

**By JAMES T. FARRELL:**

## **THE HISTORICAL IMAGE OF NAPOLEON**

**The New**

# **INTERNATIONAL**

**AUGUST : 1945**

***NOTES OF THE MONTH***

## **THE UPHEAVAL IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY**

## **WHITE AND NEGRO WORKERS IN THE TRADE UNIONS**

**By David Coolidge**

**A DEBATE:**

## **THE PARTY AND THE INTELLECTUALS**

**By**

**James P. Cannon and Albert Goldman**

**BOOK REVIEWS AND OTHER FEATURES**

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

**A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism**

VOLUME XI

AUGUST, 1945

NUMBER 5

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### The Upheaval in the Communist Party

The political sensation of the day is the upheaval in the Communist Party, operating under the temporary alias of the Communist Political Association. The theories and policies of Earl Browder, the undisputed leader of the party for a good sixteen years, are being damned with excoriating fury by the very same people who rapturously chanted his praises when he first proclaimed the New Wisdom. His place is taken by William Z. Foster. Foster was suspected for a year and a half at least, derided and spat upon, treated with contumely not only by the bigger party bosses but by the veriest pipsqueak in the officialdom—as these same pipsqueaks now declare in their wrenching supplications for mercy. He escaped by a miracle the fate of expulsion that befell his colleague, Darcy. Now he has been elevated to the pinnacle amid harrowing groans from bureaucrats whose backs are lacerated from self-inflicted flagellation as merciless and gory as that of the Penitente sect of New Mexico. It is like Easter in Russia: *Perish Beelzebub! Foster is risen!* Only, instead of kissing each other on the cheek, the enthusiastically repentant bureaucrats fight to embrace the divine posterior to which, yesterday, they applied the contemptuous boot.

The change from one Leader to another is, however, the least important aspect of the upheaval in the party. There are a dozen other aspects of so much greater and more instructive importance that it is hard to decide the one to begin with. As good as any other, perhaps, is the series of public confessions made by all the big and less big party leaders in their scramble for a prominent place on the sinners' bench.

#### The Confessions

As an introduction to his report to the party's (Association's) National Committee, one of Browder's closest colleagues of yesterday, Eugene Dennis, declares: "It is with deep humility that I submit this report on behalf of the National Board. . . . I realize that I bear a full share of the responsibility for the main errors and mistakes which the National Board of our Communist Political Association has made." Whereupon, with a complete abandonment of humility, Dennis proceeds to drive a stiletto into every port of Browder's hide.

After dumping a chamber pot and, as Heine would say, not an empty one, over Browder's head (but only after having made dead certain that this head has been officially severed from its shoulders), his very closest colleague of yesterday, the ineffable Robert Minor, declares: "I am among those who must take a substantial share of the fault for many of the errors which are criticized in the first place as comrade Browder's errors."

Another sinner with a rapidly, and prudently, acquired humility is the former party secretary, John Williamson, who is not animated in the tiniest degree (who can doubt it?) by the anxious hope of being restored to this post under the new dispensation: "I think comrade Foster is too generous to us." Yesterday, he was the doormat on which Williamson wiped his feet every morning. Today, he is already "too generous to us." There is nothing wrong with Williamson's spine except that it is made of unvulcanized rubber. All the rest of us cannot shirk responsibility for the errors that were made. . . . Each of us—and speaking for myself first of all—must come before the membership with the greatest humility."

Crowding into the confessional, Gilbert Green announces that "every member of the Board, with the exception of comrade Foster, must bear a share of the responsibility, although not all of equal magnitude. My own share of responsibility I consider particularly great. I did not follow blindly—I was firmly convinced that the main line was correct." Firmly convinced, that's putting it with restraint and—humility. So firmly convinced was Green (if there are degrees among the Stalinist bureaucrats, this creature is one of the more odious), that, to continue quoting him, "in seeking theoretical justification for our policies, I was one of those who contributed to the further revision of our basic body of Marxist-Leninist principles." How? "Unable to make the line fit the theory, I began to reshape the theory to fit the line." What simplicity! What ingenuity!

Another one of the leaders with a "Bolshevik flexibility" (i.e., a clever spinal column), Roy Hudson, insists on showing that he is no mere lackey of the new boss, that he is quite capable of being critical of him, right out in public, too: "Foster was far too lenient in his criticism of the rest of the National Board members and especially of myself. I feel very deeply the responsibility that I share with the other Board members for the mistakes made." Foster should not imagine for a minute that just because he has been raised to the heights, he can be "lenient" and "generous" with impunity. The serfs will not be silenced. They demand the harsher treatment which is their due, for which they worked so sincerely.

Everyone rushes in to grab his "share of the responsibility" before the stock is completely exhausted: "I, personally, assume a very large share of the guilt which rank opportunism alone can fully explain," cries Doxey A. Wilkerson. "I do not in my own conscience absolve myself from individual responsibility for the revisionist line," adds Sam Donchin. "I feel deeply my responsibility as a National Committee member and as a delegate from California to the National Convention which dissolved the Party and formed the C.P.A. for my part in the course we adopted there," says Carl Winter. "I must assume my share of responsibility in not sensing that alertness to the danger of bourgeois influences was all the more necessary because of the favorable political factors brought about by the Roosevelt Administration," insists the party's theo-

retician, V. J. Jerome, as if unless he did insist the others would cheat him out of the swiftly-vanishing shares.

"Our self-criticism must not be perfunctory—it must be deep and concrete," says Morris Childs, who supports the new line with quotations from the same volumes of Lenin from which he dug up distorted quotations a year ago to support the old line. "It must not be a temporary self-chastisement that soon wears off and is forgotten—it must be practised constantly." A dismaying prospect, even for the attending physician. Surely, the strongest stomach must some day get its fill of this bloody spectacle.

\* \* \*

The analogy between these "confessions" and the "confessions" at the Moscow Trials suggests itself immediately. But the differences between the two are not less important than the similarities.

In both cases, the "guilty" made declarations which they themselves did not and could not possibly believe. In both cases, the declarations were simply made on order from above and according to a prescribed pattern. In both cases, the "defendants" outdid one another in self-debasement, in insistence upon their own depravity and the eminent justice of the court.

In the Moscow Trials, however, the defendants were of a different stripe and prompted by different considerations. As revolutionists, they had passed through decades of wars, persecutions, revolutions. Each in his own way and in his own time had had to fight, and suffer from, the poisonous inroads of Stalinist terror. If they perjured themselves, abjured their principles, dragged themselves in the mud—it was not because they sought to save their skins or make a career. They allowed themselves to be persuaded by their executioners that these abominations were needed in the best interests of socialism, of the "workers' fatherland" to which, in their sadly distorted way, they owed allegiance. Even those who "confessed" in expectation of mercy, did not have personal position or self in mind, but primarily the possibility of continuing to work quietly and "tactfully" inside "the party" against the Stalinist stranglers of the revolution. That was the sense of their first capitulation to Stalin, of their second and third and fourth. Their "confession" at the trial was only the most shocking and terrible form of capitulation, the culmination of those that had preceded and prepared it. It was unforgivable, but understandable. For all our irreconcilable opposition to what they did, the years bring a growing sympathy with these once heroic figures who were victims not only of Stalin's butchery but also of their own tragically misguided devotion to the cause of socialist liberty.

But this American camarilla of avowed lickspittles, cynical prostitutes (if honest prostitutes will excuse the insult), self-labelled bureaucrats, eager turncoats and office-lusting wheel-horses—what have they in common with men of the mould of Rakovsky, Kamenev, Bukharin, Pyatakov and the other Russian martyrs? What has the position of the one in common with the position of the other? This sickening aggregation of Minor (ugh!), Green (ugh!), Donchin (ugh) and Company, down to and including their Reichsprotector of yesterday and of today—there is not a breath of principle left in them, not an iota of devotion to socialism or to the interests of the working class. They are not naïve, uninformed rank-and-filers. They are over-sophisticated and utterly cynical. Every one of them sat by with tongue in cheek, nodding approval of the Stalinist terror, the subjugation of the Russian proletariat, the destruction of the Russian Revolution and its noble ideals,

the mass murder of thousands of the greatest and best revolutionists the world ever saw, the gutting of the finest and strongest movement for world emancipation known to history. Every one of them knew better. But all they were and are concerned with is the preservation of the Russian tyranny from which they draw their sustenance and which they dream of establishing here for themselves.

Browder, we note, is still alive. But only because he is not in the hands of the Kremlin Caligulas he served so earnestly. Only because his own party is not in power in the United States! A manner of speaking? No, these statements are meant literally. Listen carefully, but with nostrils pinched tightly together, to Browder's "comrade," Morris Childs, as he spoke at the meeting of the Stalinist National Committee:

What was the meaning of the trials against the Trotskyite and Bukharin followers? They reflected the ideology of the bourgeoisie. Where did they acquire this ideology? It came from the remnants, even if they were small, of capitalism or enemy class remnants that still remained in the Soviet Union and from the outside. This is how the C.P.S.U. explained the alien ideology. And even now, at this moment, the C.P.S.U. is carrying on an ideological struggle within its own ranks, constantly cleansing out alien elements and warning those of its members now in other capitalist countries against the danger of bourgeois ideology. Now, many of these things we acquired almost unconsciously, but we are reflecting our surroundings. This is the way this ideology has seeped into our ranks. Our leadership, as I said before, fell victim almost without exception.

Browder, and "our leadership . . . almost without exception" fell victim, it appears, to exactly the same ideology that was reflected by the "Trotskyite and Bukharin followers." That was "the meaning of the trials against" the latter. If the trial of Browder has not ended for him with a G.P.U. pistol-shot at the base of the skull, he owes his thanks not to Foster, Minor, Dennis, Green, Childs and the rest of the scum, but to the fact that Foster is not the Marshal, Minor not the Vyshinsky, Dennis not the Ulrich, and Mike Gold not the Ehrenburg-Zaslavsky of America. They would have no hesitation in "proving" that Browder plotted the destruction of the "socialist fatherland," that he was financed by Morgan and Hirohito, both of whom dictated the plans to him at a secret conference which did not, however, escape the vigilant eye of any number of easily-produced and well-rehearsed witnesses.

It is the simple truth: Browder, though deposed, is a lucky man.

### What Questions Are in Dispute

From the violence with which Browder is now being attacked, one might conclude that the dispute in the C.P. involves a number of fundamental questions of principle. Nothing could be further from the truth. To establish this fact, it is only necessary to study the three counts in the official indictment of Browder as contained in the article of Jacques Duclos, the French Stalinist, which precipitated the present upheaval. Duclos, as Stalin's stenographer, writes:

1. The course applied under Browder's leadership ended in practise in liquidation of the independent political party of the working class in the U. S.

2. Despite declarations regarding recognition of the principles of Marxism, one is witnessing a notorious revision of Marxism on the part of Browder and his supporters, a revision which is expressed in the concept of a long-term class peace in the United States, of the possibility of the suppression of the class struggle in the postwar period and of establishment of harmony between labor and capital.

A fraudulent and—given its author, real and presumed—impudent accusation. The Communist Parties throughout the world, the Russian, French and American included, were liquidated, as “the independent political party of the working class” long ago, with the approval of Browder, to be sure, but with the approval of Foster and Duclos as well, and above all, upon the initiative and under the pressure of the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy. The whole history of the rise of Stalinism is the history of the destruction of the world-wide independent Communist movement. As early as 1925, the Chinese Communist Party was liquidated by Stalin, when it was ordered to dissolve into the bourgeois Kuomintang and to proclaim that its program was the same as that of the bourgeoisie (Sun Yat Senism). If Browder transformed the Communist Party into the Communist Political Association by decree, without bothering to consult the membership of the party, that is a trifle by the side of the over-night dissolution of the Communist International by a wave of Stalin's hand. Browder's dissolution of all C.P. organization in the South during the war is a trifle by the side of Stalin's dissolution of the whole Communist Party of Poland on the eve of the war. Duclos' own party was hired out to the French bourgeoisie like a chattel slave upon the signing of the notorious Stalin-Laval Pact in 1935. In fact, the business of hiring our “Communist” Parties to the bourgeoisie of one country after another has been the common and essential practise of the Stalin régime for years, and continues to this hour. (We say “hiring out” because a price is attached to the transaction, we say “hiring out” as a distinct from a free-and-clear outright property sale, as will be made clear later on.) In a word, as the French say, Browder did not invent his powder.

Quite right. But two important supplements must be added to this indictment. First, the same accusation, when made by us, was abused and shouted down throughout the world Stalinist movement as “Trotsky-Fascism.” Second, again it is not Browder who invented his powder. He is a mere disciple and, in his own fashion, a faithful one. His theoretical father is Stalin. It is Stalin who, as early as 1924-1925, put forward the theory of a “long-term class peace” between capital and labor, and in a much more fundamental sense than Browder. Stalin spawned the theory of the “peaceful cohabitation of the Soviet Union,” as a workers' state, with the entire capitalist world, that is, with monopoly capitalism. Forever? No; but as a “long-term” perspective. Inseparably linked with this theory was the still officially sanctified theory of “the construction of socialism in a single country.” And linked in turn with the latter theory was the practise of appeasing the world bourgeoisie, capitulating to it, buying it off from an attack on Russia which would prevent the “construction of socialism in a single country” by paying the price of a “long-term class peace” policy, the liquidation of the revolutionary Communist Parties and their replacement by pliant tools of the Russian Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Like Stalin, Browder (what's right is right) also never spoke of permanent class peace. But if a long-term peaceful cohabitation of the classes (see Stalin, see Litvinov) was possible on a world scale between the workers' state (and it was a workers' state when the theory was first promulgated) and international monopoly capitalism, why should it not also be possible on a national scale, in the United States? It was not and is not possible in either case, to be sure. But the fact remains that in this question Browder is only the amateur and Stalin the professional. Browder is disciple, Stalin is master.

3. By transforming the Teheran declaration of the Allied governments, which is a document of a diplomatic character, into a political platform of class peace in the United States in the postwar period, the American Communists are deforming in a radical way the meaning of the Teheran declaration and are sowing dangerous opportunist illusions which will exercise a negative influence on the American labor movement if they are not met with the necessary reply.

Again, quite right. But who writes this? The servant of the Stalin-Laval Pact of 1935! Didn't he and the rest of the French Stalinists become the champions of French imperialist militarism after the signing of this Pact, which was also only a “document of a diplomatic character” and when they transformed into a “political platform of class peace” in France? Didn't Duclos' colleague, Maurice Thorez, become the champion of strike-breaking in France on the basis of the Pact under the diplomatic formula, “We must know when to end strikes?” Wherein, with regard to any fundamental position, has Browder passed beyond the framework of Stalinist politics?

The indictment made by Duclos does not throw the necessary light on the enigma of the upheaval in the C.P.A. Let us see if more is shed by Foster and the new, overwhelming majority he acquired with such astounding ease.

#### **Browder's "Revisionism" as Seen by Foster**

From Foster, we learn that “Comrade Browder's revisionism has the same class roots and goes in the same general direction as the traditional revisionism of Social Democracy. The essence of Social Democratic revisionism is the belief that capitalism is fundamentally progressive and that the big bourgeoisie may, therefore, be relied upon to lead the nation to peace and prosperity.” Foster's formulation of the “essence of Social Democratic revisionism” is a poor one, but in any case we see what Browder is guilty of. Two weeks later, in another *Daily Worker* article, Foster charges that Browder has learned nothing “except to hide his bourgeois reformist line under more skillful phrases.” Not social-democratic reformism now, but outright bourgeois reformism. Why? Because of “the fact that Browder has abandoned the concept of a social revolution that culminates eventually in the establishment of Socialism, and instead, believes in a social development leading to a rejuvenated, progressive capitalism that liquidates the need and possibility of Socialism.”

On the surface, that is, judging by the almost unbelievable writings of Browder that Foster cites to good effect, these accusations are amply justified.

Browder proclaimed that “Marxists will not help the reactionaries by opposing the slogan of 'Free Enterprise' with any form of counter-slogan . . . we frankly declare that we are ready to cooperate in making this capitalism work effectively in the postwar period with the least possible burdens upon the people.”

He wrote that “We must find a way to finance, organize and fight this war through to victory, a way which is acceptable to the owning class (industrialists, financiers, bond-owners, with their most important hired men) and at the same time sufficiently effective for a victorious outcome.”

He outlined a program for the expansion of the foreign trade of the United States about which Foster is right in saying: “The only way that even an approach to achieving this fantastic total (i.e., an export trade of 40 to 50 billion dollars per year) could be made would be for American big business virtually to monopolize the export trade of the whole world. Not even the most blatant exponents of American imperialism

have hitherto hazarded such a grandiose plane for realizing American world domination."

In regulating the development of this foreign trade, wrote Browder, "the government shall go no further in this direction than the capitalists themselves demand." The bourgeoisie must be allowed to do it "entirely and completely by their own chosen methods." (The "chosen methods" include super-exploitation, national oppression, the subjugation and assassination of peoples!)

Browder foresaw a post-war doubling of "the buying power of the average consumer." "How that shall be done we will not suggest at this time. We look forward to practical suggestions from the capitalists who must find the solution in order to keep their plants operating."

He insisted that an economic crisis after the war is not inevitable. "It can be avoided by wise, energetic, united leadership which gathers all the available forces for the enforcement of correct policies." Crisis was not inseparably linked with the operation of inexorable economic laws of capitalism; it could be averted, like most ills of capitalism, if only the bourgeoisie was "intelligent" and "progressive" and understood "its own interests."

It is hard to recall anyone in the old or the modern Social-Democratic movement, even at its right wing, who ever went to such lengths in capitulating ideologically and politically to the capitalist class and capitalist society!

However, it would be a first-class mistake to conclude that, because Foster is so easily able to ridicule the speeches and books of Browder, he himself defends the position of revolutionary Marxism, stands on socialist principle, or has ever come within shouting distance of it. His basic criterion differs in no respect from Browder's, and that criterion has nothing in common with the interests of the working class and the cause of international socialism. The identity of their criterion is revealed not only in the *tactics* they supported and continue to support as one man, but also in the tactics and appraisals of the situation on which they differ.

Both of them support the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia, lock, stock and barrel. That is the starting point.

