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June 1943

# Fourth International

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## The Coal Crisis

and its Lessons for American Labor

*By E. R. Frank*

*The Third International Is Dead--*

*Long Live the Fourth International!*

STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE, SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

The Press on the Comintern Two Years of Soviet-Nazi War

## The Negro in the Post-War World

*By Albert Parker*

## Washington's Plans for Italy

*By Felix Morrow*

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Twenty Cents

## Manager's Column

During the past month letters which have reached us from our friends in other countries have been especially interesting. Many of them extend support in our fight to regain full mailing rights for **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** and **THE MILITANT**.

\* \* \*

*England:* "The bundle of **FOURTH INTERNATIONALS** arrived safely and have already been bound. You can be sure they will be put to good use. One feels a real pride in looking through these bound volumes. No publication or political body has ever achieved such a consistently high standard of Marxist theory.

"The copy of 'My Life' also made a safe crossing.

"Everybody here is following in detail your struggle against Biddle and the Post Office authorities. We wish you every success in resisting suppression and in fighting for the rights of the working class press."

\* \* \*

*England:* "I am under obligation to you for receipt of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** and **MILITANT**. I have applied to the post office for a permit to send money, but am disqualified to fill in so elaborate a questionnaire. Is there any way I can recompense you—by sending books or publications?"

"P.S. I date from association in Chicago with Spies, Parsons and others. Am now near 90 and appreciation of your work keeps me going."

\* \* \*

*England:* "I have just received the back numbers of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**. Many thanks.

"Is it asking too much to send me a copy of your latest book, *In Defense of Marxism?* No revolutionary socialist can afford to be without it yet we have no other way of obtaining it but by further imposing on your generosity. You have certainly performed a service to the working class in publishing this magnificent collection of the Old Man's writings in book form. Far from having finished with petty-bourgeois oppositions in the workers' movement, we are approaching a period, particularly over here, when the radicalization of the masses will throw all sorts of 'lefts' into the

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Editor: FELIX MORROW

	Page
The Month in Review.....	By the Editors 163
The Coal Crisis and its Lesson's for American Labor	By E. R. Frank 168
The Third International Is Dead—Long Live the Fourth International!	Statement of the National Committee, Socialist Workers Party 173
Washington's Plans for Italy.....	By Felix Morrow 175
The Negro in the Post-War World....	By Albert Parker 179
From the Arsenal of Marxism:	
Svyazhsk.....	By Larissa Reissner 184
Comrades Renery, Van Belle, Lemmens .....	189
International Notes:	
A Letter from England.....	190
MANAGER'S COLUMN Inside Front Cover	214

ranks of the revolutionary movement and it is essential that we should be able to estimate their true value and not place the proletarian movement in jeopardy by reliance at critical periods on unstable allies and fellow-travelers of the revolution. The Old Man had this in mind when he so painstakingly exposed the true role of the petty-bourgeois opposition in the SWP.

"We have just received news about the revocation of **THE MILITANT's** mailing rights. We are shocked at this monstrous frame-up and will give it full publicity here."

\* \* \*

From *Australia* we received the following cable: "Send **MILITANT** and **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** from January 1943 send bill."

\* \* \*

*New Zealand:* "I am very sorry to hear of the troubles of the paper, but I very much regret to inform you that owing to the war regulations in this country prohibiting the sending of money out of the country, I am unfortunately unable to send you anything, much as I would like to. I sincerely hope that all those who are able to do so will rally to your aid and that a way out shall be found of your difficulties."

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Agents here at home have sent us welcome and enlightening letters, some excerpts of which we quote:

*Minneapolis:* "Frank's article on John L. Lewis in the April issue has received praise from friends, who felt that it was a very valuable supplement to the current articles on the mine crisis, which **THE MILITANT** has been carrying. Warde's summing up of 'Ten Years of the New Deal' was likewise approved, as was Wright's 'Civil War in Yugoslavia.' It is said that these articles supply the background and the necessary theoretical analysis for the news in the headlines, which **THE MILITANT** cannot deal with exhaustively enough."

\* \* \*

*Chicago:* "**FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** is now self-supporting insofar as our bundle is concerned. We have noted recently an increased number of calls at the office for copies of the F.I. It seems to improve with each issue, showing the results of diligent research and selection."

*Toledo:* "I have been drafted, so I suggest that you tell whoever has been sending me the magazine to use it where it will be read. Thanks, and keep the ball rolling and I'll feel happier."

*Omaha:* "Enclosed you will find \$2.00 for a one-year subscription.

"Living costs here are way up and wages are the same. Most people were content to not say anything for a while, but lately there is quite a bit of grumbling about it. Maybe when they have been pushed far enough they will begin to see through some of the tricks being foisted on them and begin to do something."

*Los Angeles:* "Please send 25 more copies of the F.I. We ran quite short this time."

*Cleveland:* "I am enclosing a money order for \$12.00 to cover following subs. . . We have been netting results from almost every contact, almost no outright refusals. The reception of the press is very encouraging."

\* \* \*

Agents and subscribers: Anyone who has not received his copy of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** as usual through the mails in April or May, please write immediately to this office.

# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME IV

JUNE 1943

NUMBER 6

## The Month in Review

### Press Comment on the Comintern

**REMARKABLE UNANIMITY** The most striking characteristic of the capitalist press reaction to the Comintern dissolution was that all newspapers—Republican, Democratic, independent; pro-administration and anti-administration alike—showed an almost unbroken unanimity of opinion welcoming the step. In estimating the dissolution as a substantial concession by Stalin to the Anglo-U. S. bloc, even so rabidly anti-administration a sheet as the *New York Sun* showed it considered the move too historically important to be utilized as a pretext to score off Washington. The unanimous consensus is typified by the ultra-conservative *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*:

"Dissolution of the Communist or Third International looks very much like a gesture of appeasement by Stalin of the anti-Communists in the United Nations. . . ."

Even the unreconstructible *Chicago Tribune*, which can manage to inject anti-New-Deal bias into an editorial on the first robin, devoted a long editorial to underlining the anti-communist nature of Stalin's acts, sparing only one paragraph to drag in the sour suggestion that Mr. Roosevelt would like in return to import article 14 (nationalized economy) of the Soviet constitution.

Behind this extraordinary unanimity lies a *class* criterion: faced with an event affecting them as representatives of capitalism, all the bourgeois press instantly dropped merely family quarrels and reacted with a sense of *class* responsibility. Of the 80 U.S. newspapers which we examined, all without exception (save perhaps the politically frivolous Hearst press) emphasized that, whatever may come later, the dissolution meantime represents a tremendous gain for the "United Nations," that is, for Anglo-American imperialism. From the *Philadelphia Record* ("It is no exaggeration to say this . . . may prove a diplomatic triumph for the United Nations more far-reaching than the military triumphs at Stalingrad and Cap Bone") to *The Boston Herald* ("It is an act of immense significance . . . a favorable omen . . . comparable in effect to Stalingrad and Tunisia. . . . There should be no suspicion of the fact itself . . ."), not one characterizes it merely as a maneuver which leaves the situation unchanged. The only variant of opinion here is that some consider it "overdue," a "tardy" formalization of an act long since accomplished. The *Chicago Sun*, for instance, specifies that "the Comintern long since became a ghost . . . because Russia under Stalin had swung from the concept of world revolution which was the Comintern's reason for existence. . . ." And *The Des Moines Register* underlines the fact that it "caps a process which has been going for at least 15 years."

**THEY TELL THE TRUTH** Indeed, the second striking **ABOUT TROTSKY v. STALIN** unanimity of the press is in their historical recapitulation of the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin. These same newspapers in recent weeks have not been above dipping their pens in the *Mission to Moscow* slough

to spatter mud on Trotsky and the old Bolsheviks. But the importance to their class of the Comintern dissolution makes it incumbent on them to define with some accuracy its historical meaning. Editorial after editorial gives a condensed account of the struggle of Bolshevik-Leninism against Stalinist degeneration; they unanimously demonstrate that they knew all the time the real ideological bases of that struggle. (The one exception concerns Soviet industrialization and the Five-Year Plan, which they credit to Stalin, neglecting to extract from their morgues clippings of their own 1928 articles correctly stating that Stalin had adopted Trotsky's industrialization program after fighting against it for years.) Papers as separated in space and political opinions as *The Detroit Free Press*, *The Des Moines Register*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, *The Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, the *Atlanta Journal*, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* all accurately make the fundamental distinction between the world-revolutionary purpose of the Third International "of Lenin and Trotsky" and the non- or counter-revolutionary Stalinist policy of "socialism in one country." The *Raleigh News and Observer* cries that the "world breathed more freely" at the news that "the old Trotsky madness" was done. *The Hartford Courant* gloated:

"The Third International is dead! Marx's dream is ended.

The Leninist concept of the Comintern for 'the advancement of revolutionary principles throughout the world,' for the fomenting of 'perpetual proletarian revolution,' has died. . . ."

*The Kansas City Times* knows well who killed, who defended it:

"After Lenin's death the realistic Stalin became convinced that . . . it was foolish to fritter away energy on futile dreams of world revolution. Adopting this policy he was forced into a bitter struggle with the old Bolshevik crowd headed by Trotsky that wanted to carry the communistic crusade throughout the world.

"Stalin won and exiled or shot most of the opposing leaders. . . ."

The *Chicago Tribune*, after correctly characterizing the Leninist revolution as world-wide in intention, specifies:

"Stalin killed the dervishes of the Marxist creed. He executed the bolsheviks whose realm was the world and whose zeal was for the universal revolution."

Equally clear is the *Buffalo Evening News*: "So ends the Comintern, founded in 1919 by Lenin and Trotsky to foment world revolution. . . ." After patronizingly praising Stalin, the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* also underlines his counter-revolutionary role:

"As it was founded and supported by the men associated with Lenin in the early days of the Bolshevik revolution, the International . . . fostered subversive agitation the world over.

"Stalin has done wisely in moving to end all appearance of toleration in Russia for this subversive organization. . . . there is much to support the view of his Communist opponents [i.e., the Trotskyists] that he has ceased to have any interest in world revolution and, while basing his personal power in Russia on his support of the Communist party there, is no zealot for the cause. . . ."

Thus at this critical moment the bourgeois press must give its class a clear account of the facts, and only the frenzied

lackeys of the *Daily Worker* continue to pump out the musty wheezes that Trotskyism is fascist. Naturally we do not expect this same bourgeois press to remember, the next time it finds it opportune to solidarize with the Stalinist liars, that on this historic occasion it unequivocally equated Trotskyism with world-wide socialist revolution, Stalinism with its attempted liquidation.

**CAPITALISM PREPARES** Banker and boss continue, how-  
**ITS FURTHER DEMANDS** ever to fear not Stalin but the Red Soviet star. Gratified though they are with this part payment on Stalin's note, they are quick to suggest that there remain unpaid balances. That most authoritative of all the spokesmen of U.S. capitalism, *The New York Times*, while warmly welcoming the dissolution of the Comintern, permits itself suggestions how it may be implemented:

"It [the final effect of the decree] will depend on whether Moscow drops the 'Union of Polish Patriots' led by the wife of an Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs. It will depend on whether Moscow abandons leadership of the Yugoslav 'partisans' and permits Yugoslav unification under the recognized government. It will depend on whether the French Communists abandon their efforts to put themselves in the saddle and join in a real unification of the French nation. . . ."

In sum, the thanks Stalin gets for leaving the door ajar to his "allies" is that they smilingly jam a steel-shod foot in it.

For, no more than they forget the difference between Trotskyism and Stalinism do the capitalists forget the still unresolved class contradiction between the workers' state, however degenerated, and their own capitalist regimes, coexisting in a world in crisis. As long as the nationalized economy and the monopoly of foreign trade exist, the Soviet Union is a challenge to the imperialists. As reward for the abolition of the Comintern, they offer—that he throw away any other weapon which he may consider useful.

**ATTITUDE TOWARD THE** Significantly, however, few  
**U.S. COMMUNIST PARTY** newspapers demand the dissolution of the U. S. Communist Party. The *Philadelphia Record*, close to the New Deal, regrets that the Comintern did not dissolve also its component parties and makes the sinister suggestion:

"It *does* make clear before the world that Russia has washed her hands of responsibility for them, and that if America should find it necessary to corral her Reds and throw them into concentration camps, that would be a purely domestic American matter, and no offense to Moscow."

But this is an exception. Most of the newspapers make no demands on the Communist Party U.S.A. They understand its present role. On that weekend when the Chrysler workers and the Akron gum-miners were out on militant rank-and-file strikes, and the *Daily Worker* was howling that all strikes were Hitler's work and urging scabbing on the strikers, it obviously occurred to the bourgeois editorialists that the Communist Party was, for the moment at least, a very useful organization indeed.

A final point on which the vast majority of the capitalist editorials hammer is the claim that the dissolution of the Comintern marks the end of proletarian internationalism. While the Red Army and the Soviet masses are making their great defense to protect the remaining conquests of October, we counted by the dozens the newspapers which lyingly attributed Soviet morale to a purely nationalist desire to defend the "holy Russian" soil. Even the *New York Times* has the effrontery to state that "the patriotic, national, and even religious impulses of the Russian people . . . became the main sources of their heroism and stamina."

**THE SPECTACLE OF** In the face of the accurate char-  
**"THE DAILY WORKER"** acterizations of the defunct Comintern by the capitalist press, how did the *Daily Worker* react? As usual in the first period after Moscow makes a turn, the Stalinist editors fumbled, miserably uncertain of how best to please Moscow and fearing to err on either side of the line. The first day they published the Comintern document without comment. The second day, the *Daily Worker* stylists simply rewrote the Comintern proposal and called it an editorial. They also reported that "world reactions to the Comintern decision" were "overwhelmingly favorable." The most they dared add was that this was so "irrespective of the misconceptions and reasoning of many of those who made statements." What the misconceptions were, the *Daily Worker* editors dared not specify. Against *The New York Times'* attack on Stalinist policy in Poland and Yugoslavia the *Daily Worker* guessed it could protest, but with due obeisance to the *Times'* "anti-fascist" stature.

It remained, not for the functionaries of the *Daily Worker*, but for the realists of the *New York Herald Tribune*, to write:

"It must be recognized that revolutionary socialism on an international basis will not die. It represents an idea that will always find adherents when the world is troubled by wars or economic disaster—a movement that will wax and wane, spontaneously, no matter what Josef Stalin or any other national leader may decide."

This was an admission of an obvious-enough truth. In an epoch when decaying capitalism has no other perspective to offer desperate humanity than to reel from war to economic disaster and back into war again, international revolutionary socialism cannot but grow—and not merely spontaneously but on the basis of a program proved constantly correct and under a banner unstained by treachery and assassination. It is hardly to be expected that these bourgeois editorialists who so accurately evaluate the counter-revolutionary and anti-international significance of the Comintern's dissolution should carry their thoughts through to their logical conclusion. But history will do that for them. With the formal removal of the wreckage of the Third International, "revolutionary socialism on an international basis" will be carried to its final victory by Trotsky's Fourth International, which—as the Socialist Workers Party statement published in this issue truly proclaims—"lives and fights and which nobody can dissolve."

### The Mounting Number of Strikes

**GOVERNMENT FIGURES** Month by month, more and  
**TELL THE STORY** more workers are taking to strike action. The latest figures available from the U.S. Department of Labor are as follows:

Month	Strikes	Workers	
		Involved	Man-Days Out
February	210	42,000	170,000
March	260	72,000	230,000
April	395	200,000	675,000

As the figures for man-days indicate, often the strikes have been but for a few hours. The May figures will be far higher, including a half million miners out on Saturday and Monday, May 1 and 3, the four-day strike of 29,000 Chrysler workers in Detroit, the five-day Akron strike of 50,000 rubber workers, the continuing Baltimore transit walkout, etc.

Why these strikes, waged in all cases against terrific government pressure, in well-nigh all cases against the will of the AFL and CIO top leadership? E. R. Frank, a leading militant in one of the major unions, answers this question in this issue of *Fourth International* in his analysis of the coal crisis. He shows how the workers' resistance arises inevitably out of

the capitalist war economy. The workers still have illusions about the war and the government, yet driven by their needs they are striking in spite of their political immaturity.

**THE "DAILY WORKER"** Police minds, of course, will not **BLAMES US FOR THEM** and cannot understand this inevitable process of the class struggle. The scab Stalinist press, for example, daily howls against the Trotskyists as the instigators of the strikes. A single article in the May 31 *Daily Worker* attributes to us the events in the "Akron, Detroit, Toledo and other recent strike spots" where "for years those vital war production areas have been concentration points for the Trotskyites"; a major part in the militancy displayed at recent UAW conferences and conventions; the "unauthorized stoppages" in steel; the unrest in shipbuilding; a role in the Chrysler and Akron strikes.

We Trotskyists, now as always, support the workers' struggles, but can scarcely claim credit for the recent strike struggles. Our forces are as yet too small, the American proletariat has yet to turn toward the revolutionary movement. The Stalinists deliberately exaggerate our role in order to cover up the responsibility of the economic policies of the Roosevelt regime, and to lend weight to their demands that the Socialist Workers Party be outlawed. Still, we do not fear their denunciations or retreat under them. We remember how the Russian workers and peasants heard themselves condemned as Bolsheviks long before they ever listened to a Bolshevik agitator. Militants throughout American industry are hearing about us for the first time when they are denounced as Trotskyists. Their response in the end will be: "If what I'm doing is Trotskyism, then I guess I'm a Trotskyist."

### General Ruml Wins

**AN ADDITIONAL REWARD FOR WAR PROFITEERING** For over five months the representatives of Big Business have been fighting tenaciously for a tax-cancellation program which would enable them to keep their swollen 1942 war profits. The tax bill finally drafted by the Joint House-Senate conferees gives the monopolists and billionaires almost everything they have been howling for under the titular leadership of Ruml.

The bill wipes out 75 per cent of all taxes owed on 1942 incomes above \$50. On this basis a worker who earned \$40 a week in 1942 will have about \$100 in taxes cancelled. A Ford or a Rockefeller with an income of a million dollars in that year will have no less than \$645,000 cancelled! This is the law in its majestic equality.

In an organized campaign of lying whose totalitarian character could scarcely have been equalled by Hitler himself, the entire capitalist press pretends that the plan does not benefit the rich since they have to pay taxes each year just as always. This is a deliberate falsehood. The upper-income bracketeers had already set aside billions to meet their 1942 tax debts—billions 75 per cent of which they now are free to spend or invest, while they pay 1943 taxes out of *current* income on a "pay-as-you-go" basis. Nor, in many cases, is the amount they thus pocket curtailed much by the two so-called "anti-windfall" provisions. No millionaire will weep because he must pay taxes on 1942 or 1943 income, whichever one is higher—they were both good years. The second "anti-windfall" provision enables him to keep the full rebate if during one of the four base years—1937, 1938, 1939 or 1940—he had an income equal to his highest income in 1942 or 1943. For many rich men, 1940 was the first big year of expansion of war industry; for others, giving them four years to choose from pro-

vides them with *one* year of unusually high income equivalent to the war profits of 1942 or 1943. Those who aren't taken care of altogether by these loopholes are given the consolation of a \$20,000 cushion: a man who got \$60,000 in one of the base years and \$100,000 in 1942 or 1943, adds a \$20,000 cushion to the \$60,000, making \$80,000 the figure of his "regular" income so that he has to pay taxes only on \$20,000 under the "anti-windfall" provisions. One way or another, the plutocrats are being given additional rewards for their unbridled war profiteering.

The small and medium income tax groups, however, will find their tax burdens increased by the bill. In addition to paying immediately regular 1943 income taxes they will also have to pay during the next two years 25 per cent of taxes on 1942 income. For example, a married man making \$3,200 will have to pay current taxes on \$361 on 1943 income plus \$45 for the next two years on his 1942 income.

