the discussion revealed the existence in the Party, and in the Fourth International, of two politically irreconcilable tendencies. Yet, though the tendencies were, and are, politically irreconcilable, each group declared that the views of the other group were compatible with membership in the Fourth International.

The problem to resolve, therefore, was how to maintain the unity of the party and at the same time make possible the ideological existence of whichever group proved to be the minority in the convention. We regret to record the fact that the Majority group took the position, in effect, that if the Opposition was voted down at the national convention, it must simply submit and remain silent. Naturally, in view of the tremendous and urgent importance of the issue in dispute, the deep convictions that animated the contending groups and—above all—the feeling among the Opposition that the party regime of the Majority had proved in practise that it did not offer sufficient assurances that the democratic rights of a minority would be preserved—in view of these considerations, we repeat, it was impossible for the Opposition to accept the proposal of the Majority faction.

We proposed, on the contrary, that considering the existence of the two clearly-defined tendencies and of the exceptional situation in which the dispute was going on, the only assurance that a minority could have of the possibility of continued ideological existence was the right to issue a political-theoretical journal of its own and under its own control. The Opposition insisted that it could not concede this demand, although it had made enormous concessions in the past. Primary among them was the care taken by the Opposition not to bring the dispute beyond the ranks of the party itself, although the issues were and are of the most vital concern to the entire radical and even the entire labor public. We did this although it was criminal to keep the sympathizing circles of the Fourth International in this country totally uninformed about the dispute, although it was with the greatest effort that we refrained from condemning the official line of the party (that is, of the Majority faction) which, in our view, served only to give objective support in the war to one of the two imperialist camps.

We must further record with regret that our demand for the right of the minority to publish a political journal of its own—entirely in harmony with the best traditions of the revolutionary Marxian movement but, of course, entirely out of harmony with all the traditions of the Stalinist movement—was met by the Majority faction with the threat that if we published our periodical, even though it was based, as it is, on a defense of the general and fundamental program of the Fourth International except in so far as the question of “unconditional defense” of the Soviet Union is concerned, we would be expelled wholesale. Such an interpretation of the revolutionary party principle of democratic centralism, we consider absurd, formalistic at best and bureaucratic at worst. The carrying out of such a threat, we consider catastrophic, above all for those carrying it out. The Opposition represents not less than 40% of the membership of the party and a good three-fourths of the membership of the Youth organization; taking them together

as the organized movement of the Fourth International in this country, the Opposition constitutes a clear majority of the total membership.

Under these conditions, to continue to remain silent inside the ranks of the party would be unforgivable in a revolutionist. Under these conditions, to place confidence in the democratic guarantees offered by the official party leadership which has given the minority no cause to place confidence in it during the course of the internal party discussion, would be quite unwarranted.

It is inadmissible and therefore impossible to remain silent any longer! The official position of the S.W.P. is wrong, tragically and horribly wrong. Involuntarily, to be sure, but nonetheless surely, this position serves objectively the interests of one of the imperialist camps, however sincerely and genuinely it is motivated by revolutionary and internationalist considerations. *It is absolutely imperative that the voice of the third camp be heard!* No device, no ruse, no appeal, no threats can sway us from our determination in this respect.

It is upon our readers that we rely for the same generous and warm support they have given us in the past. We need this support now more than ever. We are sure we are not asking for it in vain.

In no sense of the word is ours a “private” undertaking. We speak formally for the Opposition group. But in a truer sense, we speak for the third camp in the war—and that is a camp of millions. Today, it is unorganized, inarticulate, unclear. We shall work unremittingly for its organization under one banner, the banner of the Fourth International; we shall work unremittingly to see to it that its voice is heard; we shall work unremittingly to see to it that its mind is cleared of the poisonous fog of social-patriotism, of class collaboration, of lack of self-confidence.

Long live the Fourth International!

Long live the victory of the Third Camp in the war!

Long live the struggle for the liberation of all mankind!

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For the Third Camp!



THIS IS THE WAR that every one expected and that has taken every one by surprise. Every one knew there would be a second world war, if not after Munich, then over Czechoslovakia, and if not then, by some miracle, over Danzig. And Danzig did indeed prove to be the spark that set off the powder barrel. But once the war was under way, it produced one surprise after another.

Every one had assumed that this war would begin like the last, with big-scale military operations, accompanied by a new refinement of civilization: attempts to wipe out the enemy's chief cities by air raids. Instead both sides cautiously parried and fenced, partly because of fear of revolution, partly because it was strategically almost impossible to break through each other's lines. For seven months of "war", Armageddon failed to materialize. At this writing, it looks as though the war is at last entering the "active" stage.

This miscalculation as to the military character of the war led to an equally great error as to the length of time it would take for the United States to enter the war. On the assumption that the Allies would soon need our military help and that Goering's bombers would lay waste London and Paris and thus arouse pro-war opinion over here, the press of the Fourth International—

along with most other observers—confidently predicted America's entry in six to nine months. The victim of this illusion himself, President Roosevelt put on an open and intensive war drive in the first month of the war, only to be forced to backwater when the war failed to materialize. Today, in the eighth month of the war, American entry looks farther off than it did in the first.

So, too, above all with the Soviet Union. Of all the surprises of this surprising war, none were greater than the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the partitioning of Poland, and the invasion of Finland. Most people thought the Soviet Union would line up with the "democracies". Some expected her to be neutral. A few—including ourselves—thought she might make a defensive alliance with Germany. But no one—again including ourselves—anticipated that the Soviet Union would take the offensive alongside of the Nazis in Poland or that she would impose her hegemony on the Baltic states and invade Finland. Nowhere in the many pages devoted to the subject in the press and resolutions of the Fourth International is there a single indication that the Soviet Union might conceivably take the *offensive* in the next war. Every possibility was foreseen except the one that actually came about.

Let us confess it candidly. Our analysis was incorrect, and we

must either shut our eyes to events—the course which Trotsky and the Majority faction of the Socialist Workers Party have chosen—or else we must revise our conceptions of the war to fit in with the data. We have chosen the latter course.

In what terms, then, do we see the war abroad? As a struggle to the death between two mighty contenders for world power, whose conflict, postponed, compromised, patched up for years, has now reached the point where it must be settled by the crushing of one or the other. The ancient, rich, and still powerful British Empire, pulling in her wake the satellite France, is locked in battle with the dynamic, hungry, young Nazi state, provisioned and supported by the Soviet Union. In this war, neutrality has become a grim joke. One nation after another is sucked into the maelstrom: Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Esthonia, Finland, Denmark, Norway. Those that are not yet involved in the war are pressed diplomatically and economically by each side to enter its camp. There is no other alternative: either London-Paris or Berlin-Moscow.

But are there in fact only two camps? Certainly one would think so to read the capitalist press, the labor press, and even nine-tenths of the radical press. Just as the warring powers try to force the neutrals to choose between *two* camps, so the world's rulers, from Wall Street to the Kremlin, try to convince the masses that there are only *two* camps and that to be an enemy of one is to give support to the other.

The idea of there being only two camps is put across to the masses in various costumes and disguises. The three most important are:

1. *The war is a crusade to save the world for democracy, with England and France playing St. George to Hitler's dragon.* This is the classic line of the last war, merely substituting the word "Hitlerism" for "Kaiserism". It is going over almost as well in the United States this time as in 1914. We say "almost" because there are hopeful signs that the American masses have acquired a certain scepticism about imperialist wars fought for democracy.

2. *The war is a crusade by the vigorous, healthy young German people to smash the corrupt, decadent old plutocracies and restore liberty and justice to the world.* This line gets little support in this country, but it is dangerously effective among the subject peoples of the Near East and the Orient. These peoples have a burning and entirely justified hatred of their French and British overlords. But to follow Hitler-Stalin in this crusade to shatter the British Empire, this would be merely to exchange one yoke for another.

3. *The war is an imperialist attack on the Soviet Union.* The two camps here are those of the imperialists and that of the workers' fatherland (with Hitler hovering in the background as a "temporary" and "limited" ally). This is the line of the *Daily Worker*, the *Socialist Appeal*, and, with the sincerest regret we say it, of Leon Trotsky. Under the guise of "defending the nationalized economy", this line ties the workers of the world to the gun wheels of Hitler-Stalin.

For our part, we reject all three of these variations on the two-camp theme. We reject the basic idea they all have in common: that the masses must fight under the banner of one or another of the existing imperialist powers, be it the stars and stripes, the union jack, the swastika, or the hammer and sickle. We say there is in this war a *third* camp independent of either of the two warring imperialist camps, the camp of the world working class, cut off from all political control, inarticulate, brutally repressed when it raises its head, but ceaselessly in ferment, pushing up from below, breaking through the surface to assert its human rights and needs. This is *our* camp, the camp of the hundreds of millions of men and women with black and white and yellow and brown skins who have no say about whether "their" country sends them to death. To accept any of the two-camp alternatives, however good and noble one's intentions may be, is to give aid to the war-makers, since all three slogans are essentially more or less well disguised devices to enlist the masses under one military banner or another. The policy of the third camp, the camp which fights under the banner of world revolution to overthrow *all* the existing governments of the two imperialist camps, this is the only realistic anti-war policy.

Some will sneer at the term "realistic". Where is this "Third Camp"? they will ask. Where is its press, where is its army, its cabinet or central committee, its guns, its factories? It is true that the Third Camp has none of these—yet. But it is a reality nonetheless.

What does the Third Camp mean?

It means Czech students fighting the Gestapo in the streets of Prague and dying before Nazi rifles in the classrooms, with revolutionary slogans on their lips.

It means African natives going on strike in the Rhodesian copper mines and fighting bloody battles with the police.

It means the Irish Revolutionary Army keeping green the traditions of the Easter Rebellion with a brilliant and implacable guerilla campaign against British authority in the heart of England.

It means Indian steel and textile and jute workers forcing concessions from the British Raj in militant strikes.

It means the Red Army soldiers who shot their officers and fraternized with their brothers in the Finnish army.

It means the anti-conscription rioters in Australia, the millions of AFL and CIO rank-and-filers whose pressure is causing American labor chiefs to talk isolationism, the Polish peasants who seized the land when the landowners fled and the Polish workers who set up short-lived Communes in Vilna and Lvov before the coming of the Red Army.

No, the Third Camp is not a myth. It exists, and its members are legion: the submerged, smoldering working masses of the world, those who do the working and starving in peacetime and the dying in wartime. It is our aim and our revolutionary duty to organize these, to make our press the voice of the Third Camp.

For the defeat and overthrow of both imperialist camps! For the victory of the Third Camp!

The Soviet Union and the World War

THE OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND World War has once more put prominently at the top of the order of the day the "Russian question". The signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact was followed by the joint invasion of Poland; by the reduction of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to the state of vassals of the Kremlin; by the invasion and seizure of part of Finland by the Red Army; and by speculation and prediction of coming events which, a year ago, would have been waved aside as postposterous.

In bourgeois-democratic circles, these events furnished the

occasion for more pious homilies about the identity of communism and fascism. In the labor movement, the patriots skilfully exploited the workers' indignation against Stalin's crimes in order to promote the cause of the democratic warmongers. Among the revolutionary Marxists, however, the events provoked an intense and thoroughgoing discussion, resulting in a re-evaluation of the role of the Soviet Union in the war and in a revision of the traditional slogan of the Fourth International, "For the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union." It is with this discussion that the present article is concerned.

Why Must We Change Our Position on "Unconditional Defense"?

