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**NEW**

**INTERNATIONAL**

**WHAT IS  
CHINESE  
STALINISM?**

by Jack Brad



***The "Fair Deal"—  
Payment Deferred***

by Ben Hall

***France's New Socialist  
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*The RDR—An Interpretation*

by Jacques

*The Real RDR—A Reply*

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**FEBRUARY 1949**

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***One Year of Czech Dictatorship***

by Rudy Svoboda

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## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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Next month James M. Fenwick comes up with an article on that well-known Columbia educator and literary man which won't encourage anybody to vote for him in 1952. . . . It's the only such political and social examination of the man that we've seen, and took some digging. . . . Guntherized, it would be called *Inside Eisenhower*. . . .

Is there a student movement today?

Since the florescent days of the '30s, nothing much has been heard about student movements and activities on the campuses, but things are going on. . . . Julius Falk, national secretary of the Socialist Youth League, writes next month on the state of student organizations and radical movements in the colleges of the country. . . . What has happened to the Wallaceites (Young Progressives of America)? Is there a Student League for Industrial Democracy still alive and kicking? What are the prospects for a socialist student federation? . . . And so on.

*Rudy Svoboda*, whose article on the Stalinist regime in Czechoslovakia since the February 1948 coup appears in this issue, is one of the oldest militants of the Communist and Trotskyist movement in that country. . . . *Ben Hall* is the Detroit organizer of the Workers Party. . . . *Jack Brad* is the man whose articles on China in *Labor Action* have aroused so much attention and interest. . . . *Henry Judd* conducts the "World Politics" column of *Labor Action*, and *Jacques* is an American socialist of long standing in the Marxist movement.

Comments from letters from abroad:

An instructor at an Australian labor college writes: ". . . thank you for the great assistance you have rendered us during the past year by sending *Labor Action* and THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. . . . As we are isolated and receive scant news on political issues in Europe, etc., the information supplied by your publications is of tremendous assistance to students here."

From India a member of the Socialist Party memoes: "I am pleased to get THE NEW INTERNATIONAL and *Labor Action*. . . . I am circulating them to all members of our unit and also to this district."

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

VOL. XV

FEBRUARY 1949

NO. 2

## Truman's Fair Deal: Payment Deferred

The "New New Deal" and the Labor Leaders

Dictator Hitler promised delivery of a new *Volkswagon*. Millions of American workers already own automobiles. In keeping with the more prosperous standard of living in the United States, democrat Truman promises a whole new New Deal.

The United States is still a capitalist democracy while Germany was a totalitarian dictatorship; but the promise of the democrat, like the promise of the dictator, depends for its fulfillment upon winning uncontested mastery of the world—and this in turn depends upon the outcome of a new world war. But preparations for this war, to say nothing of the war itself, make their own demands—demands which run counter to another New Deal.

The next period of American politics could therefore be summarized under the following head: "A *new New Deal guaranteed but somewhat deferred. Small down payments may be available from time to time as conditions permit.*" The labor leadership has accepted the promissory note of the newly elected administration and like honest, understanding creditors are determined to help the debtor achieve that situation in life which will permit speedy payment; hope seems to lie only in the adjustment of the economy of the whole world to the needs of capitalism in the United States.

The labor officialdom will soon be playing a new role in which they have hardly had time to become proficient: labor diplomats selling good will for American imperialism among the workers of the world.

The so-called bipartisan foreign policy unites the Democratic and Republican Parties. What domestic policy is best suited to the needs of this mutually agreed-upon foreign policy? The answer to this question divides them. The Republican policy, despite its evasive character in the '48 campaign, can be summarized: Abandon New Dealism; it is impossible to behave both like a world emperor and a reformer.

Haggling over minor items in the imperialist expense account, the Republicans often seem like dim-witted misers; but these pinch-penny candidates for the post of administering the United States government-over-governments show that they understand how heavy the price of the tasks ahead and how strict the need for conserving resources and checking bank balances to preserve stability at home. Senator Taft

demanded that the man from Missouri show him how to continue ERP and military preparations and yet at the same time increase drastically the social services, housing, etc.; raise wages and the standard of living of the people; and in addition to all that, clamp the lid on inflation. No reply.

The Republicans came to the Senate hearings on ERP outfitted with powerful reading glasses to scrutinize the small print in the reports of the Democratic officials. Can a nickel be shaved off here, a dime there?

"Even assuming the reasonable success of whatever program we adopt," said Senator Hickenlooper of Iowa, "for a long period [nothing] will in any way relieve us from the very substantial burden of military strength . . . if we spend billions of dollars in this period of time, the next few months or the next two or three years, for goods and materials that come out of the tight American economy, my view is that it is bound to increase the inflationary pressures on this economy here . . . it is well to canvass the cost of this thing . . . with our eyes open . . . what we are getting into . . ." and more and more of the same.

### The Price We Pay

In one of his rare references to current problems not limited to artistic platitudes, Governor Dewey spoke of inflation: "The first cause is the terrific cost of the war in money and goods. . . . The second cause . . . is our peace-waging program which we have adopted to help free nations get back on their feet and to strengthen our own national defense."

Paying high prices is a patriotic duty according to Stassen, who said, "Clearly the primary causes of high prices are the world-wide shortage of goods in the wake of war, coupled with the unsound policies of the Administration after the war and the further urgent necessity of sending quantities of American goods abroad to help the peoples of other nations to regain their feet. Every time an American family or an American housewife pays a high price for food, she is paying a part of the price for America's assistance to millions of people abroad. This is a price that we should be proud to pay."

Abandonment of a policy of extensive reforms and acceptance of the inevitability—even the desirability

—of inflation (desirable because inevitable under “free enterprise”; the bourgeois formula is: high prices equals high profits equals high production equals lower prices) means the abandonment of that labor policy which is associated with reforms.

The labor policy of the old New Deal bought off the labor leadership with a series of reform-ransoms; the loyalty of the union movement to the administration was guaranteed; the stability of the labor officialdom reinforced. But a policy of withdrawal of reforms would so undermine the stability of the labor leadership that with the best will in the world it could not control its ranks. A conservative leadership might in all sincerity promise to continue conservative policies; but who can promise that they will be able to keep their promises and who can guarantee that the guarantors will remain leaders?

The Republican party would cancel the policy of controlling the union movement primarily through the union leadership; it would establish direct state control of the union and its officialdom. The Taft-Hartley Law with its anti-Communist affidavits was the clearest expression of the new line. It controlled the unions and their officers. From affidavits applicable to members of the Communist Party to general “loyalty” affidavits applicable to all genuine union militants is a short step.

### **Truman and the Democratic Party**

The 1948 elections settled only one thing: dreams are to be tested against reality. Truman promises to harmonize the clashing needs of capitalist world policy and liberal reformism. He was trapped into making this promise despite himself.

Nominated with Roosevelt in 1944 as a concession to the more conservative elements of his party, Truman, the president, tried his best to carry out a right-wing policy. But the more success crowned these efforts, the less did it smile on his chances of re-election. He reacted to the outraged cries of the capitalist class in the first two strike waves that plagued his administration. He unearthed statutes to justify injunctions and fines against the United Mine Workers. He dusted off moldy law books to discover the right to draft all railroad strikers; and to the almost unanimous applause of its members, dramatically interrupted his address to Congress to announce his success in breaking the rail stoppage. He could not quite decide whether to sign or to veto the Taft-Hartley Law, and when he finally acted he put himself on record for a more “reasonable” law restricting labor. Under pressure from the meat packers, he abolished meat price control and soon found himself signing away price control completely.