**STILL MORE TAXES COMING FOR THE POOR** In addition, the Treasury Department is demanding another tax bill of 16 billions this year. Congress is obviously planning to raise most of this additional revenue by sales taxes, which hit the small tax payers over four times as hard as they do the rich. In this way Congress plans to make up for the "concession" to the poor man in cancelling all 1942 tax debts below \$50. With one hand Congress will wave away a \$50 tax debt, with the other hand it will rob the pockets of the poor of \$200 through sales taxes. This is "equality of sacrifice"—U.S. capitalist model 1943.

The Congressmen who are adopting this tax bill are shameless and servile tools of the plutocracy; many of them, indeed, have direct personal interests in the matter. Every member of the Senatorial Finance Committee is either a millionaire in his own "right" or has been a corporation lawyer who continues to serve his monopolist clients as loyally in Congress as outside it.

**WHERE ARE LABOR'S OWN CONGRESSMEN?** CIO President Murray has pleaded with Congress to reject this tax-grab, for he knows that its passage will intensify his task of stifling the revolt of the workers. Murray is silent about the fact that he called upon the workers to elect the same gentlemen who are putting over this bill—men whom he called the "friends of Labor" and, indeed, "our" representatives in Congress. Thanks to the company-union policy of the CIO and AFL leadership in the political field, organized labor has no representatives of its own in Congress to expose and prevent the machinations of the millionaires and their political errand-boys.

Every worker should understand that thirteen million trade unionists and their families—actually the majority of the population, even without counting their natural allies among the dirt farmers and the white collar workers—count for nothing in Congress as against America's 60 ruling families. This tax steal should provide a new impetus to the formation of an Independent Party of Labor by the trade unions. It demonstrates once again that if organized labor does not take an independent part in political life, there is no limit to the crimes against the workers which will be perpetrated by the profiteers and their political agents in Washington.

### After Two Years of Soviet-Nazi War

**WHAT THE "DEMOCRATS" EXPECTED IN 1941** Warmed by his dissolution of the Comintern, Stalin's "allies" will undoubtedly observe June 22 by fulsome praise of Stalin and the "national patriotism" of the "Russian people."

Their attribution of Soviet strength to Stalin's leadership and the forces of nationalism is of course lying capitalist propaganda, designed to hide from the world masses the real source of Soviet morale and power of resistance. The "democratic" leaders know very well by now that it was the nationalized economy of the Soviet Union and the morale of the Soviet workers and collectivized peasants based upon it—in other words, the remaining conquests of the October revolution—which stopped the Nazi war machine after capitalist "democracy" failed to do so. They must understand this now, these gentlemen to whom the Soviet capacity for struggle came as a complete surprise. Since neither they nor their Stalinist collaborators will recall such unpleasanties on the second anniversary of the Soviet-Nazi war, let us remind them what the "democrats" thought in 1940 and 1941. Churchill declared, during the initial reverses of the war with Finland:

"The Finns have exposed for all the world to see the military incapacity of the Red Army and of the Red Air Force. Many illusions about Soviet Russia have been dispelled in these weeks of fighting in the Arctic circle. Everyone can see how communism rots the soul of a nation, how it makes it abject and hungry in peace, and proves it base, abominable in war." (*Times* of London, January 22, 1940.)

Churchill said this less than five months before Dunkirk; and *Le Temps*, organ of the French "democracy" which was to collapse at the first blow, declared: "The military might of the Soviets has turned out to be a huge bluff." Roosevelt's spokesman, Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson, in a speech on January 15, 1940, explained Russia's failure in Finland by the fact that "one free man is worth twenty slaves." As for the prognostications when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, they are too fresh in people's memories to require quotation: three months was the limit generally accorded to Soviet resistance by the general staffs of the "democracies." Now these bourgeois swine who blamed the defeats on Communism want to convince the world masses that the Soviet victories and continued resistance must be attributed to reactionary nationalism.

**THE PREDICTIONS** In the anti-Soviet chorus of the Hitler-Stalin pact period were numerous renegades from communism. It is instructive to recall their theories and predictions as well as those of their masters—who, indeed, may well have been misled in part by the prognostications of these renegade "experts" on the USSR. What the big capitalists called Stalin's "Communism," the petty-bourgeois renegades called "Stalinist imperialism." Thus they tried to mask their collapse under bourgeois pressure by a theory that the USSR had ceased to be a workers' state and was therefore no longer worthy of support. Among the American formulators of this theory are Max Eastman, Sidney Hook and James Burnham—the latter, our readers will recall, bestowed his theory on the Workers Party which he founded with Max Shachtman and then left. We recall especially an article by Hook in the *New Leader* which argued that the "democracies" were fighting for the principles of freedom of the great French revolution and therefore it was natural that opposing them should be both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, which Hook identified as having identical economies. Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* likewise asserted the identity of Nazi Germany and the USSR and took it for granted they would remain together. These prophets have yet to explain why their theories led to such false predictions.

Let us go, however, to the master of these American disciples—Boris Souvarine, whose big book, *Stalin*, is the principal fountainhead of the theory that the USSR long ago ceased to

be a workers' state. A British devotee of this theory, C.L.R. James, translated the book into English. It is noteworthy that the translation was very carefully checked by Souvarine himself and that it was published in 1939 on the very eve of the war. From his theory that there was no longer anything of the October revolution left to defend, Souvarine quite logically drew the following conclusions on what would happen to Soviet morale in the event of war:

"The peasants hope for any sort of change, and are only waiting for arms to settle their arrears of accounts with their oppressors. The workers feel scarcely less aversion to the hierarchy of secretaries, in spite of all the propaganda employed to convince them of their advantageous position. The youth alone, which knows nothing of the recent past or of life in foreign countries, accepts with elation the ideology of Soviet chauvinism and would defend the frontiers without reservation if not with enthusiasm. But its warlike impulses, so vigorous in expeditions without peril and without glory against the unarmed peasants, will lose vigor under cannon and machine-gun fire. The Red Army, reinforced by a partial mobilisation, would suffice for the protection of the USSR in a conflict limited to neighboring countries, but not in a conflagration worldwide in scope, entailing general mobilisation." (Pp. 566-567.)

Even more explicitly, Souvarine speaks of Soviet "farmers ready to welcome the invaders" and "The defeat so longed for by an enslaved people" (page 569).

It would be interesting to see Souvarine attempt to explain why, instead of welcoming the Nazi invader, the Soviet masses have demonstrated an unprecedented morale; but Souvarine is too busy on such tasks as explaining why Giraud is preferable to DeGaulle. Nor have the American borrowers of his theory provided an explanation—we are still waiting particularly to hear Shachtman's version. Nor can they pretend that Souvarine's predictions about Soviet morale are not logical corollaries of his theory. As Souvarine points out, "The Russian people have always benefited by wars which shook the ruling power. . . . The Crimean War hastened the liberation of the serfs, the Russo-Japanese War unleashed the first revolution, the World War precipitated the fall of Czarism." Hence more than any other people their rich experience prepared them for defeatism in this war—if they had felt they had nothing to defend. They who bore the burdens knew even better than the Souvarines the terrible cost in human lives and material goods of Stalin's purges and the rapacity and incompetence of the bureaucracy whom Stalin represents. Nevertheless the class instinct of the Soviet masses grasped what the corroded skepticism of the Souvarines failed to understand: that the economic foundations laid down by the October revolution still remained, that the superiority of this nationalized economy over capitalist anarchy had been demonstrated for all time by the Five Year Plans despite the handicap of Stalin's parasitic caste, that this proletarian fortress was worth defending with their lives despite Stalin's destruction of the Red Army leadership.

**OUR PREDICTIONS** Of the predictions of the Souvarines, **ON SOVIET MORALE** Trotsky wrote in March 1934: "There is still too much misery, suffering, injustice, and, consequently, discontent. But the idea that the Soviet masses are inclined to await aid from the armies of the Mikado or Hitler cannot be evaluated except as delirium. In spite of all the difficulties of the transition regime, the political and moral cohesion of the peoples of the USSR is sufficiently strong, in any case stronger than that of their possible adversaries." In 1937, after the purges, Trotsky still quoted these sentences as his opinion at the Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow Trials. Neither Trotsky nor we blinded ourselves to the devastation wreaked

upon morale, industry and the Red Army by the purges and the parasitic rule of the bureaucracy; on the contrary the world working class knows the true facts primarily through the Fourth International. We showed that the true facts, however, also include—what the Souvarines failed to see—that the nationalized economy remained and made tremendous advances at a tempo impossible to capitalism, raising the cultural level of tens of millions who had been illiterate peasants or peasants' sons and are now industrial workers, machinists and engineers. Because we understood this the Manifesto of the Fourth International, "For the Defense of the Soviet Union," was able to state in the first days of the Nazi invasion:

"Despite all the crimes of the bureaucracy, the October revolution, which brought a new life to all the peoples of Russia, is not yet dead. The worker and collectivized peasant are fully aware of what a Hitler victory would mean: seizure of the economy by the German trusts and cartels, transformation of the country into a colony, the end of the first experiment in planned economy outside the profit system, the end of all hopes. They do not want to allow that." (*Fourth International*, October 1941.)

We knew the continued vitality of the October revolution. Our faith in its capacity for struggle was incomparably greater than that of Stalin. That is why he signed the Hitler-Stalin pact and surrendered the initiative to Hitler, so that the invasion of the Soviet Union came under the most favorable conditions possible for Hitler—with all Europe as the Nazi base. The latest testimony on this question is that of the A.P. correspondent Henry C. Cassidy, whose just-published *Moscow Dateline* reports that until the Nazis actually crossed the border foreigners and Russians alike in Moscow were sure of further peace; for Stalin "wanted peace at almost any price, and would make almost any concession, even unasked" to appease Hitler.

**THE MOTIVE OF STALIN'S REACTIONARY POLICY** Today the Souvarinists praise the Soviet government or are silent, with the exception of the Shachtman Workers Party which, equally falsely, continues to speak of "Stalinist imperialism." They all refuse to see to this day the source of Stalin's pacifism toward Hitler, which flowed not only from his bureaucratic lack of faith in the masses, but also from his fear of the masses. Not, however, a fear of the non-existent defeatism attributed to the workers by the Souvarinists. On the contrary, the Soviet workers endured Stalin's rule because otherwise he threatened civil war, while the capitalist invader stood ready at the frontiers. But when the invader is smashed and revolution sweeps Europe, Stalin well knows, the Soviet proletariat will settle with him.

Hence Stalin's present policy toward the "democracies" remains in essence identical with his previous policy toward Hitler. There are of course obvious differences. He never became Hitler's military partner against Britain and France although, let us remind the Stalinists, Stalin and Hitler jointly partitioned Poland, Molotov boasting: "One swift blow to Poland first by the German Army and then by the Red Army, and nothing was left" (*Daily Worker*, November 1, 1939). Stalin gave Hitler political support, their joint declaration of September 28, 1939 stating that if France and Britain refused to accept Hitler's peace terms "the fact would be established that England and France are responsible for the continuation of the war." Now Stalin and his lackeys paint up the "democratic" leaders as the hope of the world, if only they retain Stalin as their ally. As in the period of the pact with Hitler, so now, Stalin wants no revolutions in Europe, for revolutions will free the hands of the Soviet proletariat and put an end to the Kremlin bureaucracy. Just as he feared Hitler, he fears his present "allies," but will make almost any concession to them.

**THE DANGER TO THE SOVIET UNION TODAY** Stalin's false policy will collapse once more, and again under the most adverse conditions for the Soviet Union. After two years of the most destructive warfare in history, untold Soviet millions—there are no real figures given—have been killed and wounded, and a large part of the industrial plant destroyed. The Soviet masses are hungry, as the Kremlin's delegate had to make clear at the Food Conference. In a word, the USSR has been bled white while its "allies" remain so far relatively unscathed and growing stronger. The relation of forces thus grows in favor of the "democracies" as against the Soviet Union.

Magnificent though the tempos of the nationalized economy are, they remain those of a backward country, outstripped by the advanced technology of the imperialist colossus of North America. We had and still have abiding faith in the Soviet masses and the enduring vitality of the October revolution despite the degeneration wrought by Stalin. But we also know the limits of the strength of that revolution when it is compelled to fight within political limits acceptable to its capitalist "allies." Stalin has wrested from the hands of the Red Army the political weapons of international revolution with which Lenin and Trotsky demoralized the enemy armies in the war of imperialist intervention. Victory appears to be approaching for the "democracies," but that, if they have their way, will be no victory for the Soviet Union.

**OUR PREDICTION ABOUT THE "DEMOCRACIES"** We feared and predicted this situation from the outset. In its manifesto, "Defend the Soviet Union," the Socialist Workers Party wrote on June 23, 1941:

"The Soviet Union is now compelled by sad necessity to seek these alliances. That is necessitated by the isolation and weakness of the Soviet Union. What, however, shall be the attitude of the working class toward the Soviet Union's capitalist allies? . . .

"We warn the workers: the 'democratic' ally is just as hostile to the nationalized property of the Soviet Union as is the fascist enemy. Roosevelt and Churchill will seek two things at the same time: the defeat of their German imperialist rival and also to prevent the Soviet Union from strengthening itself through victory. Even at the cost of weakening their fight against their imperialist rival, Roosevelt and Churchill will try to hold down the world working class, including the Soviet Union. . . .

"The fundamental antagonism remains and will come to the fore precisely if the 'democracies' begin to win. . . .

"Even during the course of the war, Churchill and Roosevelt, in the name of greater efficiency in the prosecution of the war, may attempt to intervene in the economic life of the Soviet Union. The already grave economic crisis in the USSR—caused by capitalist encirclement and the uncontrolled mismanagement of the bureaucrats—will grow ever more profound under the stress of war. The Kremlin bureaucracy will tend to yield to close collaboration with the 'economic experts' of Roosevelt and Churchill. For their 'services' the capitalists will demand immediate payment in the form of economic concessions which would undermine the nationalized property. It is unquestionable, we repeat, that the 'democracies' are just as anxious to destroy nationalized property as is Hitler. . . .

"On guard against the capitalist allies of the Soviet Union! That is the only possible position of the real defenders of the Soviet Union: irreconcilable opposition to all the imperialist powers, whether 'allies' or enemies." (*Fourth International*, July 1941.)

These words, written two years ago, require no modification on the second anniversary of the Nazi invasion of the USSR. On the contrary, our warning takes on new significance with every passing day. The Comintern dissolution undoubtedly marks a new stage in Stalin's concessions to capitalism.



White House. This one act of courage of one union leader threatened to topple the whole intricate labor relations edifice and upset Roosevelt's coalition with the labor movement.

## The Plan of the Kitchen Cabinet

As they watched Lewis breathing thunder and defiance, Roosevelt's kitchen cabinet must have experienced the feeling of the proprietor of a china shop when a wild bull comes charging into his well ordered establishment. Lewis must be stopped at once, they cried, before he wrecks the whole delicate relationship of the coalition structure—the coalition upon which depends the stability of the administration.

Roosevelt had no qualms in March and April 1943 about the rest of the labor movement. Was he not himself the first leader of American labor? In any case, Murray and Green had assured him that they would soft-pedal their opposition to the "Little Steel formula" in return for the promise that prices would be "rolled back." Besides, there was no danger from this quarter. Roosevelt knew the Murrays and Greens and how one decisive word from him was sufficient to keep this chicken-hearted crew in line. And after all, they represented the massed millions of the AFL and CIO. Their announcement that they would abide by the decision of the WLB majority, when the latter rejected their proposals to revise the "Little Steel formula" was an open demonstration of Lewis' isolation. Lewis alone was the danger. The Murrays and Greens, it was obvious, having made their face saving protests, were ready to abandon the miners to the tender mercies of the WLB and to abandon Lewis, they hoped, to his fate.

The White House coterie acted as if this might be the God-given opportunity to settle old scores with Lewis and to eliminate him once and for all as a contender for leadership of the American labor movement. Who knows? Maybe if all went well, he might even be squeezed out of his position in the miners union. It had been accomplished once before in the case of the CIO. But what is basic was their deadly fear that a concession to the miners would break the dams: the workers all over the country would defy the government and strike to secure favorable action on their wage demands; the policy followed by Lewis would become a pattern for other union leaderships and it would become impossible for the Murrays and Greens to continue their kow-towing to Roosevelt. The kitchen cabinet thus had its strategy all cut out: isolate Lewis, disgrace him as a leader before the working class, grant no concessions to the miners, keep the wage and job freezing program intact, teach labor a stiff lesson that opposition does not pay and thereby insure the continued support of the Murrays and Greens and make them, as a matter of fact, even more dependent upon the bounty and the favors of the White House.

So, egged on by his advisers and with the admonitions of the tory press about a "firm" policy ringing in his ears, Roosevelt on April 8th announced his new "hold-the-line" order. Wages were to be absolutely frozen without any ifs, ands or buts. The question of wages was closed for the duration! The following week, McNutt, the Manpower Commissioner, issued his ruling that 27 million workers were frozen to their present jobs. Two brilliant strokes all in one week! With one decree and one departmental ruling Roosevelt had solved all his labor troubles for the duration of the war. Why had he not thought of this simple solution before? By legal fiat, it was now ensured that Lewis and the miners could not secure any of their wage demands. This would also constitute a never-to-be-forgotten lesson of the dire consequences that befall labor or any of its leaders when they challenge the authority of the government.

But events demonstrated that Roosevelt had reckoned without his host. For once, he had badly miscalculated the forces of the labor movement. For once, he had seriously overestimated his hold upon the American worker and mistaken his temper. The mine union leadership was not overawed by the "hold-the-line" decree! Lewis calmly challenged it as he had previously challenged the "Little Steel" ruling of the WLB. On April 10 he announced: "It is beside the point that other labor organizations such as the AFL and CIO, through their leaders, have adopted a policy of cringing toadyism to the administration. . . . The United Mine Workers and its membership will continue to make this fight. . . ."

## Where Roosevelt Miscalculated

Accompanying the defiance of the miners, groups of workers struck in many cities. The unrest in labor ranks grew so acute that many leaders of the most important International unions, feeling the hot anger of their own membership, began to make threatening gestures. Before many days had elapsed even the august statesmen of labor themselves, Murray and Green, crawled on their assurances to the White House and issued protests against the new decree. Even such a case-hardened bureaucrat as Matthew Woll began popping off: "The War Labor Board has become a policeman's club," he declared. "The time has come for labor to declare its independence of unconstitutional government dictation. . . ." With the labor movement in a furor, the AFL and CIO representatives of the WLB threatened to resign. Its prestige already badly punctured, the board now faced imminent death. The "hold-the-line" order thus failed to achieve any of its objectives. It did not dampen the unrest of the labor movement. It further aroused it. It did not isolate Lewis, as a preliminary to his eclipse and downfall. It threatened to push the labor movement into his arms. It did not settle the coal crisis. It aggravated it. It did not reestablish the authority of the WLB. It almost wrecked it.

The whole capitalist class, moreover, in the wake of the coal operators was pressing down on Roosevelt for a "strong" policy. "Hold the line," they demanded. "No more concessions to labor." Roosevelt is first and foremost the war spokesman of the American capitalist class and he must heed his master's voice, in spite of the fact that the stability of his own administration, not to mention Roosevelt's own career as a public figure, rests upon an understanding and alliance with labor.

As the walkouts in the mines began spreading with the approach of the May 1 deadline, Roosevelt threw caution to the winds and embarked on the ambitious venture of separating the coal miners from their union organization and leadership. He went on the air May 1 and in his own name he called upon the half million coal miners to repudiate the union strike call and to continue at work. It is true that, unlike Lewis in 1940, he did not promise to resign his position if the miners ignored his demand. Nevertheless, he threw his own labor prestige pretty heavily into the balance. The miners did not keep him waiting long for an answer. They calmly disregarded the Rooseveltian exhortation to scab and in their overwhelming majority obeyed and followed the instructions of their union.