The views of the Fourth International on the question of defense of the Soviet Union in a war, put forward up to the time the present war broke out, may be summarized as follows:

The Soviet Union, existing on the basis of state property and dominated by a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy, is a degenerated workers' state which must be defended (by internationalist, class methods independent of those employed by the bureaucracy) in any war with a capitalist power, regardless of which side appeared to be the "aggressor" and regardless of the immediate cause of the war. This defense is "unconditional" in the sense that it is not conditioned on the abdication or overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy, or even upon its acceptance of a revolutionary policy. The Soviet Union must be defended in a war with a capitalist power not because of the Stalinists but in spite of them; must be defended, however, with our own independent policy which is aimed, among other things, to overthrow the bureaucracy because we have no faith in its ability to organize an effective defense of the Soviet Union. Should the Soviet Union, in a war against one or more capitalist powers, find itself in alliance with one or more other capitalist powers, the slogan of defensism retains its full validity, just as the slogan of defeatism retains its validity both in the countries Russia is allied with and at war with; the only difference in policy in the two capitalist countries would be tactical and practical (for example, we would not oppose the shipment of munitions to Russia from the factories and ports of one of its capitalist allies).

Why is it necessary to revise this point of view, it is asked, above all now, when the war has actually broken out? Is it because Stalin has allied himself with a fascist imperialism instead of with a "democratic" imperialism? Can Marxists allow themselves to make a fundamental distinction between the two? And if such a distinction is made with respect to alliances with the Soviet Union, does it not imply a patriotic position towards the "democracies" with respect to their war with Germany? What, in a word, has changed so fundamentally as to justify a change in our position on the defense of the Soviet Union?

The change which the Marxists must make in their position has nothing whatsoever to do with all the petty-bourgeois lamentations over Stalin's shift from "democrats" to fascists. While allied with France, Stalin was already allied, at least indirectly, with a number of totalitarian regimes and military dictatorships in the orbit of French imperialism. The alliance of the notorious butcher Chiang Kai-shek with the equally notorious butcher Stalin does not eliminate the duty which every revolutionist has to defend China from Japan. The change in position is dictated by far more profound and real considerations.

Tradition vs. Reality

The discussion of the role of Russia in the war during the period of the Franco-Soviet Pact was based on hypotheses and prediction. Reference to the policy proposed by Lenin in 1917 for an "alliance" with France and England against Germany was invalid, and in any case not decisive, among other reasons because the "alliance" never seriously materialized. It was therefore false to generalize from this experience which was never experienced. The discussion of the role of Russia in the war during the Hitler-Stalin Pact is based upon tangible realities. These realities make it as mandatory upon us to reconsider our slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" as the realities of the March, 1917, Revolution in Russia made it mandatory upon Lenin to reconsider the traditional and, up to that point, intransigently defended Bolshevik slogan of a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

What are these concrete realities?

The 1935 Pact with France was a defensive alliance for the Soviet Union. It was directed against a rising and truculent German imperialism but it was calculated essentially to maintain the status quo, to keep Germany from precipitating war. The status quo policy of People's Frontism was adopted by the Comintern in accordance with this objective.

Stalin's capitulation to Hitler in 1939 took the form of an *aggressive military alliance*. This is precisely what was not foreseen or allowed for by us in the past, as Trotsky himself acknowledged at the beginning of the war. In general, it is true, the possibility of a rapprochement between Hitler and Stalin had been envisaged in our literature, but not an aggressive military alliance. The difference between the two pacts does not lie in the fact that one was made with such an illustrious democrat as Pierre Laval and the other with an undemocratic fascist. It lies in the real difference between the two imperialisms, French and German. This difference is in no wise of such a fundamental character as to warrant supporting one against the other, in the manner of the war-mongering social-democrats. But it is sufficiently important to change the character of the alliance made by Stalin. In the past, too, it was sufficiently important for us to distinguish between Hitler and Laval, not fundamentally, not so far as their social role is concerned, but to the extent of characterizing Hitler and not Laval as the "super-Wrangel", that is, the spearhead of world imperialist assault upon the Soviet Union. This difference was not based upon a feeling of tenderness on the part of Laval for Russia, but upon the fact that German imperialism, for a series of historical reasons, was dynamically aggressive and forced, in the most immediate and direct sense, as Hitler himself has said, to "expand or die" (just as England, for example, is forced to hold on to her empire or die).

Stalin as Hitler's Satellite

The role of the Soviet Union can be followed and understood only if one is clear about the *predominant character of the war*. It is not a war of imperialist attack upon the Soviet Union; it is not a "mixed war". It is a war between two big imperialist camps for the redivision of the world, with the Soviet Union as an integral part of one of the imperialist camps.

The strategy of the imperialist camp to which Stalin is subordinated, is fairly clear. It is to keep all sides of Germany protected by herself and her allies, to confine the front to the comparative safety of the Westwall-Maginot lines; to destroy the British Empire for the benefit of the Rome-Berlin-Moscow axis, primarily for the Berlin section of it. Stalin's role in the war, from the very beginning, has been that of auxiliary executant of this strategy.

Hitler did not descend upon Poland until he had assured himself not of Stalin's neutrality but of Stalin's active support. Poland was defeated and partitioned jointly and by pre-arrangement, with Hitler, in accordance with the real relationship of forces between the partners, getting the lion's share and Stalin the jackal's. The work of covering Hitler's eastern flank from possible attack by the Allies or their vassals, was then completed by Stalin's invasion and subjugation of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Far from meeting resistance from Hitler, Stalin was encouraged to proceed along the indicated line in order that Germany might have at its Baltic rear governments no longer subject to the manipulations of Anglo-French imperialism but sterilized governments kept in escrow for him by his friendly sub-partner of the Kremlin.

Of the same order and in accordance with the same imperialist strategy was Stalin's invasion of Finland, presented to us so cynically by the Stalinist press as a "defense of the Soviet Union from imperialist attack" and characterized so naively by the *Socialist Appeal* in the same terms. Whoever did not understand the real meaning of the Finnish invasion at the time, should surely

understand it in the light of subsequent events. The middle-class journalistic muttonheads who still talk about Hitler being Stalin's captive in the pact, sought to present the invasion of Finland as a "blow at Germany". The truth is just the opposite. Hitler wanted Stalin to invade Finland and Trotsky is without doubt right in saying that Berlin "obviously pushed" Stalin towards Helsinki. Why? For two reasons which are really one. In the first place, the action involves Stalin more deeply in the war on Hitler's side. In the second place, the occupation or subjection of Finland was needed by Germany as the first step towards closing to the Allies a northern front they were seeking to open against Hitler. Only after Stalin had crushed Finland and enormously weakened Sweden, did Hitler feel able to take those brutal and decisive measures which are calculated to guarantee his northern flank. Denmark and Norway fell to German instead of to Anglo-French imperialism only because Finland fell to Germany's partner. It goes without saying that if Hitler consolidates himself in Norway (as he appears to be doing at this writing), the fate of Sweden, hemmed in between Hitler and Stalin, is a foregone conclusion.

Thus, in two big moves, Hitler, with the Soviet Union at his orders, has succeeded in doing what the Kaiser and Hindenburg were unable to do in the first World War: to confine the conflict to a momentarily "defensive" war of position on a single well-protected front, the West. With Stalin's aid, Hitler has fairly well assured his eastern, northeastern and northern flanks. With Stalin's aid—today in the form of a threat, tomorrow in the form of active military intervention—he is assuring his southeastern flank, in the first place in Romania. The day after, it is not at all excluded that Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union will be fighting jointly for the "defense of the Soviet Union" in the southeast and the Near East—in actuality, for the partitioning of the Balkans and the Near East among the members of the Rome-Berlin-Moscow axis. What the Moscow *Izvestia* said about Hitler's invasion of Norway, really holds true here: War has a powerful logic of its own.

Alongside of this parallelism of military action, there is a corresponding parallelism of political agitation. Moscow echoes every claim of Berlin, every diplomatic lie, every self-justification. The same "war-guilt" explanation is given by both. The diplomatic offensives which precede military action are carefully synchronized in both capitals. The Stalinist parties, it goes without saying, do their part loyally for the Axis, concentrating all their attacks upon England and France, to the exclusion of Germany. In the colonies Hitlerite and Stalinist agents, whether by formal agreement or by the internal logic of their war alliance, conduct a harmonious campaign for the "liberation" of the oppressed peoples from Anglo-French imperialism (that is, for subjecting them to the yoke of the Axis). This is what the participation of the Soviet Union in the war looks like in reality. Under these conditions, the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" is tantamount to giving objective political aid to one imperialist camp against another. It is therefore imperative that the slogan be radically altered to read "defense of the Soviet Union in a progressive war".

The Kremlin Is Waging a Reactionary War

Wherein is Russia's participation in the war reactionary? In two respects: (1) it is acting primarily as agent of German imperialism in the war; (2) it is itself fighting a war of bureaucratic expansion, of subjugation and oppression of other peoples. From these follow the reactionary social and political consequences of its participation in the war: instead of the class consciousness of the workers being heightened, their bourgeois-patriotic feelings are intensified; instead of being brought closer to the revolution, they are driven into the arms of their own ruling class, and not the most liberal sections of it, at that (Poland, Finland); instead of becoming more sympathetic towards the principles and achieve-

ments and defense of the Russian Revolution, they become more antipathetic towards them; instead of advancing the interests of the world revolution and weakening world imperialism, the participation of the Soviet Union in the present war retards enormously the former and strengthens enormously the latter.

The two respects in which Russia's war is reactionary are not contradictory or mutually exclusive. In the partnership of the Pact, Stalin is very much the subordinate; it is indeed quite accurate to say that the Stalinist bureaucracy capitulated to Germany in the hope (a) of buying itself off from an immediate attack by Hitler upon the Soviet Union and (b) of escaping complete involvement in the world war. The first hope has been realized, of that there is no doubt. But it has been realized precisely at the expense of the second hope. The very conservatism, the provincial pacifism, the timidity and national-narrowness that have characterized the Stalinist bureaucracy, are precisely the forces that drag it deeper into the war as a tool of one of the imperialist powers. It is no mere literary paradox but a political fact of primary importance that the very fear of war which has dominated the course of the Stalinist bureaucracy has led it progressively further into war. Not less important is the fact that while serving as an agent of a big imperialist power, the Kremlin bureaucracy pursues an imperialist (expansionist) policy of its own.

The programmatic documents of the Fourth International, in all its pre-history and since its foundation, have never taken into account the possibility of a war of expansion by the Kremlin. Quite the contrary. Our analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy emphasized its national conservatism, its characteristic of staying-at-home-at-all-costs epitomized in Stalin's famous phrase about not fighting for an inch of foreign soil and not yielding an inch of Soviet soil. Throughout our political history, one can find only one or two purely incidental remarks about the possibility of the Kremlin seizing new territory; in our programmatic documents, one cannot, we repeat find any whatsoever. This explains, at least in part, the silence, confusion and equivocation that characterized the press of the Fourth International throughout the initial period of Russia's invasion of other countries. We had not been prepared for such a development. But there is no reason why such a state of affairs should be perpetuated in the revolutionary Marxian movement.

What Do We Mean by Stalinist "Imperialism"?