Both of them supported the imperialist war, which alone is enough to destroy their claim to revolutionary Marxism and socialism. They were the apologists of Hitlerite imperialism when it was to the interests of the Russian bureaucracy to have them play that rôle—during the Hitler-Stalin pact. They were the apologists of Anglo-American imperialism following the breakdown of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. They were both for openly abandoning the class struggle in the interests of the capitalist class—in the higher interests of the reactionary ruling class of Russia. Foster pretends to protest indignantly against the brutal, blatant way Browder formulated his subordination and justified it. But "national unity," in a country like the United States especially, means and cannot but mean the subordination of the working class to the class interests of monopoly capital and capitalist imperialism. This is an A B C of Lenin's teachings that has been confirmed once more in the course of the present war. Both Browder and Foster supported, and called upon the proletariat to support, the Roosevelt administration, that is, the government of the capitalist class, the spokesman of American imperialism. Even now Foster writes that "our general wartime policy of supporting the Roosevelt Administration was correct." Support of the capitalist-imperialist government in peacetime, let alone wartime, is nothing short of treason to socialism and the work-

ing class, according to all the writings of Lenin whom the Stalinists have the all-time-high impudence to cite as their teacher. Foster's only criticism of Browder on this score is that the latter made it difficult, by dealing with "the two major parties almost in a tweedle-dee, tweedle-dum manner," to "go all-out for a continuation of the Roosevelt policies, as the only way to support effectively the Teheran decisions, both in their national and international implications." He complains, further, about the failure "to demand that organized labor be admitted into the Roosevelt Government on a coalition basis." In other words, he complains that Browder did not follow a consistently *class-collaborationist policy* which, as everyone familiar with the course of the truly social-democratic revisionists knows, aims precisely at a coalition government of workers (playing the rôle of captive) and "progressive capitalists" (playing the rôle of captor).

The similarity in position is further demonstrated by the long program of slogans and demands that the new leadership has finally worked out (the fourth draft!) in its official resolution on "The Present Situation and the Next Tasks." Presumably, it is calculated to show how the Fosterites have checked the "bourgeois reformism" and the "social-democratic revisionism" of Browder. For all the "radical" verbiage of sections of the resolution ("We believe that socialism alone can finally abolish the social evils of capitalist society, including economic insecurity and the danger of fascism and war. But . . .")—it is *not* a working-class program of class struggle, but a program which does not go beyond the framework of *middle-class liberalism*.

It favors "uninterrupted war production and (upholding) labor's no-strike pledge for the duration." (It also says, "Stop employer provocation," but carefully refrains from saying how, except by means of mesmerism, perhaps, this is to be accomplished.) It favors winning the war; American-Soviet friendship; the San Francisco Charter; national independence to Puerto Rico (not Poland); a shorter work week ("except where this would hamper war production"); the right to work; the right to organize, bargain collectively and strike (but not the exercise of the right to strike); democracy in the army; etc., etc. It is against Franco; against Hoover; against the war criminals (only in Axis countries, and only those Axis war criminals who are not on Stalin's side, like German, Rumanian and Bulgarian generals and fascists); against war profiteers; against Jim Crow; etc., etc.

But as to how this program is to be realized—not a syllable! Where the Fosterites have the opportunity to present a *course of working-class action* which could draw the small farmers and even lower middle-class elements into supporting the working class—they have less to say than Browder. Where they say more, they are more preposterous than the "revisionist" they condemn. Where Browder proposed capitulation to the monopolies—which is reactionary but, alas, quite realizable—they propose to "prosecute all violations of the anti-trust laws"—which is no less reactionary but, in addition, a thoroughly middle-class utopia. Back to Teddy Roosevelt! Back to William Jennings Bryan! Back to trust-busting! No wonder Browder laughs himself sick in the *Daily Workers* "Thus does all the furious outcry against the monopolies in the course of our current discussion come to the climax of—a return to the Sherman anti-trust law!!! Did ever a revision of Marxism more quickly demonstrate its bankruptcy? But that is the logical culmination of comrade Foster's peculiar brand of revisionism."

The "new" program nowhere calls for independent class action of the workers, not even for the formation of an independent labor party. The program speaks only of "curbing the powers" of the monopolies and trusts; but does not put forward the working-class demand of *nationalization of the monopolies and banks under workers' control*. The program does not speak anywhere of a *workers' government*. That is why, except for the trust-busting plank and the failure to provide American imperialism with a scheme for expanding its foreign trade, Browder is able to declare his hearty agreement with the "new" program.

The differences between Foster and Browder, as set forth up to now, are of such an inconsequential character that they still do not explain the sudden upheaval and the violence of the fight. For the real explanation, we must look elsewhere.

### **The Key to the Fight in the Stalinist Party**

The key to the fight is to be found in a modest, quiet, almost casual sentence of the article by Jacques Duclos, a sentence which seems to hang in the air, to serve merely as a link between two quotations, to have no direct bearing on the question. Yet it is of such decisive importance that everything else in Duclos' article is superfluous, decorative at most. The sentence reads:

The Teheran agreements mean to Earl Browder that the greatest part of Europe, west of the Soviet Union, will probably be reconstituted on a bourgeois-democratic basis and not on a fascist-capitalist or Soviet basis.

*Properly analyzed, everything in the fight between Browder and Foster flows from what "the Teheran agreements mean to Earl Browder."*

Browder and Foster and Duclos and every other Stalinist leader have but one decisive criterion in politics, domestic and foreign: whatever serves or seems to serve the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy is good, and everything must be subordinated to these interests. On this score there is not and cannot be any difference of opinion in the ranks of the international Stalinist bureaucracy. But Browder (and in this he was not alone) underestimated the strength and the ambitions of Stalinist imperialism. Therein lies his misfortune and his fall from grace.

Hitler's attack upon Russia threw the Stalinists into a panic. In spite of all their big talk about Russia's invincibility, they knew that the régime hung by a hair. The Russian alliance with British and American imperialism, especially with the latter, came as a life-saver. To keep this alliance as intact as possible, the Stalinist parties were hired out by Moscow as indentured servants of Allied capitalism. In effect, the Stalinist parties said to the British and American imperialists:

"Help Russia Open a second front! Send arms, munitions, food! In exchange, we offer you our services and they will not be negligible. If you help Russia, we will take care of your working class to the best of our ability. We will gag and blind and curb it. We will crush strikes without mercy. We will harness the labor movement to the military machine. We will see to it that labor makes no firm demands upon capital. We will see to it that work is and remains uninterrupted. We will guarantee you an uninterrupted flow of blood-profit. We will hound, frame-up and drive out the labor movement all militant workers and revolutionary socialists—that, after all, is in our common interests. We will support your Churchill and your Roosevelt, even if it means the most humiliating servility.

If you help Russia, we will take care of your colonial problems, too. We will break up nationalist demonstrations in India. We will tell the Puerto Ricans, 'Not now!' We will keep the American Negroes in check as well as we can under your Jim-Crow régime. No No boot will be too dirty for us to lick. Anything, everything—but help Stalin."

That was the Stalinist line. Nobody carried it out more faithfully, more zealously, with more ingenuity and thoroughness than Earl Browder. But there is no gratitude in politics, least of all in the Stalinist variety. Browder made the mistake of thinking that the line would have to be carried out with the same intensity in the postwar period as well. He obviously misjudged the coming relationship of forces. He thought that Russia would be exhausted at the end of the war, without reflecting on the fact that the capitalist world would not be fresh and vigorous either. He thought that the Stalinist bureaucracy would need the aid and tolerance of the capitalist world to as great or greater an extent than it needed it in the early days of the war, when Browder and his cohorts everywhere were sobbing hysterically for the "second front" and offering to sell themselves thrice over in exchange for it. He thought that Russia would emerge from the war pretty much the way it entered, with the addition of a tiny bit of Baltic and Balkan territory at the most, while the rest of the world would come under the undisputed domination of Anglo-American imperialism. In that case, concluded Browder, it would be necessary to continue for a long period to offer American capitalism the humble, self-abnegating services of the Stalinist party in exchange for the same aid and tolerance in the postwar period that it showed during the war.

Browder did not foresee the actual post-war relationship of forces. Stalinist Russia has emerged as the second power in the world—not so much because of its inherent strength as because of the enormous, unprecedented weakening, even collapse, of every capitalist power but the American. For a variety of reasons (which have been treated on other occasions), Russia is in a stronger bargaining position in world politics than that country has been, regardless of the régime of the time, for centuries. It needs aid, tolerance, peace and stability and needs them badly. But except for the United States, the capitalist states all over the world need these things to at least the same acute degree, if not to a higher one. It needs aid, especially from the United States. But it is in a position to do more demanding than begging, to take without asking more than it once thought it could get by asking with hat in hand.

But see how Browder describes "the essence of the position which I have put forward":

There is a real possibility of achieving the long-time stable peace in a world which includes both capitalist and socialist nations precisely because the capitalist nations can realize a profit through it, and because this profit is greater than they can hope to realize through any alternative policy.

Translated, this says: If we Stalinists in the United States do our utmost to guarantee monopoly capitalism high profits, Russia is safe—we will buy a "long-time stable peace" for Stalin by continuing to hire out to American imperialism at cheap rates.

What Duclos called to the attention of Browder and his deifiers of yesterday was precisely the fact that it is no longer necessary to hire out at such rates. The trouble with Browder was that he thought "the greatest part of Europe, west of the

Soviet Union, will probably be reconstituted on a bourgeois-democratic basis and not on a fascist-capitalist or Soviet basis." Translated, this says: Browder did not see that the greatest part of Europe, west of Russia would be "reconstituted" under the domination of Russia, and that a considerable part of it would be completely incorporated, openly and covertly, directly and indirectly, into the Stalinist régime itself.

That is what Dennis, for example, who has caught on to Duclos' point, means when he says: "We cannot agree that the only alternative to Browder's concept of the Grand Alliance is chaos, anarchy and the end of civilization. Browder has not yet drawn all the necessary conclusions from this war of national liberation in which there has emerged a stronger and more influential Soviet Union, a new and democratic Europe and a stronger world labor movement . . . [which have] already created an entirely new relationship of world forces, irrevocably strengthening the cause of world democracy [read: Stalinism] and national freedom [read: Stalinist imperialism]." He is not an idiot, this Dennis; put a fist in his eye and, one-two-three, he sees everything clearly.

Who wielded this fist which was big enough to take care not only of Dennis' eye but of everyone else's? Duclos? That, to repeat a favorite phrase of the man behind Duclos, is enough to make a cat laugh. Duclos is a nobody, even more of a nobody than Browder. He could no more get the entire leadership of the American C.P. to jump out of its skin the way it did than Foster, in his time, could get it even to listen to him. One rank-and-filer writes bewilderedly in the *Daily Worker*: "To see everyone on the Board arrayed against Browder so soon after Duclos' article seemed rather automatic." Seemed automatic—and was! This wretched, rotten bureaucratic crew went along with Browder in the first place not because they were persuaded by a single one of his arguments, but *only* because they believed that he was talking for Stalin. They were wrong, at least to a certain extent. Browder followed the Stalin line, but he was fool or vain enough to "initiate" a few "improvements" on it. The same crew that followed him threw him into the garbage can *only* because they *know* that Duclos is one of the authentic pseudonyms of Stalin, that he could not and did not write the article by himself (if he wrote it at all), that the auspices of the article were such as made clear to every well-trained Stalinist that he must jump or be jumped upon. The choice was never in doubt.

That hundreds of rank-and-file worker-militants of the C.P. welcome the "change" for what they think it is, goes without saying. These are the union militants who did not leave the party in disgust, as thousands did, but did writhe under the humiliating political prostitution to capital into which Browder forced them in the name of the defense of the "Soviet Union." Every effort must be made by the revolutionary Marxists to bring these Stalinist workers to a clear understanding of the situation, by means of friendly discussion and practical collaboration in the class struggle for such proletarian demands as these workers would really like to realize, even though the interests of their leaders have nothing whatsoever in common with them.

As for the Stalinist leadership, and the Stalinist party itself, the "new turn" calls not for a more friendly attitude toward them by the labor movement and the revolutionary Marxists, but, if anything, a firmer and more intransigent opposition. This emphasis is demanded precisely because the Stalinists will now seek to exploit, for their own reactionary purposes, the growing militancy of the working class, its

growing disillusionment with the imperialist war and the capitalist parties; precisely because the Stalinist party will now appear in a more "radical" guise.

### Socialism, the Working Class and Stalinism

The interests of Stalinism have nothing in common with the interests of the working class, the labor movement and socialism. The Stalinist parties are the international blackmail machine of the totalitarian tyranny in Russia. An intelligent analysis of the present dispute in the C.P. only makes this fact clearer. The "new policy," like the old, was not based on the interests or needs of the American working class or—for that matter—of the Russian working class. It did not result from the pressure and demands of the working class—not even that section of it which is represented by the Stalinists. It followed from the needs and interests of the Russian bureaucracy. Nine-tenths, if not more, of the "turn" is aimed at saying to American imperialism: "If you do not give in to your rival, Russian imperialism, we are prepared to make trouble for you here at home. We will support you only in so far as you do give in."

We are interested in the fortunes of American imperialism only as its irreconcilable enemy, but as the enemy of all imperialism and oppression. We are not interested in destroying, or even clipping the claws, of American imperialism in the interests of any other reactionary power, Russia included. Hence the unbridgeable gulf between us revolutionary Marxists, us international socialists, and Stalinism. Stalinism is interested in the labor movement *only* for the purpose of making it the blind and helpless tool of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Stalinist party in a country like the United States seeks to enslave the labor movement and the working class under a totalitarian régime, of which its own structure and procedure offers us a preview-model. It is not a socialist party. Yet, it is not a capitalist party, either. Its declarations in favor of capitalism have about as much meaning as Hitler's declarations in favor of socialism. It is ready under certain conditions to *hire itself out* to capitalism, but only as agent of the totalitarian bureaucracy in Russia.

However, it is increasingly clear that the Stalinists are not *merely* the agents of the bureaucratic ruling class of Russia. That conception is proving to be too narrow. The Stalinist bureaucracy in the capitalist countries has ambitions of its own. It dreams of one day taking power, and establishing itself as ruler of substantially the same bureaucratic despotism that its Russian colleagues enjoy. Wherever conditions are favorable, it does not hesitate to exploit the anti-capitalist sentiments of the masses—sentiments which are growing throughout the world—and to emphasize the superiority of collectivism over the anarchy of capitalist production. All this provided these anti-capitalist sentiments are not expressed in the independent class action of the proletariat aiming at socialist power, only if they can be subverted, distorted and frustrated under the domination of Stalinist reaction.

In Poland, the Stalinist bureaucracy is proceeding to wipe out the remnants of the bourgeoisie and to undermine the big landlords. It is establishing its state power, in the image of Stalinism in Russia, that is, of bureaucratic collectivism, but it has nothing in common with socialism or socialist freedom, nothing in common with the socialist organization of production and distribution; it is achieved at the cost of the rights and freedom and organized existence of the working class.

The same process is at work under the rule of the Yugoslav Stalinists. How far this development may or can go, it is much too early to say; equally premature is a final judgment on its historical significance. But the reactionary character of the Stalinist bureaucracy all over the world is unambiguously established; its social aim is already clearly indicated.

For the Stalinists, the working class is a ladder for their climb to bureaucratic power. For us, the working class remains the independent, self-acting class which is called upon to emancipate itself from oppression and exploitation by achiev-

ing democracy and socialism, and therewith to emancipate the human race. In the struggle to make the working class conscious of this grand historical mission and to organize it for the victory, socialism and the proletariat encounter in Stalinism a perfidious, reactionary foe. To make this clear to the point where Stalinism has been completely rooted out of the working class, is an elementary socialist duty and a task of first urgency. The new self-exposure of Stalinism in this country will help us discharge our duty.

# For a New Trade Union Program

## **White Workers and Negro Workers**

The present article in this series is addressed primarily to the white workers in the organized labor movement: CIO, AFL and the railway brotherhoods. The demand contained in the sub-title is urged upon the white workers. The main body of the working class does not and cannot have genuine social equality in capitalist society. That is, the white workers themselves do not have social equality, in the fundamental sense. We will have more to say on this point later.

The white worker has a degree of political and economic equality in the sense that white workers are not denied the right to vote by direct legal act any place in the country, nor are they denied employment on the basis of their color. It is only the Negro who faces Jim Crow socially, politically and in a special and unique manner. It is the purpose of this article to discuss the attitudes of white and Negro workers toward each other, to discover the source of clearly apparent antagonisms and to suggest the working-class means for the resolution of this conflict within the working class.

We realize the difficulties and complexities inherent in any attempt at a frank discussion of this problem as it exists in the United States. But the only way to approach the question is in the frankest and most vigorous manner. This method of approach is indicated for the reason that the working class is rent asunder by hatreds. It is the rock upon which the working class dashes about and remains divided and disunited. It is an apple of discord thrown into the ranks of labor to keep labor divided in the interest of ruling class peace-of-mind and domination. Workers on both sides, so to speak, have very strong opinions and attitudes on the question of their relation one with the other.

Oftentimes these attitudes are extremely irrational and are held to without rhyme or reason. The leader of a strike in Philadelphia, called to protest the employment of Negroes on the street railway, gives as his reason for opposition to working with Negroes that: "Negroes carry bed bugs. We sit on wooden benches in the car house and wood breeds bedbugs." The question of admitting Negroes to a machinist's local of the AFL is under discussion in a meeting of the local. A member takes the floor to object to the admission of Negroes working in the plant because, "I hate the black s---s." A very militant white worker is against Negroes because "they are savages." A young white worker who was defending the rights of Negroes was reproached with the question: "You must want

your sister to marry a nigger." A white worker rises in the UAW convention to object to the resolution demanding equality for Negroes because "I would not want my wife and daughter to mix with Negroes at our convention." The management of a plant decides under pressure from the union to upgrade Negroes. A member of the 7-man negotiating committee begins circulating a petition in his department against the admission of upgraded Negroes to that department. Members of a railway union organize a reign of terror against Negro firemen. In numerous instances where the announcement has been made that Negroes would be promoted to skilled jobs there have been strikes.

In a steel mill, two Negroes are promoted to a department where Negroes have not worked before. Two white workers, one a union member, begin the circulation of a petition against them. They give as their reason for not wanting to work with Negroes that "Negroes smell bad." The superintendent added to the ludicrousness of the situation by telling these two workers that he got very close to the two Negro workers while they were in his office and "I didn't smell anything." Right at the time that Hitler was crushing the Poles in Poland, Polish workers in a northern city were raising furious objection to a plan of the Federal Housing Authority to erect a project to be occupied by Negroes in an area where the Poles lived.

Hundreds of instances of this kind could be given but these are enough to illustrate the situation concretely. It is interesting to compare these statements and attitudes of white workers with statements and attitudes of certain white people outside the working class. Senator Bilbo, of Mississippi, announces in the Senate that "all history and biology prove that the white race has been the leader of civilization for the past 6,000 years." Senator Eastland of the same state tells the world that the "white boys in the Pacific are fighting for white supremacy." A judge in the Scottsboro case announced that "no white woman would voluntarily give herself to a Negro."

### **Workers Imitate Employers**

The point which we are making is that the white workers as a rule take the same attitude toward Negroes and Negro workers as that assumed by the white bourgeoisie: the industrialists, financiers, Republican and Democratic Party leaders and government functionaries. Negroes assume similar attitudes: A Negro waiter on a dining car intones that it is not

Negroes whose writing is difficult to read but "it's these white folks who come in here who can't write." A Negro worker expresses the opinion that "hunkies can live cheaper than we can because all they eat is black bread and onions." A Negro soldier is convinced that "the Japanese are savages." Negro workers have stated that "the foreigners take our jobs." "If I had a black chicken and a white chicken came around I would kill the white chicken," "a white man is a white man and the white man in the union is no different from a white man anywhere else."