All was in order except one thing: the Democratic Party and the president-by-act-of-God were totally superfluous for such a policy. The Republican Party could serve just as well and had the advantage of prior copyright. While the continuation of this policy

did not necessarily mean that Truman would have to re-enter the haberdashery business, it did mean that he would have to move out of the White House.

The labor leadership became more and more uneasy. Murray denounced Truman in extreme terms. Whitney of the Railway Trainmen pledged himself solemnly to raise millions to ensure Truman's defeat in 1948. Rumors, suggestions, threats that the official labor movement would embark upon some new political path were heard. Even—lord forbid—maybe a labor party! Wallace walked out to form his third party threatening to wean away millions of Democratic voters by a very radical platform of renewed New Dealism. Inside the Democratic Party the stop-Truman movement began.

### **Strategy and Its Result**

The CIO officials and their intellectual camp followers of the Americans for Democratic Action spearheaded the drive to nominate some other Democrat in '48. Eisenhower, Douglas... better the unknown evil than the known. Mayor O'Dwyer of New York City joined the anti-Truman bandwagon. This archetypical product of the Northern political machine whose political power has more and more come to depend upon votes of the organized workers had previously proclaimed a “Taft-Hartley Veto Day” in his own home town to hold the votes of unionists for his local party.

Things looked bad for Truman. But the trend was reversed by his shift to the left made necessary by a most realistic and vulgar estimation of his chances of holding power through any other course. Predictions about the speedy disintegration of the Democratic Party and the rapid emergence of some new political formation proved to be premature and based upon a failure to estimate the full effects of the turn in Democratic Party policy.

The most significant aspect of Truman's election and the victory of his party was not the fact that the victory took place but the switch in policies which made it possible. The turn began toward the end of 1947 with Truman's report to Congress in which he outlined in vague terms a program for a continued New Deal. He continued with the enunciation of a civil-rights program which drove the Dixiecrats out of the party and conducted his election campaign with vigorous attacks on “Wall Street” and denunciations of the Taft-Hartley Law as its instrument.

The new strategy was not adopted simply as a desperate measure to make an election victory possible but also to ensure the retention of party strength in the event of defeat, looking toward a possible comeback. A defeated Democratic Party was to emerge from the election as the party of the New Deal, carrying on opposition to the Republican administration as the true representative of the “people” and as a fighter for liberal principles. Now, however, the would-be New Dealers must assume responsibility for

the execution of their fine promises, since they command control of all departments of government.

### **Plucking the Fruits of Imperialism**

Can imperialism today be reconciled with a policy of liberalism and reform at home?

The sweeping victory of the Democratic Party in the elections made possible by Truman's swing to the left tests this proposition again. Prosperity and stability in the U. S., upon which a new New Deal would depend, is not a simple domestic affair but a problem of the complicated connections of the United States with world economy. In the minds of the liberal Democrats, imperialism, far from contradicting their liberalism, is inseparably associated with it. Let us see how this works out.

Early 1946: President Truman transmits a report to Congress on foreign loans and the Bretton Woods agreement, a report which is signed by James M. Byrnes, Marriner S. Eccles and—none other than Henry A. Wallace, who at this time held a common view with them. These days of bright optimism have vanished, days when the thoroughgoing nature of the rift with Russia was still unclear. Nevertheless, this report still floodlights the liberal capitalist mentality. And here are its main aspects:

(1) America must have large foreign markets.

"During the war many of our important industries, particularly in the field of capital goods, were built up to capacities far in excess of any foreseeable peacetime domestic demands. With the elimination of war demands, much of this American productive capacity may be unused."

The foreign-loan program of the United States "is directed toward the creation of an international economic environment permitting a large volume of trade among all nations. This program is predicated on the view that a productive and peaceful world must be free from warring economic blocs and from barriers which obstruct the free flow of international trade and productive capital. Only by the re-establishment of high levels of production and trade the world over can the United States be assured in future years of a sustained level of exports appropriate to the maintenance of high levels of domestic production and employment."

(2) But the nations of the world do not have the price—they must have dollars to purchase American goods. The United States has an enormous favorable balance of trade with the rest of the world. (In 1947, for example, the U. S. exported fifteen billion dollars' worth of good and imported only six billion.)

The report tells us that dollars must be supplied to the world by loans and by the investment of capital abroad by the American capitalist class. "In a world of peace, prosperity and a liberal trade policy, there may well be a revival and continuation of American

private investment on a large scale including reinvestment of the profits of industry. . . . Such an increase of investment is a natural and wholesome development for a wealthy community."

(3) These loans, however, will have to be repaid, with interest of course.

(Drastic steps soon had to be taken to meet the threat of Russian expansion. The Marshall Plan, devised later, involves *grants*, not *loans*, to European nations to help seal them off from Russian influence. As a weapon of the "cold" war with Russia, the Marshall Plan differs from the scheme devised in this report which presents a long-term conception based upon the exploitation of a normal, peaceful world; that is, one in which the United States has no serious rival. Grants made under the Marshall Plan make no formal provisions for payment of interest either in money or in any other way. As Paul Hoffman, Economic Cooperation Administrator, has said: "The power of the purse is more effective if it is not formalized.")

We will keep investing and lending. These loans and investments will earn profits which must be paid by the nation blessed with the indebtedness. So long as the total of new loans and investments exceeds the amount which the foreign nations will have to pay to us in the form of (a) payments of interest and principal on the old debts, plus (b) dividends paid on the capital invested by our bourgeoisie abroad, plus (c) payments to cover their excess imports from the United States—so long as this is the case, the affair will run smoothly for the U. S. We will enjoy prosperity. They will enjoy loans and investments and the right to pay for the same.

### **Day of Reckoning**

(4) But the day of reckoning will come. At some point in this scheme the nations of the world will have to pay us such enormous amounts to cover the principal and interest on loans and profits of American-owned industry that new investments will fail to keep pace. "Receipts on foreign investment will exceed new investment," predicts the report. "Net repayment" will begin.

(5) Happy thought: the United States will then be able to live off the rest of the world.

When net repayment begins, whether this be a few years or many decades from now, it will involve an excess of imports of goods and services . . . over our total exports of goods and services. The growth of our population and the depletion of our natural resources and the increase in our standard of living will increase the need for imported products and these developments together with the maintenance of a high and stable level of employment will facilitate this adjustment. . . . The receipt of payments on our foreign loans in the form of goods and services is entirely consistent with increased exports from this country and rising production at home and will contribute to a rising living standard in the United States in the same way that a private individual's earnings on his

investments make possible an increase in his own living standards.

This is the "One World" of imperialism. American capitalism is to buy up the world to provide for its old age. Such is the "liberal" perspective for world development and the inseparable connection which it establishes between foreign policy and reform politics.

Leaving aside the question of whether this perspective is possible under any circumstances, we must write across the report in heavy lines: "Net payment deferred." Unfortunately for this Utopian landlord's dream of world rent collections, other dreamers dreamed dreams.