Is the imperialist policy of the Kremlin of the same nature as the imperialism of Germany, Japan, France, England and America? No, for it has different origins, different bases, different paths of development. Is it based upon the dominance in economy of finance capital, the export of capital and other characteristics of modern imperialism, we have been asked with misplaced sarcasm? No, it is an imperialism peculiar to the Stalinist bureaucracy in its present stage of degeneration.

The opposition to our characterization of Stalinist imperialism (it is not at all "red imperialism", as the social-democrats would say; there is nothing red about it), is based in large measure on a mis-reading or misunderstanding of Lenin's conceptions of imperialism. *Modern* imperialism is characteristic of the last stage of capitalism, of capitalism in decay. But Lenin did not and could not say that imperialism, imperialist policy and imperialist war are possible only under decaying capitalism. Thus, of pre-war Czarist Russia, Lenin declared that "the prevailing type of Russian imperialism is military and feudal", in distinction from the modern capitalist imperialism of England and Germany which he described so fully in his study, *Imperialism*. Thus, and even more pertinently to the present discussion, he insisted on a precise formulation of the question in his article "On the Revision of the Party Program" written in 1917 not as a casual piece of journalism but as a fundamental and critical programmatic document:

Crises, precisely in the form of over-production or of the "stocking up of

market commodities" (if comrade S. prohibits the word overproduction), are a phenomenon which is *exclusively* proper to capitalism. Wars, however, are proper both to the economic system based on slavery and on feudalism. There have been imperialist wars on the basis of slavery (Rome's war against Carthage was an imperialist war on both sides) as well as in the Middle Ages and in the epoch of mercantile capitalism. Every war in which both belligerent camps are fighting to oppress foreign countries or peoples and for the division of the booty, that is, over "who shall oppress more and who shall plunder more", must be called imperialistic. When we say that only modern capitalism, that only imperialism brought with it imperialist wars, that is correct, for the *preceding* stage of capitalism, the stage of free competition or the stage of pre-monopolist capitalism was predominantly characterized by *national* wars in Western Europe. But if it is said that in the preceding stage there were no imperialist wars in general, that would be false, that would mean that the *equally* imperialist "colonial wars" have been forgotten. (*Collected Works*, German ed., Vol. XXI, pp. 387f.)

"Every war in which both belligerent camps are fighting to oppress foreign countries or peoples and for the division of the booty . . . must be called imperialist," wrote Lenin. Does not the joint invasion of Poland by Hitler and Stalin fall precisely into that category? Does not the joint invasion of Scandinavia (of Finland by Stalin and immediately thereafter of Denmark and Norway by Hitler) also fall into the same category? The Poles are brought under full enslavement by Hitler; the White Russians and Ukrainians, according to Trotsky, under "semi-enslavement" by Stalin. It may be argued, and it is, that in Eastern Poland Stalin carried through the nationalization of property and in Finland he acquired military bases which are valuable to the defense of the Soviet Union from imperialist attack, and that from the standpoint of the international working class these measures are progressive. On October 18, 1939, Trotsky wrote that "the economic transformations in the occupied territories do not compensate for this by even a tenth part!"—meaning by "this" the antagonizing of the world proletariat and oppressed peoples. Even if we granted for the moment the above argument, we would reply, paraphrasing Trotsky: "The nationalization of property in Eastern Poland and the acquisition of military bases in Finland do not compensate by even a tenth part for the enormous strengthening of one of the imperialist camps, for the demoralization of the world working class, for the subjugation of millions upon millions of Ukrainians, White Russians, Lithuanians, Karelians and Finns to the Kremlin yoke."

Stalinist Imperialism: Three Aspects

Space does not permit a complete elaboration of the question of Stalinist imperialism, which must be reserved for another article. Let us conclude here by touching on a few brief supplementary points:

1. What is the nature of Stalinist oppression in the Soviet Ukraine? In that country, the Fourth International has *added* to the general, "All-Soviet-Union" slogan of a political revolution against the bureaucracy, the *special* slogan of the independence of the Ukraine. We not only insist on the Ukraine's *right* to separation from the Union, but we *advocate* its separation. This position, especially applied to the Ukraine, has meaning only on the condition that the Ukraine suffers under *national* oppression. And what is the nature of this national oppression? We characterize it as a type of imperialist oppression peculiar to the Stalinist bureaucracy.

2. In the "U.S.S.R. in War" (Sept. 25, 1939), Trotsky wrote: "We do not entrust the Kremlin with any historical mission. We were and remain against seizures of new territories by the Kremlin." It would be more accurate to say, "We *are* against seizures of new territories by the Kremlin," for the simple reason that the question of Stalin seizing new territories was never raised in our movement for either an affirmative or negative reply. That is, we never envisaged the possibility of a war of bureaucratic expansion. Now that we see both the possibility and reality of such a war, we declare our opposition to it. Why? We did not oppose "seizures of new territories" under Lenin (Georgia,

1920). We oppose them now because the Stalinist war of expansion, which we are today compelled to see as a reality, is reactionary, because, as Trotsky rightly says, we do not entrust the bureaucracy with any historical mission, and because we oppose the national oppression of new millions under the imperialist yoke of the Kremlin.

3. The Stalinist bureaucracy, we were told in the party discussion, is not imperialist, but an agent of imperialism. But that is true, in a sense, also of the imperialistically-corrupted labor aristocracy of the great capitalist powers. This aristocracy profited directly from the imperialist advancement of the bourgeoisie, although at the expense of the broad masses of the toilers. It is quite accurate to describe it as an imperialist labor aristocracy. The Stalinist machine is a labor aristocracy raised to the *n*th degree, to a new and unheard-of power. Naturally, its ambitions, hopes, appetites are limited, not merely by the economic base on which it rests, but above all by its subordinate position in world politics and economics. This "agent of imperialism" has its own imperialist aims and ambitions. These aims do not have, let us repeat, the same roots as British imperialism, but they exist. The Stalinist bureaucracy is not averse to acquiring oil wells in the Western Ukraine, copper and nickel mines in Finland, stocks of goods however modest, skilled and semi-skilled workers in occupied territories, and—far from least important—a wider basis for the extension of its bureaucratic power (at least a million hard-boiled Stalinist bureaucrats will be placed in power in the occupied East-Polish territories, inhabited by some 13,000,000 people).

The Majority Position: Confusion Worse Confounded

The other arguments of the proponents of the traditional policy, are contradictory and untenable. "We condemn the invasion but we remain for the defense of the Soviet Union," that is, for the victory of the Red Army, they say in connection with Poland or Finland. They condemn the invasion, but support the invaders! They are against seizures of new territories by the Kremlin, but support those who are fighting to seize them! They are against the invasion *before* it takes place; they are against it *after* it has succeeded (once Stalin is triumphant, they will raise the slogan of an independent Soviet Finland); but they are *for* the invasion (for the victory of the Red Army) *while* it is taking place.

The attempt to draw an analogy with a conservative trade union on strike misses fire completely. We do not *condemn* any strike, even if conducted bureaucratically by a reactionary leadership; we may criticize the methods, the timing, etc., of a strike. We do not oppose the "seizure of new territories" (the organizing of the unorganized) even by a reactionary union; on the contrary, we condemn the bureaucrats for not "seizing enough territory" (for not organizing more and more of the unorganized). "It is not a question of 'little Finland'," we are told, "since Finland is only an episode in the Second World War. This war will inevitably turn into a war of imperialist attack upon the Soviet Union, aimed at reducing it to a colony of world imperialism." Essentially the same objection, made in reverse, was put forth by ultra-leftists against our policy in Spain. On Sept. 14, 1937, Trotsky replied to the argument about the "episode" as follows:

It can be objected that the two imperialist camps (Italy and Germany on one side and England, France and the U.S.S.R. on the other) conduct their struggle on the Iberian peninsula and that the war in Spain is only an "episode" of this struggle. In the sense of a historical possibility, it is true. But it is impermissible to identify a historical possibility with the actual, concrete course of the civil war today. The intervention of the imperialist countries has indisputably great influence upon the development of the events in Spain. But until today it has not changed the fundamental character of these events as of a struggle between the camp of the Spanish bourgeois democracy and the camp of Spanish fascism. (*Internal Bulletin*, Oct. 1937, p. 38.)

What is called an "episode" today is indeed an integral episode of the development of the second imperialist World War, in which the Soviet Union is fighting *primarily* the battle of German imperialism. The present war may be transformed, at a later stage, into an imperialist war against the Soviet Union, in which case it will be the duty of the international working class to defend the Soviet Union even under Stalin. But it is absurd to apply to the war today the policy applicable to the war into which it may be transformed.

Only a sophist (wrote Lenin) could wipe out the difference between an imperialist war and a national war on the grounds that the one *can* be transformed into the other. The dialectic has not seldom served, even in the history of Greek philosophy, as a bridge to sophistry. We, however, remain dialecticians who struggle against the sophists, not through a denial of every transformation, but rather by means of a concrete analysis of the *given* instance, as much in its momentary situation as also in its development. (*Gegen den Strom*, p. 417.)

A concrete analysis of the given instance shows—it is imperative to repeat this time and again—that the Soviet Union under Stalin is participating in the present war as an integral part of one of the two imperialist camps. To defend the Soviet Union in *this* war, i.e., to be "the best soldier in the Red Army," to fight for its victory wherever it marches, means, objectively, to work for the victory of one imperialist camp against the other.

The Question of the Nationalized Economy

"It is not Stalin we are defending, but the remaining conquest of October—nationalized property." In the *present* war, the nationalized property of the Soviet Union is not what is primarily involved. What is at stake is the world dominance of Anglo-French imperialism on the one side, and the imperialist ambitions of German imperialism and the concern for "power, prestige and revenues" of the Stalinist bureaucracy on the other. In a war between Daladier and De la Rocque the fascist, bourgeois democracy would be at stake; the trade union bureaucrats supporting the democratic side would be participating, whatever their motives or methods, in a progressive war against fascism. In a war between Daladier and Hitler, bourgeois democracy would not be at stake but rather the respective imperialist interests of France and Germany; the trade union bureaucrats supporting Daladier on the basis of desiring to defend the French trade unions from Hitlerism, would be participating—again regardless of motives and methods—in a reactionary, imperialist war.

The corollary argument that Stalin did, after all, nationalize property in the occupied territories is no more valid for the thesis of support of the Red Army. In the first place, property relations remain intact in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, so that the Soviet Union is in the unique position of commanding three capitalist colonies, or rather semi-colonies. In the second place, the fact that property was nationalized in Western Ukraine and Southern Finland only means that the proletariat in conquering those territories (as in the Soviet Union itself) would proceed from this new reality in its struggle to overthrow the Stalinist regime, that is, it would base itself upon statified property and give it a genuinely progressive, i.e., socialist significance. It does not have it in and by itself and under all circumstances. Arab or Irish nationalists might utilize, for their own purposes, ma-

terial aid which German imperialism might give them for its own purposes; it would not follow that revolutionists must work for the victory of the German army. Finnish revolutionists will not only "accept" Stalin's nationalization but will extend and deepen and fructify it as they grow in power; but it does not follow that they should support the counter-revolutionary troops of Stalin. Capitalism itself, as Marxists have always pointed out, has found itself compelled time and again to take steps which had revolutionary consequences. "Did not the fact that Guchkov and Shulglin (Russian monarchists) brought with them to Petrograd the abdication of Nicholas II play a revolutionary role," Trotsky once asked. "Did it not arouse the most downtrodden, exhausted, and timid strata of the population? . . . Did not the entire activities of capitalism rouse the masses, did it not rescue them, to use the expression of the Communist Manifesto, from the idiocy of rural life? Did it not impel the proletarian battalions to the struggle? But does our historical evaluation of the objective role of capitalism as a whole or of certain actions of the bourgeoisie in particular, become a substitute for our active class revolutionary attitude toward capitalism or toward the actions of the bourgeoisie? Opportunist policies have always been based on this kind of non-dialectical, conservative, tail-endist 'objectivism'." (*Third International After Lenin*, p. 175.)