It is not, of course, an impossibility to separate a union membership from its leadership. Lewis in the past has been very unpopular in the coal fields. Anti-Lewis feeling and opposition to his administration is by no means all dissipated even today. For years, Lewis has ruled the union by bureaucratic suppression of all opponents and critics, by the destruction of the democratic rights of the membership, by strong-arm squads, by expulsion out of the union and industry of the foremost militants among the coal miners. Democracy is still

something to be achieved, even today, in the miners' union.

But in the current controversy Lewis and his lieutenants are waging a militant fight for the demands of the miners. In this fight, the men in the coal fields were back of Lewis 100 per cent. For Roosevelt to imagine that in this situation he could play on the traditional anti-Lewis feeling of large sections of the coal miners, or bank on his own labor prestige, at a time when he was advocating a straight union-busting program and counseling the miners to scab against their union in order to ensure his wage-freezing, job-freezing orders, did not reveal a very high order of thinking. It demonstrated that with all his abilities, talents and great wealth of experience, Roosevelt has all the limitations of the educated bourgeois snob and that his understanding of the working man and the labor movement is indeed a very one-sided one. At any rate, Roosevelt and his advisers lost their illusions how the miners would respond, as the second strike deadline approached on the eve of May 15. No newspaper reporters were rushed out to the coal fields this time to dig up miners who proclaimed their intentions to scab. May 1 demonstrated even to the blind that the miners were ready to fight. As a corollary, the kitchen cabinet was taught that an important labor leader like Lewis in the midst of leading a militant labor fight cannot be read out of the labor movement by a Harry Hopkins or a Ma Perkins or even by Roosevelt himself.

Instead of a group of cowed miners, isolated and spurned by the rest of the labor movement and docilely trudging back to the coal pits, after the government took possession of the mine properties, the miners returned to work as they had come out—united, confident and determined to continue the fight. They returned only when their union announced a strike truce. Their fight had won them the admiration and the active sympathy of the ranks of all American labor. The miners had definitely won the first round.

Things were not faring half so well in the camp of the Roosevelt government. The WLB and the OPA were a shambles. Then, before the second strike truce expired and before the government could recover its poise, two great roars of thunder came crashing out of Detroit and Akron—the four-day strike of 29,000 Chrysler workers and the six-day strike of 50,000 rubber workers. Samuel Colton, executive secretary of the American Labor League, representing over 300,000 AFL and CIO members of New Jersey has properly described them as “anti-administration strikes.” In less than a month Roosevelt had been dealt two serious rebuffs. His government was in the throes of a full-blown labor crisis.

## The Labor Crisis Was Inevitable

How did this experienced, talented capitalist politician, who for over ten years has proven himself a master in leading the labor movement and in manipulating its leadership, allow himself to be maneuvered into such a difficult position?

Because the economic consequences of the war have a logic far more eloquent than Roosevelt's radio speeches. There is a limit to trickery, deception and demagoguery. It was only a question of time until the workers would begin to catch up with him. The war and the resultant government policies have enormously speeded up the political education of the workers.

More concretely, the existence of the powerful miners union, remaining independent and aloof from the administration, under a leadership hostile to Roosevelt, has constituted for a long time a potential danger to the coalition and its stability. It is not so easy to ignore a strong industrial union of 600,000 men headed by an able, experienced and bold leader. The Roosevelt policy of keeping Lewis isolated and granting him no recog-

niton was effective only so long as the miners union was quiescent, while its leadership remained isolated from the rest of the labor movement, and Green and Murray could continue to speak unchallenged for the millions of workers of the AFL and CIO. But as soon as the miners launched their fight and their challenge of the government was eagerly seconded by the auto and rubber workers, it was a foregone matter that the Roosevelt coalition could no longer continue without some drastic readjustments and a new reshuffle of the labor machinery.

In the final settlement of the coal controversy, the operators will unquestionably sign a contract granting the miners union the minimum which the union was prepared to accept as a settlement from the first—a six-day week and a fair portal-to-portal pay allowance. But the government will carry the onus of having permitted concessions only under compulsion—it was first necessary for the miners to strike. Formally channeling the case via the WLB has not upheld the tottering authority of the already-moribund WLB. The Detroit and Akron strikes gave warning that the government's troubles, far from ending, are just about to begin.\*

It is probably not surprising, viewing the coal crisis in retrospect, that the popularity and authority of Roosevelt suffered a setback in the eleventh year of his rule. The forces of American labor are too strong, too militant, too well organized, too fresh and undefeated to be cheated and tricked indefinitely. What was surprising was the bull-headed manner in which Roosevelt attempted to halt the march of American labor, his miscalculation of its temper and strength and the subjectivity and obvious malice with which he tried to wreck a leadership that opposed him.

The Roosevelt strategy of April 8 has not come out of the battle unscathed. Roosevelt tried to isolate Lewis. Lewis has emerged again as a labor figure of great importance. Roosevelt tried to prevent the granting of concessions to the miners. He will be forced in the end to grant concessions. He tried to teach labor a lesson that opposition to Roosevelt does not pay. The opposite has been established. He tried to end the debate on his wage and job freezing program. The program is under heavier attack from the labor movement.

Why did it fall to the United Mine Workers to strike the first blow in labor's challenge to the government, rather than to the more aggressive and dynamic industrial unions in auto or rubber? Because the miners union, through Lewis, is independent of the Roosevelt administration and hostile to it, while the national leaderships of both the auto and rubber unions are tied in the straitjacket of the Roosevelt war government. The present fight of the miners was conducted in every respect under the direction and control of the Lewis leadership. The automobile and rubber workers in their battles were forced to call “outlaw” strikes against the wishes and in defiance of the authority of their international union leaderships.

In certain respects, Lewis heads a union that is ideally suited to challenge the government. The membership of the miners unions is distinctive. The miners are by no means more politically advanced or more militant than the members of the auto, rubber or steel unions. Quite the contrary. But the miner does have a somewhat different attitude toward his union than the worker in mass production industry. The miner as a rule lives in a small community where life does not offer the numerous activities of the metropolitan city. The union is a far more

\*This article was written before the second miners' strike began.—Ed.

dominant feature of life and vehicle of public opinion in the small mining communities than it is in the large industrial cities. Union organizers often relate with what pride the miners in the small hamlets of West Virginia, Kentucky or Tennessee will exhibit their union membership cards and how painstakingly they will make clear that all their dues stamps and assessments are paid up to date. How often have we heard the expression: "Unionism is the miners' religion."

The average mining town does not have the complex and intricate gradation of classes of the big cities. What is there outside of the miners and their families? A handful of storekeepers, a schoolteacher, a preacher and the direct agents of the mine owners. A scab in the coal strike must not only buck the pickets; he has to brave the social ostracism of the community. Even today, with the outside world having been brought far closer by means of the radio and the automobile, it is far more difficult to bring the full pressure of capitalist public opinion down on the heads of the coal miners than on a group of city workers.

For these reasons, it is traditionally a difficult task to break a coal strike. Even under martial law with the presence of troops, the miners simply stay away from the pits. The common method of breaking a coal strike, as a matter of fact, is for the owner to shut down the mine and starve the men out. Sooner or later the ranks break under the pressure of hunger and before long, a sullen group of coal diggers marches back dejectedly to the pits.

Such a tactic was manifestly out of the question in the present controversy. Before the coal miners could have been starved out, the steel industry would have shut down and the whole war effort would have come to a grinding stop. That is why, from a purely trade union point of view, the miners were in an exceptionally strong position to defy the government and to strike for their demands.

The power of the capitalist class in this country is immense and it would be a rash statement to say that Roosevelt could not smash a coal strike. But obviously he was loathe to break the strike in cold blood. Because, even if successful, he would at the same time have obliterated his coalition with labor and written his own death decree as a public figure.

## The Lewis Machine

The leadership of the union is very simply described: John L. Lewis rules as the undisputed head. Lewis achieved this pre-eminent position by building a machine that ruthlessly crushed all opposition and destroyed the democracy, the free discussion and debate that had been characteristic of the mine union in the previous decades. Even when the UMW flowered again in the NRA days and hundreds of thousands of miners were brought back into its fold, the union never regained its old spirit of free discussion, its rich internal life. No important new leaders have emerged in the miners union in the recent period, although half a million new members have been enrolled into the union since the NRA days. The leadership remains roughly the same as in the period when the union had a membership of 100,000 in 1930.

John L. Lewis does the thinking in the UMW for the machine. Insofar as he has a philosophy, Lewis is of course thoroughly capitalist in his thinking. Personally, however, he is built on a different scale than the grey nonentities and mediocrities that make up the national officialdom of the AFL and CIO. He is imperious, egotistic, proud, ambitious and far bolder, far more able, far more colorful and far more imaginative than any one or dozen other top labor officials. To this must be added that Lewis is an adventurer, par excellence. His

gesture of placing the CIO presidency on the gambling table in the 1940 elections was far more suited to a poker player than a responsible leader of labor. His adventurism and unbridled opportunism give him a certain dexterity and nimbleness of movement. He has none of the inhibitions of the Murrays and Greens. But these characteristics also set off his woeful limitations. His machine is a personal one. It has no basic program or aims except those of power. The program and auspices under which that power will be exercised is decided for the Lewis machine not by great labor principles or aims but by expediency.

But in Lewis' own recent experience, the power of political events more than once has thrust aside his machinations and demonstrated that political program is in the long run and on big questions more binding and decisive than personal allegiances and clique formations.

His adventurism and lightning changes of front cost him the CIO presidency in 1940. Lewis thought he could spend seven years in building up Roosevelt as Savior No. 1 of American labor and then overnight snap his fingers, and with no explanations or preliminary discussion, instruct millions of workers that now the signals were changed, now we are going back to the Republican Party and Willkie is the man of the hour. But the American workers are not members of the Lewis machine nor are they adventurers.

The following year, the CIO convention at Detroit, on the eve of Pearl Harbor, isolated Lewis completely, and lost him even his closest co-workers and friends: Murray, Allan Haywood, Van Bittner, Fagan. Why? Some people explained that Hillman had outmaneuvered Lewis at some super-clever chess game. But that is nonsense. The lightning struck Lewis for a different reason. Lewis thought he could play with the question of program—in this case, Roosevelt and the war. He thought he could cross and recross class lines with impunity. He thought he could continue to be a 100 per cent patriot, pursue a time-honored policy of class collaboration, give back-handed support to the America Firsters, and at the same time run a private feud with the President of the United States, who is not a private individual, but the chief executive of the American capitalist class.

A basic fight against Roosevelt is a fight for labor independence and political power. You cannot do that in company with America First and the Republican Party. Lewis' pre-war policy could be pursued by an individual pacifist who registers his protest and then retires from the scene. Possibly a newspaper columnist, who has no responsibility to a movement, might with impunity play such blind man's buff. But the labor movement confronts the war machine every day of the week and at every turn of the road. Whatever policy its leaders adopt, they are forced by their very position to accept the full consequences of that policy. A labor union like the CIO, which is entrenched in the industries that form the backbone of America's economy, cannot play at opposition. The top leaders of the CIO knew enough to understand this. And, of course, the thought of opposing Roosevelt and his war program never having entered their heads, they had no choice but to dump their ex-~~cesses~~.

Lewis' opportunism and lack of a thought-out program played him false again in his relations with the Stalinists. He helped build them up as a power inside the CIO. Apparently he imagined that he could get rid of them whenever they became troublesome to him, just as he had, in a previous period and under totally different conditions, rid himself of the opposition inside the miners union. The same Detroit convention saw the Stalinists very much in the CIO while the Lewis forces were virtually on the outside looking in.

This lack of a thought-out program, this combination of unbridled opportunism, adventurism and lightning-like changes and shifts of front, prevent Lewis from building anything but a personal machine. No one knows what the miners union will do or what policy it will pursue until Lewis has spoken the word. One miner expressed this idea when he said: "Lewis is always taking us into or out of something."

The limitations of the Lewis machine are discernible even from a more limited organizational point of view. For one, the machine lacks the talent of its leader. Its origins and lack of program are all too clearly stamped on its visage. It resembles very closely the machine of a Tobin in the teamsters union. Take John L. Lewis away and the UMW leadership would resemble in almost every way the leadership of the teamsters union. That is always the drawback of a personal machine. A program can be transmitted to other people. It is not so easy to transmit to others personal talents and attainments.

The Lewis machine invariably gives a bad account of itself when called upon to perform on its own. The most recent example is the organization drive of District 50. After two years of effort, in spite of ample finances, an apparatus, organizers at the union's disposal, with virtually no competition in the field for which theoretically it was set up—the chemical and by-products industry—District 50 has very little organization to show for the great outlay of energy and finances either in the chemical or any other field. The history of District 50 for the past two years is replete, however, with all sorts of wild adventures, screwball schemes and organization of senseless and meaningless jurisdiction battles with the CIO and AFL.

### Lewis' Return to the AFL

During the first days of the coal crisis, the miners union was organizationally isolated from the rest of American labor. It was the intention of the Murrays and Greens to keep the miners isolated, not only organizationally, but morally as well. They placed their petty personal ambitions and fears of competition from Lewis above the interests of the miners and the whole labor movement. The AFL and CIO Executive boards, meeting in the midst of the coal crisis, repudiated the mine strike and took that occasion to reiterate their no-strike pledge.

The miners, however, were saved from the evil consequences of this treachery by the active sympathy and support they received from the ranks of the more militant unions. In two important regional conferences of the Michigan and eastern districts of the UAW, representing over half a million members, the auto workers came forward against their own International officers to back the militant fight of the miners. Finally, the strikes of Detroit and Akron made amply clear that the miners were not without friends in the labor movement.

With the re-emergence of the miners union as an active force in the American trade union movement and of Lewis as its most important single figure, it was obvious that the miners union could not remain organizationally alone any longer. The coal crisis had proven that the industrial workers inside the CIO, the auto, rubber, steel workers, were the most reliable allies of the coal miners. This group of workers constitute the most dynamic and progressive section of American labor. The miners belong with them.

It was correct and necessary for Lewis to break the isolation of the miners union. This could have been accomplished in a truly progressive way had the mine leadership launched a campaign to establish a fighting alliance with the auto, rubber, steel unions, etc., as a step toward full labor unity. A campaign based upon the calling of a conference of all

International unions for the purpose of launching a united fight against the wage and job freezing program of the government, if pushed with the same vigor and aggressiveness displayed in the coal fight, would have achieved such a fighting alliance. Lewis has instead taken a different course. He has come to a personal agreement with Hutcheson, Woll and several other of the most case-hardened bureaucrats of the AFL and through Hutcheson has reapplied for membership in the AFL. The miners will thus find themselves part of the more conservative, less dynamic section of the American labor movement. Here again the Lewis machine demonstrates its woeful limitations. Instead of its policies being determined by a clear goal and aim, and pressing toward such a goal at every available opportunity, we find that again purely gratuitous circumstances have dictated to Lewis his course.

### What Next?

Reviewing the experiences of the miners' fight and its aftermath, it becomes obvious that in the 18-month period since Pearl Harbor profound changes have been wrought in the political thinking of the American workers.

The confusion and apathy that seized the men in the shops after Pearl Harbor has worn off. Roosevelt no longer commands the uncritical loyalty that he enjoyed since NRA days. That is not to say that the working class is already anti-Roosevelt. But the Akron and Detroit strikes proved that the miners' fight against the administration was no isolated event. The miners were only blazing the trail that the rest of American labor will now follow. For the first time in 10 years, it is possible to criticize Roosevelt personally at union meetings without inviting violent opposition from the majority of those present. Roosevelt can no longer hide behind the skirts of some underling or clerk. The recent strikes demonstrated that he must come out today and take personal responsibility for the acts of his administration and for his program of hunger and repression. The day is therefore past when labor's anger vents itself upon Roosevelt's hirelings and by-passes the chief culprit himself. May I definitely broke the Roosevelt "spell" over labor.

With the declaration of war, labor found that it was no longer negotiating with private companies, but with the government. Every contract, every wage agreement had to be approved by the WLB. The negotiations with private management became a mere formality, the negotiations with the government the reality. In the coal controversy, the operators played the role of minor characters. They uttered their few lines and then turned the whole matter over to the government. The two main parts in the unfolding drama were played by labor and by the government in its role of general executive board of big capital. For 18 months, this shift of scenery had the labor movement buffaloed. The workers had learned and understood how to fight the private corporations. They had lost all feeling of timidity for the Fords, the Girdlers, the Chryslers, the Knudsens. They had learned how to organize great strikes and see them through to victory. But how can one fight the government? That represents, they thought, all the people.

The historic significance of the coal strike is that it dramatized the hypocrisy of the government's "equality of sacrifice" program and tore away its pretense of impartiality. The coal strike wrenched one contingent of labor free of subservience to the war machine. The fight demonstrated in practice that labor was strong, possessed great resources and could successfully resist the autocratic encroachments of the government.

We can see that the 18 months in which the labor movement was in retreat before the offensive of big capital and the government have not passed in vain. The experiences gained have produced a giant leap in the political thinking of American

labor. Politics has been taken out of the realm of Fourth of July speeches and has been brought into every home every day of the week. Politics has become serious, austere, the bread and butter problem of the American worker. The declaration of independence from the Roosevelt war government is already finding organizational expression in New Jersey and elsewhere in the movement for independent political action of labor.

The miners' fight has lessened the authority of the international officialdom, the Murrays and Greens. It will be more difficult for them to keep labor in the chains of their "no-strike pledge." A new leadership is arising from among those officers and committeemen of the local unions who are espousing a program of the independence of labor and a fighting policy to protect labor's rights and advance its interests. The violent struggle which the Chrysler strike precipitated in the UAW, and the sharp cleavage created between the local officers and the International bureaucracy, is a harbinger of what is in store for the top officialdom of many other International unions.

The miner's fight has upset the relationship set up at Pearl Harbor between the labor movement and the Roosevelt administration. The old relationship no longer corresponds to the new disposition of forces. Both the AFL and CIO leaderships are going through violent convulsions in their attempt to achieve

a new equilibrium. The Roosevelt government has already announced the setting up of a new super-board on the domestic front, the Office of War Mobilization, in one effort to bridge the gap. Many shifts, readjustments, struggles and convulsions are in the offing in an attempt to achieve a new equilibrium. If the Roosevelt government conducts itself with the same vengeful bull-headedness it exhibited in the coal crisis, the class struggle in America will be volcanic indeed in the days ahead.

Labor, represented by its vanguard in coal, auto and rubber, crossed swords with Roosevelt, the spokesman of American capital, in May 1943. But both sides, after taking the measure of each others' strength, withdrew. Roosevelt was not ready to discard his pretentious disguise as "friend of labor" and openly assume the mantle of the union-busting, strike-breaking head of U.S. imperialism in war. Labor was also not prepared to dispute the authority and the might of the war government. In this sense the fight from a national point of view has ended inconclusively. The miners will unquestionably win significant concessions. But as far as the labor movement as a whole is concerned, the wage and job freeze program remains. Labor's fight for its right to live, ushered in by the miners and ably supported by the auto and rubber workers, will continue. The next showdown will not be long in coming.

# The Third International Is Dead--Long Live the Fourth International!

## *Statement of the National Committee, Socialist Workers Party*

In dissolving the Communist International, the treacherous Stalin clique has provided official recognition of the fact that the Comintern has long been dead as a revolutionary international. Its place has been taken by Trotsky's Fourth International, which lives and fights and which nobody can dissolve.

The degeneration of the Comintern began in 1924, after Lenin's death. The degeneration was caused by the isolation of the first workers' state in capitalist encirclement and the rise in the Soviet Union of a privileged bureaucracy, product of the economic and cultural backwardness of the agrarian country inherited from the Czars. The bureaucracy was a fusion of the conservative wing of the Bolshevik Party and millions of state functionaries retained from the former Czarist and capitalist apparatus. The bureaucracy took advantage of the exhaustion of the masses after the civil war and was able to seize control of the party, the unions and the state and to transform them into totalitarian instruments of the privileged caste. This process of degeneration could have been halted and turned back by victories of the proletarian revolution in advanced countries, but the Soviet bureaucracy in turn became the principal cause of the uninterrupted series of defeats sustained under its leadership by the workers of the world.