The pacific execution of this plan depended upon an agreement with Russia, which by "agreement" was to take its place as a lesser partner assigned to a slow and steady reduction by the might of the American dollar. If we could buy out the rest of the world, why not Russia? The Russian ruling class, however, saw no reason to shape the world to the needs of the American bourgeoisie when it could just as well be subordinated to the needs of the Moscow bureaucracy. The Stalinists took control of half of Europe, wrested its industry out of the American world and attached it to Russian economy. Showing no sign of altering its policy, Russia was transformed from a "glorious ally," fighting in its own peculiar way for the freedom of the earth, into a horrible dictatorship bringing tyranny and its own trade agreements to whole countries.

The fruit of imperialism doesn't fall into our lap. When we shake the tree we dislodge a wild bear. And so, instead of enjoying the fruit we must arm ourselves and hire assistants to kill the bear. Thus ended Experiment No. 1 in post-war New Dealism.

#### **For Imperialism—at a Lower Price**

The Republican spokesmen understand in their own way that in the long run imperialism is incompatible with a liberal policy. Henry A. Wallace understands it in a somewhat different way. Instead of a turn in domestic policy he proposes a turn in foreign policy, or more accurately, a return to the illusions that accompanied the first flush of victory in war.

One of the authors of the plan for a painless conquest of the world by purchase, Wallace turned abruptly away from his co-signers when it became increasingly clear that this path led toward war. To participate comfortably in an easy exploitation of the world—that is one thing. To fight a war and to prepare for it—that is something else again.

The Wallace movement, *apart from its Stalinist aspects*, represented a peace movement of the petty bourgeoisie to enjoy the benefits of international conquest but unwilling to bear its expense. In the absence of any leadership from the labor movement, it

was the Stalinists who capitalized on the prevailing peace sentiment.

The keynote of the Wallace campaign was: war and war preparations would make a New Deal impossible. ". . . in a great arsenal of two world wars," he said in Bridgeport, "I speak for peace. . . . We cannot raise living standards and armies too. We cannot build homes and barracks too. . . . The two old parties are, after all, the same. Given a foreign policy directed against the common man all over the world, they must combine on a bipartisan domestic policy directed against the common man in the U.S.A." Instead of the singlehanded domination of the world by the United States, he proposed a condominium with Russia, to avoid war.

The costs of war and imperialism are borne not by the working class alone but by all the poorer and even the not-so-poor sections of the population. During the last war, thousands of small enterprises were swamped by the needs of war production. Whole sections of the middle class, white collar workers and professionals were even less able than the organized working class to defend themselves against inflation.

A sympathetic audience heard Wallace ask: "How can Democrats or Republicans or the labor misleaders who support them check inflation when they won't cut the arms expenditures which cause inflation?" Reform and war are irreconcilable. . . . From the standpoint not of the lower but of the highest sections of the bourgeoisie, Republican policy rests on the same ground.

#### **Labor Leadership**

The Wallaceites and the Republicans, each in their own way, comprehend the basic tendency of American imperialism. The labor officialdom, however, is bound to the Democratic administration by the common hope of reconciling the imperialist line of the United States with a continuation of liberal policies.

The leaders of the CIO hailed General Eisenhower as one of the pretenders to the throne of King Franklin. They thereby concretized the connection in their minds between the might of American arms and continued New Dealism. At the CIO convention, Supreme Court Justice Douglas stressed the importance of the international role of the American labor movement in a speech which so impressed the delegates that they decided to distribute thousands of copies of his remarks.

He said: The American workers *have* an international task to perform. The European labor movement, struggling to free itself from Stalinist domination, needs the assistance of its American section. But so far, only submission to American domination and dictation has been offered as a substitute for Stalinism. Not being American labor leaders, the European workers do not glow with enthusiasm. But let the most powerful section of the world working class, the American working class, which is itself striking



Stalinism down, speak out openly and aggressively in defense of the democratic rights of the peoples of the world and Stalinism will have received a terrible, even mortal, blow. But that means to speak out without evasion or diplomacy against *all* oppression and dictatorship, that which originates from the United States as well as that which originates from Russia.

But, sadly, what Douglas has in mind, of course, is not this but the inestimable value of the labor leadership as walking delegates for American imperialism among the skeptical European workers. And, just as sadly, he is justified in his expectations. When John L. Lewis denounced the shooting of French miners by the American-financed government we listened in vain for some sympathetic echo from the labor officialdom. Walter Reuther speaks voluminously on almost every subject of current events, on plans for prosperity, on raising wages without increasing prices; but he is an "architect of the future" whose plans leave him little time to concern himself with the rights of peoples dominated by our government, peoples whose fate will affect that future.

### "Internationalism"?

Faithful advocates of the bipartisan foreign policy, our own labor leadership parrots, with a certain delay, the phrases emanating from Washington. When the administration anticipated a long period of collaboration with Russia, the Murrays maintained a close alliance with Stalinism at home and abroad. As American diplomats exchanged friendly greetings with the Stalinist delegates at world conferences, the representatives of the CIO tipped their hats to the dictatorially appointed Russian "union" delegates at the World Federation of Trade Unions. The warm fraternity chilled when Moscow frowned on Washington. Our labor leaders awoke to their differences with Stalinism; and so the big offensive in the unions against it and the pending demise of the WFTU.

As Wallace-Truman dreamed of ensuring American prosperity by the peaceable financial conquest of the world, the CIO smiled in its slumber. One of its pamphlets issued to popularize the above-mentioned Bretton Woods agreement quotes Murray: "In addition to a domestic program for full production in the U. S. there must be a vigorous long-term program of international commerce," he said. The pamphlet continued: "Our hope for 5,000,000 jobs through foreign trade lies in the industrialization of nations and continents such as China, Africa, Latin America, India and a big expansion of industry in the Soviet Union." And to avoid any misunderstanding: "This money (loans) is invested, not spent. Countries that secure aid from both the Bank and the Fund will repay the loans. The fact that loans will be made only for productive purposes is the guarantee of that . . . [some people] fear that Bretton Woods will wipe out private banking. This is not so, since banks will continue

to make loans supervised by the Bank for Reconstruction and Development."

Soon the breezes will blow a spate of "labor" speeches on the glories of internationalism. The internationalism of the American workers, however, can consist of one kind or another: that is, the American workers can hitch their fate to the progress of American imperialism abroad or they can attach themselves to the workers and oppressed peoples of the world. These are two different kinds of "internationalism." The first is laborite imperialism; the second is genuine working-class internationalism.

In Japan, strikes broken and government workers denied the right to organize; in France, American bullets for miners; in Germany, hundreds of thousands of workers demonstrate in the Western zones for wages to meet the costs of inflation. From our own labor statesmen, the newly naturalized "citizens of the world," we hear only the mealy-mouthed diplomatic formulations of the recent CIO convention.

### Case of Greece

In the true American internationalist spirit is the wretched Clinton Golden, chief labor advisor of the American Mission for Aid to Greece 1947-8, trained for this noble mission as an official of Citizen Murray's Steel Workers union. A few choice excerpts from his report, printed in the Labor Information Bulletin of the Department of Labor, illustrate how our world travelers become the weasel apologists for semi-fascist regimes—American supported.

They [the Communists] had control for a time of the Greek Confederation of Labor but the courts had unseated the Communist executive because of election irregularities and appointed other persons as provisional appointees. Under their laws [everything strictly "legal" you see], the courts named twenty-one persons, seven each from the three major political groups: Liberals, Populists, and the left-wing Communist group. Six of the seven left-wingers decided they wouldn't serve and challenged the action of the courts as being of a fascist character. This enabled them to confuse the labor unionists of the country."