The nationalization of property is not an abstraction and has no absolute merits in and of itself. "Its progressiveness is relative; its specific weight depends on the sum-total of all the other factors." (Trotsky.) In the present war, it must be considered in its social and political context. It must be considered in the light of the character of Russia's participation as an integral part of the imperialist war. The conception that since nationalized property is "progressive by its very nature" a regime based upon it must *automatically* be fighting a progressive war, has as much in common with Marxism as vulgar economic determinism has with historical materialism; the conception is, at bottom, nothing but a variety of immanent idealism.

To sum up briefly in conclusion: That "concrete analysis of the given instance" which Lenin demanded shows the imperative need of revising one of our traditional slogans. If, at a later stage, the present war between the imperialists should be transformed into an assault upon the Soviet Union, the slogan of defensism would have to be raised again, for it is not to the interests of the socialist world revolution and the working class to have one-sixth of the world, which the October uprising removed from the control of imperialism, restored to capitalist exploitation. In the present war, however, the world proletariat, the Russian included, cannot take upon itself a shadow of responsibility for the participation of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the imperialist conflict. The revolutionary vanguard must put forward the slogan of revolutionary defeatism in both imperialist camps, that is, the continuation of the revolutionary struggle for power regardless of the effects on the military front. That, and only that, is the central strategy of the third camp in the World War, the camp of proletarian internationalism, of the socialist revolution, of the struggle for the emancipation of all the oppressed.

Max SHACHTMAN

The United States At War

WILL WE GO IN?" is the question in every one's mind. From one point of view, the answer is a matter of life and death. Yet, historically considered, the question is meaningless. We are already "in". The precise point at which we will formally "enter

the war"—i.e., when the U. S. Government will extend its cooperation with the "democratic" belligerents from the economic to the military sphere—this is a technical detail that will be determined by considerations of imperialist strategy and mass psychol-

ogy. The United States has been in the war since the first shot, and with every month the web of economic interest between this country and the Allies is woven tighter.

The "Peace Scare"

As this is written, it looks as though the war may finally have reached the stage of large-scale military operations. This is welcome news to the American business community. To quote the current news-letter of the National City Bank: "Although peace would be the greatest blessing that the world could possibly receive, the reports of peace moves during the past month (March) have been commonly described as a 'peace scare' and have been a cause of hesitation in the markets." Current events in Scandinavia seem to be laying the dread spectre of peace.

It is easy to understand this attitude if one considers what the war, even in its "inactive" phase, has already meant to the American economy. Last spring there were many signs that business was drifting downward to another serious slump. The mounting war tension that summer and the actual outbreak of war in the fall reversed the downward trend. The mere prospect of big orders from the Allies stimulated in the first two months of the war a 20% increase in industrial production, almost the biggest two-months increase on record. The military stalemate that ensued was reflected in a stalemate of American business, which has been drifting in the doldrums for the past few months. If the fighting in Norway develops into big-scale slaughter and destruction, prosperity will come back over here.

The dynamic effects this would have on our economy can be grasped if one considers that, even in the first six inactive months of the war, American exports have been 33% higher than in the same period a year ago. In February, the increase in exports was 59%, and if the current rate continues, 1940 exports will be \$4,500,000,000 as against \$3,200,000,000 for 1939. The greatest boom has been in aircraft, where 75% of Allied buying to date has been concentrated, and on which they plan to spend over here a special fund of \$1,000,000,000. The national productive capacity has tripled in the past year, now standing at 12,000 planes a year, and by the end of 1940 it is expected capacity will be 30,000. The most optimistic possible calculation of the number of new planes that might be needed per year by our own commercial airlines is 7,000—and this total assumes that the air lines would be carrying *all* the present Pullman passengers, as well as *all* railway express shipments and *all* first-class mail. No wonder they talk about a "peace scare".

How admirably conscious of the interests of American imperialism is the occupant of the White House, is revealed by a recent article in *Time* describing the expansion and transformation of the United States Army under President Roosevelt: "Any foreign military attache looking at the new U. S. Army will recognize it for what it is: a standing expeditionary force, designed for prompt conscript expansion into an expeditionary army of 750,000 active troops, 250,000 reserves. . . . Remembering that the U. S. Army has fought in China, Siberia, Central America, and France, the General Staff has planned an outfit ready to be packed up and sent anywhere. The last place the Army expects to fight is on the U. S. mainland."

New Deal Into War Deal

President Roosevelt exerts his remarkable political talents to maneuver the country into the war on the side of the Allies not because he is personally inhumane or villainous, not because he is in the pay of "Wall Street", but simply because he is a responsible bourgeois statesman.

A review of the last decade of our history shows that war is the only perspective left for American capitalism. The basic problem that has long confronted our capitalist society is how to find big enough markets to absorb profitably the goods produced so plentifully by our superbly rationalized industrial system. The problem

became acute with the 1929 stock market crash and the onset of the depression. The Hoover Administration tried, and failed, to solve it by a conservative defense of the status quo. Between 1933 and 1937, the New Deal worked out a temporary solution along reformist lines, based on the theory of the State intervening to moderate the class struggle and to redistribute national income by increasing the purchasing power of the masses. The State tried to prop up the mass market for the products of industry by means of heavy governmental spending, and also, indirectly, by legislation designed to strengthen labor's bargaining position and to bring Wall Street and big business under some degree of State control. But the pressure of the big bourgeoisie, supported by conservative rural and small town elements, made progress in a reformist direction more and more difficult within the framework of capitalism. By the end of 1936, Federal expenditures had been reduced to the vanishing point. In the spring of 1937, the conservatives won the Supreme Court fight, a warning signal to Roosevelt that his leadership, was now, for the first time, seriously challenged. His response, characteristic of reformist politicians, was to try to placate his enemies by even greater concessions. In 1937, the Federal Government, for the first time since the beginning of the New Deal, took more out of the national income in taxes than it contributed in its spending programs. The result was the sharpest business decline in the nation's history: the farm price index stood at 128 in May, 1937, at 92 in May, 1938; the Federal Reserve index of industrial production in that period slumped from 118 to 76.

This 1937 collapse was even more significant than the 1929 crash: it showed that American capitalism could no longer sustain itself within the borders of the United States unless the domestic market received regular blood-transfusions of Government spending. When this reformist course became politically impossible, Roosevelt lost no time in turning to the only alternative under capitalism: an aggressive world imperialist policy to win fresh markets and investment fields for American capitalism abroad. A war drive, furthermore, would get the support of those big bourgeois interests that violently opposed the "New Deal" reformist program of the New Deal. And it would distract the masses' attention from the collapse of that reformist program. A few weeks after the first big break in the stock market in the fall of 1937, Roosevelt announced his new imperialist policy in the famous Chicago ("Quarantine the Aggressor!") speech.

The War Deal: Four Phases

Since the war began last fall, the Administration's war drive has gone through three phases, and now is entering a fourth.

1. *Full Speed Ahead!* Beginning in the middle of summer and continuing through the first month of the war, President Roosevelt boldly steered a course for open aid to the Allies and speedy participation in the war as a belligerent. The War Resources Board was set up with much fanfare, patriotic spy hunts were encouraged by the Department of Justice, the Neutrality Proclamation was frankly un-neutral, and the whole weight of the Administration was put behind the campaign to repeal the Neutrality Act. Hand in hand with these war preparations went a frank turn

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towards Wall Street. Roosevelt personally intervened to crush the WPA strike; his secretary admitted the "Brains Trust" was "out the window", while in the window came Wall Street bankers and reactionary economists to replace them; the personnel of the all-powerful War Resources Board was about equally divided between "DuPont men" and "Morgan men"; the reactionary Paul McNutt was added to the Cabinet.

2. *Backwater.* As the Congressional debate on repealing the Neutrality Act opened, the Administration began to backwater on its war drive. Roosevelt had miscalculated, like practically every one else, the speed with which the war would develop; when it became clear that a long stalemate had begun and that the Allies would need no armed aid from America for a while, Roosevelt put the war drive into reverse. He found he had also miscalculated as to the temper of public opinion; the unprecedented flood of anti-war letters and telegrams which descended on Congress as the neutrality debate opened was a surprise to the Administration—and also food for serious thought. Roosevelt stopped talking in public about his sympathy for the Allies, leaving the fight against the Neutrality Act in the hands of the Administration's floor leaders, who worked quietly behind the scenes. The War Resources Board was hastily disbanded, and Roosevelt refused to release its report on the grounds of "no public interest". The "Brains Trust" flew in the window again, and Messrs. Baillie of J. & W. Seligman, Burgess of National City Bank, and other such went back to Wall Street. The Neutrality Act was repealed, but the Administration was forced to yield important concessions.

3. *Proceed with Caution.* As the war settled into a stalemate, with diplomatic and economic strategists replacing the generals, and as the strong anti-war sentiment of the masses became ever clearer, the Administration resumed its pressure for war, but with the greatest caution. Its energies were devoted mostly to making easier the purchase of airplanes by the Allies and to building up our own war machine. This was a period of watchful waiting, with eyes on Europe for the signal that slaughter had really begun and that American armed aid was needed.

4. *Full Speed Again?* Already the fighting in Scandinavia has had its effect over here. American interests in Norway and Denmark are not great: a total investment of \$221,000,000; exports of \$30,600,000 to the three Scandinavian nations in the first two months of this year, out of a total of \$715,000,000

exports; only one Scandinavian product which is of major importance to American industry—Norwegian wood pulp, used in rayon manufacturing. But the point is not, of course, Scandinavia itself but far greater interests. Already pressure is being put on Dewey to disavow the quasi-isolationist stand which has made him the best vote-getter in the race for the Republican nomination. Already there are rumblings in the press about the Nazi flag being planted in Greenland, Denmark's possession. (President Roosevelt, after consulting various atlases and encyclopedias, has now pronounced Greenland to be definitely a part of the North American continent and hence within the scope of the Monroe Doctrine.)

Two days after the first news of the Nazi invasion, the *N. Y. World-Telegram* editorialized: "Congress has been chipping corners off the national defense program. The news from Northern Europe ought to put a stop to that. In fact, the Senate Appropriations Committee took one look at the newspapers yesterday and restored to a War Department bill the \$15,000,000 fund for starting a third set of Panama Canal locks—an item which the House had dropped." The next day the Senate Appropriations Committee reported out without any cuts a naval bill for \$967,400,000 for the coming fiscal year, biggest in history. Up to the Scandinavian flare-up, Congress had been following a course most distasteful to the Administration, of cutting army and navy appropriations and increasing farm, relief, and other non-military appropriations. However, "the news from Northern Europe ought to put a stop to that".

The interests of American capitalism require our participation in the war. But there is an increasingly powerful pressure of mass sentiment against participation. (How much this will be changed by the actual outbreak of major hostilities, with possible large-scale Nazi bombings, remains to be seen.) This sentiment has greatly increased since the beginning of the war. Early in September, Gallup asked: "If it appears that Germany is defeating England and France, should the U. S. declare war on Germany and send out army and navy to Europe to fight?" Two out of five answered: "Yes". But when the same question was asked in February, only one out of five said "Yes". The American masses share the apathy and cynicism of their European brothers as to the war aims of the "democracies".