The Soviet bureaucracy consolidated its power under the banner of Stalin's reactionary and Utopian theory, first promulgated in October 1924, of building "socialism in one country" as against the Lenin-Trotsky program of international revolution. Events since then have fully demonstrated that "socialism in one country" means in reality socialism in no country. Instead of fighting for the extension of the October revolution to other countries, the Communist parties were deformed into puppets of Stalin's reactionary foreign policy. Instead of the World Congresses of the Comintern under Lenin and Trotsky (the first

four Congresses, 1919-22), the Soviet bureaucracy has held one Congress (1924) to seize control of the Comintern machinery; another (1928) to secure formal endorsement for the already accomplished expulsion, exile and imprisonment of the Left Opposition and to transfer the Comintern machinery into the hands of the Stalin clique at the top of the bureaucracy; and a final Congress (1935) to record the conversion of the Comintern to chauvinistic support of any capitalist government allied with Stalin. Having thus sold the services of the Comintern to his capitalist "allies," Stalin could scarcely be expected to show any more compunction in similarly selling them its formal dissolution.

In 1933, in proclaiming the necessity for the Fourth International we, and our co-thinkers throughout the world, declared that the Comintern was dead as a revolutionary body, by which we meant that there could be no longer any hope of halting its degeneration and turning it back to its revolutionary origins. Like the Second International which preceded it, the Third International had become too ossified to permit of regeneration. This conclusion was rendered inescapable when the Stalinized Communist Party of Germany, with 600,000 members and six million followers, capitulated to Hitler fascism without a fight.

Stalin's monstrous crime in Germany climaxed other catastrophes which this organizer of defeats had perpetrated upon the international working class—by his collaboration with the British trade union bureaucrats which facilitated their betrayal of the General Strike of 1926, his collaboration with Chiang Kai-shek which enabled the Chinese bourgeoisie to crush the Chinese revolution (1925-27), etc. Since 1933 we have seen the most deliberate betrayals of the workers by Stalin's Comintern, first in the service of the Franco-Soviet pact, then in the service of the pact with Hitler, and since 1941 again for the

"democracies." In France the Comintern agents joined with Leon Blum in halting the revolutionary strike wave of 1936, giving full support to Daladier who ended by crushing the labor movement; the Hitler-Stalin pact completed the demoralization of the French proletariat on the eve of the war. In Spain the Comintern agents led the most reactionary bourgeois and reformist elements in crushing the Spanish revolution, breaking the morale of the fighters against Franco and facilitating his victory. When these treacherous acts failed to win from the "democracies" sufficiently substantial guarantees of an alliance for the coming war, Stalin made his pact with Hitler, including the "peace offensive" and "anti-war" activities of the Comintern. When this policy in turn collapsed and Hitler was able to attack the Soviet Union, Stalin turned the Comintern to the service of his new "allies." Already in 1933, as the price of diplomatic relations with Washington, the Roosevelt-Litvinov agreement pledged Stalin not to permit the residence on Soviet territory "of any organization or group which has as an aim the overthrow" of the U.S. government. The Comintern and the Communist Party of the United States ceased to have that aim; now the Comintern ceases official existence altogether.

Stalin's latest act merely completes the demonstration of how correct were the genuine revolutionists in all countries when, in 1933, they joined with Leon Trotsky in calling for the Fourth International, a decision given complete organizational expression by the World Congress of the Fourth International in Paris in 1938.

Before Stalin dared to bury the Comintern, he first had to assassinate Leon Trotsky in August 1940, for Lenin's great co-worker, the only one who had escaped the Moscow Trials and purges, remained as the living embodiment of proletarian internationalism. But neither the assassination of Trotsky, nor Stalin's murders of Trotskyists in Spain, France, Switzerland, etc., nor his ferocious physical destruction of the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union, nor his present attempt to discredit the very idea of an international, can halt the growth of the international workers' party. The proletarian international cannot be dissolved! It is the imperishable idea and irrepressible need of world unity, which can only be achieved through the proletarian world revolution. The Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky, the Communist International of the first four Congresses, still lives on in the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution. Stalin, usurper of the mantle of Lenin, long ago abandoned the revolutionary heritage of Lenin to the Bolshevik-Leninists—the Trotskyists. Not internationalism but Stalin's degenerate caricature of it has been thrown into the discard. The Third International is dead. Long live the Fourth International!

The real character of the Comintern was illumined by the method employed by Stalin in dissolving it. In complete violation of the Comintern's own statutes, a ukase by Stalin's puppets in Moscow is sufficient, without any pretense of prior discussion in the constituent parties. The members of the Communist Party learned about the dissolution from the capitalist press. The ostensible excuse for this totalitarian method is the impossibility of calling a Congress in wartime to settle the question. But the question still could have been posed privately to the constituent parties, discussed by the membership and voted upon. It is ludicrous, however, to suggest such a method when in reality the line has been handed down from Moscow to a totalitarianized Comintern for nearly two decades.

The arguments for dissolution adduced by Stalin's puppets in their "resolution of the Executive Cominttee" are reactionary to the core. It says not one word about the fact that the International arose as the product of the world-wide character of modern economy—a character which of course is not obliterated

by Stalin's ukase. It does not even mention the original goal of the International—world socialism. It is equally silent about the method for achieving that goal—the class struggle. At the very height of the growth of the Communist International, when great mass parties were represented from many countries at the Fourth Congress in 1922, no one dreamed of arguing that these powerful parties could do without an international center; yet today, when Stalin's policy has led those parties to destruction and only a handful of parties remain, the resolution has the effrontery to assert that "the growth and political maturity of the Communist Parties" renders an international center no longer necessary!

It was the proud and justified boast of the founders of the International that it united the "cavalry of the West"—the industrial proletariat of the advanced countries—with the "infantry of the East"—the great masses of the colonial world. Just as the revolutionary party in a given country serves to unite the heterogeneous elements of the workers and the oppressed masses, so the International was to give world cohesion to the workers of different tongues and cultures and stages of economic and political development. The International was to coordinate the different stages of development of the workers' movement into one united activity, to aid the weaker with the services of the stronger the new parties with the rich experience of the older parties. In a word, the International was to make up for the heterogeneity of the world proletariat. Yet precisely this heterogeneity is now adduced by the Comintern resolution to justify its dissolution! It declares that the "deep difference in the historical roads of development of each country of the world" and "the difference in the degree of consciousness and organization of the workers" is an "insuperable obstacle" to the functioning of an international center—a center which was founded for just these reasons! The resolution solemnly recalls that Bolsheviks "never advocated the preservation of those organizational forms which have become obsolete"—as an argument for dissolving organization altogether!

Finally, hunting for a historical precedent, and unable even with Stalinist falsifications to pretend that Lenin ever envisaged anything like this, Stalin's puppets write that they "remember the example of the great Marx" who dissolved the First International. They pretend that Marx did so "as a result of the growing need to create national workers' mass parties." It is true that Marx and his collaborators dissolved the First International. But, unlike Stalin, Marx never pretended that its dissolution represented a victory. On the contrary, he called its last Congress (at Geneva 1873) "a fiasco" and recorded honestly the fact that the defeat of the Paris Commune and the development of opportunism and anarchism in the European labor movement had disintegrated the International by internal conflict. Lest its great historical example be disgraced by its falling into the hands of anti-Marxist elements, he sponsored its removal to New York and its final dissolution in 1876. At the very first opportunity for a second Marxist International it was launched by Marx's followers in 1889. The First International went down in defeat, but with its revolutionary integrity unimpaired and its great lessons clear to all the workers of the world. The Third International, like the Second, goes down in defeat as an anti-revolutionary body which long ago lost every vestige of honor.

It is characteristic of Stalin's International that its first and only public declaration since Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union is the declaration of its dissolution. The argument that the International is an instrument which was good for peacetime but not for wartime is not a new argument. Last time, however, it was made by one who was openly an enemy of Leninism—Kautsky, the apologist for the chauvinistic disin-

tegration of the Second International during World War I. That international ceased to function during the war and in reality never functioned again. The profoundly symbolic act of the dissolution of the Comintern during war indicates that it is following in the footsteps of its predecessor in this as in all its treachery to internationalism.

The dissolution does not of course mean an end to the utterly reactionary interference of Stalinism in the labor movement. The services of Stalinism in this field are too valuable to the capitalists at present for them to insist on immediate dissolution of the Communist Party and its various agencies in the trade unions. The most open and vicious strikebreakers in the United States today are Stalin's agents, and they will not cease their dastardly work. So long as it suits their master they will serve Wall Street as its most valuable agency today in fighting against the interests of the American workers.

For the moment the dissolution is a substantial gesture by Stalin to curry favor with Washington and Wall Street. But tomorrow they will demand still more, meeting Stalin's requests for food and equipment with ever-greater pressure upon the Kremlin. The capitalists want from Stalin a free hand in their attempt to crush the European revolution which will inevitably follow the collapse of Hitler; they want indeed not only a free hand but Stalin's participation with them in the counter-revolutionary attempt. In return for goods and frontier concessions, Stalin will accede to their demands. But this too will not satisfy the capitalists. They fear not only the revolutionary proletariat but also the continued existence of the nationalized economy of the Soviet Union. For the capitalists understand very well that the very source of Stalin's power—the nationalized economy of the Soviet Union created by the October revolution—cannot be kept indefinitely in the narrow nationalistic limits to which Stalin attempts to assign it. The capitalists understand that eventually either private property or the nationalized economy must prevail in the world. Hence they will not only press Stalin for help in crushing the European revolution but will also make demands designed to undermine the nationalized economy of the Soviet Union. So long as they have not succeeded in decisive steps toward the restoration of private property in the Soviet Union, the capitalists will insist on retention of all possible jumping-off points in Europe for an assault on the USSR. Stalin's attempts to appease the "democracies" thus endanger the very existence of the nationalized economy of the Soviet Union.

How far he is prepared to go to appease them is indicated by his attitude toward the German proletariat. The final document of the Comintern does not by a word express solidarity with the Communists and class-conscious workers of Germany! The German Communists neither exist nor are accorded any tasks now or in the future by the Comintern resolution. But

this follows logically from the vile Stalinist propaganda which blames the German proletariat for the rise of Hitler and thus paves the way for oppression of the German nation as a whole by the victorious "democracies." With Germany at its disposal, Wall Street would inevitably dominate the Soviet Union.

Fortunately for the future of humanity, neither the German workers nor the European proletariat as a whole are Stalin's to barter. The German working class is the largest, most advanced and most powerful in Europe. It is destined to play the decisive role in the coming European revolution. Steeled and hardened under the terrible oppression of Hitler fascism, the cadres of the German proletariat will lead into the revolution masses steeped in the most advanced industrial technique and military training. Likewise the workers of France and Belgium and all Europe will never go back to capitalist oppression and a divided Europe. No deal between Stalin and Roosevelt will prevent the revolution whose task of establishing the Socialist United States of Europe has been hammered home by two World Wars.

The lightning of the European revolution will in turn explode the powder keg on which Stalin is sitting. The Soviet masses have endured the totalitarian oppression of the Kremlin because the capitalist invader stood poised to strike at the frontier. The European revolution will free them from that fear. The Soviet proletariat has made three revolutions. We are confident that it will settle accounts with the usurper in the Kremlin when the horizons of the Soviet Union are ringed with red instead of brown. That is what the "democratic" capitalists fear when they refer to the danger of a revival of "Trotskyism" in the Soviet Union—the revival of the political independence of the Soviet masses, which can only mean a policy of revolutionary internationalism by the regenerated Soviet state.

All this can and shall be achieved by the Fourth International!

Members of the Communist Party! Stalin's latest act has demonstrated, if further proof were necessary, that his false policy cannot be combatted from within the Comintern; even the semblance of the machinery for opposing him from within no longer exists. Every Communist worker who remains true to internationalism must draw the necessary conclusions. The defense of the Soviet Union, the defense of the interests of the international working class, requires now more than ever a genuine Communist International. The national Communist Parties are neither communist nor parties. You must leave them and enter the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky—the Fourth International. Join the ranks of the Socialist Workers Party, unite with us and the Fourth International parties throughout the world. No one shall, no one can, dissolve our International. Join us and help make the International what our traditional anthem has declared it must be: the International Party shall be the human race!

## Washington's Plans for Italy

By FELIX MORROW

With the invasion of Italy an imminent possibility, Roosevelt's "unofficial" envoy, Archbishop Spellman, continues his incessant journeying to and from Rome, which he began in February. All formal denials to the contrary, it is obvious that the Vatican is acting as broker for a Darlanist deal. Typical of the situation is the fact that the May 19 *New York Times* published as "the Vatican proposals" the following summary from its Swiss correspondent:

"In the cadres of the present Italian regional prefects—who for the purpose of civil administration would not be considered to have been active [Fascist] party supporters and would in their turn be subject to the orders of an Allied commission sitting in Rome—a ten-year plan of political metamorphosis would be immediately introduced. During this period civil administration would be handed back to the people by certain well-defined stages. The Fascist party *as such* would be immediately disbanded.

"No provision is made in this first part for the arrest or handing over to the Allies of any Fascist leaders." (Our italics.) The regional prefects, who would thus become the basis of the "new" Italian regime are, of course, all Mussolini appointees, leaders of the Fascist party. In return for their collaboration, they "would 'expect within a reasonable time' to receive certain territorial concessions in Italy's former colonial empire." These Vatican proposals are of course unconfirmed, but also undenied. How far Washington has agreed to these specific terms is of course idle speculation, but the spirit of them is undoubtedly characteristic of what Washington is seeking and ready to agree to.

Perhaps at this time the best way to understand Washington's plan for Italy is to examine their effect on the Italian anti-fascist emigres in this country, who are in a position to understand precisely what is involved. The story of their relations with Washington is in any event well worth telling, for it is a mirror of the future of all the European anti-fascists who are depending on Washington for the liberation of Europe.

We speak, of course, of the "official" Italian emigres, recognized by Washington in one form or another as the spokesmen for Italian anti-fascism. Their outstanding figure is Count Carlo Sforza, the King's Minister of Foreign Affairs at the close of World War I and ambassador to France at the time of the "march" on Rome; since January 1942 his program is the democratic republic. Their principal organization in the American hemisphere is the Mazzini Society, which also has a certain—none too firm—authority among Italian-American trade unionists. Its left wing is the semi-socialist publication-group *Quaderni Italiani*.<sup>\*</sup> Speaking for the Mazzini Society are such professors and writers as Gaetano Salvemini, Max Ascoli, G. A. Borgese, etc.

When World War II began, these Italian emigres found it difficult to pretend that liberation for Italy would come from France and Britain. Chamberlain and Daladier wooed Mussolini despite all the pleas and accurate predictions of the emigres concerning Mussolini's game—Sforza was coldly repelled when he told Daladier that Mussolini would enter the war a fortnight before France's defeat. During the Finnish-Soviet war of 1939-1940, as Sforza himself has told in his book, "The Totalitarian War and After," the big bourgeoisie and General Weygand wanted war against the Soviet Union in the hope "that Hitler might turn and become the ally of France in this 'holy war'." They got Daladier to declare to the Chamber of Deputies that 50,000 men were ready to sail to Finland (Mannerheim had told Daladier that 300,000 were necessary but Daladier did not have the equipment). Only the hasty peace between Finland and the Soviet Union ended this development. The Italian emigres could scarcely hope for salvation from a regime which was thus oriented.

Nor could they grow very enthusiastic over Churchill when he came to the helm. He had declared that he would be a fascist if he were an Italian. When Mussolini finally entered the war formally, Churchill did not eat his words. He made it clear from the first that he was ready to make peace with even the Fascist Party and certainly with the monarchy; for Britain's prime minister "only one man" was responsible for Italian entry into the war.

## The Honeymoon

It was, thus, only when the United States entered the war that the Italian emigres could persuade themselves—or try to—that a new era was really here. Washington would understand

<sup>\*</sup>A review of the program of this group was published in the International Notes of the February 1943 *Fourth International*.

what London and Paris would not. The "anti-fascist war" must be fought implacably and no peace made with the fascists, the general staff or the monarchy. Victory for the United Nations would bring revolution to Italy, not merely as an aftermath of defeat but as a consequence desired and aided by the "democracies."

Inspired with this new hope the Mazzini Society, shortly after Pearl Harbor, launched an Italian-language weekly with the appropriate title *Nazioni Unite* (United Nations). Roosevelt, in turn, gave the Mazzini Society a semi-official status. The OWI saw to it that free radio time was provided for Mazzini broadcasts. In June 1942 Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson appeared at a Garibaldi memorial meeting of the Mazzini Society, lending it government approval. He brought a "declaration" announcing "American official recognition of the antagonism between Italy and fascism." And not only the Fascist Party would have to go but also the generals; "the President has made it clear that the liberation of the Italian and other peoples from the military cliques which hold them in their clutches is one of the war aims of the United Nations."

Encouraged by these apparently unambiguous words from the State Department, the Mazzini Society and other groups in North and South America convened a Congress of Free Italians in Montevideo. There, on August 17, 1942 it was decided to create a National Council with Sforza as president which, stated the September 10 *Nazioni Unite*, should be "recognized officially in a manner similar to the De Gaulle Fighting French Committee." That was the high point of the hopes of the Italian anti-fascists that Washington would give full support to a democratic revolution in Italy.

Occasionally, it is true, the emigres offered a criticism, as when Sforza wrote:

"I received responses solicited from Italians in Italy in broadcasts of mine discussing the Atlantic Charter. 'Yes, you may be right,' the answers ran. 'You are certainly right in believing in Roosevelt's generous and humane intentions. But why are we not told by the chiefs of the democracies what they think about the future of Italy? To raise volunteers, to risk our lives, to risk much more, our honor, we must be sure that we are serving the cause of a free Italy and a free world.' (The Nation, May 9, 1942.)

To answer these questioners, Sforza urged Roosevelt to put forward "a concrete program for achieving" for Italy the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Sforza presumably had no doubt what the "concrete program" would be—a free Italy.

## A Rude Awakening

The concrete program, when it came, proved to be Darwinism. Had the Italian emigres not immediately understood the application of the North African events to Italy, it was soon explained to them in words of one syllable. Walter Lippmann wrote:

"When Mussolini and his henchmen are disposed of, there will still remain in Italy the vestiges of legitimate and historic authority by means of which the transition to the New Italy can be made. For if there is not such a transition, it will be difficult in the chaos of Italian defeat to find Italian authority able to speak for Italy." (New York Herald Tribune, November 21, 1942.)

By "legitimate and historic authority," Lippmann subsequently made plain, he meant the monarchy and the army. Encouraged by events, some Catholic spokesmen even hoped to save not only the monarchy but also Mussolini; thus on November 20, 1942 *The Tidings*, official organ of the Los Angeles Archdiocese, wrote:

"We must remember that the government of Mussolini is still the lawfully constituted authority in Italy. If we can get

Italy out of the war by negotiating with that lawfully constituted authority, that is to our advantage." (Quoted in *Nazioni Unite*, December 31, 1942.)

Less crudely and much more authoritatively, the *New York Times* laid down the line:

"Clearly the United Nations cannot make peace with the existing Fascist regime. Here again, however, a problem would arise regarding the extent to which it is wise to attempt to impose from the outside a democratic regime or a particular form of government on Italy." (*Times*, December 1, 1942. Our italics.)

In the face of these statements, Gaetano Salvemini sadly concluded that, at the least,

"the royal House of Savoy, the army and the Pope are being kept on ice by Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt as the legitimate authorities entitled to speak for Italy. . . ." (*Nazioni Unite*, December 31, 1942.)