So you see, the trouble with the above "legal" action was not that it *was* fascist in character but that it helped the Communists "confuse" the workers by calling it fascist!

The Communists had tried to convey the impression and I think they were fairly successful [Stalinist propaganda—how artful!] that in Greece there was no freedom, no civil rights, no free speech or assembly. They had claimed the government was fascist and the American Mission was primarily concerned with maintaining that kind of government. . . .

An emergency session of the Greek Parliament convened because of reports of a possible Communist coup passed a law prohibiting strikes and lockouts with a death penalty. But after we had been there awhile and when the Greek government received protests from the AFL and the CIO against the anti-strike law they cooled off on that issue. Strikes have been called since and no one has been arrested or shot, and I am informed that the law will be repealed soon.

How can one call this government "fascist"? It

promises not to execute strikers, when pressed. True the law is still on the books, says Golden, but "soon..." About six months after his optimistic report on the progress of a liberalism which promises under duress not to shoot strikers, it required the intervention of a UN subcommittee to compel the Greek government to abandon preparations for the execution of ten Greek maritime unionists.

### **Just Not Interested**

Accepting the same analysis of the world role of U. S. capitalism as the bourgeoisie, our labor leaders, especially those of the CIO, have been content to leave questions of "foreign policy" in the safe hands of the official diplomats. When the administration for its own reasons was denouncing the crushing of the opposition by Stalinism in the countries of the Russian sphere of influence, they were only moderately interested.

Walter Reuther engaged in a two-year bitter factional fight with Stalinists during which every conceivable issue that served the struggle was raked to the fore by both sides. One of the largest single nationality groupings in the UAW are the Polish workers, intensely concerned with the murderous actions of the Stalinist gangsters in Poland. Reuther overlooked this question. The top leadership of the CIO has just concluded a fight against the CP concentrated on the issues of the Marshall Plan and support of Wallace, both closely related of course to international policy. We saw disciplinary measures invoked, abrupt commands issued, but we heard no political exposure of the reactionary work of Stalinism everywhere in the world against the working class.

What accounts for this indifference? Simple devotion to American foreign policy would seem to demand a different attitude. We must conclude, however simple the answer, that the "world citizens" of the CIO were just not interested. And now, if they are to busy themselves with international affairs at the invitation of a government which is sorely in need of apologists throughout the world, we must be excused for our lack of enthusiasm.

The new international role of the American labor leaders is closely associated with the whole question of the new New Deal. American capitalism can provide itself permanently with effective labor ambassadors abroad only if it can afford payment at home for services rendered. The alliance between the Democratic Party and the labor movement, which just managed to survive the strains of the last three years, is an unstable treaty resting upon momentary, vanishing factors. What made the left turn of President Truman possible?

New Dealism and war preparations, as the Republicans and Wallaceites contend, tend to be mutually exclusive. But the capitalist state acquires an adequate political line in a complicated fashion under a bourgeois democracy where all classes, above all the

working class, maintain their rights, their organizations and their ability to carry on a coordinated struggle in their own behalf. Not the best policy but the best possible policy prevails. In the intricate struggle between parties and factions, corresponding to conflicts between classes and social groupings, momentary and opportunist interests play a big part. (One virtue of fascism from the point of view of the capitalist class is that it is relieved of many of these tedious problems and can reach decisions more abruptly and more drastically.)

A minimum of social conflict at home is indispensable to meet the conflicts abroad. Elections, the testing ground of political platforms and policy, show what policies can receive the maximum popular support and therefore how far the regime may go at any moment without coming into violent clash with its own working class. Those policies which receive a minimum of popular endorsement can be held in abeyance for new times and new tests. The 1948 elections slowed down the tendencies toward the right but did not and could not eliminate them.

### **Not Another New Deal**

The United States today affords a short period of extended life for the antics of watered-down liberalism-in-words. War production is hardly begun and its inflationary effects hardly felt. The full impact of the Marshall Plan is not yet felt; the United States has not yet thrown its own resources fully into the effort. While not powerful enough to buy off the working class of the whole world, industrial United States is rich enough to provide its ruling class with rising profits and still, for the moment, tolerate meager concessions to its own working class.

The most authentic representatives of big capital have been willing to forgo a show-down battle with organized labor; in the strike movement of 1948 we saw General Motors, Ford and Chrysler after a brief moment of hesitation reach amicable wage settlements which set a "pattern" of peaceful agreements for the decisive sections of industry.

To continue this pattern, acceptable (or at least tolerable) to the capitalist class, it is possible to modify the most extreme provisions of the Taft-Hartley Law. This temporary objective situation made the Truman turn not only a policy which could assure a Democratic victory in the elections but one which was within the limits of what was immediately acceptable, even if not most desirable, to industry. Possible and acceptable—but not for very long.

Truman represents not another New Deal but a temporary dabbling in liberal trivialities, especially in words. The irreducible need of the new administration is to prepare for war. It has therefore no intention of freeing the union movement from government controls. It intends to replace the hated T-H Law with a more "reasonable" measure of control which will insulate the economy from the electric shock of



mass strikes. In this one instance, the whole new New Deal is exposed. The government does not have full confidence in the union movement and its leadership because it has no confidence in its own ability to pacify them with reforms.

There is a certain justification for this lack of confidence. The Democratic Party, the labor leadership, and the rank and file of the unions all approach the putative new New Deal in a different fashion. Capitalist politicians may modify their attitude toward reforms, offering or withdrawing them as suits the basic needs of the system and class whose wealth oils their political machines and personal careers. Election defeats are no tragedy. When the great liberal, New Deal Senator Brown of Michigan, was defeated by the Republican Ferguson, he soon found employment as head of the Detroit Edison Company. A brief synopsis of his biography is the biography of all liberal democrats: he was liberal—but not too liberal.

### "Reasonable" Labor Control

For the labor officialdom, this is a life-and-death question: almost (if the word does not seem out of place in this connection) a matter of "principle." Periods of reform mean stability for the leadership; periods of reaction undermine this stability. Fresh in the mind of every porkchopper is the nightmare experience of World War II. The conservative leadership summarized its loyalty to the war in the no-strike pledge just as today it hopes to pledge its loyalty to the Marshall Plan by accepting "reasonable" measures of labor control.

But while the war made it difficult to make gains for the workers it did not prevent the capitalist class from striking blows at the unions. Rank-and-file movements developed within the unions against the leadership under the slogan "Rescind the No-Strike Pledge." In at least three important CIO unions, the leadership faced serious opposition: John Green in the Shipbuilders Union saw his regime threatened; Sherwin Dalrymple in the Rubber Workers Union saved his administration only by resigning in favor of L. S. Buckmaster, who in turn held on to the presidency at the last convention of his union by a few votes; R. J. Thomas and George Addes in the Auto Workers Union were utterly and finally defeated by Walter Reuther, who knew how to take advantage of the dis-

content that had accumulated during the war years.

The end of the war brought relief to the sorely pressed leadership, but it had hardly exhaled a collective sigh of relaxation following the celebration over the election of Roosevelt for a fourth term than the rightward swing of the new Truman administration and the Republican victory of 1946 shocked them into new moods of anxiety. The 1948 elections permit them another short respite to chase rainbows. At last they can begin to usher in the brave new world which they have spoken of for so many years and prayed for so often in vain. Are the new hopes any more likely of fulfillment than the old?