Dwight MACDONALD

India and the Third Camp

"We want neither the rule of London or Berlin; nor the rule of Paris or Rome; nor that of Tokyo or Moscow."—*The Congress Socialist of India*, Sept. 1939.

* * *

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT and hopeful aspect of this strange Second World War which, with the creation of a new front in the Scandinavian areas, is about to assume a greatly intensified military nature, has been the political and economic actions of the colonial peoples.

In the colonial empires of England and France there live hundreds of millions of native people whose lives and daily activities are molded solely by their foreign imperialist oppressors. These people now find themselves at war. Against their will and with no consultative voice in the matter, they have been drawn into the imperialist struggle in which they are the main bone of contention.

But they have not accepted their fate quietly this time! From the war's inception, the Third Camp of the colonial people for national independence and peace has begun intense mobilization against both imperialist war camps. Headed by the people of the

sub-continent of India, the colonial workers and peasants of French Indo-China, Burma, Ceylon, Cyprus, Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa, British West Indies, Syria, Palestine, etc., have displayed in one way or another their hostility to the war.

The Anti-War Struggle

It has been primarily the 400,000,000 workers and *hisans* of British and Native India who have led the forces of independent Third Camp action. The series of strikes and political actions that have swept over this country have typified the course of events in the colonies we have mentioned. That is why it is worth describing in more detail the development of the Third Camp in India.

When Chamberlain announced in September of last year that the British Empire was at war, India automatically became a belligerent power.

On that very day began the anti-war fight. A meeting of 100,000 workers in Madras assembled to hear Subhas Chandra

Bose, left-wing nationalist leader of the All-India Nationalist Congress, plead for the launching of an immediate anti-war civil disobedience movement. This mass meeting was the signal for similar demonstrations in the provinces of Madras, Bengal and Punjab. The people of India had commenced their reply to the imperialists' war plans.

Before many weeks went by it became clear how England intended to utilize the man-power and resources of the world's greatest colony in its war aims. The promulgation of the Defense of India Act by the British viceroy created a military dictatorship over the country. A call for military volunteers was issued and recruiting officers went to work in India's military areas (Punjab and Northwest Frontier). Large garrisons were rushed to the fortifications on the Northern front and troop transports carried tens of thousands of Moslem and Sikh soldiers to Egypt, Palestine, Aden, France and other areas of the Near East where they swelled the colonial forces of the Empire.

Among the population the effect of the war was instantly felt. Food prices, especially the price of grains and fruits which are the staple consumptions of the people, skyrocketed an average of 25%! The government, however, saw to it that the profit derived from these increased prices went solely to the merchants. The sale price of farm produce was standardized by governmental decree. The net effect was a sharp reduction in the living standards of the Indian workers and the already super-exploited Indian peasant.

Indian industry, which first began during the last war, soon received its war stimulus. An order for 500,000,000 sand bags was placed with the India Jute Mills Associations at Calcutta. The effect of this was a raising of the mill workers' hours from 48 to 60 per week with no pay increase. In the Chota-Nagpur steel and iron area of Central India, British capitalists poured in millions of English pounds for plant expansion and extension. By December of 1939 the number of peace-time munition workers had trebled! Indian factories can now supply England with the following war products: munitions and airplanes, iron and steel finished goods, jute for sand bags, tents, etc., chemicals and explosives, railway rolling stock and numerous raw materials (rubber, cotton, oil seeds and fats, manganese, etc.). This is exactly the rôle designed for India by its slave masters—to supply an endless amount of its wealth and products for the imperialists. But the people have said otherwise!

Indian Labor on the March

Beginning with small, local strikes a strike movement has spread rapidly from one end of the country to the other. It has

involved hundreds of thousands of industrial workers in the jute, steel, cotton, printing and transportation fields. Cities as far apart as Bombay and Calcutta have been affected. The demands of the strikers have been well summarized in a resolution drawn up at a general conference of 52 unions representing the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress. These demands were for (1) 40% war allowance to make up for the rise in food prices; (2) control of food prices; (3) opening up of cheap grain shops throughout the city of Bombay and the Province. A campaign launched by these unions has already forced the opening up of 19 grain shops.

At the present moment, the strikes are fanning out and assuming a more general and nation-wide character. There are general strikes of textile workers in progress in Bombay (185,000), Cawnpore and Allahabad. Steel mill workers in Calcutta and Patna, street cleaners in Calcutta, printers in Cawnpore, etc., are all engaged in strike activity. Although victory has as yet only been attained in the smaller strikes, the desperate Bombay general strike now in progress for 6 weeks is the center of the strike struggle. A victory here would be followed by a series of major strikes all over India.

While Indian industrial labor is on the march, a bitter struggle is under way in the sharply split Indian Nationalist Congress. There are, in reality, *two* Congress movements in India today. The Compromise wing led by Gandhi has completely capitulated to British imperialism and more openly than ever supports the war of the British. It has been this sabotaging action by Gandhi and his followers that has contributed most to dampening the militancy of the Third Camp. But around the dramatic figure of Subhas Bose, a radical bourgeois nationalist and former president of the Trade Union Congress, a new group of anti-compromise nationalists have rallied. At the recent All-India Congress sessions this group staged an anti-compromise demonstration with undoubtedly good results. Centering primarily in the radical province of Bengal, the Bose "Forward Bloc" is preparing intensified action for Indian independence at the moment. The economic and trade-union activity of the Third Camp is far in advance of its political action today, but it is clear that the Bose Anti-Compromise Congress must soon attempt to give political direction to the spontaneous strike struggles of the Indian workers.

This is India today—world center of the Third Camp, living symbol of independent action of the colonials against imperialism and for peace. The story of India is being duplicated to one degree or another in all the colonial countries of the world. It is these people whom the American forces of the Third Camp must constantly bear in mind and prepare to assist at every appropriate moment.

Sherman STANLEY

Archives of the Revolution

DOCUMENTS of the HISTORY and THEORY of the WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

The Politics of Desperation

Some Notes on the Article, "A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party."

WHAT A COMFORT it will prove to Max Eastman! For ten years he insisted that what separated him from us was—dialectical materialism. For ten years we replied: No, Max Eastman, you are only fooling others and yourself, and trying to fool us; what separates you from us is your unwillingness to accept the political program of the international revolution, and the practical political consequences that flow from that program. We will not permit you to evade the political issues by turning the debate

We are publishing herewith, for the information and study of our readers, the complete text of one of the political documents circulated in the ranks of the Socialist Workers Party by the Opposition group during the discussion that has just closed. We think this document is of more than purely internal-party interest, and we hope to be able, in future issues of the review, to make public other key documents of the S.W.P. discussion.—ED.

aside into the abstract regions of speculative metaphysics.

But Eastman, it seems, was right all along. The real root of the matter, the ineluctable heart and core—it is now Trotsky who makes it at last clear to us—is, precisely—dialectical materialism. Burnham rejects dialectical materialism: from this original sin flow, like the conceptual links of the endless closed chain of the Hegelian uni-

verse, all the errors and crimes of the party opposition. But, we recall, it is not today or yesterday that Burnham rejected

dialectical materialism. Indeed, since he never accepted it, he can hardly be said ever to have rejected it. His opinion of dialectical materialism has been a constant: it has not been unknown in the Fourth International. A curious coincidence, and a mark of almost criminal laxity, that Trotsky waited until 1940, in the midst of a bitter factional struggle on concrete political issues, to discover its burning and all-vital importance.

The rule says: we must think things through to the end. The discovery having been made, even if so belatedly and under such exceptional circumstances, the International must draw the consequences. Trotsky must, I would feel, now propose a Special Commission to investigate and weed out all traces of anti-dialectics that have crept into the Socialist Workers Party through Burnham's activities during these years. It will, I am afraid, have plenty of work cut out for it.

It might begin, for example, with the party's Declaration of Principles, its foundation programmatic document, which was, by an oversight, written by Burnham. With the war actually started, it will have to devote particular attention to most of the pamphlets and articles on war, since most were written by Burnham. Surely it cannot overlook the political resolution for the last convention, also the product of Burnham's Aristotelian typewriter; or, for that matter, a fair percentage of all the political resolutions for conventions and conferences and plenums during the past five or six years. And not a few special articles and lead editorials in the Appeal and New International, the political document motivating the break with the Socialist Party—as well, come to think of it, as the first resolution proposing entry into the Socialist Party (the anti-entrists were, evidently, right, since the whole orientation sprang from anti-dialectics). And the Spanish resolution, around which centered the chief political fight in the Socialist Party. Let us not speak of the fact that perhaps the bulk of motions, resolutions, articles on **American politics** (the main enemy is, is it not, in our own country?) came from the same tainted source.

And let us above all not mention that even today, when anti-dialectics has come into the full anti-revolutionary open, the party was compelled to turn—to Burnham, in order to formulate a political plan in connection with the Congressional session (Appeal, issue of December 30th) and to ask—Burnham, to defend the policy of the party when criticized by a local branch (Rochester; unanimous PC motion, meeting of January 9), and to accept Burnham's motions (as against both Cannon and Cochran) when an important branch (Newark) asked how to handle the spreading Food Stamp Plan.

But the investigation will unearth even more curious, and ironic circumstances. It will find, to take one instance, that at the founding convention of the S.W.P., the lengthy Russian resolution itself, the resolution which defeated Burnham was, with the sole exception of the paragraph or two repeating the dictum that "Russia is a workers' state,"—written by Burnham. All, that is, of the concrete analysis, all that dealt with origins and sources and conditions and relations and predictions and history and changes, was the product of anti-dialectics (anti-dialectics operating, true enough, largely on material unearthed by Trotsky); dialectics contributed to the resolution—the "fixed" category ("workers' state") of "vulgar" and "Aristotelian" thinking.

The reply comes: Agreed, Burnham has done some service in his day; when, a tame petty-bourgeois journalist, he submitted himself docilely to the "proletarian element", he could reach correct Marxist conclusions in spite of his dialectical peccadilloes; now, with the war broken, he capitulates to the mighty pressure of the Hooks and Eastmans, becomes a petty-bourgeois "enraged", and all his proposals, motions, speeches, articles, are false and "absolutely stale". If he were a dialectician, he would understand how this happens. If he would recognize his heresy, confess, and resubmit it, he might even live to do further service in the future. But a more central point is: not whether Burnham has done service in the past or will behave in the future (both very minor problems), but how the past illumines in its own way the sudden appearance on the scene of dialectics at just this time, at the time when Burnham is in an opposition struggling against Trotsky and Cannon over the concrete political issues of today and tomorrow.

Perhaps, however, it was only that the American comrades were naive, being only (by their own admission) "students" of dialectics rather than ordained dialecticians, and did not recognize the monster they were harboring. But then there is a new, and this time international, scandal to explain: Two years ago Max Eastman wrote in *Harper's Magazine* a theoretical attack on Marxism. Trotsky thereafter wrote me a personal letter requesting and proposing to me that I answer Eastman and defend the theories of the Fourth International against his attack (which, a few months later in the *New International*, I did). I was neither more nor less of a dialectician then than today. My views on the subject were as well known to Trotsky then as today. I therefore enquire: By what right did Trotsky make this proposal to me? By what right did he entrust the theoretical defense of the Fourth International against a theoretic opponent who was himself an anti-dialectician to—an avowed anti-dialectician? Was he ignorant then about the importance of dialectic, but suddenly wise today? Or was he light-minded and irresponsible, in giving the defense over to a theoretic enemy? Equally astounding: last June, after the article "Intellectuals in Retreat," after my review of Haldane in *Partisan Review* where I once more summarized flatly my point of view toward dialectics, Trotsky, through Abern, re-

quested me to edit and cut 1,000 words from his introduction to the Longmans Green edition of "Capital"—and to do so at my own discretion. An extraordinary attitude toward one's own theoretical work: to turn it over to an irreconcilable enemy for revision!