For a moment, when Darlan was assassinated, *Nazioni Unite* expected a miracle. Like the American liberals, it prayed that the murder would bring an end to "expediency":

"His exit from the political scene at this important moment may prove useful to the cause of France and of the United Nations.

"General Giraud, unanimously elected successor to Darlan, is not an *homme de gauche*, but he has not been a collaborator of the German invaders, on the contrary, he has bravely escaped twice from German prisons," etc., etc. (Editorial, *Nazioni Unite*, December 31, 1942.)

A week later, of course, *Nazioni Unite* was wailing about Giraud's choice of Peyrouton as his right-hand man.

## The Blows Begin to Fall

The Mazzini people might have found a way to swallow Giraud and close their eyes to the overtures being made to the monarchy and army in Italy. But now they began to receive blows here in America which it was impossible for them to ignore.

They had ecstatically hailed Biddle's order removing Italians from the status of enemy aliens. Now they discovered its main function. Under it notorious friends of Mussolini—particularly the circle of the newspaper magnate Genesio Pope and the fraternal order Sons of Italy—now appeared in the arena as claimants for leadership of the Italian emigration, naturally as "anti-fascists." And they appeared with government support. Mazzini Society opposition to this masquerade was brushed aside by the OWI officials in charge of setting up Italian-American Victory Councils in every locality. Since the Mazzini national officers refused to sit with the "ex"-fascists, the OWI went over their head to the local chapters of the Mazzini Society, telling them that it was the government's desire to have them in the Councils. A government "desire" could not but appear to emigres as an order, and in Chicago, St. Louis and some other places the Mazzini chapters entered the Councils together with fascist elements. In Philadelphia the chapter refused to join but was included anyway in the official roster of the Council.

In this procedure the OWI got yeoman's aid from the Stalinists who, in order to get into the Councils themselves, were more than ready to support entry of the fascist groups. With their usual anxiety to establish their respectability, the Mazzini leaders lumped together the fascists and the Stalinists as "totalitarians," and were maneuvered by the OWI and the Stalinists into a position where the main dispute appeared to be over the inclusion of the Stalinists.

A warning of things to come was an OWI statement in December branding as a forgery written in America an appeal of the underground Italian Socialist Party for civil disobedience.

The document had been vouched for as authentic by the Mazzini and other groups, including the Italian-American Labor Council. It has all the marks of being genuine, and far more dubious documents "from Europe" have been accepted by the OWI. For the OWI to go out of its way to repudiate the document can only mean an attempt to denude the Mazzini and like-minded groups of any semblance of authority to speak for the anti-fascist elements in Italy.

The handwriting was on the wall and could not be denied. What Washington was really up to now had to be told. Max Ascoli described how "one of those tough realists who crowd the public corridors and the hotel bars in Washington"—Ascoli was still too polite to say that they also crowd the State Department—formulates the government's policy:

"Professor, don't be a dope. Nobody who has any sense around here wants a revolution in Italy or anywhere else in fact. Revolutions are unhealthy affairs. After we lick Hitler, it will be through due process of law that the four freedoms are going to be obtained anywhere. What we mean is this: Couldn't Italy use whatever independence she has left so that at the right moment she would give a good stab in the back to Germany? See? We do not mean the Italian people, but some of the basic, legitimate institutions of Italy, like the army, the monarchy, the church or the fascist party. Which of these legitimate institutions is the one that we can use as a pivot in organizing the turn around? See?" (*Nazioni Unite*, Jan. 21, 1943.)

"Of course," adds Ascoli despairingly, "everybody will turn—one moment before our total victory." Even Mussolini.

Gaetano Salvemini now said:

"the State Department and the OWI not only are giving no encouragement to any groups [in Italy] which might organize resistance, but are actually doing everything in their power to discourage such action. Since they cannot rely upon a revolution in Italy before British and American armed intervention has smashed the Fascist military machine, and since a later revolution would serve no military purpose, they are not interested in anti-Fascist revolution. Further, they do not intend to have any such nuisance. . . .

"It appears that Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter, which pledged Britain and America to 'respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live, is to be interpreted as meaning that they will be allowed to choose only forms of government like those of Franco in Spain or Petain in France, or such as Otto of Austria would set up somewhere in Central Europe.

". . . anyone addressing the Italians on an American broadcasting station must pledge himself not to remind the Italian people that the King is as responsible as Mussolini for the tragedy of present-day Italy. And an army of newspapermen is instructed by the State Department to teach us, day in and day out, that if not the King then at least his son is to be regarded as the 'leader of the anti-Fascist groups'; or perhaps the Crown Prince's wife, or the King's cousin, the Count of Turin . . . or Badoglio, or Grandi or Ciano. . . ." (*Nazioni Unite*, February 4, 1943.)

## A Last Desperate Plea

Shelved by the State Department, the scolding "democrats" have still one string to their bow: the threat of proletarian revolution. Like De Gaulle, they warn Roosevelt that Darlanism is dangerous because it leads to civil war. The "democratic" emigre Catholic priest, Luigi Sturzo (who in 1919-20, as leader of the Popular Party, worked with the fascists under the slogan of "restoration of public order and the suppression of Socialism") forebodingly urges Roosevelt to understand:

"But if, together with the Monarchy, they want to constitute a government 'a la Petain' at the will of Churchill and

Roosevelt, then the Italian people will be forced to bend toward secret and revolutionary movements." (*Nazioni Unite*, January 8, 1943.)

Similarly Salvemini adduces as the worst consequence of this Roosevelt-Churchill policy:

"that in their endeavor to force down the throats of the Italian people 'pro-Allied Fascism without Mussolini,' discredited politicians and a discredited royal house, they are making unavoidable in Italy an even more fearful post-war crisis than that which the collapse of the Nazi-Fascist military machine will bring about." (*La Controcorrente*, January 1943.)

De Gaulle at least has insisted that his movement is indispensable if revolution is to be prevented in France. The Italian "democrats" are not so bold. If, alas, in spite of all their pleas they are to be shelved in favor of the present Washington policy, they still offer advice on how to prevent a proletarian revolution. Thus Salvemini, after assuming that Mussolini and the King will sign the armistice, begs the Americans and British, "engrossed in immediate military tasks, to let the anti-fascists make short work of Mussolini, the King, the Crown Prince, Badoglio, Grandi, Ciano and their like." And then, presumably no longer engrossed in immediate military tasks,

"the armies of occupation should prevent an irresponsible extremist clique from seizing power, and the people should be given time to organize themselves again into political parties, to discuss the issues before them, and finally to choose their own government. This would be the right course; and the United States, in pursuing it, would not only remain loyal to its traditions but would gain the love and gratitude of all peoples." (*Nazioni Unite*, February 4, 1943. Our italics.)

In short, Salvemini, who elsewhere correctly makes sport of "their futile attempt to make anti-Mussolinian omelette without breaking the Fascist eggs," here asks Roosevelt and Churchill to use their troops against the "irresponsible extremist clique" without breaking the anti-fascist revolution.

The threat of revolution adduced by the "democrats" in beseeching more consideration from Washington is not an empty one. The "democrats" are, in truth, far more disturbed by what is happening in Italy than they are by what is happening in Washington. One article cites a letter from a "young representative of the Italian Underground" who recently wrote:

"We have never pinned all our hopes on this war, and . . . we recognize as ours only the anti-Fascist war, which is playing a decreasing role in this second world conflict." (*Nazioni Unite*, March 4, 1943.)

This quotation is extremely interesting; one would wish that *Nazioni Unite* had given us the entire letter. It is clear, however, that its writer has no illusions about being liberated by the "democracies." In contrast to this anti-fascist in Italy, the Sforzas and Salvemini pinned *all* their hopes on this war, i.e., on supporting the "democracies." And, as we have seen, even now, they continue to offer their unsolicited advice to the "democracies." In these few words they quote from an anti-fascist in Italy one can detect the abyss of experience and therefore of ideas which separates the Italian underground from the petty-bourgeois emigres.

## Why Roosevelt Prefers Darlanism

Why, despite all their craven pleas, are these "democrats" so rudely rejected by Roosevelt?

There was a time when such pleas would have carried weight—in the epoch of the stability of democratic capitalist regimes. But that time is gone forever, as history since 1917 testifies. Sforza is in effect proposing that Washington and London attempt to repeat the experiment of the Weimar Republic—let subservient "democrats" rule defeated Italy. But the imperialists have scarcely forgotten how very nearly the

proletarian revolution conquered in Germany in 1918-23. If Ebert came close to the fate of Kerensky, the danger would be far greater in the case of Sforza. Ebert had the many-millioned Social Democracy and the trade unions, firmly dominated by a bureaucracy which had generations of experience and prestige. Through what instrumentality could Sforza hope to rule apart from naked force? The emigre professors? The Italian bourgeoisie as a class is indelibly identified with the fascist regime and the monarchy in the mind of every worker and peasant; hence the proletarian revolution is on the order of the day the moment the regime cracks. Washington can have no reason to believe that the Sforzas will be able to hold back the revolutionary torrent. Precisely for this reason Washington does not want the regime to crack, and seeks an understanding with its principal pillars: the monarchy, the church, the army and the capitalist class.

Moreover, even if the Sforza alternative had possibilities of success, Washington has *domestic* reasons for preferring the Darlanist method. In the years 1918-23 the Weimar Republic was compelled to go far to the left more than once in order to save itself from Bolshevism. Ebert's first government was called the Council of People's Commissars in imitation of Lenin's. For a while it had to recognize the legality of the Soldiers' and Workingmen's Soviets. After the workers defeated the Kapp Putsch in 1920 the Social Democracy had to pretend it was planning socialization of industry. No government could exist without the support of the Social Democratic Party. A Sforza regime would have to do at least as much. What would be the effect of such radicalism on the Italian workers in this country? Many of them would undoubtedly be inspired by revolutionary developments in Italy to become revolutionists here; even those who accept Sforza's reformism as good coin would seek the same thing here. That happened to the German, Russian, Ukrainian, Finnish workers here after the last war. Thus the Italians would be found in the vanguard of the leftward moving American proletariat.

According to the 1940 census, 3,766,820 people in America give Italian as their mother tongue. More than one-third of these are in New York state alone. Another half-million are in Pennsylvania, and nearly as many in New Jersey. Thus concentrated in great industrial centers, they are predominantly workers. Unlike the radical foreign-born workers of 1918, these Italian-Americans (most of them born here) generally speak English and could reach out to the American workers. Generoso Pope and his stripe have kept them in the hands of Tammany Hall and other city machines. But that would be ended in the course of the Italian revolution. That is why Washington prefers Pope to Salvemini here and the monarchy and the army instead of Sforza in Italy.

To support the pillars of the Italian regime is a desperate enterprise. The social hatred that has been accumulating in the Italian masses for twenty years is directed at all the ruling summits. To try to prevent it from having any real vent—that is what Washington proposes—means to continue in Italy still further the twenty-year accumulation of social bitterness. When it does explode, as it inevitably must, there will be no safety valves left, as Sforza warns Roosevelt. Yet, fantastic as this enterprise appears to Sforza—and it is fantastic in the long run—the American bourgeoisie must make the attempt. By any means they must seek to bolster the machines of the Generoso Popes in the Italian-American communities. They know that a leftward upsurge of the American proletariat is coming. If thereby they can keep some part of the nearly four million Italian-Americans out of it for a time, Darlanism will have served its purpose. Like every ruling class in decline, they can have no long-term perspective.

Within the limits of this basic policy Washington naturally will do what it can to embellish the ugly reality. It will find among the Mazzini Society leaders some who will be more than willing to go as American overseers of the "ex"-fascist regime. Particularly those emigres like Professor Max Ascoli, who have become American citizens and who have no serious perspective of returning to live in Italy, will see a seat or even a secretaryship on an Allied Commission in Rome as a stepping-stone to a distinguished career in America. Nor is it altogether unlikely that Sforza himself may serve. Even now he is as much concerned "that the Italian frontiers will not be violated" by the peace as he is about anti-fascism. And by Italian frontiers he means also the colonial possessions which he retained for Italy as Foreign Minister in 1920; for example, the Dodecanese Islands, populated by Greeks, which he refused to permit to join Greece despite his predecessor's pledge to do so and which he still will not grant to Greece.\* Perhaps it will be for the

\*The Dodecanesian League of America, 211 W. 33 St., New York has just published a pamphlet on this, "Sforza vs. Sforza," contrasting his "democracy" with his imperialism.

sake of saving such "Italian" possessions that Sforza will join the "new" regime. In any event there will be a sufficient number of "anti-fascists" who, just as they were able to persuade themselves that Washington would liberate Italy, will likewise persuade themselves that the formal dissolution of the Fascist party has "freed" Italy enough to justify their collaboration with Washington and the "ex"-fascists.

Furthermore, Washington will undoubtedly seek to avoid using Italian figures exactly equivalent to Darlan. It will try to limit collaboration to second-rank fascists, not only to mollify American public opinion, but also because there is reason to believe that collaboration with Darlan, Nogues and Peyrouton proved much less fruitful than Washington had imagined. The top-ranking "ex"-Vichyites, in so far as they could, tried to play their own game and seriously interfered with American-British military operations. In seeking collaborationists a notch or two lower down, Washington will also be better able to dress up such lesser-known figures as really anti-fascists at heart. For this purpose particularly it will find useful the services of the Mazzini Society leaders.

# The Negro in the Post-War World

By ALBERT PARKER

"I don't want to hurt your feelings, young man," stated A. N. Kemp, president of American Airlines, "but I don't believe that Negroes will be used as pilots in the immediate world of post-war aviation." He said it in an interview in New York printed in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 27, 1943.

The airline executive went on to explain that "of course" he personally had nothing against Negroes and had even hired some to work in his ground crews, but that his company would lose money if it hired Negro pilots; and presumably to show that his outlook was not limited by considerations of profits alone, he added that "the Negro would have to become more cultured before he could expect to enjoy the fullness of American life."

He spoke pleasantly, politely, his tone was friendly, but in his words there was no hint of doubt or hesitation: he was speaking with the voice of the whole capitalist class and frankly stating its intention of maintaining in the post-war world the rotten pattern of Jim Crow discrimination, segregation and insult which dominated this country before Pearl Harbor and the proclamation of the "four freedoms." There are some people who harbor illusions about the character of the Negro's status after the termination of the second "war for democracy," but if they do, it is not the fault of Kemp and his fellow capitalists and the government, whose words and deeds speak loudly and plainly enough.

A. Philip Randolph, AFL union leader and national director of the March-On-Washington Movement, has proposed that "there ought to be and must be a movement known as the Free Negro, which will send a strong delegation of Negroes and their true friends to the Peace Conference at the end of this war to present the claims of Negro people in America, the British West Indies and Africa."

One would be justified in concluding from this that Randolph believes the post-war status of the Negro will be decided at a peace conference of the victorious United Nations. To a certain extent this is correct. But to a far greater extent the Negro's fate is being determined right now, in the midst of the war. What happens at a peace conference will depend not only

on the relationship of forces between the various countries, but even more on the relationship of class forces within each country. The character of the peace conference will have been decided more or less conclusively by what happened during the war, just as the nature of the war and what happens during it flow from the developments and struggles leading up to the war.

The Negro's greatest opportunity for advancing toward full equality is now, as his enemies well recognize, and if the Negro does not take advantage of this opportunity now he will find it much harder to make progress after the war, when his enemies will have disposed of their foreign rivals and will be able to devote their energy and attention toward keeping the Negro "in his place."

It is necessary to make this point and to drive it home again and again because there are so many people trying to obscure it. These people—the modern Uncle Toms, in whose ranks the Stalinists must be included—never miss an opportunity to explain how much progress is being made. They loudly tell you how many more one-tenths of one per cent schools there are for Negroes today than there were before; they cite figures to show that Negro birth mortality rates have fallen by so much or that Negro preachers and lawyers have increased in number by that much. Needless to say, they attribute all this progress to the superior qualities of their own programs. Nor are middle class Negroes and Stalinists the only people addicted to the pastime of progress-shouting. Government bureaus and the capitalist press have been going in for it quite heavily since Pearl Harbor. Indeed, you might say of the capitalist press articles and reports on the Negroes that they devote two-thirds of their space to inflammatory and most often distorted accounts of crimes by Negroes and one-third to accounts of the remarkable extent of Negro progress.

The purpose behind this pointing-with-pride and viewing-with-pleasure is obvious. The Negro people instinctively want to take advantage of the present crisis to achieve the rights which have been denied them. This can be confirmed by any honest person acquainted with Negro thought today. It is hard

to convince the Negro masses that this is a war for democracy when they are denied the most elementary democratic rights.\* The progress-shouters seek, so to speak, to change the subject, to convince the Negroes that even though things aren't perfect, they are getting better day by day and will eventually work out all right. Their purpose is to persuade the masses not to conduct militant struggle against Jim Crow. If they are successful, the Negro people will miss the present opportunity to improve their status with the result that they might be condemned to second-class citizenship for decades to come.

It is not our intention here to argue that the Negro's conditions have not changed at all, nor to overlook whatever genuine progress that has been made. No one can dispute, for example, the fact that Negro unemployment today is much lower than before the war, or that many Negroes have won genuine equality on their jobs as the result of trade union efforts. What we propose to do here is to look at the whole picture, to examine the true character of the gains that have been made since Pearl Harbor, to list the losses and the setbacks that have been encountered while these gains were being made, to show what was temporary and secondary and what was permanent about these gains and losses. It is necessary for militant Negroes to ponder these questions, for World War II will not last forever and they have lives to live after it comes to an end. They must understand the developments of the first 18 months of American participation in the war, for the post-war pattern is foreshadowed in these developments.

\*Just what the Negro thinks about this question has been demonstrated in the polls of the *Pittsburgh Courier's* Bureau of Public Sentiment, the most reliable and thorough index of Negro opinion in this country.

On October 24, 1942 it asked: "Do you believe that the Negro should soft-pedal his demands for complete freedom and citizenship and await the development of the educational process?" The answers were:

NO.....81.2%  
YES.....17.1%  
UNCERTAIN .. 1.7%

One year after U.S. entry into the war the Bureau asked: "Have you been convinced that the statements which our national leaders have made about freedom and equality for all peoples include the American Negro?" The answers, printed on Dec. 19, 1942 were:

NO ..... 82.2%  
YES ..... 17.7%  
UNCERTAIN .. 1.1%

Even before these surveys were taken, the government itself conducted one. Officials apparently found the results so devastating that the findings of the survey have never been made public to this day. But a newspaperman found out about some of the facts and revealed them in the June 14, 1942 issue of the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune and Star Journal*. In part he wrote:

"A government survey which is regarded as a secret document, has uncovered the information that 38% of the Negroes questioned believe it is more important to 'make democracy work at home' than it is to beat the Germans and Japanese. . . .

"Only 50.5% of the Negroes questioned regard beating the Germans and Japanese as more important than 'making democracy work at home.'

"That phrase has a diverse meaning. . . . Essentially, and to most Negroes, it means the elimination of economic discrimination, the right to work and live in decency; to others it means the elimination of segregation, and to still others complete race equality."

As we wrote at the time: "We are not in a position to check on the accuracy of figures in a report which is kept secret. Nor do we know what kind of people were questioned in this survey—what proportion, for example, were government employes and what proportion were in the South where a Negro worker or sharecropper might be putting his life in jeopardy by stating his true opinion. But we can take it for granted that if there was any exaggeration in it, it was all on the side of making things seem as rosy and cheerful as possible."