White workers block up against Negro candidates for office in the unions and "plug" for a white candidate, purely on racial grounds. The unions under the leadership of the white workers permit the company to discriminate against and Jim Crow Negro workers. AFL unions bar Negroes from membership and hold Negroes out of employment under closed shop agreements. In all sections of the labor movement locals or groups of white members object to Negroes attending social affairs given by the union on the ground that they are against "social equality." All of these are common practices and attitudes found everywhere, to one degree or other, in the trades unions. It is necessary to unearth the roots and the source of these attitudes on the part of white workers. The attitude of Negro workers is essentially a defense set-up against the anti-Negro practices of white trade-unionists.

The labor movement and the white workers act in this reactionary manner under the impact of capitalist society. It is a demonstration of the fact that *no* institution is immune from the all-prevailing miasma of a putrid social order whose devotees profit materially from this fratricidal strife in the labor movement and the working class. Workers enter the factory and the union out of the capitalist world, enveloped in all the prejudices, hatreds, puerilities, psychological distortions and social fabrications of bourgeoisie society. The workers, white and black, live in a capitalist social order encompassed about with every tangible and concrete device necessary for the maintenance of the class supremacy of the bourgeoisie and the breeding of internecine conflict among the proletarians.

From the standpoint of propaganda, the subtlest means used to keep white and black workers embroiled in bitterness and hatred is the doctrine of the superiority of the white race and the inferiority of the Negro. This propaganda and agitation seep through the whole national scene and enter every nook and cranny of human relationships. For the country at large this is well-understood. What is difficult for Negroes to understand is why such attitudes are prevalent in the labor movement. It is the purpose of this article to give an exposition of the reasons for this phenomenon.

We say that the base for hatred between black and white workers is laid when it is established in the mind of the white proletarian or other white toiler that the Negro is inferior. The white worker quoted does not want Negroes in his union because they are "savages" and of course it is well understood that savages are an inferior breed. They are "dirty," "diseased," "ignorant," give off an "offensive odor," etc., etc. It is not that the Negro worker is literally a savage, rather he is only one step removed from the savage state. He is therefore not a person one sits beside, works with, eats with or dances with. "Negroes don't make good union men," they are "scabs," "difficult to organize," "won't pay their dues."

The white worker has these notions drilled into him day and day out; year and year out. Not always in the crude and

semi-illiterate manner of a Bilbo but far more effectively by distortions of bourgeois historians, journalists, publicists and the mumbo-jumbo written by sociologists and political scientists in the name of science and scientific method. These bourgeois scholars, academic sorcerers, with their ill-founded generalizations, really plant the seed which flowers into the ignorant but articulate and vicious demagogues who infest the Congress, state legislatures, newspaper office and other public institutions. One can prove this to oneself by consulting some of the school histories, especially those sections dealing with slavery and the Negro today. Also many of the sociological treatises have been responsible for a great deal of rubbish about race which with some people passes for science. For instance, in their discussions of "miscegenation" it is always a white man and a Negro woman. Reading these "investigations" one would never get the idea that "miscegenation" takes place the other way round. One of the judges in the Scottsboro Case concluded that these Negro boys must be guilty of rape because "no white woman would willingly give herself to a Negro." This judge of course knew that this was a lie, but there are simple-minded white folk who could be made to believe it.

The white worker also receives a daily training in the concept of superior and inferior races from federal, state and municipal governments. He learns that Negroes are Jim Crowed by the government, that the federal government does not enforce the 14th and 15th amendments, that Negroes and white people are always placed into separate units in the Army, that the Navy has a tradition that Negroes are neither to serve nor be transported on battleships.

For decades the white worker has been taught through the practices of capitalist employers that Negro workers are confined to the menial, dirty, heavy, the lowest paying and most undesirable jobs. The white worker has become accustomed to seeing Negroes pushing the trucks, sweeping the floor, running the elevator, slaving at the coke oven or in the foundry. He is not accustomed to seeing Negroes in the company office, in the engineering or drafting departments or as part of the sales force. It is understood that Negro women can be only domestics, cotton pickers or scrubwomen. These practices in conjunction with the writing, speeches and lectures of the publicists, politicians and teachers, thoroughly indoctrinate the white worker with the idea of white superiority and Negro inferiority. Consequently when the white worker enters the factory he carries the ideas, notions and prejudices with him which he has acquired in capitalist society. On this, as well as other questions, he thinks as the leaders of capitalist society want him to think. His social theories as well as his economic ideas are not his own but those of the capitalist ruling class:

Such a white worker, and this type is the overwhelming majority, therefore thinks of the factory as a white factory, the union becomes a white man's organization, because they both exist in a "white man's country," with a white man's government, a white man's army fighting a white man's war, white business enterprises, white amusement places and restaurants, big league ball clubs, YMCA's and churches. He often resents Negroes being employed in "his plant," opposes his promotion to a "white man's job," his running for office in a white man's union, or his attending a dance given by this white man's union. Being white is alone enough in the thinking of the white worker to make him superior to the Negro.

This quality of whiteness with the attendant propaganda, tradition and pseudo-science produces a queer mental state in the white worker. The doctrine of the superiority of the white race and the inferiority of the Negro creates for the white worker, a feeling of oneness with the ruling class: with the employers, financiers and big government officials. This thing called the white race is a mystical entity, a hallowed group, a pure strain whose purity and thousand-year-old achievements must be kept inviolate and isolated from contamination by contact, as equals, with "inferior" races.

The indoctrination of the white worker with ideas of Negro racial inferiority and white supremacy creates a harmony-of-interests attitude on the part of the white worker toward his employer, his congressman and even toward the policeman on his block. On the question of Negroes the white proletarian closes ranks with every section of the white population except that small minority of white people who reject the race superiority myth and the resultant practices. This minority become "nigger lovers," and a serious threat to "white supremacy." The white worker can eat with the general manager of the plant, he can get a room in the same hotel as Ford or Truman, he can ride in the same car with Col. McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*. Or so he believes, and the real situation in this connection is a subject unexplored and totally misunderstood by the average white worker.

His acceptance of this hocus-pocus about race and race superiority envelops the white worker in a cloud of ignorance, superstition, anti-labor practices and class collaboration. The whole set-up of capitalist exploitation and the class organization of capitalist society becomes obscured. By their blind adherence to the notion of white superiority and Negro inferiority the white proletarians stultify the class struggle and defeat the purpose for which the trade-union movement exists. In the mass production industries where the majority of them receive the same pay as the Negroes, they solace themselves on the propaganda, put over by the ruling class, that although they receive the same pay as the "inferior" Negroes, they belong to a superior race, to the race that maintains "white supremacy." They belong to the race which owns the biggest bank in the world, the tallest building on earth, which operates the richest university in the world, which operates extra-fare luxurious trains, which owns the most palatial dwellings: these white workers belong to a race which pays itself billions in dividends and interest every year, to a race which gorges itself on the finest food brought from every corner of the earth. The white proletarian accepts this situation as part of his pay. Although his pay envelope may contain the same amount as the Negro on the next machine, this white worker nevertheless permits himself to be drugged with the propaganda of a superior and an inferior race.

The Negro worker along with other Negroes is given a status in society, similar to the status of the serf in feudal society. The Negro is assigned a place and is expected to "know his place." By his actions, the white worker divides capitalist society into two groups: Negroes and white people. The "white" group includes all white people: the employing ruling class, the middle class and the white working class. The Negro group includes all Negroes: the Negro banker and businessman, the professional group and the black worker.

Workers acquire such reactions mainly for the reason that the working class has not yet developed the habit, in its thinking, of inquiring into the source, the history and the roots of any body of opinion which is disseminated in society. Con-

cepts, notions and propaganda are accepted uncritically and without any thought as to what effect such doctrines may have on the working class as a whole. For instance, workers and others use the term "race" as though they really knew what they were talking about. (The pamphlet, *Races of Mankind* should do yeoman service in dispelling these illusions and this ignorance.) They do not know that no reputable and competent biologist, anthropologist or sociologist would dare come out today with the statement that there are superior and inferior races. Anthropologists definitely discount and reject the notion of race as ordinarily understood. There are no pure races. They are all mixed. This can be demonstrated to anyone in the U. S. except to the most obtuse or to those who profit from the propagation of this myth in some material or social way. This doctrine is often spread around by those who know that it is not true. The South is the hot-bed of this nonsense and it is very significant that in this section, where the greatest amount of mixing has gone on, we find the most pronounced talk about the purity of the white race. It is interesting that genealogical organizations, whose business it is to trace one's ancestry, do not do a very extensive business in the South. Many Southerners, when they find it necessary or expedient to account for some seeming "impurity" in their lineage, are in the habit of discovering that they are descended from some Indian chief or princess. (Pocahontas is a very popular ancestor for white Virginians.)

Suppose, however, the scientists, whose business it is to be acquainted with such things as race and "racial characteristics," were of the opinion that there are superior and inferior races. What would this mean? What would they be talking about? Of what significance would such theories or discoveries have for the working class? That is, what social, economic or political importance would such a theory have for wage earners? How could white workers use such a theory to improve their material status, their political and economic position in capitalist society? Would employers be inclined to raise the wages of the white workers because these workers were of a group which was "superior" to the group which Negro workers belonged to? Will lay-offs during "reconversion" be determined by considerations of racial superiority or inferiority? If this is the case, is it not true that during the last depression, the only people on the relief rolls would have been Negroes and other non-white workers? Furthermore, one would suppose that employers would never object to collective bargaining agreements except where Negroes are to be covered by the contract. Also, one would think that the federal government which also is a practitioner of race superiority and Jim-Crow, would only deny maintenance of membership after strikes in cases where the strikers were members of the "inferior" race. In the case of military conscription, one should draw the inference that only members of the inferior race would have to be drafted since their very inferiority would mean that they had no proper notions about patriotism, the defense of civilization and of "our noble institutions." We can add another inference. That is, we should expect our Jim-Crow federal government to do more than merely segregate Negroes in separate regiments. We should expect them to keep the members of the superior race at home and let the inferiors go to the jungles of Burma, the reptile-infested fastnesses of the Pacific and brave the vicissitudes of German prison camps. It might be replied that these are deeds for men of heroic mold, pastimes for the brave, the chivalrous and the noble.

Some white workers will be inclined to say that what we say here is merely ludicrous and fantastic. Perhaps so, but what makes it ludicrous and fantastic? Only the brute fact that many white workers act toward the Negro workers as though these things were true and actual. If white workers do not believe the "ludicrous" ideas which we express above, they will have to express such disbelief in action. They must base their changed actions on their discovery of the facts of life as it is in capitalist society: a social order based on the ownership of the means of production by a class and the use of the productive forces for the extraction of private profit.

They will have to divest themselves of quack notions about

race and begin thinking in terms of working class and ruling class. They will have to throw off all ideas of superior and inferior races and begin to understand that in capitalist society, the attempt to divide mankind into races can have no value for the working class, which as a whole is exploited and oppressed by the capitalist ruling class all over the world. On the basis of this fundamental idea it will become clear that what is important for the working class is not what race or nationality one belongs to but rather which class is he a part of.

(To be concluded)

DAVID COOLIDGE.

# Agrarian Struggles in the U. S.

## **Populism and Its Lessons for To-day**

The question of a mass labor party is on the order of the day as the practical task of our party precisely because it is an inherent stage in the development of the American working class and the entire history of American society. Only American history itself can explain the oft-lamented political "backwardness" of American labor; and correctly anticipate the coming radicalization and politicalization of the working class of this country. This study is undertaken not merely to recount the history of Populism, but to emphasize: a) the relation of farmers and labor during that period; b) the class relations within the Agrarian movement; c) the rôle of the Negroes; d) a comparison of Populism with the present stage of the class struggle.

### **Agrarian Politics Before the Triumph of Industrial Capitalism**

The rôle of the agrarian masses in America is unique in world history. Indeed American history from the birth of the nation to the Civil War can almost be condensed into two words "free soil." While in western Europe the bourgeois democratic revolution, i.e., political and legal equality, was pushed forward by the old plebian masses—laborer, artisan and mechanic—in America small landed property was the material basis for social individualism, theoretical equality, civil rights and popular rule. Rousseau's natural rights of man and hatred of the corruption of cities was effectively transplanted on the American soil, and personified by Jefferson. In Europe the proletariat was counterposed to the bourgeoisie in the very making of the bourgeois democratic revolution. There the peasant proprietors were indifferent, and later were tools of the counter-revolution. In America the social, economic and political scene at that very same time was dominated by agrarian expansionism. In England, for example, the proletarianization of the peasantry took place in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and mass proletarian movements arose in the nineteenth century. In America the historical development is almost in reverse. The working class was very fluid in its composition due to the open frontier. The workers were in the main farmers-to-be and thus played a very subordinate rôle to the agrarian political struggle.

Every time the commercial, traditional, aristocratic New England was pitted against the newly immigrated and equali-

tarian West, the frontiersmen won. The commercial bourgeoisie split almost in half during the revolutionary struggle against England. The pro-British "Loyalists" were willing to serve as a compradore ruling class. But the agrarian debtors and southern planters showed a good deal more consistency and solidarity. After the war, the newly reunited commercial ruling class succeeded in having the states ratify the economic documents drafted in a near-conspiracy—the American constitution. But increasing the burden of the agrarian debtors and attacking the democratic rights of the great masses of people brought forth some of the most violent anti-capitalist agitation in American history followed by the agrarian upheaval of 1800. While the capitalist Federalist party stood helplessly by, this country doubled in size with the purchase of Louisiana. Territorial expansionism meant agrarian expansionism.

Paradoxically too, the war of 1812, the second stage of the triumph of American capitalism was precipitated by the agrarian "War Hawks." While Federalist New England threatened secession, Jackson's backwoodsmen defeated the British Regulars. Federalism died, and less than two decades later Jacksonian democracy rose triumphantly into power.

In the struggle against slavery, "the second American revolution," the agrarians played a most decisive rôle. The northern bourgeoisie was in a thousand ways intimately connected with the southern plantation economy. "The nation is united by the thread of cotton," said Emerson. The northern bourgeoisie conciliated and compromised. But northwestern wheat triumphed over southern cotton nationally and abroad. In 1856 the farmers joined to a large extent by the working class, organized the Republican party. "Vote yourself a homestead," was their battle-cry in 1856 and 1860. They were joined by a far-sighted section of the industrial bourgeoisie and the Civil War was on.

Yet this is no attempt to idealize the agrarian petty bourgeoisie. Though the vigorous, articulate, equalitarian frontiersman is admirable, his defeats were more lasting than his victories. The anti-capitalist agitation was loud and long, but capitalism was not uprooted. On the contrary. The bitter creditor-debtor struggle of 1800 was not resolved by social change but by national expansionism—the increase in available land and in foreign commerce. It is true that Jackson, the idol of the agrarian debtors, abolished the national bank.

But his struggle for the protective tariff sheltered the rise of American industry. And the Republican party, organized almost spontaneously by the Agrarians, became in a short time the political tool of monopolized big business, bitter enemy of the agrarians.

The farmers tried to fetter and limit the growing productive forces of this country. They could not succeed, no matter how many political victories they achieved. The high point in the self-contradictory, self-defeating struggle of the rural masses is Populism.

### Agriculture After the Civil War

The triumph of American capitalism in the Civil War was not limited to a mere military victory over the Southern armies. The war had spurred on a gigantic expansion of manufacture and industry. In 1860 little more than a billion dollars was invested was six and a half billion, with the products worth more than nine and a quarter billion. Thirty thousand miles of railroad track enmeshed the country between 1865 and 1873. Stock companies, corporations, and consequently absentee ownership, arose everywhere. Within the industries, trustification and centralization began to make such headway that in 1890 the pretentious government battle against monopolies had begun.

The vanguard of capitalism within the western territories were the railroads. True to their election slogans, the Republicans passed the Homestead Act in 1862. "The Homestead Act was the crowning achievement of middle class agrarianism in national politics." This "crowning achievement" was a bonanza for the American railroads. The free dispensation of western lands was severely limited by the open and secret speculators. Mass migrations were then organized by the rail-appropriations of large strips of territory by the railroads and roads to sell the lands they had seized. In addition the growth of farming communities in the west meant increased freight for the expanding railroads. So great was the demand for land by the foreign immigrants and dissatisfied native workers, that not only were the western territories settled with incredible speed, but in addition the land values were inflated by rapacious speculators.

The capitalization of agriculture—the triumph of urban manufacture and commerce over the rural agricultural economy was a result of the following:

a) The technological revolution in agriculture and the growth of agricultural machinery. Farmers with larger amounts of capital could increase their productivity and thus occupy a superior position on the market. In the evolution from extensive to intensive farming, machinery and fertilizer were becoming increasingly necessary.

b) The growth of the domestic market. The farmer ceased to be a free, individual producer. Self-subsistence farming became subordinate to farming for a surplus to be sold on the market. Marketing and market prices were completely taken out of the producers' control. The price of wheat, for example, was decided by the extent of world supply, native unemployment, and artificial speculation on Wall Street. The ever more frequent and more disastrous capitalist crises in 1873, 1877, 1884, and 1893 caused severe drops in agricultural prices. From 1870 to 1897 the price of wheat dropped by forty per cent, corn by thirty-three per cent, and cotton by almost two hundred per cent! Service, storage, and food processing—all trustified and interlocked—cut deeply into the farmers' income. A host of speculators, middle-men, brokers, and railroad

agents fattened themselves at the expense of the farm producer.

c) Collapse of the European market. Before the Civil War America was the granary of Europe. However, it was not many years before American wheat was competing with Argentinian, Russian, Australian, and Canadian food commodities on the foreign market.

d) Reliance upon manufacture for consumption goods. This is in sharp contrast with earlier frontier days when the farmer relied to a large extent on domestic industry and natural resources for his living needs. Needless to add, all the products of these industries were—considering the farmers' income—fantastically high-priced. This was a natural result of trustified industry which grew up in the shelter of a high protective tariff.

e) The final result and the real crux of the dominance of capitalism over agriculture was that the most simple home-steading demanded a large amount of capital to be even temporarily successful. Eastern capital was quick in coming, in the form of usurious loans with farm mortgages for security. The ever increasing need for credit combined with the steadily collapsing farm prices led to mass indebtedness and foreclosures, the impoverishment and expropriation of the once-free peasant proprietors.

Leaving aside the detailed grievances and the particular situation in the South, this is the background of the powerful and turbulent agrarian struggle for the redress of grievances and in defense of small property and individual agricultural production.