During World War II, various maps and atlases were sold with the promises by the publishers that, upon conclusion of the war and the peace settlements that would follow, new and more up-to-date editions would be forthcoming gratis or at some nominal fee. As the trusting purchaser of one of these atlases, I still await redemption of this promise some years after the hostilities have ended. But one can bear no grudge: with the best will in the world the publishers cannot achieve the impossible. If the simple promise to deliver a new map of the world cannot be redeemed, how much faith can one put in the pledges of the statesmen and politicians to deliver not a map but the new world itself—a liberal, progressive world—at least for the American people?

The difficulty is that while the New Deal is to come as the promised fruit of victory in warfare, the preparations for war and, of course, the war itself yield only the fruits of reaction. That is why we can have no confidence in the Truman regime. The labor holder of the promissory note of the new administration will be faced not with a future of slow and steady payment but of more and increasingly insistent demands for more credit.

BEN HALL

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# The RDR—An Interpretation

## A View of France's New Socialist Movement

Without finding it necessary to express our opinion on all the points raised in the two articles which follow, the Editorial Board wishes to make clear its disagreement with the approach and views of Jacques, —that is, his completely negative attitude toward the RDR—and its agreement with Comrade Judd that the RDR “merits the friendliest and most welcoming response from American socialists.” The reply by Judd was written at our request. We are also making plans for further discussion of this important new socialist movement in France in subsequent issues.—THE EDITORS.

Every new current of thought in the present period is scanned eagerly for the possible light it may throw on coming events. Particularly is this true in those countries which show every sign of social instability since the end of the war. The sudden prominence of the RDR (Rally of Revolutionary Democrats), involving some of the foremost French intellectuals, deserves more than passing analysis for the significance it may have as a portent.

The leaders of this movement have held some surprisingly well-attended meetings in Paris, notably one in the Salle Pleyel reported at length in their press, *La Gauche*, of December 20, 1948. Here we find the speeches of leftist writers from a number of countries: Jean-Paul Sartre, David Rousset, Breton of France; Theodor Plivier of Germany; Carlo Levi of Italy; Richard Wright of the United States. All these writers have certain traits in common, revealed clearly in their speeches.

They voice, all of them without exception, a deep mistrust of political parties, not excluding vanguard workers' parties. This is the fruit of complete disillusion with the aftermath of the October Revolution, to which most of these intellectuals felt drawn. Anti-Stalinism, the antipathy to the totalitarian regime in Russia based on the police power of the GPU and its concentration camps, has driven them to turn their backs on all politics.

### Against Party Affiliations

Yet they know well the hollow fraud of bourgeois democracy and so, unlike many American writers, they do not yield before the pressure of the Western democracies and place no reliance on the democratic imperialists to overcome Stalinism. They speak openly for a revolutionary change in the economic bases of capitalist society. Since, however, this grouping concludes from experience that there must be an inevitable bureaucratization of state power under the

control of a political party, their main concern and their *raison d'être*, as a movement, is to defend liberty and democracy.

André Breton tells us how he and Albert Camus vowed, after the French liberation, never to affiliate to any political party. Georges Altman, whose break with the Stalinists on the *Franc Tireur* was an important occurrence, calls for an Internationalism of the Spirit to bring about the total emancipation of man, to combat all dictators and dictatorships, to fight all police states. Rousset, former Trotskyist, tells briefly of his experiences in Spain where he saw an entire people rise up “outside of the rigidity of parties” to overcome oppression. As soon as the parties stepped in, the inevitable bureaucratization was followed shortly by reaction.

It is Sartre who expresses best of all the spirit of the RDR. An article of his in the left socialist press, *La Pensée Socialiste*, sums up his “platform.”

He wishes to unite the immediate demands of the workers with larger revolutionary aims and above all with the idea of liberty. A political party cannot do this, since it must be a centralized organization with a top apparatus which can only issue commands. Only the people themselves can really take care of the needs of democracy from day to day. The masses must organize as both producers and consumers in local committees, village committees, shop committees. It is necessary that the toilers take power “one day,” but if we do not want them to be replaced immediately in power by a bureaucracy which pretends to represent them, then it is necessary to realize, outside of parties, in an extra-parliamentary domain, the bases of the democracy of the masses, something never before attempted.

### Sartre's Semi-Syndicalism

Sartre proposes his movement for the purpose of realizing this in practice, as an experience, somewhat along the lines of the unions. “C'était dans le syndicat que l'on pouvait le mieux être un homme.” (It was in the unions that one could best be a man!)

If this is not the orator's phrase used to flatter the organized workers, it shows a singular illusion concerning the unions. The all too recent miners' strike, in which the miners were forced to sacrifice their own interests for those of the Stalinist hierarchy, causes Sartre to hark back to the past. But his nostalgia for the period of syndicalist control is hardly in keeping with the facts. One has to be incredibly naive to speak against bureaucracy and then to praise the unions in the same breath.

It would be easy to sweep aside the views of these

intellectuals as ineffectual abstractions which fail to deal with concrete reality. Democracy is treated not as a method for attaining certain worthwhile goals but as an end in itself, as a "way of life." The class struggle becomes emptied of content in the hands of these non-Marxists.

Sartre thinks he has found a new solution in the form of a watered-down syndicalism. In their day the really revolutionary syndicalists had no doubt that their minority vanguard would finally succeed in leading the workers to power in the factories, mines and mills, the state being left to wither away. These were not timid syndicalists who rejected the very thought of taking power because it must lead to corruption and would thus besmirch them spiritually.

Sartre wishes a division of labor that is utterly utopian. He takes it for granted that only a vanguard party can lead the workers and peasants to victory in the taking of power, but he cannot see that such a party must be molded from within by an alert and conscious membership and leadership that knows how to preserve democracy. Sartre sees the need for a mass force outside the party or parties which must preserve democracy and liberty despite the party leaders. This task he assigns to the new movement, the RDR, which he denies is a political movement since it has no desire to take power. To foster this aim, Sartre seeks the help of organizations, even parties, as well as individuals.

### **Politics All-Important**

The attempt at this late day, after the October and post-October experiences, to organize the masses outside of political parties so as to exert some measure of control over the state, can be looked upon only as a variety of neo-syndicalism. It shows a singular lack of insight into the history of this petty-bourgeois movement. The syndicalists, on every critical occasion, have invariably been forced to discard their previous tenets. They have split into two groups, one entering the ranks of the proletarian vanguard, the other allying itself with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Syndicalism is the historic expression of the inability of the petty bourgeoisie to make up its mind in the class struggle until forced to do so by events.

The RDR betrays this same trait. It stops before a major decision unable to solve its problems. France is today extremely unstable, ruled by a government which stands between the main contending forces in society, representing neither one. The all-important question is the political one and no other: which class shall rule the state, for whose benefit shall it be used? The intellectuals of the RDR will stand aside from this question in vain. They wish to shun the political path because they refuse to see that political parties are like other human institutions which can and do outgrow their usefulness and sink into decay. What is

necessary when a party of the working class degenerates is not to turn one's back on politics, but to build a new party imbued with fresh revolutionary spirit.

Sartre remarks: "We cannot do great things, except to denounce oppression every time under whatever its forms." It is necessary, he adds, to conduct this common struggle together. We will not enter into any Socratic dialogue with Sartre concerning how decisions are to be taken for the "struggle" in an organization such as the RDR. One may go all-out for discussion for democracy, yet it must be said that never have decisions been taken, in a loose organization such as the RDR, except at the top among the intellectual leaders.