First, the question of employment, which strikes so directly at the economic conditions of the Negro masses that there is quite often a tendency to subordinate all other questions to this one. There are many estimates of the number of Negro workers employed in war plants, the highest being a half million. This figure includes both those working on machines and janitors, porters, etc. All others listed as gainfully employed are either in non-war industries and occupations, including domestic service, on the farms, or in the armed forces. The total in the armed forces is already over a half million and is expected to increase to a million by the end of 1943. Newly-adopted legislation, embodied in House Joint Resolution 96, which was passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the president over the protests of many labor and farm organizations, who charge the bill with restoring "virtual peonage," in effect ties the Southern Negro farmers and sharecroppers to the land for the duration of the war. It gives county agents notoriously staunch upholders of "white supremacy," the power to deny Negroes the right to leave their home county for such purposes as going North to work in war industries.

Meanwhile, in the face of the most severe manpower shortage in the nation's history and in the eighteenth month of the war, there is still a comparatively large body of able-bodied Negroes, estimated from 600,000 to 1,000,000, who remain unemployed. There are still hundreds of plants in the country which refuse to hire Negroes or which resort to "token" employment, and there are thousands of other plants—by no means all in the South—which will not permit Negroes to hold skilled or semi-skilled jobs and which refuse to give Negroes equal pay for equal work. Even in New York, the State Committee on Discrimination reported recently, "discrimination because of color, race or creed still exists" and employers continue "the old practice of discriminating against Negroes not by barring them from employment, but by restricting them to such menial jobs as porters or other maintenance men." (*New York Times*, May 7, 1943.) And in an industry as vital as the railroads, where Negroes have been employed for many decades, the Office of War Information admitted in April 1943 that "war or no war, unwillingness to employ Negroes in many types of railroad jobs persists."

Negroes hold more jobs than they did before Pearl Harbor, and in many cases better ones, and that is all to the good. But their jobs are not as secure as those of other workers. In plants where there are strong unions, the seniority of Negroes is generally protected. But even in such plants the probability is that when war production is ended or reduced after the war, they will be the first fired because they were the last hired. Thus it is clear that gains in Negro employment are by no means permanent and can disappear like last year's snow with the end of the war. This is not the least of the reasons why thoughtful Negroes are so concerned about the post-war world.

## Roosevelt and the Negro

We have indicated why Negro employment increased—not because of any widespread elimination of racial bias in employment but because of the manpower shortage. It is necessary to emphasize this point because there are many scoundrels pretending otherwise and trying to give the credit for the rise in Negro employment to the Roosevelt administration and its agencies—scoundrels like the Stalinist James W. Ford, who says:

"The government has a well-established policy against discrimination of Negro citizens in war industries. That policy was established by President Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802, issued June 25, 1941. One cannot deny that much has been accomplished in the elimination of job discrimination, that many hundreds of thousands of Negro workers have been put to

work in war industries. The Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) was an effective instrument in exposing cases of discrimination and forcing employers to hire Negroes. . . ." (*Daily Worker*, April 10, 1943.)

To show how Ford lies we need only refer to the brief history of the FEPC.

Not even its own members ever claimed with Ford that the FEPC was "an effective instrument in . . . forcing employers to hire Negroes." They knew too well that Executive Order 8802, from which they drew their authority, gave them no powers to force anyone to do anything. The FEPC was set up by Roosevelt to ward off the projected March-On-Washington in the summer of 1941, and was a concession without any teeth in it. The FEPC helped a little by a few open hearings to publicize the scandalous situation in industry, and it prevailed on a few employers to hire some Negro workers. Its ineffectualness was amply demonstrated when it held a hearing in Birmingham in 1942, where it was more or less openly defied by the Jim Crow employers.

Despite its impotence, the FEPC was the object of much opposition, especially from the Southern Democratic poll tax bloc in Washington, who hated it as a symbol of the government's right to "encroach" in any way on the right of the states to treat the Negroes as they please. This opposition resulted, in the summer of 1942, in Roosevelt's transfer of the FEPC from the jurisdiction of the White House to that of McNutt's War Manpower Commission, whose finances are controlled by Congressional committees largely dominated by the poll taxers. Many labor and Negro organizations condemned this transfer as a move to make the FEPC even more powerless than it had been previously, and requested that it be restored to its previous status. Finally in December 1942, Roosevelt answered these protests with the statement that he saw no necessity for any changes in the situation because the FEPC is "still under direct control of the Chief Executive." He also made reference to the announcement that the FEPC was planning soon to go ahead with a number of open hearings.

But the goose of the FEPC had already been cooked in spite of these typically Rooseveltian assurances. A month later Jim Crow scored another victory in Washington when McNutt, against the expressed wishes of the FEPC members, suddenly called off an already scheduled hearing on discriminatory employment policies of the railroads, a hearing which Negro leaders had described as a "key test" of McNutt's attitude toward the Negro. In the four months after this, the FEPC achieved absolutely nothing: some of its members resigned; Roosevelt promised, again after many protests had been made, that the railroad hearings would be held after all; McNutt and Attorney General Biddle called a number of organizations to a conference to suggest means of reconstituting and strengthening the FEPC; McNutt explained many times after that conference that the delay in further action was due to the difficulty in getting a new chairman for the agency. Finally a new chairman was secured, Mgr. Francis J. Haas, dean at Catholic University which has barred Negro athletes from its track meets, and on May 27, 1943, Roosevelt issued a new executive order establishing a new FEPC which like its predecessor has now power to abolish Jim Crow in industry. There isn't an informed person in Washington who honestly believes after these developments that the new FEPC will meet a happier end than the old one.

The fate of the FEPC is a sign of the things to come. To this it should be added, for the benefit of those looking ahead to the post-war period, that the FEPC had authority to investigate only war plants and was never intended to function after the war anyhow.

Roosevelt's own attitude can be gauged not only by what

happened to the FEPC, which as he insisted was "under direct control of the Chief Executive," but also by a number of other events. It will be recalled that when Negroes were preparing for a march on Washington in June 1941, Roosevelt summoned A. Philip Randolph, Walter White and other Negro leaders to the White House for a discussion. The following year Randolph declared on several occasions that the interests of the fight against Jim Crowism required that "free, independent and courageous Negro leaders have a frank, candid and plain talk with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt about the whole situation." Randolph even wired the White House an assurance that he wanted a discussion "in the interests of national unity, effective defense and victory for the United Nations and the cause of democracy." But on August 6, 1942 Roosevelt's secretary curtly replied: "Regret that owing to extreme pressure on the President's time impossible to make appointment requested." In 1943 Randolph apparently knows better than to ask again for such a talk.

Nor have Negroes forgotten Roosevelt's failure to intervene, as he had the power to do, to prevent the legal lynching of the sharecropper Odell Waller. And they see a deep significance in the contrast between his repeated condemnation of Axis atrocities and his continued failure to say a word against lynching in the United States. They are likewise bitterly aware of the contrast between his many declamations about the four freedoms and his cynical remarks last year while the fate of the anti-poll tax bill hung in the balance in the Senate: "asked whether he thought the poll tax repeal bill should pass, he reiterated that he knew nothing about it, had talked to no one about it, and therefore could not express an opinion." (*New York Times*, November 21, 1942.) And this is the man who will probably be at the head of the government when the present war is ended.

Of course the executive is not the only arm of the federal government. There is also Congress, and its present members may also be in office when the peace conference is held. But is there a single high school student in the nation who does not know that this Congress is at least as reactionary as the Roosevelt administration? This is the Congress which is admittedly more conservative than the previous Congress which permitted anti-poll tax legislation to be filibustered to death. This is the Congress where the Southern Democrats hold the undisputed balance of power and where both capitalist parties vie with each other in wooing the Southern Democrats by appeasing them regularly on all issues affecting the Negro. This is the Congress where the poll taxers control the most important committees and use them to uphold and extend "white supremacy," as in the case of the Social Security Board whose chairman, A. J. Altmeyer, was recently intimidated by poll tax congressmen into promising that hereafter no white stenographers would be permitted to assist Negroes and no Negroes would be permitted to furnish stenographic assistance to white employees of that federal agency.

There is also the judicial division, the Supreme Court, now controlled by Roosevelt's appointees. Twice last year, while the sharecropper Odell Waller sat in death row for killing a man in self-defense, the court was asked to review the case, and twice it refused, not even explaining its refusal. Its attitude, however, was later made unmistakable by the "liberal" Justice Frankfurter who stated: "As a federal judge I am unable to find any justification for summary interference with the ORDERLY process of Virginia's courts of justice." That the poll tax bars Negroes and poor whites from service on Virginia's juries, that Waller was the victim of a lynch spirit and a viciously prejudiced judge—all this appears "orderly" to the gentlemen on the Supreme Court. And why not? It is in complete accord with the views expressed by this body when it upheld the poll tax laws, when it upheld the "white primary" rules which bar Ne-

goes from voting in the most important part of elections in the South, when it upheld the educational, transportation and other Jim Crow segregation laws of the South.

The law-enforcement agency of the administration is no better. The Department of Justice has been hinting lately that it deserves to be decorated with a few medals because it has followed up a handful of prosecutions for flagrant violations of the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, which forbids slavery and involuntary servitude. But what has this or any other department of the government done to put an end to the bloody crime of lynching, which certainly violates that section of the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution requiring that no state shall "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws"? What has it done about the poll tax and other devices to disfranchise the Negroes in the South, all of which technically evade but plainly violate the first section of the fifteenth amendment which reads: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state, on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude"?

What can be expected after the "war for democracy" of a government which refuses during that war to enforce its own laws for the democratic rights of the Negro people? Will such a government, after the "war for democracy" is won, be likely or willing to pass additional laws benefitting the Negro? And if it does, will such laws be worth the paper they are printed on?

## Jim Crow in the Army

But the capitalist plans for the Negro in the future are most glaringly highlighted by the government's treatment of the Negro in the armed forces today. It is not necessary to recount the whole story of that treatment in this place.\* Every Negro family is already too well acquainted with the details. But our discussion requires that we at least outline the pattern employed in the armed forces.

In 1940, with U.S. entry into the war growing imminent, leading Negro organizations appealed to Roosevelt to drop the Jim Crow bars that excluded Negroes from most branches of the armed forces and confined them to segregated regiments in the army and kitchen duty in the navy. Shortly before the presidential election that year, Roosevelt answered the protests by stating: "This policy (not to intermingle colored and white) has proved satisfactory over a long period of years, and to make changes would produce situations destructive to morale and detrimental to the preparations for national defense." And although this policy violates Section 4(a) of the 1940 Draft Act which prohibits "discrimination against any person on account of race or color," it has been rigidly adhered to ever since, and applied to every Negro volunteer and draftee.

Protests and the needs of the armed forces compelled the military authorities to admit Negroes into many branches previously closed to them. But always, and under all circumstances, this was done on a strictly segregated basis. Negroes were permitted (a handful, anyhow) to enter the Army air force, but only after an all-Negro squadron and a separate and, needless to say, inferior training center had been established. They were permitted to enter the Navy in some non-kitchen servant capacities, but only after arrangements had been made to segregate them in small shore patrol ships and labor battalions in which they could not become commissioned officers. Similarly they were accepted into the Coast Guard and the Marines in sep-

arate all-Negro bodies. Negroes are permitted to take officer training—a grand total of 1,200 during the first 17 months of the war!—but only with the understanding that they will not be allowed to command any white soldiers, although naturally with such a small number of Negro officers for such a large number of Negro soldiers, there will have to be and are many white officers in command of Negroes.

To change this "satisfactory" setup in the armed forces, says Roosevelt, "would produce situations destructive to morale." He does not say whose morale.\* But it is not hard to guess that he means primarily the morale of Southern ruling class opinion. To protect Southern bias, therefore, the military authorities try to spread anti-Negro prejudices among hundreds of thousands of non-Southern white youth in uniform, many of whom went to school with Negroes and were taught to regard them as equals. To prevent "situations destructive to morale," the military authorities export their prejudices to Great Britain, where the people greeted American Negro soldiers in the most friendly and comradely manner until they were ordered to desist in the interest of not hurting the feelings of bigoted U.S. Army officers and soldiers.

But the utter hypocrisy of Roosevelt's explanation for segregating Negroes in the armed forces has been bared most conclusively by his reaction to a very reasonable request made by several liberal and Negro organizations representing at least a million people. Very well, they said in effect, you don't want to end segregation in the armed forces and we won't press you on that; but why don't you at least permit the formation of a single mixed division, which would be made up of white and Negro soldiers volunteering to serve in it? It is hard to see how anyone could argue against creation of such a division on the ground that it would produce situations harmful to morale; being made up of volunteers who would want to show that it is possible for Negroes and white to collaborate amicably and fruitfully, it would probably have the highest morale in the armed forces. Precisely for this reason Roosevelt not only refused to act on the mixed division petitions delivered to him—he even refused to comment on them.

This incident, and many others like it, indicate that what Roosevelt and the government are upholding is not morale but anti-Negro prejudice and the predominant Southern technique for keeping the Negro "in his (separate) place." This is upheld in the armed forces because the Southern rulers fear, in the words of a resolution of the Socialist Workers Party, "that no Negro trained to handle a gun would peacefully go back to the old life of discrimination, segregation, disfranchisement and insult, after training in an army where he was treated as an equal with white soldiers." But the logic of segregation is such that once adopted as a policy for the armed forces there is nothing to stop it from being extended to all the major and minor organs and institutions of society. This is precisely what the enemies of the Negroes want and are striving for.

The issue of segregation is in many respects the most important one facing the Negro today. It is the last and strongest line of defense of those who want to keep the Negro down, the stronghold from which a thousands types of discrimination can be

\*What the Negro people feel about such segregationist policies is shown by their answer to the *Pittsburgh Courier's* poll of February 20, 1943. The question was: "Do you believe the Negro should fight against segregation even when it is the accepted 'pattern of the community'?" The answers:

YES .....	89.1%
NO .....	8.8%
UNCERTAIN ..	1.9%

Even in the South the answer from 88.6% of those questioned was yes.

\*That has been done briefly but most adequately in a 5-cent pamphlet, "The War's Greatest Scandal: The Story of Jim Crow In Uniform," issued by the March-On-Washington Movement, 2084 Seventh Ave., New York, April, 1943.

launched. Yet the only Negro member of Congress, William L. Dawson, who like his colleagues Rankin and Bilbo believes in the greater glory of the Democratic Party, and who claims to be a representative of the Negro people not only in Chicago but in the whole United States, recently declared that such issues as segregation "fade into insignificance in the light of the bigger questions raised by this war. America's enemies now are the foes of all minorities." (*PM*, April 23, 1943.)

But flag-waving won't solve the problems of the Negro people and it won't change the mind of a single one of their enemies. For on this one issue there is a remarkable unanimity among all leaders of Southern ruling class thought—both openly reactionary and "liberal." The demagogues like Rankin, Talmadge and Dixon rave and rant and threaten civil war at the very prospect of any breaches in the wall of segregation; they don't like it but they don't object too strenuously when Negroes in the South get jobs which were always closed to them before because this helps to win the war which they believe is being fought to save "the white man's civilization"; but they declare their readiness even to secede from the Democratic Party when there is talk of ending or altering the system of segregation. The "Southern liberals" show their real colors when this problem is raised, as the publisher Mark Ethridge did when he warned that "There is no power in the world—not even in all the mechanized armies of the earth, Allied or Axis—which could force the Southern white people to the abandonment of the principle of social segregation." (July 1942). And in April 1943 when more than 100 white "Southern liberals" met in Atlanta to discuss a program for Negro-white relations, they expressed the same idea although much more hypocritically when they stated: "The only justification offered for those laws which have for their purpose the separation of the races is that they are intended to minister to the welfare and the integrity of both races." To minister to the welfare and the integrity of both races is truly a noble aim, and no doubt explains why every outspoken enemy of the Negro people is so determined to uphold the segregation laws and practices!

The truth is that all Southern capitalists and their "liberal" agents stand so firmly on this issue because once segregation is ended, all else is lost for the oppressors of the Negro people. Once the wall separating them is removed, the Negroes and poor whites will see that their interests are the same and they will unite their forces to better their common conditions. And conversely, if the barrier of segregation can be maintained for the duration of the war, then the Negro-haters will be able to use it to extend and intensify their oppression and to take back whatever the Negroes have gained during the war. For the very basis of segregation is the myth of "white supremacy"—just as the basis of the persecution of the Jews in Europe is the myth of "Nordic superiority"—and so long as that myth can be preserved, the Negro will be unable to make permanent gains.

The government does more than its share to uphold this myth. Why should Negroes be segregated in the armed forces and not in federal housing projects? There is no logic in that, so—a little pressure from the Southern congressmen, and Negroes are segregated in these projects even in Northern communities. But why in housing projects and nowhere else? The poison of bi-racialism spreads further through the government apparatus and by way of that into all spheres of economic, political and social life. Uncle Toms like F. D. Patterson of Tuskegee Institute hail the government when, for example, it opens the air force to Negroes on a segregated basis, declaring that this is "a definite improvement" in the conditions of the Negro people. These people fail to see, or at any rate to admit, that such "improvement" is comparable to the government

striking off a few links in the chain binding the Negroes only to surround him with another prison wall. But every thoughtful Negro sees in these developments the intention of their enemies, with the approval of the government, to establish a strongly enforced and far-reaching system of segregation which will freeze the Negro into a permanent position of second class citizenship.

To fully estimate the Negro's status in post-war America, one must also understand the economic and political direction in which American capitalism is moving. In a recent pamphlet\* we summed up the process as follows:

"The United States is the richest, most powerful capitalist country in the world. But no more than the others has it been able to escape the processes of decay which are inherent in capitalism and are developing ever more rapidly in this period. As in the other capitalist nations, here too greater and greater power and wealth are accumulated in the hands of the monopoly corporations and heavier restrictions are set on the rights of the masses.

"In its youth capitalism was able to grant concessions: democratic liberties to certain sections of the masses, and slightly higher wages to the more skilled layers of the working class. Today, capitalism is in its death agony. To exist, it must snatch back the few concessions it was able to give in the past; it must depress the living standards of all the workers; it must destroy the democratic rights of all the masses. No capitalist nation in the epoch of imperialism is immune from this process which is speeded up in wartime but was in operation before the war and will not be eliminated after the war if the capitalists remain in power. The United States capitalists follow in the footsteps of their German brothers, although at a different tempo.

"Keeping in mind this background, Negroes will best be able to appreciate what capitalism in this country has to offer them. When the trend is toward the destruction of all democratic rights, when more regimentation is in store for the masses as a whole, Negroes have little to hope for from the capitalist system. When the employers are trying to take away the few democratic rights of the white workers, there is little chance that they will willingly extend new rights to the Negroes. The events of the last decade clearly indicate that under capitalism the prospect is not for Negroes to be raised to the status of the white workers but rather for the white workers to be driven down to the status of the Negroes. And once fascist reaction triumphs, the Negro's status may become even more intolerable than it is today. Negroes can learn from the fate of the Jews in Europe, who made some gains during the period of capitalism's rise only to be forcibly deprived of them when capitalism assumed the political form of fascism. Like the Jewish scapegoat in Germany, the Negro may face deportation, loss of whatever citizenship rights he now possesses, mass slaughter and extermination."

Fortunately there is another perspective, the perspective of the socialist revolution and the establishment of a Workers' and Farmers' Government which will, as the Bolsheviks did in the Soviet Union under Lenin and Trotsky, not only destroy the economic cause of race discrimination but will also adopt and enforce legislation guaranteeing full equality to the Negro people and all other minorities.

It is in the light of this perspective that we can see that the Negro has made some genuine gains in recent years, gains which have a permanent character and cannot be erased at the mere command of the capitalists. These gains are in the trade union movement. More Negroes belong and there is a greater understanding of the need for Negro-white solidarity in the unions than ever before. What the white trade unionists have learned about the heroism and sacrifices of their black brothers in building the unions and what the Negro unionists have learned about the need for allying themselves with the labor movement will make possible the speedier entry of the unions

\*"The Struggle for Negro Equality" by John Saunders and Albert Parker, Pioneer Publishers, June 1943, five cents.

into the political struggle against capitalism and for the creation of a Workers' and Farmers' Government. In the unions and through the unions, in and through the revolutionary party, the Negro masses will be able to meet and defeat the challenge of their enemies in the post-war world.