### The Concentration of Political Power

Before the Civil War, various sections of the ruling class, i.e., classes based on different forms of property, had contended for national power. But in 1876, the disputed Hayes-Tilden election was settled by a gentlemen's agreement. Northern troops were to be removed from the South, thus ending any possible sectional dissension. Bourgeois historians bemoan the fact that the period of 1876-1896 was devoid of notable legislation, though full of unprincipled political fights and scandalous corruption. Arthur Harrison, Garfield, and Hayes were presidents during this period, but it is impossible to remember their names, let alone what they did.

Once in office, the affairs of the bourgeoisie were managed quite well, though the nation suffered. Four times as much land was donated to speculators, miners, and railroads as to actual homesteaders. No matter how much the agrarians writhed under unfair freight rates, the Republican government took no action. Currency and credit reform was not forthcoming. The banks bought government bonds and then issued national currency on the basis of the purchased bonds. The banks then lent the money at high interest rates, thus collecting interest from the government and the unfortunate agrarians. The Republicans maintained the high tariff to bar any foreign disturbances to trustification and price-fixing in this country. The tax burden fell most heavily on landed property, lightly on corporate wealth, and not at all on the privately amassed fortunes of the millionaires. Court injunctions, state militias, and Federal troops were consistently used against rebellious labor. Finally, the Supreme Court of hand-picked Republican judges, became a graveyard for any state legislation infringing on the rights and privileges of corporate wealth.

The two-party system was in effect a one-party system. The

political fortunes of the Democratic party were very low for it was formerly 1) the party of slavery; 2) the party of secession; 3) the party of corruptionist city machines developed in Jackson's day and before the birth of Republicanism. The stronghold of the Democratic party, the solid South, was in control of the bankers and merchants who were merely an offshoot and subordinate section of northern industry.

On the other hand the Republican Party: 1) was originally based on an alliance between farmers and workers; 2) had abolished slavery and maintained the Union; 3) was the party of capitalist expansion after the war; 4) claimed to have given jobs to workers; 5) homesteads to farmers; 6) was less corrupt than the Democratic Party. Thus the political successes of the Republican Party during those years are easily explained. Within the party no voice of opposition could be heard. It was the political handmaiden of a bold and triumphant class of robber barons. Individual reformers and agrarian radicals were either bought off or isolated or excluded from Party councils. Senators were elected by state legislatures filled with reliable party hacks. Congressional committees contained the most agile parliamentary maneuverers who could defeat reform bills without much effort. There were no primary elections or any public intervention in the choice of party nominees. There was no popular recall of public servants who had committed political offences. The rumblings in the west were too distant and ineffective, and the temporary discontent in the cities too unimportant, to seriously affect the Republican monopoly of political power. Altogether, it is doubtful if such a period of unchallenged, brazen robbery, oppression and deceit will again be repeated in American history.

### The Rise of Third Parties

The actual organizers of the Republican Party had been idealists, reformers, abolitionists, even politically conscious workers. But as the majority of the big bourgeoisie crept in under the Republican tent and the party was taken over by the plutocracy, these elements were quickly squeezed out. They consequently became the organizers and agitators of the small crop of third parties which arose during the '70's and '80's.

Significantly enough, the first independent action after the Civil War was taken by politicalized trade unionists. In 1872 the National Labor Reform Party participated in the national elections on a program of land reform, cheap currency, and the eight hour day. At the same time, the Prohibition Party was organized in the midwest, adding a strong plank against land speculation to its main plank of prohibition. In 1876 the Greenback Party entered the national election demanding continued use of the Civil War currency and the government's resumption of gold purchasing. The bitterly violent railroad strikes of 1877 brought in new allies from the ranks of labor, so that in 1878 the Greenback Party became the Greenback Labor Party. The issues of land reform, cheap currency and legal limits to the working day dominated the program. This alliance between class conscious farmers and workers netted a million votes in the Congressional elections of 1878. This vote was fairly evenly divided between the East, South, and Western regions of the country. Temporary agricultural prosperity cut down the Greenback Labor Party vote by more than two thirds in the presidential elections of 1880. In 1884 the Anti-Monopoly Party was set up mainly by delegates from the Eastern industrial states. The program

consisted of anti-monopoly planks (in the language and manner with which we are so familiar today) and sympathy to labor's economic demands.

The rise and fall of these third parties previous to the Populist Party of 1892 lead us to the following conclusions: 1) the classes leading in the formation of third parties were, in the order of their importance, farmers, urban petty bourgeoisie, and workers; 2) the programs were mainly agrarian, the increase of available currency—"Greenbackism"—being the main political theme; 3) rural distress was not as acute between 1872 and 1884 as afterwards; 4) the successes, such as they were, were mainly local, limited to various states—no great alliance between labor, the petty bourgeoisie, and farmers could be affected; 5) the majority of the agrarians were not resorting to political action, or were pushing their class demands in the existing parties.

### The Grange and the Alliance

The organization of the Populist Party evolved from the mass agrarian organizations, the Granges and the Farmers' Alliances. In the period after the Civil War the farmers Grange movement predominated in the West and South. The material difficulties and physical loneliness of rural life led to the organization of farmers groups which were mainly non-political in nature. Among the organizations' purposes were technical education on agricultural problems, self-help projects such as crop insurance, cheaper credit facilities, and cooperative marketing of their products.

It was soon to become evident (after twenty-five years!) to the timid, conservative peasant proprietors that these meek efforts could not defeat the stranglehold of the railroads and monopolies on the farmers' economic existence. Though agricultural education might somewhat affect the productivity of his crops, it could not increase their market price. Nor could the farmers obtain the necessary credit by merely pooling their meagre financial resources. Their efforts at independent marketing of their crops could not challenge the established marketing practices of the gigantic railroad system and the trustified food processors. The futility of their efforts at economic self-help turned their attention to political action. The unbridled economic supremacy of big business demanded intervention and regulation by the state power under pressure of the small agrarian producers. This was their political conception.

The struggle of the western agrarians was directed against the railroads and for the regulation of trade rates. In 1874 the National Grange claimed one and one half million members and some twenty thousand local Granges. Yet so involved were the Granges in non-political activities that its full organized strength was not used in the elections. Instead the farmers moved to influence the existing political machines in the states. When this strategy was not successful, independent state parties and slates were put forward. Thus between 1872 and 1892 eleven state parties were organized.

Though seats were won in the legislatures of many western states and though the farmers waged aggressive political campaigns, the results of their efforts during the Granger period were negligible. The railroads were too powerful and too important in the scheme of capitalism as a whole to be unseated by election majorities and agrarian agitation. Commerce was an interstate matter and could not be effectively controlled by the strict state legislation. Besides, the railroads could engage in every type of subterfuge, legal and illegal

evasions of legislation, and intimidation of agrarian reformers. The furious political battles against the economic and political power of the railroads ended only in futility and despair.

The economic crisis of 1873 combined with the severe natural draught sent streams of wagons rolling eastward bearing the sign "In God we Trusted, in Kansas we Busted." In the attempt to maintain profitable price levels and thus save themselves from foreclosures and tenantry, the western farmers rallied around the slogan of "Inflate the Currency" and the Greenback Party. The temporary prosperity from 1878 to 1884 weakened the combativity of the farmers. But the struggle was to rise to yet greater heights after the panic of 1884.

By 1890 the mass wave of organized farmers numbered over four millions. By 1896 the new organization, the Farmers' Alliances, published more than fifteen hundred newspapers. Unlike the loosely federated Granges, the Farmers' Alliance maintained strong sectional and even national solidarity. In the beginning, they were not decisively political; nevertheless, they succeeded in sending a large number of "Independent" congressmen to Washington. It is true that the great mass strength of these Alliances created the illusory possibility of challenging capitalist supremacy over agriculture, by means of economic projects in credit and marketing. This is a familiar belief of the embattled small property owners. In turn, the ineffectiveness of these economic projects turned the agrarian masses ever more violently onto the road of political action.

The economic roots of this mass movement are not difficult to ascertain. The rates of interest on agrarian debts were ever increasing, while prices were steadily sinking. Land was passing into the hands of loan companies and tenantry increased from less than fifteen per cent of the farming population in 1870 to twenty-eight per cent in 1885. To use Marx's classic phrase "the free producer was divorced from his means of production." These landless and propertyless agrarians were the radical ferment of an entire mass movement. In previous periods the high land values enabled the indebted farmer to sell his property and start life anew. With the diminishing of free land, such a solution became impossible. The repeated shocks of depression, panic, and collapse in American economy climaxed a long period of agrarian resentment. The government's violent assault upon striking workers and legal assaults upon labor unions all revealed to the class conscious farmers, even if not to the workers, the active economic bias of the national government. The growth of trusts and large fortunes, the prevalence of economic swindles and political scandals, the stolid indifference of the large capitalist parties—these were the reasons for the greater political emphasis of the Farmers' Alliances and the birth of the People's Party.

#### **Background of Southern Populism**

The Southern Populists are clearly recognized as being the aggressive, radical, and numerically powerful section of the Populist movement. The inter-twining elements of race, class, and party resulted in a complex maze of southern politics. Mere superficial acquaintance with Populism in the South gives the impression only of contradiction and confusion. Leading Populists were pro-Negro and anti-Negro; pro-Third Party and anti-Third Party; allied with Southern Republicans, Southern Democrats, or remaining independent; standing on occasion on the Right wing of western Populism, or on its Left Wing. To achieve any clarity at all, it is necessary to trace the movement historically and with strict economic emphasis even where all the necessary data is not always available.

The breakdown in the plantation system presented serious difficulties in maintaining cotton culture and a one-crop agricultural economy. Material devastation, indebtedness, the bankruptcy of the planter class, and the general backwardness of southern society hindered any immediate economic recuperation. What was to substitute for the plantation economy? Since the land-hunger of the poor whites and newly-freed slaves was extraordinary, many large estates were divided. Thus in South Carolina the number of landowners had increased from thirty-three thousand in 1860 to fifty-one thousand in 1870. Due to the manipulation of the old planters and the shortage of credit necessary for small farming the plantation system was maintained in a new form. The decisive position in the post-Civil War Southern agriculture was occupied by merchants' capital and credit. To a large extent this was northern capital in a new guise, and this, together with the important role of the railroad lines, led to the belief that the South was being "colonized" by the North. Commercial capitalism played this important part in the very slow transition from agricultural toward an industrial economy. Peculiar to the South is the fact that commercial capitalism maintained the vestiges of slave economy, i.e., the sharecropping system. Two different types of the lien-crop are noticeable. In one case the free farmer would mortgage his farm to the merchant in return for the necessary cash credit or supplies. Not being able to pay back the debt in cash, due to the lack of individual marketing facilities and the sinking price of cotton, the farmer would pay back his debt by giving a share of his crop to the merchant in return for more credit. Since this credit system was really exorbitant usury, his indebtedness grew and the farmer found himself tied hand and foot to the merchant and often reduced to semi-peonage.

An important variation of crop-tenancy was the system where the *planter* maintained a share-cropping system that was in turn dominated by the banks and merchants in his need for credit, and by the railroads and cotton brokers in his need for transportation and marketing.

The social and economic struggles in the last decade of the nineteenth century followed the classic line of city versus country. Aligned on one side were the merchants and bankers, professional classes, and a large section of the working class (although the latter participated in this struggle with some indifference); on the other side were: a) planters and landlords who themselves exploited and dominated tenants and agricultural laborers, b) individual, self-sustaining property owners employing few or no agricultural laborers and suffering various degrees of indebtedness, c) tenants, d) agricultural laborers.

It is only by delineating the class lines within the agrarian movement itself, that we can explain the crossing of lines in the conflict between agrarian debtors and merchant creditors at the various critical points of this struggle.

#### **Populism Sweeps the South**

"The New Bourbon regime in Georgia was essentially a businessman's regime. To a greater or lesser extent this was undoubtedly true of other Southern states."<sup>5</sup> Having ruled the South for more than a century, the Southern planters found themselves replaced by the representatives of capital and commerce.

The political battles revolved around a number of issues,

some already familiar. Poorer elements of the population attempted to whittle down payment of the Civil War debts. This was the cause of West Virginia's secession and separate statehood. Anti-railroad legislation and the demand for currency inflation were important political issues. "The frequent change in the Lien laws evidenced a conflict between landlord and merchant." Most fundamental was the fight for enfranchisement of the poor whites and their participation in the government. Up-country farmers battled with the coast-city business men for the control of the Democratic political machine. Due to their numerical majority, the farmers often succeeded in winning.

But twenty-five Alliance men in the state legislature of South Carolina could not prevent the flow of Northern capital to the South for the purpose of accumulation through a system of usurious credit. Nor could they dictate to the monopolists the prices to be charged for necessary commodities. Many professional Alliance politicians went over to their political opponents, and with the infusion of this new blood, the Bourbon Democratic machine was again consolidated. In the meantime, the Southern agrarian masses had to be satisfied with the formal political victory, some technical help in agriculture and shadow-boxing motions against the railroads.

The economic circumstances of the cotton farmers were becoming so desperate that leaders of Southern populism devised a scheme whereby agrarians would influence the control of the issuance of national currency, and the marketing of agricultural products would become the government's responsibility. Under the "Sub-treasury plan," as it was called, the government would build warehouses for the storage and grading

of agricultural products. Legal government tender would be issued to the farmers based on 80 per cent of their produce. As a result, the farmer would be assured of cash credit instead of the exorbitantly priced supplies of the merchant-creditor. The middlemen would be almost entirely eliminated from the marketing process. Southern Populism pushed the Sub-treasury scheme against the bitter opposition of financial circles and the indifference of the Northern Farmer's Alliance.

The Southern wing of the national Populist movement was more powerful and radical than its Northwestern counterpart, for the following reasons: (a) Northern farmers struggled against big business "in general." The banks and loan companies who were oppressive creditors, did not play a large or important political and social role within the immediate areas of the farmers' existence. In the South, however, the town merchants were the local and clearly recognized medium of exploitation, since agricultural credit in the South took the form of supplies rather than cash. (b) The greater prevalence of tenantry and agricultural labor in the South. Northern farmers were indebted property owners, Southern farmers were to a much greater extent, propertyless and landless. (c) In the South, the political struggles were for the fundamental right of suffrage and political action, while the Northern farmers were politically expressive by tradition, having organized and provided the mass backing for the Republican Party in 1856. (d) The severe crisis in cotton culture and the general backwardness and impoverishment of the South. The drop in cotton prices was always greater than that of other agricultural commodities.

WILLIE GORMAN.

(To be continued)

# The Party and the Intellectuals

## The Debate in the S.W.P. Continues

The background of the two letters by James P. Cannon and the article by Albert Goldman which are reprinted here, is formed by the letter of James T. Farrell which was printed in the *New International*, November, 1944. The letter was originally addressed to the editors of the *Fourth International*, theoretical magazine of the Socialist Workers Party. It was a friendly protest by a devoted and courageous supporter of the Trotskyist movement against two articles written in the *Fourth International* by two Cannonite writers, one Joseph Hansen and the other Harry Frankel. As our readers know, the *Fourth International* refused to publish the letter by Farrell. We did publish it.

Meanwhile, it appears, the leader of the opposition in the Socialist Workers Party, Albert Goldman, proposed that Farrell's letter should be published in the *Fourth International*, and protested against the decision of the Cannonite majority to suppress it. In justification of this decision, the party leader, Cannon, wrote the two letters which are reprinted here from the S.W.P.'s internal party bulletin (Vol. 7, No. 2, April, 1945) in which they appeared. Goldman replied to these letters in the article reprinted here which is also taken from an S.W.P. bulletin (latest issue) in which it first appeared.

The decision to reprint these three documents is, of course, ours alone. As the reader will see, they deal with questions which cannot in any way be regarded as "internal affairs." In his two letters, Cannon puts forward conceptions of politics and of the revolutionary party which have never before been put forward in all the history of the working-class movement, at least not so crassly.

Unlike their author, who so prudently "restrained" himself from "letting our press publish" these conceptions, we consider it our duty to bring them to the light of day. Not only in order to compel him to take the public responsibility which he discreetly shirks, but in order that they may be subjected to the thoroughgoing criticism which they deserve and require. Marxism and Bolshevism should have the opportunity of public dissociation from them.

Cannon's letters are a gift to all the anti-Bolsheviks, professional and amateur. They give them an unexpected and unwarranted opportunity to confirm their criticisms by referring, for once, to a self-styled "Bolshevik." If politics is an esoteric affair, like "every other art and science, every profession and occupations"; and if it is only the affair of "we Leninists [who] have studied the art"; and if, consequently, it is not the province of the non-party world (including not only such educated Marxists as Farrell but—the masses of workers) to practise or even to discuss it; and if—most absurd "if" of all—Cannon is expressing the Bolshevik viewpoint; then the anti-Bolsheviks are uncontestedly right! Then, Bolshevism would indeed be fundamentally identical, or would "lead inevitably to" Stalinism. Politics is nothing but the struggle to gain or hold state power. Stalinist politics (here it resembles all bourgeois politics) aims at holding state power against and over the masses. The Stalinist gang is the "expert" in politics, i.e., the struggle for state power, and it sees to it that the "amateurs," i.e., the masses, i.e., the "people who don't know the business, do not presume to lay down the law to those who do."

It is not surprising, therefore, that Dwight Macdonald should

gleefully snatch up Cannon's free gift and use it in the current issue of his magazine, *Politics*. Cannon serves him as evidence that the "organizational" principles and concepts of Bolshevism are innately authoritarian or totalitarian and therefore are connected, somehow or other, or lead to, somehow or other, Stalinism itself.

What "organizational principles" Macdonald himself would substitute for Bolshevism or what he thinks is Bolshevism, he does not yet know and cannot yet say; but he is not to be rushed, and, with the aid of deep thought, skepticism and, above all, longevity, he will one historical day hand down the recipe. Meanwhile, he is so busy feeding his hobby the oats of Cannon's letters, that he has no time to note such facts as: his inability to find anything resembling Cannon's monstrosities in the teachings or practices of Lenin, which are a living refutation of Cannon and Macdonald; the living refutation of Cannon represented by the Workers Party, a Bolshevik organization; and the fact that the leader of the opposition in Cannon's own party, Albert Goldman, who not only speaks in defense of Bolshevism but does so authentically, fights for views on revolutionary politics and the character of the revolutionary party which are in direct conflict with Cannon's conceptions. Macdonald evidently agrees with Cannon on one point: that the latter is the genuine representative of Bolshevism. A ludicrous error!

However accurately Cannon may be presenting his own conceptions, they have nothing—absolutely nothing—in common with the ideas, traditions and practices of Bolshevism. This is made sufficiently clear in the article by Goldman. To the criticism and views set forth in this article, we are glad to subscribe wholeheartedly.—EDITOR.

#### CANNON'S LETTERS

I forced myself to read again the letter of James T. Farrell. You don't know what an effort of self-discipline it takes to restrain me from answering that letter the way it deserves to be answered and letting our press publish both. However, a politician must write always to serve political ends and may not permit himself the indulgence of mere self-expression.