Dialectics and Finland

Trotsky complains that I do not take dialectics seriously, limiting myself to "rather cynical aphorisms". I have not, it seems, the proper attitude of respect toward sacred doctrine, and this is unbecoming in a Marxist. It is true that, considered as an alleged scientific theory, I do not take dialectics seriously, any more than I would take seriously, as alleged scientific theories, any other theology or metaphysics. How can I take a doctrine seriously when, during the course of an entire century, its alleged "laws" or "principles" have never even been formulated—they have only been named, given titles. How can I even say whether I agree or disagree with, for example, the "law of the change of quantity into quality", when no one yet has told me or anyone else what that law says? Of what use are all the metaphors (good and bad) and the "examples" brought forward to illustrate the "law" when no one has yet stated what they are supposed to be illustrating?

It would be the easiest thing in the world to make me take dialectics seriously, and to persuade me of its truth, if it is true. All that would have to be done is the following: Formulate its laws in a clear and unambiguous manner, in such a manner that the terms used in the formulation refer directly or indirectly to objects or events or procedures or operations that are publicly recognizable in the experience of any normal human being; and show what predictions can be made about the future on the basis of deductions from these laws. Then I will grant that dialectics is significant, and will take it seriously. Show, second, that on the basis of deductions from these laws predictions about the future can be made that are verifiable and verified, and that they enable such predictions to be made as well as or better than any alternative proposed hypotheses. Then I will grant that these laws are not merely significant but true. An Open Letter to Burnham on dialectics is announced. It will give an opportunity for this enlightenment. Looking back over the hundred years' failures of the past, I am not over-optimistic about its coming this week.

I do not take dialectics seriously as a scientific doctrine, but I take very seriously indeed the uses to which dialectics is put in some political disputes, in particular by Eastman, the anti-dialectician, in his way, and by Trotsky in the current dispute. I object, and very strongly, to the substitution of theological disputation in the manner of the Council of Nicaea (which split Europe over the question of whether the Son of God was of "one substance" or "similar substance" with the Father), of loose metaphors and platitudes about science and pseudo-science in the style of the 19th century popularizers of Darwin, for—clear discussion of the genuine issues of the politics of 1939 and 1940.

Consider: the opposition raises questions with reference to the war, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the actions of the Soviet Union, the invasion of Finland. The reply is: the problem is whether or not Russia is a workers' state. The opposition demonstrates convincingly that a decision on the definition of the class character of the Soviet Union cannot answer the strategic and tactical issues posed to the movement. The reply is: the problem is the laws of dialectics. (There is a fourth stage which does not appear in written documents: the abominable personal gossip with which the Cannon clique corrupts its followers.) In an analogous manner, the opposition makes and proves concrete criticisms of the conservative and bureaucratic Cannon regime. The reply is: the problem is the alien petty-bourgeois social roots of the opposition.

Why is dialectics brought into the dispute? In the first instance, as an obvious and mechanical maneuver, which deceives no one, of "trying to drive a wedge into the ranks of the opponents." But more generally: to evade issues that cannot be and have not been answered on their own legitimate plane, to escape from an inconvenient reality to a verbal jousting ground, to confuse and turn aside the attention of the membership from the actual problems that face them, to—in the century-sanctioned way of all "authority", all "dogma", all bureaucracy—brand the critic as heretic so that his criticism will not be heard. The textbooks ("the school bench") give a name to this device: *Ignoratio Elenchi* or Irrelevant Conclusion. The remarks on it of Whately—a contemporary of Darwin, by the way—are not, however, themselves irrelevant: "Various kinds of propositions are, according to the occasion, substituted for the one of which proof is required; . . . and various are the contrivances employed to effect and to conceal this substitution, and to make the conclusion which the sophist has drawn answer, practically, the same purpose as the one he ought to have established. I say 'practically the same purpose', because it will very often happen that some emotion will be excited—some sentiment impressed on the mind—(by a dexterous employment of this fallacy) such as shall bring men into the disposition requisite for your purpose, though they may not have assented to, or even stated distinctly in their own minds, the proposition which it was your business to establish."

Let us suppose, however, that I accept the entire first half of Trotsky's article, that I grant my errors on dialectics, and accept dialectics as the key to truth and socialism. What has changed with reference to the political issues in dispute, the problems discussed in

the second half of his article? Nothing has been changed a centimeter. Everything remains just as it was when dialectics had never been mentioned. For Trotsky does not in any respect whatever establish any connection between what he says about dialectics in the first part of his article, and what he says about the defense of Russia, the Soviet-Finnish War, and the "organizational question" in the second half. Does anyone doubt this? Let him re-read the article, and see for himself. It follows therefore that the entire discussion of dialectics is totally irrelevant—as Trotsky himself presents the discussion—to the political questions. "Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of nebulae . . ." Very well; let it be so. Now show us how from generalizations of that type it follows—even by the most dialectical of logics—that . . . the Red Army is introducing workers' control in Finland and we ought to defend it.

The fact that Trotsky *thinks* and *says* there is a necessary connection between his dialectics and his politics has nothing to do with the question of whether there actually is such a connection. All through history, men have thought and said that there were connections between their scientific investigations or practical decisions on the one hand and their theologies or metaphysics on the other. Pasteur said that there was such a connection between his bacteriology and his Catholic faith; Einstein today between his field physics and his pantheistic idealism; Millikan finds God proved in his cosmic rays.

Either the dialectics is relevant or irrelevant to the empirical and practical questions in dispute. If it is irrelevant, to drag it in is scientifically useless. If it is relevant, the empirical and practical questions can in any case be settled on their own merits on the basis of the available evidence and our goals. In neither case is a decision as to dialectics required.

* * *

Trotsky writes: "To demand that every Party member occupy himself with the philosophy of dialectics would be lifeless pedantry." I want to enquire: if it is true, as Trotsky claims, that dialectics is "the foundation of scientific socialism", if rejecting does, as he declares, define the one who rejects as an **alien class influence**, if dialectics is indeed the method whereby we can solve correctly political problems, then by what conceivable principle does Trotsky conclude that it would be "lifeless pedantry" for more than a few Party members to occupy themselves with it? Rather would we have to say that dialectics must be the first and last study of all party members if they wish to be consistent and clear-headed revolutionary socialists.

Or must we seek another kind of explanation for Trotsky's dictum: There is one doctrine—the "secret doctrine"—for the elite, the leaders, the inner circle; and another—the vulgar doctrine—for the mass, the ranks, the followers. What is the relation of the followers to the secret doctrine? They are not to know it, to study it, to test it in their own conscious and deliberate experience: that is excluded as "lifeless pedantry." But may they then consider it unimportant, or reject it? Not on your life: then they are alien class elements. No: they must believe, they must have faith. As for the doctrine itself, it is safe in the hands of the elite; they will bring it out on appropriate occasions (a sharp factional fight, for example) to smite and confound the Enemy.

For my own part, I do not believe in Faith.

My friend and colleague Max Shachtman (may he forgive me for the reference, as I must, perforce, forgive him for what he has recently written about me) says: I do not really understand much about dialectics; I am only a humble student of the subject; of course I believe in it as all good Marxists must. This attitude is not unique in Shachtman. Whenever I have talked to any pro-dialectics party comrade about dialectics—or tried to talk about it—I have been given the same response (except, to be complete, in the case of Wright, who seems to think he understands dialectics because its words so well express the conflicts and shifts and confusions in his own attitudes and actions). We do not really understand it; we believe of course; we cannot formulate its laws; we cannot tell you how you can test them; some day we hope to get around to studying it. This response is as characteristic of pro-dialecticians in the Cannon clique as in the opposition. Few even pretend to "understand", for example, the first part of the Trotsky article which I am now discussing.

Now I ask Shachtman and all these comrades of the party: if you don't understand it, if you can't explain or prove it, why then do you "believe" it? Whence springs your faith?

Throughout the centuries, it has been characteristic of religious groups to have two doctrines: the "esoteric" doctrine of the "inner circle", the monopoly and carefully guarded secret of the high priests; and the "exoteric" doctrine of the "outer circle", for the followers. Is this not exactly the situation with dialectics—whether or not you "believe" in dialectics? And the existence of an esoteric doctrine is always potentially reactionary, anti-democratic. It is so because the esoteric doctrine is by the nature of the case irresponsible, not subject to control by the humble followers, a weapon in the hands only of the priests.

For the method which I advocate—the method of science—there is only one doctrine, available to all. And what it says is subject always to tests that can be made by any normal man. There is no revelation, and no short cut, and no prophet.

I conclude on dialectics with a challenge:

In the letter dated January 3rd it is clearly implied that my attitude toward dialectics is incompatible with my being editor of the theoretical journal of the party. In the article (p. 11) it is stated explicitly that my rejection of dialectics represents the influence of another class.

First I want to ask: Where in the program of the Socialist Workers Party or the Fourth International is a belief in dialectics made part of the programmatic basis of our movement, the acceptance of which defines the conditions of membership? And if it is not, by what right does Trotsky or any one else attack me politically or object to my editorship of an organ of the International on the grounds of my attitude toward dialectics?

Is not our movement founded on its program, decided by conventions representing the membership? Or—do we communists hide our views, and is our real program something different from our public and adopted program?

But if Trotsky is justified in what he says about dialectics, and the conclusions he draws in connection with dialectics, I say further:

Let him propose to the forthcoming convention that this lack in our program be filled, that the convention adopt a specific clause, to be added to the Declaration of Principles, affirming acceptance of the philosophy of dialectical materialism.

If he does not make such a proposal, then only one of two conclusions is possible: either what he is now writing about dialectics is not meant seriously, is mere polemical rhetoric for the faction fight of the moment; or dialectics is indeed an esoteric doctrine, not suited for the public opinion of the party to pass upon, but a private monopoly of the priests.

If he does make the proposal, it is true that he will have only one precedent in the history of labor politics: Stalin's program adopted at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, in which the abandonment of Marxism was consummated. I confess that I should not like to feel that our movement is ready to regard such a precedent as appropriate.

The Finnish Invasion and the Perspective of the Third Camp

If by a "workers' state" we mean that form of society transitional from capitalism to socialism, then Russia today can be considered a workers' state only on the basis of its nationalized economy. Of those various major features of the "transitional society" described in advance (in *State and Revolution*, for example), no one, absolutely no one in any political camp except that of the Stalinists themselves, maintains that any other socialist factor remains in Russia today except the nationalized economy. Nationalized economy, must, therefore, in the view of those who hold that Russia is a workers' state, be a sufficient condition for so characterizing it, and by a workers' state Marxists have always meant, from Marx on, that form of society which is transitional from capitalism to socialism.

The assumption therein involved I, of course, reject. I hold that at least one other major condition is necessary for that form of society which is transitional to socialism—namely, workers' democracy; and that therefore Russia today is incorrectly characterized as a workers' state. This was Marx' opinion; and his opinion has been entirely confirmed by the experiences of the last fifteen years of Soviet history.