Unlike most other people and groups who discuss post-war problems, the Trotskyist aim is not to divert attention away from current needs, but on the contrary to show by what capitalism offers after the war the need for struggling against capi-

talism and all its works today. Unlike the Dawsons, the Patersons and the Stalinists, we seek to show the Negroes that they must not be lulled into passivity and acquiescence by seeming but actually non-existent "progress." We try to show the Negroes what fundamental achievements must be won if they are to make permanent advances on the road to equality. That is our contribution to the discussion on the Negro's future in a capitalist world: to show the masses what lies ahead and to summon them to the struggle for emancipation today.

## From the Arsenal of Marxism

### *Svyazhsk*

By LARISSA REISSNER

EDITOR'S NOTE: Symbol of the international character of the October revolution is Larissa Reissner, daughter of a Polish mother and a German—East Elbian—landowner; she was born May 1, 1895, in Vilna (Poland), educated in Germany and France; before her 22nd birthday she was an outstanding figure in the Russian revolution.

Trotsky, in *My Life*, writes of her in his chapter on Svyazhsk:

"Larissa Reissner, who called Ivan Ivan Nikitich (Smirnov) 'the conscience of Svyazhsk,' was herself prominent in the Fifth army, as well as in the revolution as a whole. This fine young woman flashed across the revolutionary sky like a burning meteor, blinding many. With her appearance of an Olympian goddess, she combined a subtle and ironical mind and the courage of a warrior. After the capture of Kazan by the Whites, she went into the enemy camp to reconnoiter, disguised as a peasant woman. But her appearance was too extraordinary, and she

was arrested. While she was being cross-examined by a Japanese intelligence officer, she took advantage of an interval to slip through the carelessly guarded door and disappear. After that, she engaged in intelligence work. Later, she sailed on war-boats and took part in battles. Her sketches about the civil war are literature. With equal gusto, she would write about the Ural industries and the rising of the workers in the Ruhr. She was anxious to know and to see all, and to take part in everything. In a few brief years, she became a writer of the first rank. But after coming unscathed through fire and water, this Pallas of the revolution suddenly burned up with typhus in the peaceful surroundings of Moscow, before she was even thirty."

Elsewhere Trotsky ranks her with Isaak Babel as the greatest writers of the civil war period—a remarkable tribute to a girl to whom Russian was a foreign language, acquired in maturity.

*The Front*, a collection of her civil war

sketches, from which "Svyazhsk" is taken, was enormously popular with the Soviet masses. The various districts of the Communist Party—Moscow, Leningrad, the Urals, etc.—vied with each other in bringing it out in scores of editions. A larger collection of her work, *Oktober: Ausgewahlte Schriften*, was brought out in Germany by the official Comintern publishing house as late as 1930, with an introduction by Radek written in 1926, the year she died. It was not until Stalin's 50th birthday (December 21, 1929) and the publication on that date of Voroshilov's *Stalin and the Red Army* that the falsification of the history of the civil war began with full force. Now, of course, Larissa Reissner's sketches are forbidden literature in the Soviet Union, for their unforgettable portraits of the civil war leaders murdered by Stalin are a complete refutation of the Stalinist falsifications.

With this sketch of "Svyazhsk" we begin the publication of her work for the first time in English. The translation is by John G. Wright and Amy Jensen.

Whenever two comrades who worked together in the year 1918, fought beneath Kazan against the Czechoslovaks and then in the Urals or at Samara and Tsaritsin, chance to meet again many years later one of them is bound to ask after the first few questions:

"Remember Svyazhsk?" And they will clasp each other's hand again.

What is Svyazhsk? Today it is a legend, one of the revolutionary legends which still remain unchronicled but which are being retold over and over again from one end to another of this Russian vastness. Not one of the demobilized Red Army men from among the old-timers, the founders of the Workers' and Peasants' Army, upon returning home and reminiscing about the three years of Civil War will skip over the fabulous epic of Svyazhsk, the cross-roads whence the tide of the revolutionary offensive started rolling on all four sides. On the east—toward the Urals. On the south—toward the Caspian shores, the Caucasus and the borders of Persia. On the north toward Archangel and Poland. Not all together, of course; nor simultane-

ously. But it was only after Svyazhsk and Kazan that the Red Army became crystallized into those fighting and political forms which, after undergoing change and being perfected, have become classic for the RSFSR.\*

On August 6 (1918) numerous hastily organized regiments fled from Kazan; and the best among them, the class-conscious section, clung to Svyazhsk, halted there and decided to make a stand and fight. By the time the mobs of deserters fleeing from Kazan had almost reached Nizhny Novgorod, the dam erected at Svyazhsk had already halted the Czechoslovaks; and their general who tried to take the railroad bridge across the Volga by storm was killed during the night attack. Thus in the very first clash between the Whites who had just taken Kazan and consequently were stronger in morale and equipment, and the core of the Red Army seeking to defend the bridge-head across the Volga, the head of the Czechoslovak offensive was lopped

\*Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, the original name of the USSR.—Ed.

off. They lost their most popular and gifted leader in General Blagotich. Neither the Whites, flushed by their recent victory, nor the Reds rallying round Svyazhsk had any inkling of the historical importance that their initial trial skirmishes would have.

It is extremely difficult to convey the military importance of Svyazhsk without having the necessary materials at hand, without a map, and without the testimony of those comrades who were in the ranks of the Fifth Army at that time. Much has already been forgotten by me; faces and names flit by as in a fog. But there is something that no one will ever forget and that is: the feeling of supreme responsibility for holding Svyazhsk. This was the bond between all its defenders from a member of the Revolutionary Military Council to the last Red rank and file in desperate search for his somewhere extant, retreating regiment, who suddenly turned back and faced Kazan in order to fight to the last, with worn-out rifle in hand and fanatic determination in his heart. The situation was understood by everyone as follows: Another step backward would open the Volga to the enemy down to Nizhny (Novgorod) and thus the road to Moscow.

Further retreat meant the beginning of the end; the death sentence on the Republic of the Soviets.

How correct this is from a strategic point of view, I know not. Perhaps the Army if rolled back even further might have gathered into a similar fist on one of the innumerable black dots which speckle the map and thenceforth carried its banners to victory. But indubitably it was correct from the standpoint of morale. And insofar as a retreat from the Volga meant a complete collapse at that time, to that extent the possibility of holding out, with one's back against the bridge, imbued us with a real hope.

The ethics of the revolution formulated the complex situation succinctly as follows: To retreat is to have the Czechs in Nizhny and in Moscow. No surrender of Svyazhsk and the bridge means the reconquest of Kazan by the Red Army.

## The Arrival of Trotsky's Train

It was, I believe, either on the third or fourth day after the fall of Kazan that Trotsky arrived at Svyazhsk. His train came to a determined stop at the little station; his locomotive panted a little, was uncoupled, and departed to drink water, but did not return. The cars remained standing in a row as immobile as the dirty straw-thatched peasant huts and the barracks occupied by the Fifth Army's staff. This immobility silently underscored that there was no place to go from here, and that it was impermissible to leave.

Little by little the fanatical faith that this little station would become the starting point for a counter-offensive against Kazan began to take on the shape of reality.

Every new day that this God-forsaken, poor railway siding held out against the far stronger enemy, added to its strength and raised its mood of confidence. From somewhere in the rear, from far-off villages in the hinterland, came at first soldiers one by one, then tiny detachments, and finally military formations in a far better state of preservation.

I see it now before me, this Svyazhsk where not a single soldier fought "under compulsion." Everything that was alive there and fighting in self-defense—all of it was bound together by the strongest ties of voluntary discipline, voluntary participation in a struggle which seemed so hopeless at the outset.

Human beings sleeping on the floors of the station house, in dirty huts filled with straw and broken glass—they hardly hoped for success and consequently feared nothing. The speculation on when and how all this "would end" interested none.

"Tomorrow"—simply did not exist; there was only a brief, hot, smoky piece of time: *Today*. And one lived on that, as one lives in harvest time.

Morning, noon, evening, night—each single hour was prolonged to the utmost count; every single hour had to be lived through and used up to the last second. It was necessary to reap each hour carefully, finely like ripe wheat in the field is cut to the very root. Each hour seemed so rich, so utterly unlike all of previous life. No sooner did it vanish than in recollection it seemed a miracle. And it was a miracle.

Planes came and went, dropping their bombs on the station and the railway cars; machine guns with their repulsive barking and the calm syllables of artillery, drew nigh and then withdrew again, whilst a human being in a torn military coat, civilian hat, and boots with toes protruding—in short, one of the defenders of Svyazhsk—would smilingly produce a watch from his pocket and bethink himself:

"So that's what it is now—1:30 or 4:30 o'clock. Or, it is 6:20. Therefore I am still alive. Svyazhsk holds. Trotsky's train stands on the rails. A lamp now flickers through the window of the Political Department. Good. The day is ended."

Medical supplies were almost completely absent at Svyazhsk. God knows what the doctors used for bandages. This poverty shamed no one; nor did anyone stand in fear of it. The soldiers on their way with soup kettles to the field kitchen passed by stretchers with the wounded and the dying. Death held no terrors. It was expected daily, always. To lie prone in a wet army coat, with a red splotch on a shirt, with an expressionless face, a muteness that was no longer human—this was something taken for granted.

Brotherhood! Few words have been so abused and rendered pitiful. But brotherhood does come sometimes, in moments of direst need and peril, so selfless, so sacred, so unrepeatable in a single lifetime. And they have not lived and know nothing of life who have never lain at night on a floor in tattered and lice-ridden clothes, thinking all the while how wonderful is the world, infinitely wonderful! That here the old has been overthrown and that life is fighting with bare hands for her irrefutable truth, for the white swans of her resurrection, for something far bigger and better than this patch of star-lit sky showing through the velvet blackness of a window with shattered panes—for the future of all mankind.

Once in a century contact is made and new blood is transfused. These beautiful words, these words, almost inhuman in their beauty, and the smell of living sweat, the living breath of others sleeping beside you on the floor. No nightmares, no sentimentalities but tomorrow the dawn will come and Comrade G., a Czech Bolshevik, will prepare an omelet for the whole "gang"; and the Chief of Staff will pull on a shaggy stiffly frozen shirt washed out last night. A day will dawn in which someone will die, knowing in his last second that death is only something among many other things, and not the main thing at all; that once again Svyazhsk has not been taken and that the dirty wall is still inscribed with a piece of chalk: "Workers of the World Unite!"

## Against the Stream

The rainy August days thus passed one by one. The thin, poorly equipped lines did not fall back; the bridge remained in our hands and from the rear, from somewhere far away, reinforcements began to arrive.

Real telephone and telegraph wires began to attach themselves to autumn spider-webs flying in the winds and some kind of enormous, cumbersome, lame apparatus began to operate on the God-forsaken railway station—Svyazhsk, this tiny, hardly discernible black dot on the map of Russia, at which in a

moment of flight and despair, the revolution had clutched. Here all of Trotsky's organizational genius was revealed. He managed to restore the supply lines, got new artillery and a few regiments through to Svyazhsk on railways that were being openly sabotaged; everything needed for the coming offensive was obtained. In addition, it ought to be borne in mind that this work had to be done in the year 1918, when demobilization was still raging, when the appearance on the Moscow streets of a single well dressed detachment of the Red Army would create a real sensation. After all, it meant to swim against the stream, against the exhaustion of four years of war, against the spring floods of the revolution which swept through the whole country the debris of Czarist discipline and wild hatred of anything resembling the bark of old officers' commands, the barracks, or old army life.

Despite all this, supplies appeared before our very eyes. Newspapers arrived, boots and overcoats came. And wherever they actually hand out boots, and for keeps, there you will find a really solid army staff; there things are stable; there the army stands firmly intrenched and has no thought of fleeing. That's no joking matter, boots!

The Order of the Red Flag was not yet in existence in the era of Svyazhsk, else it would have been issued to hundreds. Everybody, including the cowardly and the nervous and the simply mediocre workers and Red Army men—everybody, without a single exception, performed unbelievable, heroic deeds; they outdid themselves, like spring streams overflowing their banks they joyfully flooded their own normal levels.

Such was the atmosphere. I remember receiving at that time by extraordinary chance a few letters from Moscow. In them was some talk about the exultation of the petty bourgeoisie preparing to repeat the memorable days of the Paris Commune.

And in the meantime the foremost and most dangerous front of the Republic hung by a thin railway thread and flamed, setting up an unprecedented heroic conflagration which sufficed for three more years of hungry, typhus-ridden, homeless war.

## The Men Who Did It

In Svyazhsk Trotsky, who was able to give the newborn Army a backbone of steel, who himself sank roots into the soil refusing to yield an inch of ground no matter what happened, who was able to show this handful of defenders a calmness icier than theirs—in Svyazhsk, Trotsky was not alone. Gathered there were old party workers, future members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, and of the Military Councils of the several Armies to whom the future historian of the Civil War will refer as the Marshals of the Great Revolution. Rosengoltz and Gussev, Ivan Nikitich Smirnov, Kobozev, Mezhlauk, the other Smirnov, and many other comrades whose names I no longer recall.\* From among the sailors, I remember Raskolnikov and the late Markin.

Rosengoltz in his railway car almost from the very first day sprouted the office of the Revolutionary Military Council; extruded maps and rattled typewriters—obtained God knows where—in short, he began building up a strong, geometrically perfect organizational apparatus, with precise connections, indefatigable working capacity and simple in scheme.

In the days to come, whatever the Army or the front, wherever the work began to sputter, Rosengoltz was immediately brought in like a queen-bee in a sack, placed into the disturbed bee

\*All these legendary heroes of Svyazhsk and of the Civil War, along with hundreds and thousands of others of their generation were murdered by Stalin in the Moscow frameups and blood purges two decades later.—*Ed.*

hive and would immediately proceed to build, organize, forming cells, buzzing over the telegraph wires. Despite the military overcoat and enormous pistol in his belt, nothing martial could be discerned in his figure, nor in his pale, slightly soft face. His tremendous force did not lie in this field at all, but rather in his natural ability to renew, establish connections, raise the tempo of a halting, infected bloodstream to an explosive speed. At the side of Trotsky he was like a dynamo, regular, well-oiled, noiseless, with powerful levers moving day after day, spinning the untearable web of organization.

I do not recall just what kind of work I. N. Smirnov officially performed in the staff of the Fifth Army. Whether he was a member of the Revolutionary Military Council or at the same time also head of the Political Department; but apart from all titles and frameworks he embodied the ethics of the revolution. He was the highest moral criterion; the communist conscience of Svyazhsk.

Even among the non-party soldier masses and those communists who had not known him previously, his amazing purity and integrity were immediately recognized. It is hardly likely that he himself was aware how much he was feared; how everyone feared nothing so much as to reveal cowardice and weakness before the eyes of this man, who never yelled at anyone, who simply remained himself, calm, courageous. No one commanded as much respect as Ivan Nikitich. Everyone felt that in the worst moment he would be the strongest and most fearless.

With Trotsky—it was to die in battle after the last bullet had been fired; to die enthusiastically, oblivious of wounds. With Trotsky—it was the sacred pathos of struggle; words and gestures recalling the best pages of the Great French Revolution.

But with Comrade Smirnov (so it seemed to us at the time and so we spoke in whispers to each other as we huddled close together on the floor during those already cold autumnal nights)—Comrade Smirnov: this was pure calm when “up against the wall”; or when being grilled by the Whites; or in a filthy prison hole. Yes, that is how one talked about him at Svyazhsk.

Boris Danilovich Mikhailov came a little later, directly from Moscow, I believe, or generally from the center. He arrived in a civilian coat, with that bright, rapidly changing expression on his face that people have on being freed from prison or big cities.

Within a few hours he was completely overcome by the wild intoxication of Svyazhsk. Changing clothes, he went out on reconnaissance patrol in the vicinity of White Kazan, and returned three days later, tired, his face wind-tanned, his body crawling with the ubiquitous lice. By way of compensation, he was all in one piece.

It is a fascinating spectacle to observe the profound inner process taking place in people who arrive at a revolutionary front: they catch fire like a straw roof lit on all four sides, and then on cooling off become transformed into a fire-proof, perfectly clear and uniform piece of cast iron.

Youngest of all was Mezhlauk. Valerian Ivanovich. He had a particularly hard time. His younger brother and wife had remained behind in Kazan and, according to rumor, had been shot. Later it turned out that his brother actually had died there, while his wife suffered indescribably. It was not customary to complain or talk about one's misfortunes at Svyazhsk. And Mezhlauk kept an honest silence, did his work, and walked through the sticky autumn mud in his long cavalry coat, all of him concentrated on one burning point: Kazan.

Meanwhile the Whites began to sense that with its strengthened resistance, Svyazhsk was growing into something great and dangerous.

Intermittent skirmishes and attacks came to an end; a regular

siege, with large organized forces on all sides was started. But they had already let slip the propitious moment.

Old Slavin, Commander of the Fifth Army, not a very gifted colonel but one who knew his business exactly and thoroughly, fixed on a key point of defense, worked out a definitive plan and carried it through with truly Latvian stubbornness.

Svyazhsk stood firm, its feet planted in the ground like a bull, its broad forehead lowered toward Kazan, standing immovable on the spot and impatiently shaking its horns sharp as bayonets.

One sunny autumn morning came narrow, agile and swift torpedo-boats from the Baltic fleet to Svyazhsk. Their appearance created a sensation. The Army now felt the river side protected. A series of artillery duels began on the Volga, occurring three or four times daily. Covered by the fire of our batteries concealed along the shore, our flotilla now ventured far forward. These forays were crowned by such extremely audacious ones as that undertaken on the morning of September 9 by Sailor Markin, one of the founders and outstanding heroes of the Red fleet. On an unwieldy, armor-plated tug boat he ventured far out to the very piers of Kazan, landed, drove off the crews of enemy batteries by machine gun fire and removed the locks from several guns.

Another time, late at night on August 30, our ships came flush up to Kazan, shelled the city, set fire to several barges loaded with munitions and food supplies, and withdrew without losing a single ship. Among others Trotsky, together with the Commander, was aboard the torpedo-boat "Prochny" which had to fix its steering gear while drifting alongside an enemy barge and under the muzzles of the White Guard artillery.

Vatzetis, commander-in-chief of the Eastern front, arrived at a moment when the offensive against Kazan was already in full swing. Most of us, myself among them, had little exact information concerning the outcome of the conference; only one thing quickly became a matter of general knowledge and was greeted with deep satisfaction on all sides: Our old man (that is what we called our commander among ourselves) declared himself opposed to Vatzetis' views, who wanted to undertake an attack against Kazan from the left river bank, while our commander decided to storm Kazan on the right bank which dominates the city and not on the left bank which is flat and exposed.

## The Whites Advance

But precisely at a time when the entire Fifth Army was tensely poised for the attack, when its main forces at last began pushing forward under constant counter-attacks and many heavy day-long battles, three "luminaries" of White Guard Russia got together in order to put an end to the protracted epic of Svyazhsk. Savinkov, Kappel and Fortunatov at the head of a considerable force undertook a desperate raid against a railroad station adjoining Svyazhsk, in order in this way to capture Svyazhsk itself and the Volga bridge. The raid was brilliantly executed; after making a long detour, the Whites suddenly swooped down on the station Shikhrana, shot it to pieces, seized the station buildings, cut the connections with the rest of the railway line and burned a munition train stationed there. The small defending force at Shikhrana was slaughtered to the last man.

Nor is this all; they literally hunted down and extirpated every living thing in this little station. I had the opportunity to see Shikhrana a few hours after the raid. It bore the stigma of the completely irrational pogrom violence that stamped all the victories of these gentlemen who never felt themselves the

masters and future inhabitants of the soil accidentally and temporarily conquered.