James T. Farrell didn't realize how hard he was trying to confirm the assertion that he "strongly objects to"—about the superiority of Trotskyist morality. In addition to its other faults—and everything in it is wrong—his letter is dishonest. When we read Frankel's article again we were astounded to see how grossly Farrell misrepresented it. And the tone of the letter! It is rude and brutal. He would never dream of permitting himself to write that way in a critical letter addressed to the *Nation*, *Politics* or the *Saturday Review of Literature*. But Frankel and Hansen are only young and not very prominent writers for a small outcast party. Why bother to be polite or fair to them? Nothing is more contemptible in my eyes than to reserve one's good manners for equals and superiors and speak to "little people" like a boor. That, by my standards, is immoral.

Farrell is greatly mistaken if he imagines that he can maintain relations with us on that basis. And he is still more greatly mistaken if he thinks his collaboration with us in the defense case entails any *political* obligations on our part. Our party is too dignified, too sure of itself, to take any guff from anybody. I look forward to the day when I will be free and it will be politically expedient for me to speak for the party on this theme.

August 29, 1944

#### An Insult to the Party

The leaders of the opposition showed a great deal of disregard for the opinions and sentiment of the party membership. Perhaps the worst manifestation was the demand that James T. Farrell's letter be published; the attempt to impose his pompous strictures on the party as some kind of authority

which the party was bound to recognize. That was a coarse and brutal insult to the party. The party would not be a party if it had not learned to rely on itself and to reject out of hand every suggestion of guidance from outside sources.

We learn and correct our mistakes through mutual discussion and criticism among ourselves. We Leninists have studied the art of revolutionary politics and organization and our decisions receive the constant corrective of the workers' mass movement. We *work at it* every day. Such individuals as James T. Farrell, whose main interest and occupation lie in other fields, haven't yet started even to think about it seriously. His banal letter alone is sufficient proof of that. Before he, or anyone like him, can presume to teach us he must himself first go to school. We take our ideas and our work far too seriously to welcome instruction from people who haven't the slightest idea of what they are talking about; who mistake vague impressions and philistine prejudices for professional competence.

It is remarkable how politics lures the amateur. Every other art and science, every profession and occupation, has its own recognized body of knowledge and its own rules and standards which amateurs and laymen respect from a distance and take for granted. People who don't know the business do not presume to lay down the law to those who do. Neither James T. Farrell, nor anyone else who didn't wish to make himself ridiculous, would ever dream of intruding—with a ponderous air of authority, at that—on a discussion among practitioners of another art or profession outside the field of his own special study and experience.

But in the art of revolutionary politics and organization—which is not the least difficult nor the least important of the arts—since its aim is to change the world—any dabbler feels free to pontificate without the slightest sign of serious preparation. Dwight Macdonald is the arch-type of these political Alices in Wonderland. But Farrell, as the most cursory reading of his childish letter shows, is not much closer to the real world. There is nothing we can do about it. We can't prevent such people from committing their half-baked notions to paper as soon as they pop into their heads and then waiting for the earth to quake.

But we have people in our ranks—worse yet in our leadership—who excitedly demand that we set aside our rules and suspend our business to listen to these preposterous oracles and even to heed their revelations. We should in all conscience object to that. That is downright offensive. We now learn that James T. Farrell's letter has finally found its place in Schachtman's magazine. That is where it belonged in the first place.

January 16, 1945

JAMES P. CANNON.

#### GOLDMAN'S REPLY

In Comrade Cannon's comments on the letter of James T. Farrell, in which Farrell criticizes the articles of Comrades Hansen and Frankel, there is revealed an attitude which is not only incorrect but Stalinist in character. If all the leading comrades were to adopt a similar attitude it would bring great harm to the party.

The comments are handed down to posterity in the form of excerpts from letters written by Cannon and published under the title of "Notes on the Party Discussion" in the *Internal Bulletin* of April, 1945. Taken as a whole the "notes" constitute a pail of filth without a single reasoned argument and hence cannot be answered. Hurled at the intended victims,

the filth can only dirty the author and, unfortunately, the party. One is compelled, however, to take notice of the comments on Farrell's letter because the intelligent party members must be warned of the harm that a Stalinist attitude to the revolutionary intellectuals can do to the party.

It is not my intention to analyze all of the statements made by Cannon in his remarks dealing with the Farrell letter. Practically every sentence in both of Cannon's letters dealing with Farrell's criticism contains gross errors and obvious half-truths. It would be of no great value, however, to prove that this is so. What is of value is to analyze the attitude which Cannon has toward people like Farrell when they are critical of anyone in the party who faithfully follows Cannon's leadership.

### **Intellectuals and the Marxist Movement**

That the Marxist movement should attract to itself many intellectuals is only to be expected. Even before it reaches a stage of decay, capitalist society is full of so many repelling contrasts that the best elements of those who are busy in the world of ideas are attracted to a movement which proposes to transform the world, abolish exploitation of man by man and at the same time create the possibility of true intellectual freedom.

Unfortunately a socialist movement that grows in numbers and influence and has at its disposal positions with some remuneration and a good deal of prestige, attracts to itself many careerists. Doctors, lawyers, journalists, professors who are willing to represent the workers in parliament constitute an opportunist element dangerous to the movement.

It must not be forgotten that those intellectuals who devoted their lives to the socialist movement without any thought of remuneration or prestige played an exceedingly important rôle in the growth and development of revolutionary parties. It was Lenin who held to the theory—how correct it is need not be discussed at this time—that socialist consciousness was brought to the working masses by the revolutionary intellectuals, that without the aid of these intellectuals the workers can only arrive at trade-union consciousness. One can dispute that theory, but no one can dispute the fact that revolutionary intellectuals of the type of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky gave guidance and furnished leadership to the revolutionary working class movement.

In addition to the intellectuals who participated directly in the work of the party, there were in the past and there will undoubtedly be in the future many writers and artists who see injustices and hypocrisies of capitalist society and reveal a strong sympathy for the aims of socialism. Such intellectuals can be of tremendous help to the revolutionary party. An attitude which repels the best of these intellectuals can do nothing but harm to the party.

### **The Stalinist Attitude**

At present it is hardly conceivable that an intellectual with any intelligence would support the Stalinist party on the theory that it is a revolutionary party. But there were many revolutionary intellectuals who, in the mistaken belief that the Stalinist party was a revolutionary party, supported that party before the days of the Moscow Trials. For the intellectual who indicated sympathy for the Stalinist party nothing was too good—so long as he accepted the voice of the big Stalinist bureaucrats, especially the voice of Stalin, as an emanation of

the divine will. Such an intellectual could be fairly certain that his works of art in his own field would not be subjected to any artistic standard but would be proclaimed the works of genius. The price the intellectual had to pay to receive recognition as a great artist was the unconditional acceptance of the party line.

If the intellectual, however, became critical of the party line or of something that was done by an important party bureaucrat, the wrath of the apparatus would be sure to descend upon him. His artistic creations were either ignored or shown to be mediocre in character; he became an enemy of the people.

Is it difficult to see that a revolutionary intellectual with some regard for his ideas could not possibly remain sympathetic to such a party? One of the many great crimes perpetrated by Stalinism consists in the fact that it succeeded in bringing disillusionment to many intellectuals who had been attracted to the revolutionary movement.

By and large the intellectuals who were sympathetic to the Stalinist parties in the late Twenties and the early Thirties were not of the type who were attracted to a radical party because it was a large and powerful party. These intellectuals were not experts in Marxist theory and could not see the implications of the theory of socialism in one country but they were willing to help in the struggle for socialism. True, the prestige of the Soviet Union was behind the Stalinist party and that was some compensation for the unpopularity of the Stalinists, but, after all, not all the intellectuals could hope to go to the Soviet Union, where they would be feted in return for their willingness to advertise the merits of the Soviet bureaucracy.

It can be truthfully contended that most of the intellectuals actively supporting the Stalinist party prior to the days of the Popular Front were not seeking to make a career out of their connections with the Stalinist movement. They were devoted to the idea of socialism but were alienated and driven away by the attitude of the Stalinists toward them.

If the critical and independent intellectuals were disillusioned and driven away from the revolutionary movement, those who were not so independent were corrupted. A party that had to defend itself against Trotskyism by falsehoods and slanders was corroded through and through. No critical intellectual could have remained a supporter of the Stalinist party for long without suppressing his critical faculties or becoming thoroughly dishonest. It is impossible for a human being to tolerate that which he deems to be wrong and dishonest without destroying his moral fibre.

Able intellectuals who could contribute to the revolutionary movement were either corrupted or disillusioned by their experience with the Stalinist party. Instead of a party which feared no criticism because it felt itself able to defend its ideas and practices against the whole world, the intellectuals were confronted by a party which demanded complete and unconditional acceptance of all its ideas and actions and would not tolerate any criticism.

Either to accept and praise everything the party did and said or to be considered an enemy of the party were the alternatives confronting the intellectual in his relationship to the Stalinist party. They who accepted and praised became corrupt; the independent intellectuals were either completely disillusioned with the ideas of revolutionary Marxism which they thought were represented by Stalinism, or else, in the

case of a very small number, turned to the true exponent of revolutionary socialism—the Trotskyist movement.

### Cannon's Attitude to Farrell

A revolutionary party does not kowtow to any intellectual, but that does not mean that any responsible party leader is justified in ridiculing a criticism offered by an intellectual who has clearly indicated his sympathy to the party. Whenever a revolutionary intellectual sympathetic to the party undertakes to interpret the ideas of the party to the outside world he must expect criticism if criticism is due. He is given the right to be critical of the party or of anything said or done by a representative of the party. He can expect a reply from someone connected with the party but not a pail of garbage hurled at him.

It is only natural that a revolutionary intellectual having any respect for himself should not hesitate to criticize anything a party member says or does when he disagrees with it. He would not be a revolutionary intellectual if he refrained from criticizing that which he disagrees with. If the criticism has something to do with the party line, the party does not hesitate to answer the critical intellectual. I am certain that Farrell understands that simple rule very well. If he criticizes party policy he expects an answer.

The letter which Farrell wrote for publication in *Fourth International* had nothing to do with party policy. His criticisms of Hansen and Frankel were not directed at anything officially adopted by the party. The refusal to publish his letter was undoubtedly construed by him as an act of a Stalinist character. In so construing the refusal he was correct. In addition the leader of the party comments on his letter in such a way that Farrell cannot help but be driven away from our party. He is not a party person whose duty it is to fight any manifestations of a Stalinist character. He is a revolutionary intellectual sympathetic to the party, and Stalinist rudeness and stupidity repel him.

What is the essential attitude that Cannon reveals in his comments on the Farrell letter? It is this: so long as the intellectual does nothing that I dislike, so long as he praises me and my followers, so long is he acceptable. But let him raise his voice in criticism either of myself or of my followers and he will feel the full weight of a rude and boorish attack.

Instead of publishing Farrell's letter in our press and presenting a reasoned argument showing that Farrell was wrong in his criticism, the letter is refused publication. And then Cannon proceeds to write a reply shocking in its implications and conceals it from the public by publishing it in the *Internal Bulletin*, indicating thereby that he feels himself incompetent to answer Farrell's letter in the public press. Of course Cannon boasts that he had to restrain himself from answering Farrell's letter the way it deserved to be answered and let the press publish both Farrell's letter and the answer. Vain and empty boast! The best answer Cannon could give consists of the comments published in the *Internal Bulletin*. And the main point that these comments make is to tell Farrell not to interfere with the esoteric science of politics.

### Politics as a Mysterious Science

According to Cannon, Farrell, although only an amateur, dared invade the precincts of the art and science of revolutionary politics by writing a letter criticizing Hansen and Frankel. Let us see what aspect of the art and science of revolutionary politics Farrell concerned himself with in his letter.

Did he give the party advice on some political theory, on some question of Marxist politics or economics? Had he done so it would have been incumbent upon some leading member of the party to show him that he was wrong, assuming that he was in error. But when one analyzes the actual contents of Farrell's letter, one can clearly see that Cannon's comments have no relevancy whatever. Farrell did not take issue with any party policy or theory of Marxism; he simply criticized the contents and tone of certain articles.

I know very little about astronomy and would certainly refuse to offer an opinion on some theory involving knowledge of astro-physics. But if a scientist presents an article arguing that the theory of an opponent is senseless because the opponent is a member of an "inferior race" I could certainly intervene and give my opinion of that argument. I would not be intervening as an expert in astronomy but as a person who understands that proof in all controversies requires logic and reason.

When it concerns questions of politics the matter is still more simple. Politics is in fact the only art or science which has aspects upon which every person is able to offer an opinion. Do we not urge every worker to participate in the science of politics? Do we not, by asking the masses to support us, also ask them to give us their opinion about our science of politics?

Indeed, Farrell has in all probability read and studied as much of Marxist theory as most of the leading elements in our party. Although not a party person, his opinion on questions of politics can be given serious consideration. But the fact remains that in his letter he did not deal with party policy or theory; he criticized what to him seemed articles miserable both in content and tone. Whether he is correct or not is immaterial; what is material is that as an intelligent person Farrell was justified in making his criticism and Cannon's sneer at his being an amateur is utterly out of place.

### Browder, the Intellectuals and the Moscow Trials

It is significant that in attacking the intellectuals who questioned the methods used and the convictions obtained in the Moscow Trials, Browder used an almost identical argument that Cannon used in attacking Farrell. In polemicizing against Reinhold, Niebuhr, Browder stated that Niebuhr's attitude "can be explained only by assuming that he claims special privileges for the artist to go free-lancing in the field of sharpest political struggles without accountability to anyone. According [to] this theory the artist may decide to try to put a whole government on trial, a socialist government at that, and propose as judges the highest legal talent in the bourgeois world, unconnected with revolutionary politics in any way—and because he is an artist—even a 'great artist'—we are to treat such nonsense with respectful consideration." (*Communism and Culture*, by Earl Browder)

What does Browder in effect state to those intellectuals who, outraged by Stalin's murder of the Old Bolsheviks and his charge that Trotsky was a fascist conspirator, were willing to interfere in politics to the extent of participating in an impartial investigation of the charges? "You are only artists and intellectuals. Keep your hands out of politics, which is a science and an art requiring great learning and experience for proficiency. You are amateurs. Leave the art and science of politics to Stalin and to me, humble servant of the great genius."

I do not know whether anyone in our ranks answered Browder. The answer is of course obvious. Under the claim that politics is an esoteric science and an art requiring great

knowledge and experience, Browder wants the intellectuals to keep aloof from the Moscow Trials. But the politics involved in the Moscow frame-ups is just the kind of politics that every intelligent intellectual and worker should concern himself with. This kind of politics deals with questions of fact, of reason and of truth. Not only do the intellectuals have a right but a duty to interfere in such politics.

Is it necessary for me to remind Cannon and others that we strongly urged every intellectual to interfere in the politics of the Moscow Trials? We did not tell them then that politics is not their business. We were of course ready to take issue with them if they deduced from the trials a political conclusion with which we did not agree, but we were anxious for them to intervene.

When Farrell intervenes in practical politics by criticizing the contents and tone of certain articles that appeared in our press, Cannon tells him that he knows nothing about politics and should stick to his profession. When Farrell intervened in politics to defend the name of Trotsky against the slanders of the Stalinists, Browder told him that he knew nothing about politics and should stick to his profession.

#### Correct Attitude to Intellectuals

Stalinism has created a great dread among the best type of revolutionary intellectuals—the dread that a revolutionary party calling itself Bolshevik demands unconditional acceptance of its ideas and practices and tolerates no criticism. The intellectual interested in revolutionary politics constantly tends to confuse Stalinism with Bolshevism. This fact requires extraordinary patience on our part. Even where an honest intellectual makes a mistake, our correction of him should in the first instance be garbed in a friendly tone. But if, as in the case of Farrell, the criticism is entirely friendly and, in my opinion, essentially correct, then the kind of reply Cannon made can only confirm the suspicion of the intellectual that Stalinism and Bolshevism are one and the same thing. Fortunately, Farrell knows that Cannon's attitude to the revolutionary intellectual has nothing to do with Bolshevism.

But why, I can hear some comrades say, is Goldman worried about alienating the revolutionary intellectuals? The answer is that alienating any group by a wrong attitude is harmful to our cause. If the intellectual elements are alienated by our program and correct activities, then there is nothing to fear. But if any intellectuals are alienated by an attitude which Cannon reveals in his comments on Farrell's letter, then it is not only the intellectual but every intelligent worker who is alienated.

And are there any prospects for getting the support of intellectual elements? We can expect nothing from the intellectual elements of the type of Eastman who in their younger days fought a valiant battle for the ideals of socialism. Disillusioned by Stalinism, they have succumbed to the temptations of bourgeois democracy at the very time when its rotting corpse is bringing forth totalitarian barbarism.

But a new generation of intellectuals is coming on the scene. These intellectuals are not likely to listen to the Eastmans who have given up the struggle. From among them, the best elements can be won over to Trotskyism and our movement can be greatly benefitted. But to win them over we must first convince them that there is not a single trace of Stalinism in our movement.

To win the support of the worthwhile intellectuals they must be made to feel that the party encourages a critical and independent attitude; that they are free to criticize us and that they can expect answers based on facts and reasoned argument and need not expect Stalinist filth to be thrown at them. A correct attitude to the intellectuals has absolutely nothing to do with yielding to their incorrect ideas. It means a confident attitude—confident in our ideas and our ability to defend them. It is this confidence that leads to a correct relationship between us and revolutionary intellectuals attracted to our party. Cannon's attitude is in reality a result of his inability to defend his ideas and his actions.

ALBERT GOLDMAN.

May 21, 1945.

# Historical Image of Napoleon

## The Essence of Bonapartism

(This is the second article on Napoleon by James T. Farrell, from a work in progress on Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Copyright, 1945—James T. Farrell, Editor.)

Here, it is pertinent for us to go back and to examine the idea of glory. The men who were the leaders of the Revolution in its great, its heroic, its democratic days, idealized the republicans of antiquity and they sought to emulate them. Robespierre and his contemporaries, for instance, cited, as models of emulation, such ancient figures as Solon and Brutus. They repeatedly used the phrase, "the Tarpeian rock," and proclaimed, in the eloquent style of their times, that they feared not to go to it: to it, most of them did go. Napoleon, also, thought often and spoke of the ancient world. But in it, he found different models, Alexander and

Caesar. He appreciated Homer, largely because of the Homeric accounts of war and of heroes. He thought of legions and eagles. He wanted, himself, to surpass Caesar in deeds and for his legions to surpass the achievements of the legions of Caesar. Even his style differs from that of the early men of the Revolution. They were more rhetorical, more eloquent: there is more of the language of persuasion in their writings: its appeal is to the people, not to soldiers and underlings. Napoleon—an excellent writer—wrote and spoke in a style that was crisp, clear, terse: it is a style of command. As a speaker, he was best when talking to soldiers. Among the many comparisons that can be made between Napoleon and Julius Caesar, one is that of style. Caesar, also, wrote in a crisp, clear and economical style. The early leaders of the Revolution, no less than Napoleon, dreamed of glory. But theirs was not precisely the same glory as was that of Napoleon.