Nevertheless, even if the assumption is granted, if it is thus further granted that Russia today is a workers' state, this will not at all suffice to motivate a tactic of defense of the Soviet State and the Red Army in the present war (just as, conversely, if the assumption is denied and it is thus denied that Russia is a workers' state, this will not by itself suffice to motivate a tactic of defeatism). We cannot deduce a tactic of defense from our definition of the Soviet state any more than we could deduce it from the "law of the negation of the negation." Nor are we aided further in determining our tactic by the assumption that nationalized economy, in and by itself, divorced from the concrete social and political and historical relations which form the context of the nationalized economy, is "progressive" (an assumption which is involved in the initial assumption of our "dialectical" defenders of the workers' state doctrine—an assumption which effectively eliminates all the changing actual reality which they say dialectics teaches us to take into account, and substitutes: a static, abstract category).

The general strategic aim of our movement is the world proletarian revolution (and socialism). We all hold (in words, at any rate) that this aim is now a goal not for the indefinitely remote future, but for the present period, that is, for the war and the post-war period. We concretize our goal in the statement of our "war aims"—united socialist states of Europe, the Americas, a free Asia and Africa, a world federation of socialist republics. Presumably we mean these seriously.

Any tactic we propose, therefore, can be justified only by proof that, directly or indirectly, it is in fact the best available means for reaching our general strategic goal.

Even granted, then, Trotsky's assumptions, granted that Russia is a workers' state, the tactic of defense can be justified only if certain additional propositions are, in fact, true.

These would have to include: (a) Defense of the Red Army is in fact the best available means of defending the nationalized economy

(which, for the purpose of discussion, let us assume to be in and of itself progressive); (b) **Defense of the Russian nationalized economy as a primary task is the best available means for promoting the world revolution.**

But everyone grants (in words, at least) that the defense of Russia is not the **only** major necessary means for achieving our general strategic aim; other necessary means include, certainly: the overthrow of Stalinism; colonial revolts; the lifting of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses; the deepening of the class struggle throughout the world, in at least several major nations to the point of successful proletarian revolution. In and of itself, defense of the present (i.e., Stalinist) Russian state and the Red Army, even if 100 per cent successful, would be of not the slightest value in achieving our goal; on the contrary, would make our goal impossible, since it would mean only the continuation in power and the extension of Stalinism.

The two propositions required by Trotsky to justify the tactic of defense therefore involve a third: (c) **Defense of Russia in the present war does, in fact, serve as the best available means, or as an integral part of the best available means, for promoting colonial revolts, the lifting of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, the overthrow of Stalinism, the deepening of the class struggle throughout the world (including, naturally, Russia itself and those countries against which Russian military action is conducted), and the completion of this struggle in successful revolutions.**

Unless these three propositions are true, then the tactic of defense is not justified—no matter what may be the truth about dialectics and the definition of the Russian state. Their truth can be established in one way and one way only: not by changing quantity into quality or uniting opposites, but by relating them to the relevant evidence that can be brought to bear from modern historical experience—including prominently the evidence presented by the first months of the war itself.

As soon as these propositions are formulated, it is clear that Trotsky and the Cannon clique have utterly failed to present sufficient evidence to permit us to regard them as true. Proposition (a), especially on Trotsky's premises (which include the belief in a "fundamental contradiction" between the bureaucracy and the nationalized economy) is certainly at best very doubtful, and becomes increasingly doubtful as we observe the economic program in the small Baltic countries—now Russian provinces, in the declaration of the Kuusinen government, and for that matter in Poland, or if we estimate the probable effects of increasing economic collaboration with Germany.

But it is Propositions (b) and (c) which are crucial; and any child should be able to realize that all the evidence from the beginning of the war, far from giving any remote likelihood of their truth, shows them to be undeniably false.

Trotsky, concentrated on the sociology and psychology of polemics, does not recognize explicitly the nature of the scientific problem posed in the dispute. Nevertheless he is compelled to give it implicit recognition. He seems to sense that all the thousands of words he has been writing since September on the "workers' state" and dialectics are beside the point; and he tries to introduce at last—a few hundred words out of the many, many thousands (chiefly on p. 10 of the mimeographed version of the article I am now discussing)—some evidence for the truth of the key proposition (c).

What is this alleged evidence? I will quote the central sentences: "In the second case (Poland and Finland) it (the Stalinist bureaucracy) gave an impulse to the socialist revolution through bureaucratic methods. . . .

"... the resolution (of the opposition on Finland) does not mention by so much as a word that the Red Army in Finland expropriates large land-owners and introduces workers' control while preparing for the expropriation of the capitalists . . . they (the Stalinists) are giving—they are compelled to give—a tremendous impulse to the class struggle in its sharpest form. . . . The Soviet-Finnish war is evidently already beginning to be completed with a civil war in which the Red Army finds itself at the given stage in the same camp as the Finnish petty peasants and the workers, while the Finnish army supports the owning classes, the conservative workers' bureaucracy and the Anglo-Saxon imperialists . . . in this 'concrete' civil war that is taking place on Finnish territory.

"As for the Kremlin it is at the present time forced—and this is not a hypothetical but a real situation—to provoke a social revolutionary movement in Finland. . . ."

Now the first thing to be observed about this alleged evidence is that the whole world—including Trotsky himself—knows it to be false. Nothing of this kind has happened or is happening. Trotsky, indeed, admits it to be false when, in the letter dated January 5th (to "Joe"), evidently replying to the qualms his statements about Finland had raised even in the stern breasts of the Cannon clique itself, he "explains" what he wrote by saying . . . that such things **did** happen—in Poland!—and will happen in Finland. But what he said in the article was that they had happened and were happening in Finland. (From where, by the way, Comrade Trotsky, did you borrow this method of "explanation"?)

(In passing, it was the opposition that pointed out, long ago, that an embryonic civil war began in Poland; and this fact was repeatedly denied and ridiculed by Cannon.)

What **did** actually happen—so far as we can learn by sifting all the reports—in Poland, Finland (and let us not forget Lithuania and her two sisters), up to now?

In Poland, important manifestations of the class struggle, including embryonic revolutionary steps, began—before the Red Army marched and independently of Russia—with the military and civil breakdown of the Polish bourgeois government. This is a normal and natural occurrence in all countries, whatever the character of the opposing army, when the home government goes to pieces. In a number of towns (including, apparently, Vilna and Warsaw itself) embryo "soviets" arose on a loose basis, with labor and other popular organizations assuming *de facto* many of the tasks of sovereign power; in the villages, peasants began ousting the landlords—or, more exactly, the landlords had already run away.

It is quite possible (though the evidence is far from clear) that in some sections the march of the Red Army excited certain hopes—at least hope in comparison to the fears of the advance of the Reichswehr, and even encouraged some peasants to bolder steps in occupying the land of their former masters (who were no longer there to oppose them). These hopes were in the shortest time liquidated, together with the persons of any peasants or workers hardy enough to persist in them. The regime of Stalinism—and Stalinism without completely collectivized economy—was imposed by the representatives of the G.P.U. In the Vilna region the embryo "soviet" was smashed and the militants killed, in preparation for handing the territory back to bourgeois Lithuania.

Then the Red Army took over the three small Baltic states. Anyone who thought that in that action "the Kremlin (was) forced . . . to provoke a social revolutionary movement" was rapidly undeceived. From the reports, a few underground communists began to show their heads. With public statement (released in the world press) and by police action, the Red Army joined the Baltic government in shoving those heads down again, and in reinforcing bourgeois rule and capitalist economy in those nations.

Meanwhile, it was revealed to all who had initially doubted it that Hitler and Stalin had divided Poland in complete and prior agreement.

These events were observed by the workers and peasants of the world, and above all, we may be sure, by the workers and peasants of the other nations bordering Russia—not least by the people of Finland. Not being highly skilled in sociological definition nor belonging to the inner dialectical circle, they drew nevertheless, in their humble way, certain conclusions (where they had not already drawn them from the Trials and Spain). Their conclusion, in short, was: the Red Army in this war is not our ally.

The propaganda campaign began against Finland, and then the invasion. For a number of days, the Red Army triumphantly advanced. The Kuusinen government was proclaimed, issued its program (a bourgeois, not a proletarian program, by the way, in spite of Trotsky's dialectical deduction that the Kremlin must use social revolutionary policies—bureaucratically carried out; the Kremlin did not consult Trotsky).

What was the effect—the actual effect that happened, not the effect that we can read about in our former theses (which coincides with what Trotsky writes in the present article) or deduce from theories? The effect was, not to stimulate, but to wipe out what there had been of the class struggle (and there had been more than a trace of it) in Finland, to throw the Finnish workers and peasants into the hands of their own bourgeoisie. This is proved, first, by reports which, properly sifted, can legitimately be believed; but, second, independently, by what may be deduced from (1) the failure of the Kuusinen government to excite any favorable response and (2) the high morale of the Finnish army which is obviously supported by a huge percentage of the population. This last fact the NC majority and Trotsky explain by the shockingly Phillistine argument that the Finnish army has such good supplies and training—as if the Red Army were equipped with bows and arrows.

This reaction was not surprising. Knowing the Red Army fought against their interests, and seeing no third alternative, the Finnish workers drew what seemed to them the only possible conclusion under the circumstances: to fight desperately for the bourgeois "fatherland"; with the third alternative (an independent struggle for freedom and power against the main enemy, at home, and the invading enemy) excluded, they chose what appeared to them as the "lesser evil". Those responsible for this reactionary conclusion are the imperialists on the one hand and the Stalinists on the other (and all others!) who, ruling out the third camp, posed the choice exclusively as either Mannerheim's army or Stalin's.

On the other side, according to our theses (War and the Fourth International), the Russian soldiers and workers should have been reacting as follows: "Within the U.S.S.R. war against imperialist intervention will undoubtedly provoke a veritable outburst of genuine fighting enthusiasm. All the contradictions and antagonisms will seem overcome or at any rate relegated to the background. The young generations of workers and peasants that emerged from the revolution will reveal on the field of battle colossal dynamic power." But (to paraphrase a remark of Trotsky's), "events did not recognize our theses." In the Finnish war, the Russian soldiers and workers have shown—just the opposite, as everyone knows. There is no mystery here. The soldiers fight so poorly, so unenthusiastically, because—though without benefit of dialectics—they understand clearly enough that in this war the Red Army fights not for but against their interests and the interests of workers everywhere, and of socialism.

Who is it who is closest to socialist consciousness; those Soviet soldiers and workers who recognize the reactionary character of the

war, are resentful and distrustful of it, and show no enthusiasm for it; or those (notably including the G.P.U.) who are whipped up into a frenzy of Stalino-patriotism for it? We, the opposition, say: the former. Trotsky is compelled by his doctrine to say: the latter.

But, in the further course of the Finnish war, will not the class struggle re-assert itself in Finland? Certainly, as we have declared from the beginning. When the Finnish defense and the Finnish government begin to crack, just as in Poland the overt class struggle will re-appear; workers and peasants will take social revolutionary steps, will, perforce, begin moves toward independent power and sovereignty. Above all will they do so if there are revolutionists and militants among them who have not, meanwhile, been functioning as spies of the counter-revolutionary Red Army, but have made clear to them that their struggle, in the first instance directed against the main enemy at home, finds an also implacable enemy in the Kremlin and all its institutions, that the Red Army marches in not to aid them but to crush them; and if internationalists within the ranks of the Red Army have guided in a parallel manner the ranks of the Red soldiers, urging them to throw off the yoke of the Kremlin-G.P.U. and to join in common struggle against their oppressors with the Finnish workers and peasants—not to obey the orders of the Kremlin to reduce the workers and peasants of Finland to a new type of slavery.