In a courtyard, a cow lay bestially murdered (I say murdered advisedly, not slaughtered); the chicken coop was filled senselessly with chickens riddled in all too human a fashion. The well, the little vegetable garden, the water tower and the houses were treated as if they had been captured human beings and, moreover, Bolsheviks and "sheenies." The intestines had been ripped out of everything. Animals and inanimate objects sprawled everywhere, decimated, violated, ugly-dead. Alongside this horrible shambles of everything that once had been a human habitation, the indescribable, unutterable death of a few railway employees and Red Army men caught by surprise appeared quite in the nature of things.

Only in Goya's illustrations of the Spanish campaign and guerrilla war can a similar harmony be found of wind-swept trees bending low beneath the weight of hanged men, of dust on roadways, of blood and stones.

From the station Shikhrana, the Savinkov detachment turned toward Svyazhsk, moving along the railroad. We sent our armored train "Free Russia" to meet them. So far as I am able to recall, it was armed with long range naval guns. Its commander, however, did not rise to the level of his task. Being surrounded on two sides (so it appeared to him), he left his train and rushed back to the Revolutionary Military Council in order "to report."

In his absence "Free Russia" was shot to pieces and burned. Its black, burning hulk lay derailed for a long time beside the roadbed very close to Svyazhsk.

After the destruction of the armored train the road to the Volga seemed completely open. The Whites stood directly beneath Svyazhsk, some 1½ to 2 versts away from the Fifth Army's headquarters. Panic ensued. Part of the Political Department, if not all of it, rushed to the piers and aboard the steam boats.

The regiment, fighting virtually on Volga's banks but higher upstream, wavered and then fled with its commanders and commissars. Toward morning, its maddened detachments were found aboard the staff ships of the Volga war fleet.

In Svyazhsk only the Fifth Army staff with its officers and the train of Trotsky remained.

## How Svyazhsk Was Saved

Lev Davidovich mobilized the entire personnel of the train, all the clerks, wireless operators, hospital workers, and the guard commanded by the Chief of Staff of the fleet, Comrade Lepetenko (by the way, one of the most courageous and self-sacrificing soldiers of the revolution whose biography could very well provide this book with its most brilliant chapter)—in a word, everyone able to bear a rifle.

The staff offices stood deserted; there was no "rear" any longer. Everything was thrown against the Whites who had rolled almost flush to the station. From Shikhrana to the first houses of Svyazhsk the entire road was churned up by shells, covered with dead horses, abandoned weapons and empty cartridge shells. The closer to Svyazhsk, all the greater the havoc. The advance of the Whites was halted only after they had leaped over the gigantic charred skeleton of the armored train, still smoking and smelling of molten metal. The advance surges to the very threshold, then rolls back boiling like a receding wave only to fling itself once more against the hastily mobilized reserves of Svyazhsk. Here both sides stand facing each other for several hours, here are many dead.

The Whites then decided that they had before them a fresh and well organized division of whose existence even their intelligence service had remained unaware. Exhausted from their 48-

hour raid, the soldiers tended to overestimate the strength of the enemy and did not even suspect that opposing them was only a hastily thrown together handful of fighters with no one behind them except Trotsky and Slavin sitting beside a map in a smoke-filled sleepless room of the deserted headquarters in the center of depopulated Svyazhsk where bullets were whistling through the streets.

Throughout this night, like all the previous ones, Lev Davidovich's train remained standing there as always without its engine. Not a single section of the Fifth Army advancing on Kazan and about to storm it was bothered that night or diverted from the front to cover a virtually defenseless Svyazhsk. The army and the fleet learned about the night attack only after it was all over, after the Whites were already in retreat firmly convinced that almost a whole division was confronting them.

The next day 27 deserters who had fled to the ships in the most critical moment were tried and shot. Among them were several communists. Much was later said about the shooting of these 27, especially in the hinterland, of course, where they did not know by how thin a thread hung the road to Moscow and our entire offensive against Kazan, undertaken with our last means and forces.

To begin with, the whole army was agog with talk about communists having turned cowards; and that laws were not written for them; that they could desert with impunity, while an ordinary rank and filer was shot down like a dog.

If not for the exceptional courage of Trotsky, the army commander and other members of the Revolutionary Military Council, the prestige of the communists working in the army would have been impaired and lost for a long time to come.

No fine speeches can make it sound plausible to an army suffering every possible privation in the course of six weeks, fighting practically with bare hands, without even bandages, that cowardice is not cowardice and that for guilt there may be "extenuating circumstances."

It is said that among those shot were many good comrades, some even whose guilt was redeemed by their previous services, by years in prison and exile. Perfectly true. No one contends that they perished in order to prop up those precepts of the old military code of "setting an example" when amidst the beating of drums "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" were exacted. Of course, Svyazhsk is a tragedy.

But everyone who has lived the life of the Red Army life, who was born and grew strong with it in the battles of Kazan, will testify that the iron spirit of this army would have never crystallized, that the fusion between the party and the soldier masses, between the rank and file and the summits of the commanding staff would have never been realized if, on the eve of storming Kazan where hundreds of soldiers were to lose their lives, the party had failed to show clearly before the eyes of the whole army that it was prepared to offer the Revolution this great and bloody sacrifice, that for the party, too, the severe laws of comradely discipline are binding; that the party, too, has the courage to apply ruthlessly the laws of the Soviet Republic to its own members as well.

Twenty-seven were shot and this filled in the breach which the famous raiders had succeeded in making in the self-confidence and unity of the Fifth Army. This salvo which exacted punishment from communists as well as commanders and simple soldiers for cowardice and dishonor in battle forced the least class-conscious section of the soldier mass and the one most inclined toward desertion (and of course there was such a section, too) to pull themselves together, and to align themselves with those who went consciously and without any compulsion into battle.

Precisely in these days was decided the fate of Kazan, and

not that alone but the fate of the entire White intervention. The Red Army found its self-confidence and became regenerated and strong during the long weeks of defense and offense.

In conditions of constant danger and with the greatest moral exertions it worked out its laws, its discipline, its new heroic statutes. For the first time, panic in the face of the enemy's more modern technique became dissolved. Here one learned to make headway against any artillery; and involuntarily, from the elemental instinct of self-preservation, new methods of warfare were born, those specific battle methods which are already being studied in the highest military academies as the methods of the Civil War. Of extreme importance is the fact that in those days in Svyazhsk there was precisely such a man as Trotsky.

### Trotsky's Role

No matter what his calling or his name, it is clear that the creator of the Red Army, the future Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, would have had to be in Svyazhsk; had to live through the entire practical experience of these weeks of battle; had to call upon all the resources of his will and organizational genius for the defense of Svyazhsk, for the defense of the army organism smashed under the fire of the Whites.

Moreover, in revolutionary war there is still another force, another factor without which victory cannot be gained, and that is: the mighty romanticism of the Revolution which enables people straight from the barricades to cast themselves immediately in the harsh forms of the military machine, without losing the quick, light step gained in political demonstrations or the independent spirit and flexibility gained perhaps in long years of party work under illegality.

To have conquered in 1918 one had to take all the fire of the revolution, all of its incandescent heat, and harness them to the vulgar, repellent age-old pattern of the army.

Up till now history has always solved this problem with imposing but moth-eaten theatrical tricks. She would summon to the stage some individual in a "three-cornered hat and a gray field uniform" and he or some other general on a white horse would cut the revolutionary blood and marrow into republics, banners, slogans.

In military construction, as in so many other things, the Russian Revolution went its own way. Insurrection and war fused into one, the Army and the Party grew together, inseparably interwoven, and on the regimental banners were inscribed the unity of their mutual aims, all the sharpest formulas of the class struggle. In the days of Svyazhsk all this remained as yet unformed, only hanging in the air, seeking for expression.

The Workers' and Peasants' Army had to find expression somehow; it had to take on its outward shape, produce its own formulas, but how? This no one clearly knew yet. At that time, of course, no precepts, no dogmatic program were available in accordance with which this titanic organism could grow and develop.

In the party and in the masses there lived only a foreboding; a creative premonition of this military revolutionary organization which was never seen before and to which each day's battle whispered some new real characteristic.

Trotsky's great merit lies in this, that he caught up in flight the least gesture of the masses which already bore upon it the stamp of this sought-for and unique organizational formula.

He sifted out and then set going all the little practices whereby besieged Svyazhsk simplified, hastened or organized its work of battle. And this, not simply in the narrow technical sense. No. Every new successful combination of "specialist and commissar," of him who commands and the one executing

the command and bearing the responsibility for it—every successful combination, after it had met the test of experience and had been lucidly formulated, was immediately transformed into an order, a circular, a regulation. In this way the living revolutionary experience was not lost, nor forgotten, nor deformed.

The norm obligatory for all was not mediocrity but on the contrary, the best, the things of genius conceived by the masses themselves in the most fiery, most creative moments of the struggle. In little things as well as big—whether in such complex matters as the division of labor among the members of the Revolutionary Military Council or the quick, snappy, friendly gesture exchanged in greeting between a Red Commander and a soldier each busy and hurrying somewhere—it all had to be drawn from life, assimilated and returned as a norm to the masses for universal use. And wherever things weren't moving, or there was creaking, or bungling, one had to sense what was wrong, one had to help, one had to pull, as the midwife pulls out the newborn babe during a difficult birth.

One can be the most adept at articulating, one can give to a new army a rationally impeccable plastic form, and nonetheless render its spirit frigid, permit it to evaporate and remain incapable of keeping this spirit alive within the chickenwire of juridical formulas. To prevent this, one must be a great revolutionist; one must possess the intuition of a creator and an internal radio transmitter of vast power without which there is no approaching the masses.

In the last analysis it is precisely this revolutionary instinct which is the court of highest sanction; which exactly purges its new creative justice of all deeply hidden counter-revolutionary back-slidings. It places its hand of violence upon the deceitful formal justice in the name of the highest, proletarian justice which does not permit its elastic laws to ossify, to become divorced from life and burden the shoulders of Red Army soldiers with petty, aggravating, superfluous loads.

Trotsky possessed this intuitive sense.

In him the revolutionist was never elbowed aside by the soldier, the military leader, the commander. And when with his inhuman, terrible voice he confronted a deserter, we stood in fear of him as one of us, a great rebel who could crush and slay anyone for base cowardice, for treason not to the military but the world-proletarian revolutionary cause.

It was impossible for Trotsky to have been a coward, for otherwise the contempt of this extraordinary army would have crushed him; and it could never have forgiven a weakling for the fraternal blood of the 27 which sprayed its first victory.

A few days before the occupation of Kazan by our troops Lev Davidovich had to leave Svyazhsk; the news of the attempt on Lenin's life called him to Moscow. But neither Savinkov's raid on Svyazhsk, organized with great mastery by the Social Revolutionists, nor the attempt to assassinate Lenin, undertaken by the same party almost simultaneously with Savinkov's raid, could now halt the Red Army. The final wave of the offensive engulfed Kazan.

On September 9 late at night the troops were embarked on ships and by morning, around 5:30, the clumsy many-decked transports, convoyed by torpedo boats, moved toward the piers of Kazan. It was strange to sail in moonlit twilight past the half-demolished mill with a green roof, behind which a White battery had been located; past the half-burned "Delphin" gutted and beached on the deserted shore; past all the familiar river bends, tongues of land, sandbanks and inlets over which from dawn to evening death had walked for so many weeks, clouds of smoke had rolled, and golden sheaves of artillery fire had flared.

-We sailed with lights out in absolute silence over the black, cold, smoothly flowing Volga.

Aft of the stern, light foam on the dull humming wake washed away by waves that remember nothing and flow unconcernedly to the Caspian Sea. And yet the place through which the giant ship was at this moment silently gliding had only yesterday been a maelstrom ripped and plowed by wildly exploding shells. And here, where a moment ago a nightbird tipped noiselessly with its wing the water from which a slight mist curled upward into the cold air, yesterday so many white spumy fountains were rising; yesterday, words of command were restlessly sounding and slim torpedo boats were threading their way through smoke and flames and a rain of steel splinters, their hulls trembling from the compressed impatience of engines and from the recoil of their two-gun batteries which fired once a minute with a sound resembling iron hiccups.

People were firing, scattering away under the hail of down-clattering shells, mopping up the blood on the decks. . . . And now everything is silent; the Volga flows as it has flowed a thousand years ago, as it will flow centuries from now.

We reached the piers without firing a shot. The first flickers of dawn lit up the sky. In the grayish-pink twilight, humped, black, charred phantoms began to appear. Cranes, beams of burned buildings, shattered telegraph poles—all this seemed to have endured endless sorrow and seemed to have lost all capacity for feeling like a tree with twisted withered branches. Death's kingdom washed by the icy roses of the northern dawn.

And the deserted guns with their muzzles uplifted resemble in the twilight cast down figures, frozen in mute despair, with heads propped up by hands cold and wet with dew.

Fog. People begin shivering from cold and nervous tension; the air is permeated with the odor of machine oil and tarred rope. The gunner's blue collar turns with the movement of the body viewing in amazement the unpopulated, soundless shore reposing in dead silence.

This is victory.

### Comrades Renery, Van Belle, Lemmens

Through underground channels the terrible news has just come to us that three of our comrades in occupied Belgium have just been shot by a Nazi firing squad. The fallen comrades are Renery, Van Belle and Lemmens, members of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, Belgian section of the Fourth International. They died fighting against Nazi oppression and for the only way out for the workers of that ruined continent—the Socialist United States of Europe. Be sure that we shall avenge their death. Not upon the heads of the German proletariat but side by side with them against the exploiters of all lands.

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# INTERNATIONAL NOTES

## *A Letter from England* *A Split Among the Stalinists*

Britain continues to seethe with unrest. Unauthorized militant strikes continue to break out among workers driven beyond the limits of endurance by the employers' policy. Carters and dockers in Belfast, railwaymen at Stratford, Royal Ordnance Factory workers at Beardmoors, and the miners repeatedly here and there, flare up in angry defensive protest. The new Wage Award of the National Arbitration Tribunal to the engineers [machinists] is regarded as an insult to the engineering workers, and in effect amounts to a provocation which must have stormy repercussions in the next few months.

The Beveridge Report is also a big issue here. The Labour "lefts" and petty-bourgeois careerists of all shades are trying to cash in on it. This is a reflection of the way the masses have turned their attention to the future and are asking "What are we fighting for?"

### *Labour Party Conference*

In the political field there is a definite trend on the part of organized labor to break the electoral truce. This is only the beginning, but it is already sufficiently widespread to cause a split among the Labour and Trades Union tops. Churchill has threatened the labor movement with a split if the forthcoming conference decides to break the truce. Thirty six [local] Labour Parties have placed on the agenda "Break the Electoral Truce." Two resolutions putting our position in all essentials are also on the agenda: "Break the Coalition—Labour to Power on a Socialist Program." Unquestionably the Labour Party Conference will be one of the most momentous in years.

It is difficult to predict what the outcome of the Conference will be. One thing is certain: the truce has not long to live. The leadership will attempt to sidetrack the discussion away from the question of the coalition; if it gets too hot they will try to find a formula to retain the coalition but break the electoral truce as a vent for the feelings of the rank and file.

The leading strata of the labor fakery are also worried by the rise of the middle-class party, Common Wealth, which has been successfully contesting by-elections on demagogic slogans of precisely that reformist character which the Labourites would be raising were they not self-gagged by participation in the coalition cabinet.

The Labourite tops are grateful for Stalinist agitation for continuation of both coalition and truce. But they do not want the Communist Party in their own house. It will need all the bureaucratic steamrolling of the Trades Union bloc to keep the Communist Party from affiliation, for the Stalinists are certainly organizing their campaign.

The Stalinists continue to grow numerically. But it is significant that the best of their national cadres in the working class are becoming "demoralized," i.e., shocked into consciousness of their class needs and permeated with "Trotskyism." In the Clyde-side, where the Stalinists have been complete masters of the industrial movement for years, they are receiving shattering blows from the leftward-moving workers. The Area Shop Stewards Committee there is split almost equally in two—a left wing versus the Stalinists. The latter are the least representative of the shop stewards at this stage in the area. They have lost their leading figure, Sillers, at the recent District Committee elections for the Amalgamated Engineering Union. All the pointers are that they will lose heavily in the next elections. The split, it is publicly known, is directly reflected in the ranks of the Stalinists themselves.

What we cannot too seriously emphasize is that two processes are simultaneously occurring. The continued growth of the Stalinists comes from the leftward groupings of previously backward workers who are now driven by the historic conjuncture to seek a "left" way out. Thus this growth stems from a *new base*, comes from *new strata*. Simultaneously, the politically more advanced workers in the C. P., learning from bitter experience the class-collaborationist nature of Stalinism, are turning farther left, looking for a real Bolshevik program, toward us.

For example, in discussions with the Shop Stewards Convener of one of the most important government plants on the Clyde, he informed us that the Central Committee of the C.P. had instructed them not to participate in the "Trotskyist" controlled Consultative Committee covering all Royal Ordnance Factories in the country. The plant is the acknowledged Stalinist stronghold on the Clyde and has a bloc of 60 votes in the area council of 250. They rejected the Central Committee's instruction and were expecting expulsion.

These workers, of course, are not yet Trotskyists but had arrived at the correct conclusion: *that Stalin was prepared to sacrifice the British working class in return for Churchill's aid*. Their proletarian basis and background plus contact with real Marxists will bring them ultimately all the way into the Trotskyist movement. Of this we are confident. Were our leading forces numerically larger, the process would be rapid.

A similar situation exists in most proletarian centers with the exception of London, where the Stalinist bureaucrats have a strong grip. But it is symptomatic of the general trend that even in London a movement is beginning.

### *Crisis in the I.L.P.*

The Independent Labour Party is about to hold its annual Conference. For the first time since the C.L.R. James walk-out and debacle, there has matured in the I.L.P. a sizable group of genuine Marxists. Of course most of them are young and lack the experience of battling with old foxes of the calibre of Brockway. But there is obviously developing a Bolshevik wing. A resolution proposing to open up discussions on affiliation with the Fourth International was ruled out of order by the Standing Orders Committee and I.L.P. National Secretary McNair wrote to a local branch stating that under no circumstances will they permit this resolution to come up at the Conference.

It is not at all excluded that the I.L.P. leaders are preparing to scuttle and enter the Labour Party in a miserable capitulation. They are at all costs determined to show the Labour bureaucrats that they are by no means dangerous and that they do not harbour any revolutionary tendency within their ranks. Fresh proletarian elements are, however, entering their ranks and branches long extinct are coming to life again. The fresh elements turn instinctively toward sound Bolshevik policy.

### *Our Continued Growth*

The Workers International League is now producing a mid-month supplement to the monthly *Socialist Appeal*. This is our only legal means of expressing our views more frequently at this stage. Only the Paper Control limits our possibilities in this sphere. Nobody can estimate how much greater our circulation could be if it were not for the paper regulations: we have been forced to print prominently in our April issue the following note: "Pass the *Appeal* on. The limitations of the paper supply imposed by the Government regulations determine the maximum circulation of our paper. We are therefore forced to ask our friends to see that their copies are passed on—not to one comrade or work-mate, but to several. This is an elementary duty of every real supporter of the *Socialist Appeal*."

The impact of our press on the British workers is significantly reflected by the behaviour of our Stalinist and capitalist foes. A pamphlet has been published against us by the Communist Party, with the slanderous title, *Hitler's Agents Exposed*, which contains the first attempt by the British Stalinists to deal with the program of Trotskyism, and is an important reflection of the above-described situation within their own ranks. There has also been published *How the Defeatists Work*, by the Economic League, the British brand of Pinkertons, blaming us for all the strikes.

P.S. The leading shop steward on the Clydeside, mentioned above, has been expelled with three others from the C.P. As a result, 40 members in the plant have resigned from the party.

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