"Revolutions," wrote Kropotkin, "are never the result of despair. . . . On the contrary, the people of 1789, had caught a glimpse of the light of approaching freedom, and for that reason, they rose with great heart." Formally, the consciousness of freedom is expressed in such documents as the Bill of the Rights of Man. Among other things, it proclaimed that men have the right to think, the right to express opinions freely. This right is cognate with a real consciousness of freedom, and with human dignity. Man, in his ascent from the Kingdom of the ape, has had to—as must every child—discover that he has a mind, a consciousness. He had had to discover the very means which could even permit him to know that he has such a consciousness. The Great French Revolution was one of the mightiest steps in history aiding man in this discovery, in his further conquest of freedom. The ideas of glory of the early Revolution are intimately associated with these facts.

In those days, new men rose on the stage of history, nursing their new dreams of glory. The most extreme, the most enthusiastic, of these men dreamed of glory for all men, glory for all men in freedom. Anarcharsis Cloots visioned a universal republic. Yes, glory was then different from what it became in the era of *la gloire*. Parenthetically, I might remark that Stendhal, novelist of the tragedy of glory, recognized and commented on this. In his biography, *Mémoires Sur Napoléon*, he described the enthusiasm of the first days of the revolution: he stated that the Napoleon, the great man he admired was General Bonaparte, and not the Emperor Napoleon I. He stressed the use of the former name, not the latter. In the first and heroic days of the Revolution, glory was associated with the ideals of liberty, fraternity, equality. Saint-Just, while still too young to be admitted to the Legislative Assembly, was intensely absorbed in the life of the times, and wrote an agitated letter to a friend which has been preserved. He stated: "I feel that I could ride the crest of this century. Companions of liberty and glory, preach them in your Sections: may danger encompass you." Also, he spoke of "the audacity of magnanimous virtue," and added: "Adieu! I stand above misfortune. I will bear everything but I will tell the truth." To achieve glory then was to work self-sacrificingly and devotedly in the effort to create a great republic of freedom and virtue. Yes, in those days to scale the crests of that century was, to avenge justice and virtue, and to cut down tyrants. To win everlasting glory was to help in the establishment of liberty. Personal ambition did not stir these men as it did those in the days of *la gloire*. Saint-Just, for instance, also said: "Let those who are ambitious go and walk for an hour in the cemetery, where the tyrant and the conspirator sleep together."

### **"The Principles of Political Morality"**

This ideal of glory was formally expressed in the Jacobin ideal of the Republic of Virtue. On February 5th, 1794, Robespierre delivered in the Convention, a report on *les principes de morale politique*. I quote from it. "But what is our aim? . . . the peaceful enjoyment of liberty and equality, and the reign of eternal justice whose laws are engraved not on marble or stone, but in the hearts of every man—whether of the slave who forgets them, or of the tyrants who denies their truth. We desire an order of things in which all base and cruel feelings will be suppressed and all beneficent and generous sentiments evoked by the laws; in which ambition means the desire to merit honour, and to serve one's country, in which rank is the offspring of equality; in which the citizen obeys the magistrate, the magistrate the people, and the people the rule of justice;

in which the country guarantees the well-being of every citizen, and every citizen is proud to share in the glory and prosperity of the country; in which every soul grows greater by the constant sharing of republican sentiments, and by the endeavor to win the respect of great people; in which liberty is adorned by the arts it ennobles; and commerce is a source of public wealth, not merely of the monstrous opulence of a few households. We want to substitute in our country, morality for egotism, honesty for love of honour, principles for conventions, duties for decorum, the empire of reason for the tyranny of fashion, the fear of vice for the dread of unimportance: we want to substitute pride for insolence, magnanimity for vanity, the love of glory for the love of gold: we want to replace 'good company' by good characters, intrigue by merit, wit by genius, brilliance by truth, and the dullness of debauch by the charm of happiness. For the pettiness of the so-called great we would substitute the full stature of humanity; in place of an easy-going, frivolous and discontented people create one that is happy, powerful, and stout-hearted; and replace the vices and follies of the monarchy by the virtue and amazing achievements of the Republic."

From Meneval, Bourrienne and other sources, the private life of Napoleon can be glimpsed. Both in his private life, and in his public career, we find that he illustrates many of the precise opposites of that which Robespierre affirmed in his ideal conception of the Republic of Virtue. The pomp of the festival of the coronation here can suffice to suggest this to the reader. (2) The English scholar J. M. Thompson attempts to reconstruct Robespierre's private life during the time when he lived in the house of the carpenter, Duplay. (3) Some evenings there was singing from his favorite Italian operas, and Buonarroti played the piano. Or Robespierre read aloud from Racine or Corneille, and then, he would go to his room and work. All present sometimes would together take part in declaiming from the professional speakers. A few evenings a year, he would take Madame Duplay and her daughter to see classical dramas at the *Théâtre Français*. The family would walk on the Champs Elysées or go on excursions into the country. They would enjoy quiet sports and Robespierre would watch the Savoyard children dance, give them money, and exclaim: "it était bon." (Thompson here, while giving this detail cautions that it might be borrowed from the life of Rousseau, Robespierre's master.) At this point, Thompson continues: "he was never so gay and happy as on these occasions, and it was generally on these evenings, when they got home, that he recited his favorite poetry." Or Robespierre would go on solitary walks with his dog. These recreations, says the same biographer, "were exceptional." Usually, there was the Assembly from 10 to 3 or 4 in the afternoon: the Jacobin Club from 6 or earlier until 10. Around five, he ate a hurried dinner, and Madame Duplay tried to have oranges and coffee for him. And reports to read: letters: speeches to compose: interviews: "Robespierre's was a regular, temperate, and laborious life." And: "His hosts were simple, honest patriots of the *lower middle class—the backbone of the Revolution*; and the house in the rue Saint-Honoré was a perfect setting for the public life of 'the Incorrputible.'" (Italics mine. J.T.F.) A similar reconstruction of the private life, say, of Marat would add additional emphasis here to the contrast. (4) Now, suffice it to say that the differences in the days when there was something glorious from those of the days of glory exist on every level of experience. Elsewhere in this book, I shall have other observations to offer in this respect.

## Corruption and the Directory

The period between the fall of the Jacobins on the 9th Thermidor and the 18th of Brumaire, when Napoleon's *coup d'état* lifted him to power, is almost uniformly described by historians as *seamy*. Mathiez quotes the writer, M. Thureau-Dangin: "In the general histories, once one has passed the 9th Thermidor and arrived at the years which follow one another, colorless and desolate, agitated and sterile, up to the 18th Brumaire, the writers seem to be seized with weariness and disgust.... Everything, both events and men, is on a smaller scale.... The stage is given over to minor characters, and things have reached such a pass that Tallien, Barras and their like become leading characters." And Mathiez closed his study, *After Robespierre: The Thermidorean Reaction*, by pointing the moral to be found in this period: "The profound unpopularity of the Convention in its latter days, which was also to weigh upon the government which followed it was well deserved. Since the 9th Thermidor the men who had overthrown Robespierre had identified themselves and their private interests with the Republic. They had constantly violated the principles of democracy. They had been even more arbitrary than the government whose place they had taken. Their policy had neither cohesion nor consistency, and, being inspired by nothing but the needs of the moment, alienated every party in turn—both the Jacobins, whom they imprisoned and allowed to be massacred, and the constitutional royalists, whose road to power they had finally barred...."

The great majority of Frenchmen despised these men who made politics a profession and a source of profit. The Perpetuals had nobody behind them but the purchasers of national property and the army-contractors, a narrow phalanx, but bold and well disciplined. This, with the aid of the army, sufficed to enable them to maintain themselves in power in opposition to the wishes of the great majority. But it was a serious matter that the régime of parliamentary government which was now inaugurated should be vitiated from the outset at its sources and in its activities, and that so early as this the representatives of the people no longer represented anyone but themselves. This was an undoubted sign that the Republic which they exploited as though it were their own property would not last.

With the fall of Robespierre, no real reign of order was established, let alone one of liberty. The White Terror was ushered in. The ruling deputies "literally formed a new nobility, placed by the Constitution outside the common law," as Mathiez further remarked. Step by step, the democratic gains of the Revolution were destroyed. Step by step, reaction proceeded insidiously. Robespierre had held that only the superfluities of commerce should be sold. But the Jacobins had not had the strength to achieve any such aim: they were sufficiently strong only to save France at the head of the most revolutionary class of their times. Their fall initiated the triumph of the middle class.

This dreary period is describable as a Roman middle class holiday. With the increase and intensification of reaction, the Convention broke up, and the Directory supplanted it. Kropotkin, who significantly closed his history with Thermidor, remarked in his conclusion: "The Directory was a terrible orgy of the middle classes, in which fortunes acquired during the Revolution, especially during the Thermidorean reaction, were squandered in unbridled luxury." And the evidence substantiating such remarks is overwhelming. Mathiez opened his

work, *Le Directoire*, by characterizing this period as one in which were violated "every day the principles of the Republic, under the pretext of saving the Republic." The Directory was a government of a minority, a *coup d'état* government maintaining itself by exceptional measures. Here was, in fact, a *seamy* middle class régime of profit taking and spending, made possible as a consequence of the Revolution. The revolutionary war which France fought to defend herself became more than a war of defense. It, also, became one of loot. Pillage of one kind or another was on the order of the day. In fact, Mathiez called France of this time, "The Republic of pillage." At the same time there was observable the phenomenon of personal government. And again as also said Mathiez, such a republic accumulated all of the vices of the old and the new society. Patriotism was either decadent or an excuse for such a régime, a reign of "order." The real signs of patriotism, when they did flare in France, were crushed. The population became more and more indifferent to the suffrage and the election laws. Emigrés marched in troops, sword in hand, singing counter-revolutionary songs. There was inflation with all of its inevitable concomitants, all of the misery which it brought to the weak and the poor. The great ideal of the nation gradually changed into the ideal of the Great Nation. And with this, foreign war became the war of the Great Nation: it became, among other things, a means of loot. "It is not Bonaparte," said Mathiez, "... who habituated the French army to marauding and pillaging.... The evil was before him. The miserable army that Bonaparte commanded lived on pillage for a long time: conquest was for it essentially a means to subsist."

This was the period of the profit taking of the glory of the days from 1789 to 1794. And a study of this period makes it clear that it was not the democracy, the dictatorial democracy of the Terror that destroyed the Republic. Those armed citizens of 1789, they did not destroy the democracy. And neither did the license of popular will destroy the democracy. Those who profited most from the Revolution destroyed the democratic aspects of the same Revolution. In this early day, before the bourgeoisie had exhausted its progressive historical rôle, the contradictions between democracy and the rule of the bourgeoisie were already revealed. The rule of wealth and the reign of freedom were not compatible. Some writers on democratic theory, such as Harold Laski, formalize this by discussing the contradictions between the ideal of liberty and the ideal of equality. But this formality usually conceals the real contradiction: that is between the rule of wealth and the rule of the masses, the rule of the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of a real democracy.

Revolutions are periods of civil war. The French Revolution was civil war. Dual power was created in France in 1789. Dictatorship was ushered in then. The most revolutionary class, the *sans-culottes*, did not have a sufficient separation of interests, a sufficiently independent program, a sufficient power and force to push the Revolution further. This class—pushing its Jacobin leaders to the left, driving some of them into republicanism and regicide—saved the Revolution, assured its basic gains. Once this was done, once the victories of Fleurus finally assured defense against the foreign foe, the fall of the Jacobins was on the order of the day. Reaction took the form of the rule of wealth. And this period of middle class orgy created all of the conditions for the man on horseback. Just prior to the 18th Brumaire, there was a revival of

the Jacobins: the clubs seemed to be springing back to life. Fear of the people was revivified. And, at the same time, concessions had been made to monarchy, to the defeated class. Politically, economically, the new ruling class needed order in its house, and it needed a man of order. The bourgeois man of order is, in the final analysis, the man on horseback. Between Thermidor and Brumaire, the conditions for the rise of this man were created. He came to power by the *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire. He breathed the very ideas of eighteenth century individualism, identified his own interests with those of the French nation and, in fact, Napoleonic egotism can even be described as a dramatization and super-extension of individualism.

#### **Bonaparte: Child of the Revolution**

Bonaparte was a "child of the Revolution," not only in the sense that it created the conditions for his rise, his glories, his rule. He was, also, as a man of his century, fed by the ideas of the Enlightenment. In other portions of this book, when we consider and evaluate Tolstoy's characterization of him, this will be considered in detail. Napoleon, who fathered the slogan that careers are open to all men of talent, was himself a young man of talent looking for a career. The Revolution opened the road to him for his career. It provided him with his Toulon. His fate was tied to that of the middle class. From the Bourbons he could expect nothing. The young men of Toulon and Vendemaire, in fact, could expect worse than nothing. He was, in the period just prior to his *coup d'état*, but one of the generals aspiring for that seat on horseback. We know how he maneuvered, plotted and succeeded.

No one ruler does all that is attributed to him. Napoleon was the administrator, the executive, the military leader, the man who forged and coördinated the policy of the French middle class. More than anything else, what is to be said of him was that he was adequate to his tasks. When his greatness is regarded, it can, most properly, be seen in contrast to the figures who immediately preceded him, rather than in connection with the leaders of the Revolution during its early stages. He seems so overwhelmingly superior because these men were so petty. It was under his rule that the economic gains of the Revolution were secured. It was under his rule of a grandiose policeman that order was put in the house of the bourgeoisie and that the populace was, as a whole, bribed and forced into its proper place at the bottom of society. It was under his direction and with his coöperation that the Code was written, ordering the law of France, establishing the changes of property rights which were effected in the Revolution. It was under his rule that the last democratic gains of the Revolution of a political character were erased: for instance, he ended local autonomy. His great administrative contribution was that of establishing a centralized system which made more easily, more orderly, more sure, the rule of the middle class. His work, his rôle was not to bring liberty. He was the hangman of liberty. Instead, he offered some equality, and order. This fact is suggestive, showing more decisively the nature of the incompatibility of equality and liberty as a consequence of class rule. Under Napoleon, the potentialities released by the Revolution, those potentialities which seemed so dormant in the post-Thermidorean period, were utilized. French arms were carried across the continent of Europe. The army, originally forged as the patriot army of Carnot, became the basis for the Grand Army, instrument of Napoleonic policy. Then,

feudal thrones shook. The crowned heads of Europe received blows, blows from which they never recovered. Looking back at Napoleon today we must see him against the background of such an age, and as the product of conditions such as those outlined in this analysis.

#### **Military Genius and Bourgeois Emperor**

Napoleon Bonaparte was, in reality, the last great martial captain of the bourgeoisie, as Cromwell was the first. The tasks which he inherited were not merely military. He was well aware of this. With all of his apparent love of war, he did not make war for mere love. It was Clausewitz, military theoretician of the Napoleonic era, who declared that war is an instrument of policy. This was no mere speculation. It was concrete observation based on Napoleon and the Napoleonic period. Napoleon was the man of his times with grasp, policy. He neither invented nor visioned this policy out of his own head. He coördinated it, attempted to implement it in and by war. Before him, the mercantilist economists conceived war as an instrument of policy, a means of securing and increasing the wealth of the nation. Napoleon did likewise: he acted on the principle that war is an instrument of policy. His continental system was not merely a means of loot: it was the expression of this policy. It expressed the idea of a unified Europe under the ægis of a bourgeois France: with this, it embodied a Europe free of tariff barriers, free of all feudal fetters and one vast era for expansion. In a sense this was a vision parallel to that of Alexander Hamilton in America. Negatively, this system was a form of economic warfare aimed to bring England to her knees. But had this been accomplished, the positive aim of the system would also have been achieved.

Napoleon often spoke proudly of his *work*. There can be no doubt but that he was proud of his own glory. With success, victories, power, his egotism became exaggerated. He dreamed of mastery of the world. But, at the same time, if we interpret him subjectively, if we see him merely as the embodiment of a spirit of war and egotism, we will not understand either him or his times. He was a bourgeois emperor and acutely conscious of this fact. Thus, in Moscow, he posed the question of freeing the Russian serfs. He did not issue an emancipation proclamation. He knew that he was a man who ended devolutions, not one who began them. Aware of this he knew that he was based on the middle class. He was, thereby, the man of order. He was, equally, aware that in the period of his rule, the power of the middle class had been secured: the Revolution was, in this sense, made irreversible. Thus, when he was dethroned, he remarked that all that Louis XVIII needed to do was to change the bed linen at the Tuilleries: also, at Elba, he said that if Louis XVIII did nothing more for commerce, he was doomed to failure. Just like his immediate predecessors in the Directory, Napoleon identified his own interest with that of the nation. But in his case, the juncture of his own interests, and that of the middle class masters of the nation, coincided. When this juncture was gradually severed as a consequence of recurrent war, then his fall became certain. The fall of Napoleon was not a mere military event, determined in the Russian snows and at the Battle of Leipzig. The task of unifying Europe was beyond the means of France. The co-relations of power of the period indicate this. France faced the combination of absolutist Russia and mercantilist England, the latter in command of the seas. The Revolution stimulated a hunger for liberty all over the continent of Europe. It generated this same hunger in the

countries which France invaded. Napoleon, unable to appease it in France, could not appease it outside of her borders. His rôle was twofold. He became judge and policeman in France, and he became the organizer and executor of French policy in Europe. Trotsky, in *The History of the Russian Revolution*, aptly summarized that rôle: "Napoleon guaranteed to the big bourgeoisie the possibility to get rich, to the peasants their pieces of lands, to the sons of peasants and hoboes a chance for looting in the wars. The judge held a sword in his hand and himself also fulfilled the duties of bailiff. The Bonapartism of the first Bonaparte was solidly founded." But that solid foundation did not permit Napoleon to succeed in his continental system. Robespierre, years before Napoleon's period of glory, said in opposing the Girondin agitation for the foreign war, that mankind does not love armed liberators. The armed liberator looked too much like the policeman. Outside of France, especially in Germany, the ideals of the Revolution stimulated opposition. And with this the separation of the interests of Napoleon and those of the nation—especially those of the big bourgeoisie—were evidenced. During the Hundred Days, he did not have the support of the French middle class. And when news of the Battle of Waterloo reached Paris, French government bonds rose on the Paris Bourse; they rose still further when Napoleon abdicated in 1815.