What Sartre and the others say they intend is to create an "atmosphere," one in which liberty and democracy will thrive. We are more interested in the realities underlying this social phenomenon. The movement is itself not born in a vacuum but in a certain social atmosphere already existing. Why does it come into being precisely now? Intellectuals are frequently the first harbingers of a distinct change of sentiment in the environment. The RDR is both the product and the vocal expression of such a change. It seeks and has found a responsive chord.

### **What RDR Reflects**

The sudden growth of the RDR reveals that Stalinism has passed its apogee in France and is now in decline. The masses extended a considerable credit to the Stalinist party after the liberation for several reasons.

There was the success of Russia in the war which helped bring French liberation. There was the role of Stalinism in the resistance movement, a good part of which was a self-created myth fostered by the typical propaganda of the Communist Party. Finally there was no other working-class force in being to which the masses could turn for leadership, so that the Stalinists filled a virtual vacuum. It is the cynical treachery of the Communist Party that has brought about a positive working-class reaction against it. Disgust has mounted against a party whose high-handed methods so clearly sacrificed the interests of the proletariat for those of the remote Kremlin. The callousness with which the mines were destroyed with not the faintest regard for the livelihood of the miners, the assault on French economy with no visible benefit for the French masses — that has brought a change in the atmosphere. The Stalinists are forced to recognize the new mood and to try a new tack.

The RDR is also an expression of alarm over the menace of fascism in the deliberately toned-down De Gaulle movement of the Rally of the French People (RPF). De Gaulle pretends that his Rally is not a political party, that it is above political parties. The leftist writers have imitated De Gaulle in this mysticism, perhaps hoping to divert to the left the growing

sentiment of mistrust of the present political parties and away from the De Gaulle form of fascism. This is an error for which so many paid in the past. The masses can defeat fascism only on the road of proletarian revolution.

The RDR reflects accurately the rejection by French workers of the sharp posing of but two alternatives before them — either Western capitalism or Eastern Stalinism. Not only does neither of these alternatives embody their real needs and hopes, but they are profoundly anti-war and they see nothing but war in this dichotomy. The French masses have lost sympathy with Russian Stalinism as its totalitarianism and brutality have been increasingly revealed to them. But that has not meant any growth of sympathy for American imperialism with its Marshall Plan aid meant to stave off not only Stalinist penetration but the authentic proletarian revolution as well.

The mistake, made by socialists and by the RDR as well, is in thinking that use could be made of the present mood to build a "third force," opposed to both axes, east and west. The very term "third force" makes no appeal to workers, especially to the advanced layer. That section feels the need for a powerful movement of its own which shall become the first force, not the third. Many workers turned to Stalinism because they felt it represented a great power which could be used to further their aims. They have turned away from it when experience taught them that this power was being exerted in utter indifference to their interests.

### Prospects for the Movement

It is the natural fate of all half-way, indefinite movements without any real historic program to decline rapidly. The RDR is a phenomenon that cannot live in its present form for very long. There is a distinct feeling that already it has begun to suffer a relapse. An "atmosphere" devoid of all tangible organization cannot maintain itself in being. The RDR cannot build the type of committees of which Sartre speaks. These would approximate soviets and could appear only in the throes of a revolutionary situation in which power would be immediately at stake. Nor can the RDR build anything in the nature of a syndicalist movement. That too requires organizing abilities beyond those of the present leaders of this intellectual movement.

What then? The Sartre movement is the contradiction that epitomizes France today. It reveals with the clarity of an etching the unmistakable feeling of the masses that they need a new revolutionary party to defeat fascism and to usher in socialism. The "atmosphere" is there but the party fails to spring up and flourish for lack of leadership.

Had such leadership been already in existence, there can be little doubt that these French intellectuals

would have found politics not so hopeless and they might well have moved forward from the untenable position they now occupy. Sartre and his fellow writers modestly recognize that they are not after all Lenins and Trotskys. They can participate in the intellectual struggle and help to reveal and to create an atmosphere; but far, far more than that is necessary. When Breton, in his speech in the Salle Pleyel, mentioned Trotsky's name in connection with the Manifesto to the Intellectuals which Breton and Diego Rivera signed with Trotsky in 1938, there was immediate spontaneous applause. That was no accident. Breton mentioned it precisely because he knew where the sympathies of the audience lay. Of course he mentions a Manifesto which he did absolutely nothing to further after he signed it. But the incident is symbolic in that the need for such a man as Trotsky is felt, to act as the polarizing force to really rally the masses.

### How It Harms Socialism

It is possible that a section of the RDR may crystallize out to form one nucleus for the formation of a real mass vanguard party. There is no sign of this at the moment and it becomes therefore increasingly less probable. Insofar as the RDR tends to create syndicalist moods among workers — that is, tends to turn away from politics and the building of a strong party of their own — it does harm to the movement. Its movement forward depends on forces other than itself, with far greater understanding of social motion.

But its complete disappearance would mean that a time and a mood has been allowed to pass when the active vanguard could have been gathered into a revolutionary grouping. The time tests the leaders! This is the sense in which the total frustration of a movement which in and of itself could only prove abortive, would nevertheless represent a working-class defeat, since the possibilities were present for the building of a vanguard movement which yet failed to be achieved.

JACQUES

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# The Real RDR—A Reply

## *Its Political Views and Role in France*

It is approximately one year since the *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire* (Revolutionary Democratic Assembly, or Grouping) was founded in France. To have been founded in the first place and then to have grown within the space of one year to its present size and significance, certain unique circumstances must necessarily have existed. These were found in the France of 1948. They may be summarized in the following terms:

A polarization, both political and ideological, took place rapidly in France after the end of the war. This polarization occurred at both the proletarian and bourgeois extremes of French society, and naturally tended to draw the numerous middle-class layers of France (peasantry, urban professionals and shopkeepers, etc.) to one or the other side. In the general milieu of the Left, the French Stalinist party naturally dominated. The tendency was toward the freezing fast of all political programs and doctrines. Ideology, in working-class and progressive circles, became compartmentalized, narrow and hard. In view of the fact that Stalinism was everywhere supreme in the field, that the Socialist Party had sunk back into a more than ever hopeless version of its pre-war reformism (after a short Resistance period of new life), and that French official Trotskyism had proved its bankruptcy to all who cared to examine it, the political outlook in France was gloomy indeed. One real movement existed—Stalinism; the rest was confusion and despair.

### **RDR's Major Role**

It is here that the RDR enters into the picture, and if this is not understood then the RDR's great contribution and function can never be grasped. It broke up the icefields of Stalinist ideology and set the flux of French left-wing political life in motion once again. If it had accomplished no other purpose, its foundation would have more than outweighed its faults.

One of the RDR's creators, David Rousset, has explained its historic function in these terms:

We are thus faced by a vast social zone extending from the moderate wing of the middle classes to working-class groups, either hostile to the Communist Party or disturbed and hesitant with respect to its policies. Hundreds of thousands of men and women retire from public life. It is the most important social phenomenon in France today. It ruins any possibilities for the traditional democratic play of forces. Politics is in abeyance. If it persists and becomes aggravated, it will call forth a totalitarian solution. It indicates, finally, a dangerous sclerosis in French society. Our Assembly, however, tends precisely to fill up this emptiness, to lead back to public life those masses who were drawing away from it. This is what I mean

by again giving a popular basis to democracy. ["Discussion on Politics," *Les Temps Modernes*, September 1948, p. 390.]