Does the policy of the Kremlin (through "compulsion" or voluntary will, it does not matter) in reality stimulate the class struggle, the social revolution? If so, then Marxism has been wrong from the beginning, for then the struggle for socialism can be carried on by bureaucratic-military means as a substitute (good or bad) for the popular, conscious and deliberate mass struggle of the workers and peasants. To accept Trotsky's interpretation of the events of the present war is to accept the theory of the **Bureaucratic road to socialism**. I refer the reader to Max Shachtman's excellent discussion of this point in his recent reply to this same article of Trotsky's.

But is not the Kremlin stimulating the social revolution by its new policy, both directly through its own state agencies, and by the new line of the Comintern? If this is true—as Trotsky now holds—we cannot possibly explain intelligibly to the workers the meaning of the new line of the C.I. (and we have not done so up to now—everyone recognizes that from reading our press), we have no sufficient reason for not re-applying for admission as a faction of the C.I.

No. The present policy of the Kremlin stimulates the class struggle and is "socialist" only in the same general sense as Wilson's policy with reference to "defeatism" in Germany in 1917-18, or Chamberlain's policy in his broadcasts to and leaflet-droppings on Germany today, or Hitler's similar appeals. These "revolutionary" policies—with respect to the enemy country—are all simply supplementary military-strategic devices. As a matter of fact, in this sense the most "radical" of all of them at the present time is Hitler's, not Stalin's: Hitler's New Year speech was far more "socialist" than the proclamation of the Kuusinen government. True enough, the nation employing this device is always playing with social dynamite—above all in this war. Even Chamberlain's propaganda is capable of "stimulating the class struggle" within Germany under appropriate circumstances—but we hardly support it, for that reason (though we do support the class struggle, no matter how stimulated). But the more usual effect is for it to aid in stifling the class struggle in the enemy nation, (precisely because it is not internationalist in character, and because the workers understand it as merely a maneuver of a rival oppressor). This is just what has happened in Finland, just as in Germany after the Chamberlain leaflet raids.

Cannon and Trotsky tell us: But then you want the imperialists to take over the Soviet Union. This is nothing but the standard slander which has always been directed against those who uphold the internationalist position of revolutionary defeatism. We are for the defeat of all the belligerent armies and the overthrow of all the belligerent governments; but for defeat and overthrow not by the opposing armies in the field, but by the **third camp**, by the workers of each respective country.

But Cannon and Trotsky say nothing of the meaning of their alternative in relation to the general strategic aim, to the world proletarian revolution. How, just how, will a defensive tactic with respect to the Red Army serve the development of the revolution, how in this war—not the war of our theses—where the Red Army fights, in alliance with the Reichswehr, for the defense, preservation and extension solely and simply of the power, privileges and revenues of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy? Trotsky and Cannon do not tell us, cannot tell us. And yet their position could rest only upon a clear, convincing and reasonable answer to this question.

* * *

The position of the opposition is based upon the perspective of the collapse of existing governments, upon the optimistic expectation of mass revolt against the war. It is summed up as: **the strategy of the third camp**. In this war, the actual war which has broken out and is now going on, the revolutionists must take their stand unambiguously in the third camp, the camp of the workers and peasants, of the oppressed of the entire world, of the peoples of India and Africa, the camp of struggle against the camps of all the belligerent powers and the belligerent governments. Today the troops of the third camp are atomized, disordered and disorganized, scattered through the framework of society. Tomorrow their ranks will close; they will form in great army corps; the popular army of India, the revolting Negro divisions of Africa, the workers' fronts of Germany and the Ukraine

and France and the United States. . . . But they will do so successfully only if the troops of tomorrow can hold clearly and simply and unambiguously before themselves the firm strategic aim: the third camp, the camp of struggle against the war and the war-makers, for workers' power and socialism.

Trotsky and Cannon, **desperately** clinging to a doctrine no longer adequate to meet the test of events, have abandoned the strategy of the third camp. How revealing that even the phrase (used so effectively—after being mistakenly borrowed from the opposition—in putting forward the revolutionary position in the A.L.P. controversy between Rose and the Stalinists) has dropped out of the party press and agitation! They have joined one of the belligerent camps, one of the war camps. In this can be seen the basic **defeatism** of their perspective (they, who accuse us of being defeatists!), defeatism toward the possibility of successful proletarian revolution in the course of the war. They are compelled, more and more, to argue for Stalinism as the "lesser evil" (their description): this lesser evil is the goal they place before the workers—a fine goal indeed to inspire revolutionary struggle! They must reason in terms of the **maintenance** of existing governments (what if, Cannon asks in debate, Finland takes over northern Russia?). Everything is turned upside down. The strategic aim of world revolution issuing out of the war is **subordinated** to defense of Russia. Their whole policy becomes oriented around the tactic of defensism with respect to the Red Army—on the very best account, the part usurping the place of the whole. For the sake of a hand the head and heart are sacrificed.

Trotsky has permitted a frantic clinging to a false doctrine to drive him, in short, to a **policy of defeat and desperation**.

What the Record Shows

In the article, "The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism", we analyzed the character of the Cannon group, its regime, and its present policy. We showed that it is not a principled tendency, but a permanent clique; that its only real policy is self-maintenance; that it on all occasions subordinates political to organizational questions; that in actuality it has no genuine program, but only the **substitute** for a program—the substitute being usually borrowed from Trotsky.

In the present dispute, Trotsky puts forward the program which the Cannon clique appropriates, and Trotsky supports—unconditionally—the Cannon clique. It does not, however, follow that the analysis which we made of Cannon's present policy applies also to Trotsky. I wish now to examine briefly the political record of Trotsky since August 21st with the aim of throwing some light on the problem of how Trotsky has reached his present impasse, in which he finds himself upholding an incorrect political perspective, a false analysis of events, and a sterile, cynical and rotten bureaucratic clique. I will draw only upon facts which are well known, and which can be checked at every point.

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International—Trotsky made no public statement to the press. He then gave out two short and very general statements in which he did not attempt any analysis or prediction; in fact they summed up to little more than the view that there was nothing much to be said about the agreement. Trotsky issued no statement—so far as we know—on the outbreak of the second world war, the most momentous event in the history of mankind. In fact, he has to this day made no general analysis of the war and its meaning, a lack which has been widely remarked among the general public.

Since the war began, Trotsky has made only two specific predictions of any importance. The first was when the Red Army was mobilizing on the borders of Poland, when Trotsky stated that Stalin did not know why the army was mobilizing. A short time later he was compelled to recognize that the Polish invasion had been carried out by prior agreement with Hitler. A few weeks before the Finnish invasion, Trotsky was preparing an article for a magazine. According to an outline of this article which was received in New York, he therein predicted that there would be no Finnish invasion (that year at any rate) but that the issues would be "compromised".

The first major article written by Trotsky was the one which was published in the *New International* (The U.S.S.R. and the War). This did not concern itself in a single sentence with the problems and prospects of the war already started, but with the most general possible theoretic issues. The second (published in an internal bulletin) was on the class character of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile (and continuing through the present) have been numerous shorter documents dealing with the internal factional struggle, the overwhelming percentage of them concerned with such issues as the character of the groups in the party and their methods, etc. The next long document (the one here under discussion) brought in one new subject: the dialectics; and a new document (the Open Letter to me) on the same subject is now promised. The only specific statements about current events in this document (those on Finland) turn out, by Trotsky's own admission, to be false.

So far as I am aware, he has said nothing about the taking over of the three Baltic countries. And nothing was said about the taking over of Poland and the invasion of Finland until after these events occurred.

Let us sum up the undeniable general features of this 4½ months' picture: virtually no specific predictions, and those made disproved by events; nothing specific foreseen in advance; no proposals or guides for action in advance; a minimum concern with the major historical action now occurring—the second world war; a maximum of energies devoted either to general theoretic questions (up to and beyond dialectics) or immediate internal polemic.

This picture has a great political-symptomatic importance. This is easily grasped when we compare it with Trotsky's almost invariable political record in connection with other major historic occurrences (none of which since the Russian revolution approaches the significance of the second world war)—such as, for example, the German events or the Trials. There, while not neglecting general theoretic concerns or internal factional struggle when necessary, Trotsky has been distinguished over all other political figures in the entire world for precisely what is absent now: for immediate and constant reaction to the events; for exact predictions, so often brilliantly confirmed; for stating at every stage guides for the action of the work-

ers; for illuminating by specific analysis the meaning of actually occurring events. The whole world knows this.

To the present picture, we must, unfortunately, add further elements: Trotsky not merely supports the Cannon regime, but whitewashes it 100%—an attitude which even its most ardent follower in the party could not even pretend to justify by objective reference. Trotsky not merely condemns the opposition, but slanders it, misstates and distorts not merely its views but its very words. Trotsky (for example, in the sheaf of letters of the first days of January) indulges in absurd exaggerations.

Now Trotsky has amply proved by his entire career that he above all takes ideas, doctrine, principles seriously, that he bases himself upon and operates from principles. When we keep this in mind, the picture of these months falls into a classic and often repeated pattern: the pattern of one who proceeds from a theory, who is motivated in his actions by that theory, but where the theory itself is false. Clinging to the theory becomes under these circumstances an act of desperation; and the desperation communicates itself to the actions, even to the very style.

The theory, the doctrine, at all costs. But the doctrine is not in accord with events. Then, refusing to abandon the doctrine, there are only two solutions: to evade events (by treating, say, of very general theoretic questions or of dialectics), and to falsify events to bring them into accord with the (false) doctrine. No intent to deceive is involved in this: it follows almost automatically when one clings desperately to a false doctrine.

Therefore also the opposition must be smashed at any cost. The only vehicle for the doctrine is Cannon (who will accept any doctrine that suits his clique purpose). Therefore complete support for Cannon. But here, too, just as in treating international events, Trotsky must pay a heavy price—and the price, alas, is assessed not merely against Trotsky but against the International and indeed in the last analysis against the workers everywhere—for his false doctrine. To implement his (false) doctrine he finds he can utilize only a rotten bureaucratic clique; but by supporting this clique he becomes an accomplice in and defender of its crimes against the movement.

If we realize that Trotsky proceeds seriously and firmly from theory, and that his theory with relation to the war is false, his present political position, and the manner of his political and organizational intervention in the party dispute—so puzzling and often shocking to many comrades—become at once intelligible. (This of course is not that "class analysis" which Trotsky demands from all Marxists. All that such analysis could mean in his case would be: what social group is aided by the effects of Trotsky's present policy? The answer is perfectly evident: the Russian bureaucracy. His present policy is a deviation from the direction of the international proletarian struggle for socialism, toward Stalinism.)

The party and the International face in the immediate future the most serious decision of many years. We will either be dragged by a false doctrine, a distorted perspective, and a bankrupt regime into a blind gulf where the waves of the war will leave us floundering and finally drown us; or we will, with however painful a wrench, break out onto the high road, the best soldiers in the one army to which we can give our loyalty; the army of the third camp.

James BURNHAM

January 10, 1940.

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