#### **Napoleon: Bonapartist**

Further changes can now be seen in our picture—uncomposed in 1789, composed in 1804. The scene becomes the Elysées Palace after the Battle of Waterloo. Outside on the streets are the descendants of those armed men and women of 1789, workmen, students, soldiers, young officers, the nondescript city rabble. Carnot, the old Jacobin, had spoken at the Assembly, calling for the armed nation to rise and to repulse the foreign invader, as it had done in the days of Danton. He received no encouragement. Caulaincourt was disturbed. Fouch , himself, sat unmoved, new plots spinning in his head. The fall of Napoleon meant more power for him and for Talleyrand. No one had seconded Carnot. But this waiting crowd was ready to follow Napoleon. Napoleon knew that he was not the man to drown Paris in blood. Napoleon could not speak as had Danton. Carnot had tried to do this. He failed. Napoleon, fat and over forty, had gone a long way since the days when he was a slim youth, friend and prot g  of Augustin Robespierre. The little fat man walked alone in the garden. The crowd outside saw him and cried out: *Vive la nation! Vive l'empereur!*" But Bonaparte was no longer their leader. To lead them now he had to offer not loot, but liberty. And that would have meant no restoration of the glory of 1804.

The French bourgeoisie (led by the greatest military genius of the age, supported by the greatest army that had—up to that point—ever been assembled in human history) had proven insufficient to the task of mastering Europe. It was tired. It was ready, more than ready, to let its man of glory go into the shades. The solid foundation of the first Bonapartism left behind it a solidly founded French bourgeoisie. The returning Bourbons could not destroy that foundation. To have headed the crowd outside, Napoleon would have had to try and undo that very foundation. In exile at St. Helena, he well could say that in the end he was only a Jacobin. But in June, 1815, he could not be a Jacobin—he dared not be one.

Napoleon is disappearing from our picture. One of the last scenes as he fades out is that of old Carnot, in tears, embracing Napoleon in farewell. The men who helped forge the

*sans-culotte* army of Valmy and the man of Austerlitz bid farewell. It is as if both were, at the same moment, bidding farewell to history. The period of glory symbolically ends, as it were, scenes like this one. An old man and a fat man in middle age say adieu—two children of the Revolution.

Napoleon's memory is tied to that of the Revolution. But now we can see in what sense this is so. The legacy he left was real. We have seen what that was. From his name, the crisis form of bourgeois rule has been derived—Bonapartism. There is illumination in this fact. Bonapartism, as a form of bourgeois rule, is not a historical accident. It is a consequence of this contradiction of bourgeois society. In the histories, this is all implicitly recognized. For every bourgeois historian who condemns his memory there are scores who heap their scorn on the Jacobins. The tribute paid Napoleon is due not merely to his indubitable greatness and genius: far more than that, it can be seen as if an unconscious payment of respect for services rendered. He became a figure around whom legend grew. The old soldiers of his legions became part of the democratic movement in the Restoration. His influence was felt on every current of thought in the nineteenth century. His rôle in literature would be but a separate study. His name became a symbol of glory. Even his ashes, returned to Paris, were used by Louis Philippe as a democratic gesture. When they were returned to Paris on a cold and snowy day in December, 1840, the forbidden *Marseillaise* was again sung in the streets.

But again let me emphasize that a major part of his historic contribution bears his name—Bonapartism, a word describing a form of personal and police rule in the interests of bourgeois society: this is a form of rule generally more adjustable to the conditions of bourgeois society as crises mount in intensity, and as the incompatibilities of this rule lead to a continual fettering of mankind in its long and blood-ridden struggle for freedom. In this sense, as well as in the more purely military one, he was the last great bourgeois captain. The next real man of iron was the reactionary Junker, Bismarck, the child of a revolution that failed rather than of one that succeeded. And after him, there came the more grandiose edition, Adolf Hitler, the child of a revolution that did not succeed on a whole continent. There were progressive elements in the work of Napoleon, as contrasted with the work of these men. And further, had Napoleon's policy succeeded, had he unified Europe, his rôle would have been progressive in the same sense that the work of Alexander Hamilton, in America, had its historically progressive character. But we need not here discuss historical *as ifs*.

With this view of Napoleon in mind, we can discuss in more detail, Tolstoy's characterization of him, his moral denunciation of Napoleon, his theory of history, and all of the real and seeming paradoxes which are to be found in these.

JAMES T. FARRELL.

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# More Questions of Clarification

## Scientific Socialism and the Labor Movement

As is indicated by the present article, the article by our German comrades in the May, 1945, issue of the *New International* entitled "Some Questions of Clarification," which was directed to "a French comrade," elicited a letter from him which is printed herewith. The article itself is a commentary upon the letter and a reply to the questions raised in it.—ED.

Dear Friends:

Up to now I have not had the time to read your latest article<sup>1</sup> more than quite superficially. Offhand, I believe that a clarification of the question can be better achieved if the posing of a new problem is not suddenly palmed off in place of the old one.

No doubt the concept of a labor movement can be defined the way it is now done by A. A. Only, this hardly has anything to do with our discussion. In all the debates, I have constantly emphasized that I speak of the labor movement in the traditional sense. And this is the basis on which the discussion occurred, when you, for example, acknowledged the existence of the English labor movement but denied the existence of the French. People with a proverbially sharp memory shouldn't really have forgotten this.

What interests me at the moment, however, is only the first paragraph of your article. I assume that the French comrade who is referred to there is supposed to be me. My words there are given an authenticity, by means of quotation marks and direct quotation, which is not warranted by your presentation. What is involved here, in my opinion, is a fairly crude shift in emphasis. It would be in the interest of the cause to reword this paragraph. My formulation would read as follows:

"The German comrades stand on the viewpoint that there is no longer a labor movement in Europe. For this reason, they have concentrated upon the petty bourgeoisie in their treatment of the national question, and spoken of its leadership in the Resistance movement. We, on the contrary, did not consider the traditional labor movement dead, even though it was influenced to an increasing extent by Stalinism. It proved to be the backbone of the Resistance movement and, subsequently, the most significant factor of the European situation. For this reason, we advocated an orientation upon the workers and their organizations. That is the essential difference between us and the Germans."

With best greetings,

April 17, 1945.

CHARLES.

\* \* \*

### THE REPLY OF THE GERMAN COMRADE

Dear Charles:

P. gave me your letter to answer. You have slipped into a couple of mistakes that I should like to correct.

You assert first of all that in the question of the non-existence of the labor movement, we have "suddenly palmed off the posing of a new problem in place of the old one." Then you say:

"In all the debates, I have constantly emphasized that I speak of the labor movement in the traditional sense. And this

is the basis on which the discussion occurred, when you, for example, acknowledged the existence of the English labor movement but denied the existence of the French."

As to that, I wish to observe:

Although I have no manuscript of my article at hand, I know quite well: the article proceeds from the posing of an *allegedly* "new" problem and arrives finally at a consideration of the *special* position of the labor movement in Europe. In it I emphasize, as before: Wherever Hitler came as victor, he also destroyed the "traditional" labor movement. If this was the basis of the discussion for you (it never was for us, as I shall soon show), then it is fully conceded also in my article: We denied the existence of the traditional labor movement in France, for example, and acknowledged its existence in England. With your first objection, therefore, you have only bored a hole in the air.

Furthermore: How did the distinction between the traditional labor movement and that which we call the *politically organized* labor movement (in the sense of scientific socialism) enter into the debate? The answer is clear: *We injected it*—nobody else insisted on this important distinction, nobody else as much as suspected that this was a problem, nobody else got involved in the polemic over the matter. Your own formulation tacitly acknowledges that we do not "suddenly" come forth with the posing of another problem but that we are discussing upon what is for us a very *old* basis. The rupture between scientific socialism and the labor movement is one of the most important questions, and a very complex one at that. The treatment of this question by us is in reality much older than is indicated in my article. In the European debate, we infiltrated it with the "Three Theses," where it says:

"In order that socialism, isolated by the retrogressive movement, *may again be linked with the labor movement and with the mass movement in general*, the creation of revolutionary parties and the re-establishment of the labor movement itself are required."

It was precisely this formulation and what followed from it for us (on the situation of the labor movement in general, on the situation of our own movement in particular), that constituted the "bone of contention" which set off the entire debate. And here: if this had not been the "basic" problem for us, we would have evaluated *entirely* differently the position of the labor movement, for example, in France *even after its smash-up* by Hitler. Looked at more profoundly: there would then have been no Hitler and the world today would have a different face.

Further: As things stand, this "basic" posing of the problem of ours is the reason why we have in actuality a fundamentally different political line from yours. In my article, I announced that I will deal with the "essential" or "fundamental" (any word you wish suits me) difference between you and us. For the moment, only this: What you regard as our "essential" difference, is a joke to us. I refrain entirely from examining here whether "the" Germans "concentrated upon the petty bourgeoisie in their treatment of the national question, and spoke of its leadership in the Resistance move-

1. See: "Some Questions of Clarification," N. I., May, 1945.

ment." Every time you have made this assertion, we laughed and shook our heads. For the time being, we could do no more than that, for in strict contrast to us, you have avoided formulating your criticism in any manner that would permit an orderly reply. To tell stories, to "interpret" at will, to make assertions, etc.—Uncle Sam in America can do that too. That was too unreliable and too cheap for us. So we did not simply "speak," but set ourselves down in print where we can be checked. Now, since all the protests against your interpretation (excluding public check) remained unsuccessful, I am glad to have found an opportunity at least to deal with the matter in writing.

So then: our characterization of the Resistance movements as "people's movements" (see the "Three Theses") is "old." These people's movements themselves could not, already in consequence of their characterization (naturally, on the basis of the situation as a whole), bear a "labor" character but only a general petty-bourgeois character. Whatever may have been the percentage of workers participating in it, is a matter of complete indifference in this connection. The question of the "leadership" stood for us exclusively only as the *problem* of leadership by the Fourth International. Beyond this problem, the whole movement was and is *petty-bourgeois*, and does not bear even the stamp of the "traditional" labor movement.

This, dear friend, is our fundamental position in three strokes. You will surely observe for yourself how far different it is from what I should like to call a "sovereign interpretation" *a la Logan*.

Now, anybody is at liberty to consider our viewpoint as *false*. But nobody can say that we did *not set this viewpoint down in writing and convey it in print*. Every one of the Germans involved is "oath-bound" by it, every one of them is ready to let himself be "caught" at his real view. But here is what is involved: we could have such a viewpoint only because it rests upon that *basis* which you (excuse me: "suddenly") call the posing of a "new" problem. In other words: Our posing of the *actually "basic"* problem asserts itself obtrusively in everything we have written or even only—"spoken."

All we have encountered in the discussion, to be sure, is complete incomprehension and still more bad will. As people with a "proverbially sharp memory," we recall gloomily: the vanguard of the vanguard shone through its absence, and in place of what it should have done it raised a pile of extremely weakly-covered counsels of confusion. In view of the peculiar interpretation to which our Theses were subjected, we gave a systematic presentation of our standpoint in "Capitalist Barbarism or Socialism." This document (and especially that part of it that applies to the present question), is now about two years old. There is, therefore, nothing "sudden" about it, to say nothing of much older documents (for example, our "Theses on the Construction of the Fourth International"). We said two years ago about our "basic" posing of the problem:

"... in a certain sense, the proletariat has already suffered the 'penalty of its own destruction' because in most of the world it has been destroyed as a *politically-organized, self-constituted and freely-associated class*. The proletariat has again, as formerly, become an amorphous mass, the characteristics of its rise and its formation have been lost. . . . Its consciousness is now only *class-consciousness* in the sense of *limitation*, through belonging to a class. It is *bourgeois* consciousness and (not to speak of revisionism) is doubly reactionary in so far as it has received [the form of] *Stalinism*. . . .

" . . . the severed connection between scientific socialism and the labor movement (which now exists almost only as a spontaneous, but no longer as a politically-organized movement) must be reconstructed under new conditions. . . .

"Scientific socialism is in the same situation as at the time of its emergence. . . . Otherwise there are only isolated and decimated propaganda groups, exactly as at that time (then emerging, now residual), which must endeavor to expand, to link themselves to the masses, and to arouse the *political* labor movement to life again.

"Political consciousness lives only in these groups and individuals—the alleged tradition of the masses is . . . the true-bourgeois tradition of revisionism and its Stalinist perversion, under whose influence the masses have stood for more than forty years and which is responsible for today's situation."

These are of course only especially striking passages for our theme. You find more of them in our document itself. In the English edition (Supplement of the *New International*) the most important passage is on page 339 (right, below) and page 340. In addition, however, there is also this:

"The recoupling of socialism with the labor movement is the point here around which everything revolves."

I think: the point around which everything revolves, speaks for itself. You will therefore surely no longer assert that "no doubt the concept of a labor movement can be defined the way it is now done by A.A." My dear friend, A.A. has an uncommonly sharp memory—he does not define it that way "now," he simply does that always.

And what now? Quite simple! Proceeding from the discussion on the Paris uprising, you brought up the question of the labor movement again a few weeks ago and in connection with it you repeated your false interpretation of our views. I was therefore queried from all sides (M. asked, among others), as to what our denial of the labor movement is actually all about. Without looking into the reasons for the ignorance of our position, I decided to devote a special article once more to the whole question. As already said: there is no more complex and important theme. What is more: it presents new *aspects* with every day's development and—it is not yet exhausted. That is all.

As to your desired reformulation of your views about us, it is a puzzle to me to find where I am supposed to be guilty of a "crude shift in emphasis." But I welcome having a statement authorized by you. I will therefore see to it under all circumstances that your statement gets into print. If I do not come in time with the correction (the article is surely already on the press) I will give you completely authentic satisfaction in the next number of the *N.I.* Nobody there will offer objection. As soon as convenient, both letters will be published.

A concluding observation: When you assert that I *palmed off* the posing of a new problem in place of the old, you stigmatize me, to put it plainly, as a political swindler, for I declare unmistakably in my article that I am speaking of our *old* position. However, do not be put out for a moment: I do not take it as a personal insult.

One should not react with positive assertions to an article that one has read "quite superficially" by one's own admission. In spite of my positively "fabulous" memory, I would *never* dare to do that, in any case. I believe, moreover, that a sharp memory has a good deal to do with "sharp" thinking.

Sincerely yours,

A. ARLINS

London, April 25, 1945.

# Four Books by Koestler

## Stalinism Ruins Another Intellectual

Although two of his latest four books are non-fiction, Mr. Koestler is essentially a novelist. In the field of fiction he is a rare and unusual writer; rare in that he can treat of purely political subjects, unusual in that the finished product is literature and not a clumsy propaganda tract. He has the ability to develop characters, probe their thoughts and create moods and impressions with such a fineness of style that the political theme blends with the story as unobtrusively as a backdrop blends with the action on a stage.

His artistry and skill as an engrossing story teller have captured a public of many more than the relatively few who have an intrinsic interest in the subject matter alone. The readers, drawn by the writer, cannot remain immune to the message; and it is with the message that we are primarily concerned. This inquiry into the content is made especially timely by the appearance of Koestler's latest book, in which, deserting the field of fiction, he develops his political faith in a series of essays. This volume, however, is but the culmination of a development that began some years ago. In tracing this development we can best appraise the present work.

*Darkness at Noon*, the earliest and best of the four books, is a story of the Moscow Trials of 1937. The story unfolds through the arrest, imprisonment, questioning and execution of N. Rubashov, ex-Commissar of the People.

Rubashov, like many of the Old Bolsheviks, was both an intellectual and a man of deeds. A hero in the Civil War, a leader in the party, he served faithfully in high positions both in Russia and abroad. As the revolution degenerated, the leadership exchanged its revolutionary perspective for the perspective of extending its control and its privileges over the masses of Russia. Rubashov became conscious of that change. He was aware of the oppression and exploitation of the workers, the growth of the bureaucracy, the use of terror, prisons, torture and murder in the interest—not of the revolution but—of the régime. Seeing all this, he remained a part of the apparatus. He participated in its betrayals of the workers. He joined in the denunciation of "deviationists." When his mistress was executed, he made a public protestation of allegiance to No. 1. Why he did these things, no believing in them, he cannot explain: perhaps he was old and tired, perhaps the time was not ripe, perhaps he was saving himself.

Rubashov's deviations were therefore in the mental sphere: moral revulsion at the tactics employed, and side remarks about No. 1 and the régime. It was these that led to his arrest. The hearings and the self-examinations that led to his confession are excellently handled. The development of the confession is believable and realistic. This is a tribute to Koestler's ability: for Rubashov confesses to crimes which he not only did not commit, but which he had not even contemplated. The essence of totalitarianism is slowly and imponderably bared. So vulnerable is such a régime that it can brook an oppositional thought no more than it can an oppositional deed—for the thought is the potential of the deed. Thus, the inquisitors confront Rubashov with the sly remarks he made and the indiscretions he committed, and accuse him of the most extreme deeds that could possibly follow. A derogatory

statement about No. 1, for example, is blown up into a full-fledged plot to assassinate No. 1.

Simultaneously, but not with equal clarity, Rubashov's stature is delineated. He was never a principled opponent of the régime. Mentally rebelling against the methods employed against the workers, and the foreign sections of the party, he questioned the course of the bureaucracy. But during his imprisonment the doubt as to the ends of the party are dissipated, replaced by the feeling that perhaps the party is still following a revolutionary course, and that the terrors and brutalities are necessitated by the "immaturity of the masses." Once this conclusion is accepted the rest "follows." If Stalin is still a revolutionary leader, the means "necessary and proper" to maintaining his control must be accepted. Rubashov still retains his moral opposition to the "tactics" used, but in a striking passage says: "There ... is a ... choice which is no less consistent, and which in our country has been developed into a system: the denial and suppression of one's own conviction when there is no prospect of materializing it. As the only moral criterion which we recognize is that of social utility, the public disavowal of one's conviction in order to remain in the party's ranks is obviously more honorable than the quixotism of carrying on a hopeless struggle." Rubashov makes his final sacrifice: self-recrimination and confession at a public trial.

### The Type Which Capitulates

The curtain falls on Rubashov and the story is told; but this is a story that is more insidious in what it implies than in what it tells. It tells of Rubashov's capitulation to Stalin. The logic of the capitulation (as stated above) depends essentially on a Rubashov type. He had to be an individual whose deviations were not organized, whose opposition was tactical and not principled, and who felt there was still Bolshevik vitality in the régime. To this character, Koestler grafts an imposing façade. Rubashov says: "The old guard is dead. We are the last." We are told that the first chairman of the International had also been executed as a "traitor." Rubashov speaks with sympathy for the masses. Rubashov was an "Old Bolshevik," a "Hero" in the Civil War. In short, this party wheelhorse, part and parcel of the régime, is held out by Koestler and accepted by most readers as an inflexible old revolutionary. In Rubashov's capitulation is implied the capitulation of the whole revolutionary movement. Only by a literary sleight of hand, moulding the protagonist from Stalinist clay and then clothing him in revolutionary garments, could Koestler effect his implication: To be a revolutionary is to be a Stalinist.