Or again, in an article published in *Le Semeur*, organ of the French Federation of Christian Student Organizations, Rousset explains the origin of the RDR as follows:

It is a framework for political action adapted to today's conditions, but due to the general decomposition of social forces throughout France and Europe it is premature, so it seems to me, to pose the problem of a new party demanding an ideological homogeneity that no one can achieve at this moment. What is important is the assembling, on a broad front from an ideological viewpoint but more precise so far as immediate program of action is concerned, of the very great number of Frenchmen who are tired of all that has happened these past years. Because the immediate danger, internally, is some authoritarian solution and . . . externally, involvement in war. To prevent that, large masses, capable of expressing themselves, must be rapidly mobilized . . . so that the existing relationship of forces may be modified.

Within the context of the RDR's *actuel* and living struggle against war and Gaullist reaction, of course, it is believed that the vital clarification of political and ideological problems will take place.

### **New, Progressive Alternative**

Now, this is not the place to examine in any detail whether the RDR, in one brief year, has lived up to all its hopes and expectations. Furthermore, its leaders and spokesmen are best qualified to handle this question. We should only like to point out that the RDR has grown significantly and stabilized its organizational framework considerably. In view of the prevalent political apathy—the very condition of the RDR's creation!—the fact that the RDR has definitely entered into the stream of conscious French political life is noteworthy in and of itself. Particularly in left-wing circles, the RDR, together with its press and publications, has become a major factor.

Above all, it has become a center of attraction for those turning away from the SFIO (Socialist Party) and the Stalinist movement, yet desiring to remain in active political life. At the precise moment when alternatives of withdrawal or a deepening ideological decay in either the Stalinist or reformist political organizations seemed to exist as devil's choices, the RDR emerged and presented a new, progressive alternative. Again, only in this way can it be understood and welcomed.

It is clear that Jacques, author of the preceding article, hardly shares this view. We shall attempt to indicate how his analysis of the RDR is based upon

little else than his own sadly lacking information, to begin with, and on an approach which in advance prevents him from attaining the slightest understanding of what this new movement is all about and why it merits the friendliest and most welcoming response from American socialists.

The essence of Jacques' charges against the RDR seems to be as follows: This new movement, particularly in the presence of its intellectual leadership, represents a turning away from political life and activity, a revulsion against party life and action, and a withdrawal in the direction of an idealized and spontaneous "syndicalist" philosophy and practice. The socialist and revolutionary cause in France has been positively harmed by the formation of the RDR since it encourages these "syndicalist" moods and prevents the building of a vanguard revolutionary party. The RDR is thus not merely a failure, a "total frustration," but a reactionary tendency in French political life, although Jacques does not specifically state this obvious conclusion.

It is possible to answer Jacques in many and alternative ways. On one level, many of his remarks reveal an ignorance of the bare facts about the RDR, even to an inaccurate translation of its name.<sup>1</sup>

### "Anti-Politics" Charge False

The RDR is headed by a group of intellectuals who, because of their anti-Stalinism, their antipathy to the totalitarian regime in Russia, etc., have decided to "turn their backs on all politics." So says Jacques. Is this not absurd?

What is the RDR's program, if not "political"? What are its activities (its press, meetings, branches, organization, etc.) if not "political"? Finally—and perhaps this will convince even Jacques of its "political" character—the RDR's National Executive Committee, meeting January 30 and 31, decided to present RDR electoral lists in the coming cantonal elections in March, as well as to prepare for a national convention of the RDR in October of this year (*La Batalla*, February 7, 1949).

What Jacques means, of course, by his "anti-politics" charge is that the RDR does not fit into his conception of a revolutionary vanguard party. That the RDR is not a revolutionary Marxist vanguard party is . . . true. Did it or any of its leaders ever claim that it was? Or is it Jacques' real point that it should have become one, from the day of its foundation?

We have tried to indicate the origin of the RDR

1. We cite this not out of petty polemical spite, but because it is so revealing of his misunderstanding of the RDR's nature. It is not a "Rally of Revolutionary Democrats," as Jacques states, but a political assembly calling people together on a democratic and revolutionary program which was clearly specified in its very first manifesto (i. e., against war, against Europe's division into pro-Russian and pro-American blocs, for the socialist reorganization of French life, etc.). Jacques' title makes the RDR out to be some kind of neo-Jacobin movement or, worse still, nothing at all. It is one thing to attack and criticize the RDR for its program, its practice and its claims; but it is another thing to deny, in effect, that it has any shape or form or program.

and we challenge anyone to conceive how the French crisis of one year ago could have given birth to a "vanguard party." The need was not another artificial attempt to call forth a "vanguard party"—had not the French Trotskyists been blowing upon this futile theme for a minimum of fifteen years without the slightest success?—but the creation of such a broad grouping as could eventually, after a long period of practice and experience, produce precisely such a party.

Rousset has explained this clearly enough:

We must, however, find these answers [to political questions], and we can succeed in this only by maintaining a living contact with daily social development. It is only through our being in and practising a common struggle that the necessary theoretical solutions will be found. It is this that explains, on the one hand, why we are not ready to found a party and, on the other hand, why we are founding an assembly. This assembly itself expresses our agreement on more limited, more immediate objectives, which correspond more directly to the present situation. . . . It thus allows for a regroupment of new or former militants—that is, it creates a *milieu* for work. It therefore responds to immediate and necessary tasks; the principal one for us being the need to give a popular base to democracy, and it permits the creation of conditions indispensable for effective theoretical research. In simpler terms, by first regrouping the great mass of those who desire a transformation in their means of existence, it opens the way for the formation of a new political vanguard. This is why, without any hesitation or any demagogic intent, we are not a party but an assembly. [*Ibid.*, p. 387.]

But it is not the RDR's only sin that it refuses to be what it never could be in the circumstances. The leaders of this movement, according to Jacques—all of them, without exception—distrust political parties as well as politics in general. It is Sartre who even denies that the RDR is a "political movement" (we are not given the source of this denial) and therefore becomes, in Jacques' eyes, the one "who best expresses of all the spirit of the RDR." At one point, it is even referred to as "Sartre's movement."

### Wild Errors

The errors and misrepresentations here run wild. To begin with, distrust of the existing political parties in France was the beginning of wisdom and a *sine qua non* for any kind of progressive reorientation. That certain individual intellectuals, reacting in a familiar manner, have extended this skepticism on their part into a paralyzing generality is beside the point. Jacques claims this is characteristic of *all* the RDR's leaders, and does not hesitate to give a rather dishonest example in proof. After quoting a speech of Rousset in which the speaker cites the fact that the Spanish masses rose, at the start of the civil war, without being tied to rigid political parties (a statement of fact!), Jacques continues: "As soon as the parties stepped in, the inevitable bureaucratization was followed shortly by reaction." Is it not clearly intended to give the reader the impression that *this* is the subsequent content and thought of Rousset's re-



marks? This unfortunate impression could not be further from the truth, as any reader who examines Rousset's speech (*La Gauche*, December 28, 1948) can easily ascertain.

The same kind of false impression is left with regard to Sartre. Whatever criticisms can be made of him, from the standpoint of Marxist politics and philosophy, the most stupid one is to accuse him of an anti-political bias! If only American intellectuals would function with the same political consciousness and activity as Sartre! His whole work is permeated by political thought and action and, in fact, the only possible basis on which one could make an adequate and objective study of the man and his doctrine is clearly through a political and social analysis of his work.