That true revolutionaries, principled oppositionists, do not capitulate is proved by the thousands in Russia who died without capitulation, and by the others, less in number but in the thousands still, who were tracked down by the GPU in Europe and in America too and murdered in cold blood. This palming off an apparatus man as a revolutionary has its counterpart in the substitution of Stalinist folderol for Marxist tenets. The argumentation that leads Rubashov back into the party centers around two questions: morality and the nature of the Stalinist régime. Mr. Koestler's contentions on these

two points bear as little similarity to Marxism as Rubashov bears to a revolutionary.

Rubashov claims for the revolutionary movement a Machiavellian morality of "the end justifies the means." The rationalization centers in the argument that these horrible means that are so repulsive to Rubashov (and which he really opposes) are necessary to the proper party end, and so must be "accepted." Socialists, backsliders and renegades from V. Serge through Max Eastman to the late and unlamented Burnham have tried to create the fable that the Marxists are an unprincipled and amoral lot who have to stomach some terrible things because they believe the "end justified the means." If these people, including Koestler, had spent less time in writing and more time trying to comprehend the tenets of Marxism, they would know that the principles of the Prince and the principles of Marxism have no more in common than does Churchill's definition of freedom for Greece with the aspirations of the ELAS. End and means disputation are meaningless, because the end and the means are not two unrelated things. The dialectic interconnection between the end and the means demands that the two be considered together and yet that each one be justified in itself. And never are repugnant or contradictory means justified because of some anticipated end. What, then, is our basis of judgment? Marxist morality, like Marxist action, draws its rules from the class struggle. That which raises the level of consciousness and advances the interest of the proletariat is good, be it means or end; that which retards the consciousness and depresses the oppressed is indefensible. It is on this—and not on an abstract ethical basis—that Marxists condemn (and not condone, as Koestler implies) the régime and its methods, that have for their object the continued enslavement of the people.

Koestler, incidentally, shows himself a better revolutionary in action than he does in contemplative thought. In *Darkness at Noon* he is greatly concerned with abstract ethical standards. In *Scum of the Earth* he recounts the lies, deceptions, briberies (and other "tactics" which he does not detail) that enabled him to escape the Gestapo. Strangely enough, the morality of these actions does not seem to worry him. This saved him from the peculiar predicament of Giuseppe Modigliani, an Italian refugee in France at the time of the defeat of France, who—according to a recent book by Varian Fry—practiced the morality that Koestler preaches: "He wanted to leave France, but absolutely refused to do anything illegal."

#### **Whitewashing Stalinism with—Idealism**

Equally revealing is Koestler's discussion of the Stalinist phenomenon. Stalinism—with all the evils it connotes—is brought about by the "inability of the masses to comprehend" the new economic system. Since they cannot understand it, you can't expect them to govern themselves; ergo, somebody has to "lead" them. Koestler continues: "Measured by classical liberal standards, this is not a pleasant spectacle." But a "Marxist" must stomach it because: "the horror, hypocrisy and degeneration which leap to the eye are merely the visible and inevitable expression of the law described above."

That such confusionist twaddle should pass as Marxism is appalling. One can easily take this section and, substituting India for the locale, and British Imperialism for Stalinism, find that he has mouthed shameless apologies that justify the rape of India by the British and the oppression of any people by terrorists. Nothing, absolutely nothing is more repugnant to the Marxist concept than the idea of patronizing the masses,

of rejecting their action in favor of that of a leader who "knows better," of instilling in them a fear and servile obeisance to a regime that "promises" better things to come.

The Stalinist phenomenon has a material base. Its basis lies in the low productivity of Russia at the time of the revolution, the failure of the supporting revolutions in advanced countries, and the subsequent imperialist encirclement. The state power which could not be maintained by the people, since they could not carry out the socialist program on which their power depended, slipped to the bureaucracy, which substituted force to maintain its authority against the people. Marxists view the Stalinist regime as an oppressive regime that must be overthrown. To expect, as Koestler does, the people to develop under this oppression, and the oppressors to resign their authority is to labor and bring forth an unnamed offspring of idealism mated with Stalinism. Such a labor is Koestler's right. To name the offspring "Marxism," however, is a fraud on the readers.

Many in the past have defended the Stalinist regime. Some, staunch Stalinists, defend it by outright lies: it is a democracy over there (look at the Constitution), there are no terrors or concentration camps (just foreign propaganda), etc. Others, like Koestler, are more disarming. They admit the evils which are common knowledge, but claim they are "necessitated" by the "immaturity of the masses" and if the truth be known *they are part and parcel of "revolution."* This is the implication in *Darkness at Noon*. Jan Valtin revealed the rot and corruption of the Party and washed his hands of it in hopes of earning a few honest bourgeois pennies. Koestler fills a tub of filth and more which is Stalinism and has his hero wallow in it because it represents the "Party of the Revolution." To Koestler's credit, he left the Stalinist movement. To his discredit and permanent impairment, he remained in it too long!

#### **"Hitting My Temples with My Fists"**

*Scum of the Earth* is not a novel. It is the true and bitter story of the lot of those thousands of refugees who found themselves in France at the outbreak of the war. Driven first from one country and then another, there arrived in France in 1939 the persecuted of the continent. Refugees of race and belief, they were the marked men of the Gestapo and the GPU. These people were (with the exception of the Communists—for this was the era of the Hitler-Stalin pact) anti-fascists.

*Scum of the Earth* is the story of their persecution by the democratic government of France. Rounded up by the Police, herded into stations, interned in concentration camps that rivalled Hitler's for inhumanity, they were finally delivered into the hands of the Gestapo. The few, like Koestler, who managed to escape were exceptions.

The book is real. It is the book of an artist who has had no time to formulate a plot or polish his style. The politics are sketchy. Koestler feels that the anti-worker and pro-fascist feelings which permeated the Government made it incapable of conducting an effective struggle against fascism and made it prefer capitulation to social unrest. There are indications though, of Koestler's political course. Whereas he had, up until 1939, maintained an expectation that some good would come from Stalinist Russia in spite of its "tactics" he now loses this faith completely. The Hitler-Stalin past was the last blow. He writes that when he heard the news: "I began hitting my temples with my fists. . . . I tried to explain . . . what it meant to the better optimistic half of humanity which was

called the Left because it believed in social evolution and which, however opposed to the methods employed by Stalin and his disciples still consciously or unconsciously believed that Russia was the only promising experiment in this wretched century." Thus the metaphysician who tried to split the means from the end, damning the means and trusting the end, was caught in the net of his own making. He washed his hands of Stalin.

For some this would be merely a step that would open up new vistas. Here was a chance to become acquainted with the real Left, the left that knew the impossibility of "socialism in one country," that combatted the "two-class" block in 1927, that opposed the theory of "social-fascism" in 1930, that fought for social revolution and not "bourgeois capitalism" in 1936, and which for some years has recognized that Russia is not only not a "promising experiment" but a reactionary force in the world. Unfortunately this path was not open to Koestler. Like the "poor white" who dined so exclusively on gruel that he thought mush and dinner were synonymous, Koestler drank so deeply of Stalinism that he thought it was synonymous with Marxism. Repelled by Stalinism he turned against Marxism and the Left. In his confusion he felt that the Allies were fighting fascism. He joined the English Army asking only that they let him fight Hitler and that they permit him to live in a little world all of his own in which he can make believe that England is fighting for Democracy.

### First Aid from Freud

It is from this pattern that the next volume is fashioned. *Arrival and Departure* is a novel. Its protagonist is Peter Slavek, a youthful intellectual and ex-Party member. Having suffered torture and imprisonment at the hands of the Gestapo, he flees his native land and jumps ship in a neutral port. His first step in the neutral country is to try to enlist in the British army—the "standard bearer" of the fight against fascism. However, there are delays at the Consulate and, while he waits for his permit, he has glimpses of the "better life." In contrast to the deprivations and unrest which were his lot in the past, he finds—through the kind intercession of an old friend—the comforts of regular meals, clean linen, sympathetic companionship and Love. (Not those Jacobin sluts he had heretofore had, but good clean-cut bourgeois love.) Growing restless at the British delay, and under pressure from his newfound friends, he applies for a visa to America.

The crisis is engineered with all the subtlety and finality of the wicked landlord slapping the mortgage on the living room table and leering at the comely maid. The British permit comes through and, at the same moment, Peter's Love suddenly departs for America, leaving a simple note which makes it clear that Peter must decide for himself whether to "return to the struggle" or flee to "normalcy" and to her. Now Rubashov too was faced with a crisis: to die in silence or capitulate? That crisis was so effectively developed it took a second reading to see the turning point, and was resolved by theory and argumentation. Koestler is no longer interested in the hollow arguments that lead back to the Stalinist fold; but he can find no new ones to urge our hero into the lion's mouth; and so he turns to Peter's conscience, and finds a powerful and unexplained urge to martyr himself. Peter is pushed into the Allied camp on the strength of Faith and inner conscience!

Before Peter gives in (remarkable how Koestler's heroes always capitulate) we are entertained with the struggle between the rational desire to flee, and the blind catagoric urge

that drives Peter back. The conflict is too much; it expends itself in a physical disability; and Peter loses the use of his right leg. It is the role of Sonia, the psychoanalyst, to show that nothing ails the leg, and to remove the purely psychic disability. To do this she must discover the motivation for the conscious. Why does it demand Peter return to the struggle? Enter Freud, and we discover that radicalism (shades of Molotov who thought that fascism was a matter of taste) is a matter of infantile guilt. A guilt neurosis and Peter was a radical; a different neurosis and Peter would have been a fascist. It is, in fact, a fascist who quotes the theme: "We know that a person's character is formed, by the heredity and environment, before he reaches the age of ten; modern psychology even tells us before he is five. But the age at which we learn about miner's sons and social theories is say fifteen—at the earliest. Hence it is not the theory which shapes the rebel's character, but his character which makes him susceptible to the rebellious theories."

It certainly is not our intent to minimize the significance of the Freudian conceptions, nor to deny that character tendencies are formulated at an early age. But to see in this the explanation of all subsequent action is to be guilty of the greatest crime against logic; *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. Because character formations are earlier than social formations they are the cause of social formations. To carry this to its illogical conclusion, since three precedes four three is the cause of four.

Character is the combination of qualities and traits that will largely determine *how* an individual will do certain things; social formation is a matter of *what* he will do. The two are not in separate airtight compartments; but as separate concepts flowing from separate sources they cannot be identified nor can one be said to cause the other. If our psychology has taught us anything, it is that tendencies can be channelled. Character is decisive as to the manner in which an individual will function within the camp he chooses; but the camp in which he exercises his traits will depend primarily on subsequent causation. It is the social causation that Koestler completely ignores in the volume. In short Peter's childhood may well have given him a party complex; but that he was a martyr for the workers and not for the fascists was due to social causation—hunger, unemployment, decaying society, war, which Koestler disregards.

### If Not Left, Then Right

That an ex-Stalinist intellectual would throw his lot in with the Allies is—as explained above—quite natural. Unable to go left, he must go to the right. Little need now be said about the Allies "fighting fascism." Our only hope is that poor Peter died in the glories of the Imperialist War and did not live for the sad disillusionment of the Imperialist Peace.

Compared to *Darkness at Noon*, this is an inferior novel: clay pigeons replace the characters, shadow the reality, and pipe dreams the content. Peter is a figment as compared to Rubashov. Sonia—though she tends to dominate the book—cannot achieve half the reality of the unseen Czarist in cell 402 whom the reader knows only through the cryptic messages tapped on the wall. The impelling reality of the imprisonment in "Darkness at Noon" is approached in only a single section of this book, the story of the Mixed Transports. In *Darkness at Noon* Koestler probed with a scalpel and, like a finished surgeon, cut away the materialist and class roots of Marxism, sewed up the body and called it Revolution—though we recog-

nized it as a reasonable facsimile of Stalin. Working now like a butcher, he hacks away exploitation and depression, crisis and unemployment, war and damnation and presents you with the key to the social problem—personal neuroses plus faith!

Koestler's poverty at this point is unmistakable. Repelled by the left he turned to the right. He cannot long remain there for he is too familiar with the ugly visage of reaction. Unlike the society in which he lives he need not either go forward or retrogress: he—as an individual—can try to escape. That is his sole logical course. That is the course on which he embarks in the Yogi and the Commissar.

### **The Yogi and the Commissar**

*The Yogi and the Commissar* is a series of essays in which Koestler tries to clarify his position. He identifies himself as an intangible sort of "leftist" "whom the Stalinists call Trotskyites, the Trotskyites call Imperialists, and the Imperialists call Bloody Reds." The finest writing in the world couldn't clarify such a position, because it is not a position. It is an allegation flowing from eclecticism with no discernible base. His basic contention in this volume is that we must regain certain "human" values which have been lost. However, before he embarks on this quest for the lost values, he settles two old scores: one with Russia and one with Marxism.

His essay on the Soviet Myth and Reality is excellent. Well documented, clear, forceful, it exposes the conditions in Russia since the degeneration of the Revolution. He concludes that Russia is neither "workers state" nor a state "tending towards socialism," but a "state-capitalistic totalitarian autocracy" distinguished from the other great powers—as far as the working class is concerned—by its implacable opposition to any real left. His conclusions, true in a very general sense, cannot stand under a more minute examination. He gives no basis for his conclusion that the economy is "State-Capitalistic." Though he recognizes Russia's opposition to a genuine left, he misses the real reason for the opposition and he underestimates her menace to the workers. These faults, however, are minor as compared to the errors he commits when he tries to "explain." His explanations are confused and contradictory: for he tortures his explanation of the failure of the Russian Revolution to attempt to prove his second point; the failure of Marxism.

Koestler's faults when dealing with Marxism could be adequately answered only in a volume slightly larger than his own. Every passage is an error. His grasp of Marxism is poor, he constantly confuses Stalinist practice for Marxist theory, and in his anxiety to prove his case against Marxism he lets his rhetoric run away with his reason.

In *Scum of the Earth*, because the Stalinists were using the "dialectic" to justify their alliance with Hitler, Koestler renounced the "dialectic." In *Arrival and Departure*, casting his lot with the Allied Camp, he dropped the class basis of his struggle. There remains the material conception of history, and it is with that that he deals in *The Yogi and the Commissar*.

For Koestler the materialist conception lacks a certain "spiritual" quality, a "humanness," a concern with deeper "ethical values" that makes it inadequate as a method either for the study of the past or for a guide to the future. To prove his point he traces the failure of the revolutionary movements before 1917 and claims that their frustration was due to their neglect of the "craving for Faith, something absolute and unquestioning to believe in." Conversely he traces the failure of

the European Left after 1917 to the absolute and unquestioning belief in the Soviet Myth, to the "unconditional surrender of the critical faculties" of the disciples of Russia. Now to explain the failure of the earlier movements to a lack of "faith" and the failure of the later movements to the presence of faith is to explain nothing. Which is just what Mr. Koestler does! As far as the materialist conception goes, it has no place for blind faith. It goes without saying that a mass movement must have an idea—or ideal—for which it strives. Socialism, from the days of the early Utopians, has supplied such an ideal. From this ideal Marxism did not detract. It merely supplied that analysis of society which would enable the realization of the idea. In that analysis there is no place for unquestioning belief or the surrender of critical faculties primarily because, as Koestler notes in one of his contradictory statements, it drains the life blood of a movement.

### **The Workman and the Tools**

The failure of the socialist incentives in Russia is brought forth as another argument to prove the inadequacy of the materialist conception. Koestler points out that the new incentives failed under Stalin and were replaced by old ones. He concludes (rhetoric replacing reason): "The Russian Revolution failed in its aim to create a new type of human society in a new moral climate. The ultimate reason for its failure was the *arid 19th century materialism of its doctrine*. It had to fall back on the old opiates because it did not recognize man's need for *spiritual nourishment*. (Italics mine.) In an earlier section, however, in explaining the failure of the revolution in Russia he says: "The Russian experiment neither proves nor disproves the possibility of socialism: it was an experiment carried out under the most unsuitable laboratory conditions and hence inconclusive." If the failure of the revolution "proves" nothing and is "inconclusive," logic demands that the failure of a single element of that revolution—the socialist incentives—likewise proves nothing. But Koestler by-passes logic and consistency in his anxiety to prove the "spiritual" inadequacy of Marxism.

In his title essay *The Yogi and the Commissar* (1 & 11) Koestler deals with the materialist conception as though it was a purely mechanical idea ("Change from Without") condemning man to fatalism. That the doctrine does not ignore the human factor and is not mechanical is implied in its effort to organize human action. The question of "free will" vs. "no free will" beaten to death in Koestler's final essay, has been considered time and again by Marxists who try to straighten out the confusionists. There are certain material limitations beyond which an individual cannot go. Further, there are material conditions which tend to impel mankind in a certain direction if he is to resolve his problems. Men try (and have tried) to rise above the limitations of their epoch. Failure and frustration is their lot. Men try (and have tried) to go counter to the tendency of their times. Destruction and barbarism is their reward. If a man wishes to be really free he must analyze the basic forces at work, determine their direction, and add his subjective effort to that end. "Freedom," said Engels, "is the recognition of necessity." That this statement could not come from a mechanist or teleologist is obvious to everybody but Mr. Koestler.

The incompetent workman will always blame his tools. Having failed Marxism, Koestler feels that Marxism has failed him. Having been a part of, and supporting, an organization that has propounded false policies since 1926, Koestler

views the havoc wrought on the working class through these false policies and blames—not these perversions of Marxism—but Marxism itself. In singing his swan song, he makes a clean sweep. He parts company with "Stalinists," "Trotskyites," "dissident communist sects," "Marxists," etc., since they are all tarred with the same brush. Then he is free, free as a will-of-the-wisp to soar untrammelled into the highest flights of fancy. And in his final essay, he really flits about. He is still—mind you—"for the left"; but a left that will regain its lost birthright by re-establishing the spiritual side of man. Each individual must seek that lost part of himself that gives him certain absolute ethical and moral values. Once this is done then we can begin changing the world. Thus, you see, Mr. Koestler is not a complete "retreatist" or complete spiritualist—he just wants to postpone any left activity until the left grows up to its responsibility through study and contemplation. For anyone who wishes to substitute "symmetry" for the dialectic, "harmony" for the class struggle, and "Love" for the materialist conception the last essay should make very interesting reading. Actually it is the opening door to mystical personal retreatism. Koestler has already entered; he will not emerge: for the contemplation of the "inner man" is but a short step removed from the contemplation of the navel.

There was once a little fish that leaped from the polluted Stalinist stream while it still had vitality. Watching it flop back and forth on the bank, other little fish hoped it would return to a clear stream and, swimming upstream, gain its full vigor. But the little fish had been so long in the filth and the mire of the polluted stream that it thought all streams were polluted; so it tossed back and forth on the bank until it died. The smell of death is unmistakable.

PETER LOUMOS.

#### AT THE LAST MINUTE

The news of the victory of the British Labour Party has just been received here. It arrives too late for us to make the comments that news of such tremendous importance requires and deserves. The significance of the election in Great Britain will be dealt with at length in the coming issue of the *New International*.

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