This holds particularly true for his important play *Mains Sales* (Paris version, not the New York distortion) which contains his interpretation of the relationship in political life between ends and means—an interpretation which, in our opinion, is strongly open to criticism and must be rejected. But Sartre's philosophy and doctrine, having as it does many elements in common with the best of Marxist teachings, must be approached not only squarely but fairly. Jacques' remarks are simply false.

### How Sartre Puts It

It may well be, for example, that Jacques confuses the French word *syndicalisme* (meaning trade-unionism) with our term syndicalism (IWW, etc.), but there is nothing in Sartre's writings to indicate the latter trend. Actually, he has virtually nothing to say about labor unions and workers' organizations, beyond perfectly acceptable comments and generalities about democracy and the need for the French labor movement's rank and file to find a means of expressing its will on issues of Stalinist-called political strikes, etc. In France, as a moment's reflection will indicate, the struggle for trade-union democracy is vitally different from that in America. There it is bound up in the closest conceivable fashion with political problems.

Let us see what Sartre himself understands by the role of this RDR which he helped to create. We quote again from his discussion with Rousset (*ibid.*, p. 339) :

Inasmuch as we are not only—we do not want only to be—the expression of a class, but that, placed as we are on the line of demarcation between the middle class and the working class, we seek rather to bring about a reunion of these two classes which, on many levels, have the same interests. That implies different ideological elements facing each other. That implies that we will be in the presence of people impregnated with Marxist culture and others with different points of departure—particularly for the intellectuals with their standpoints stemming from bourgeois philosophical thought which is, in its best aspects, a democratic philosophy.

What is of importance for us is that the functioning of our Assembly's internal democracy leads to the constitution of—I will not say an ideology—but a powerful ideological current held in common between these different elements. And this wish is not utopian, because all those united in our Assembly

have certain essential ideas in common, be they Marxist or be they not.

And whether we share Sartre's viewpoint that an ultimate common ideology can be created between these diverse currents or not, the whole point of the matter is that Marxism and revolutionary socialism in France can gain nothing but credit and benefit by participating in this effort! This is one road to the creation of the essential revolutionary party. This is why one finds in the RDR today such tendencies as pacifism, World Federation (the Garry Davis movement), intellectual socialists of all shades and varieties, Christian Socialist youth and students, revolutionary socialist youth elements (*Action Socialiste Révolutionnaire*, etc.), and the group of French Trotskyists who had enough courage and understanding to break with their hopeless past ties.

### Did RDR Block New Party?

The masses of France, pursues Jacques, were ready for a new party but the leadership to create such a party was lacking. The RDR stepped in and instead of progress we had a "relapse." For one who quotes Trotsky at such length and with such approval, this reveals a deep ignorance of a major tenet in Trotsky's teaching: the relationship between class and party. Is there the slightest truth in his statement that, one year ago, the French masses were set for a new revolutionary party, with all its consequences, but the RDR blocked them? How could a handful of "anti-political intellectuals" accomplish such a task?

The truth is that, suffering from defeat in the famous general strike of winter 1947, plus a deepening disillusionment with Stalinism, a mood of pessimism and apathy had set in. This is common knowledge. A revolutionary party cannot be created out of nothing, and that was the situation in France—at least until Jacques proves that the facts were contrariwise. No RDR could have been born and survived a month if the over-all tendency had been in the other direction.

Sufficient has been said, we believe, to suggest some important fallacies in Jacques' approach to the problem of the RDR. He has criticized it for not being what it never could be; for being something that it is not; for aiming at some mythical goal it cannot attain; and for not aiming at some goal (acceptable to Jacques) which it never could have attained. His criticism is doubly faulty and valueless since it blocks our seeing the *real* problem of the RDR, its *real* faults and weaknesses.

The destiny of the RDR is clearly a highly undecided matter. Whatever our opinion as Marxists may be, nothing could be worse than the laying down of a doctrinaire formula which would exclude, in advance, the possibility of revolutionary socialists working in such a movement, in the most open, friendly and ob-

(Continued on page 62)

# What Is Chinese Stalinism?

## *Notes on the Nature of the New State Party*

Throughout Asia the post-war period has been one of vast social upheaval. What happened in Europe after the First World War is now happening in Asia after the second.

Without the organizing technology of modern society which links together great areas and peoples and without extensive industry which creates a more homogeneous and substantial working class, Asia's revolutions have taken varied forms.

In no case have these changes been organized by a socialist revolutionary party basing itself on the workers. Leadership has fallen to national bourgeois classes, social-democrats (Burma) or to mixed elements of the bourgeoisie and nationalist landlords. Though in most instances these elements have sought and obtained mass support from the peasantry and the working class, the leadership has never passed to these latter. Thus the great transformation is taking place under conservative auspices and with limited objectives.

While Stalinist parties exist in almost all the countries of Asia, in only two of them is the nationalist movement operative in the name of Stalinism as such, and only here does Stalinism so completely dominate the movement as to clearly stamp its own character on it in exclusive fashion—in China and in North Korea. Elsewhere national bourgeois groups (India, Indonesia, Siam, Ceylon), social-democrats (Burma) or landlord elements (South Korea) are in the forefront.

### **The Pattern in China and Korea**

In several of these countries social-democracy is active (India, Indonesia, Viet Nam). This is a new phenomenon which deserves examination, since Social Democracy in colonial areas on a large scale is something new. Trotskyist or left anti-Stalinist groups exist on a larger scale than they do anywhere in the West in Ceylon, India, Burma, Indonesia and possibly Indo-China.

The exception to the above pattern is Indo-China, where the CP is a leading but not exclusive or completely dominant force. The reason for this is the protracted struggle which forces Indo-Chinese nationalism to seek international allies; that is, the national struggle is forced into the inter-imperialist framework. If warfare is renewed in Indonesia, as seems likely, the movement there may also be forced onto the alien tracks of Stalinism. Wherever imperialism has been too weak and has made serious concessions Stalinism has had to take second place.

Both China and Korea have this feature in common: in both countries the two world powers face

each other directly, creating a fixed inter-imperialist limitation to the struggle—unless it took the road of social revolution. Without that alternative (and the reason for its failure in Asia needs to be studied) middle elements between the powers were doomed. In the revolt of Asia, which is one of the great new forces of the post-war period and which is the most dynamic progressive factor in the world today, only in China and North Korea has Stalinism become dominant; these two instances are deviations from the general pattern, for they represent a new tyranny and enslavement.

### 1

Thus in China, the U. S. supported Kuomintang rule, but at the same time tried to strengthen the "liberals." This was the essence of Marshall's proposals. But neither the Kuomintang nor the CP wanted the liberals as U. S. spokesmen, and the liberals were too weak to accept such a role. The dolorous fate of the Democratic League is the full history of Chinese liberalism.

The Kuomintang is no longer and has not been for many years the party of nascent capitalism. Unable to make headway against the continuous warfare and conquests of the Japanese, the bourgeoisie lost political power. Never fully emancipated from imperialism, part of it under Wang Ching-wei sold itself completely to Japan. Never fully divorced from usury and landlordism, it could not resist the growing dominance of feudalism over the Kuomintang during the war, when the state was in the interior removed from the seats of power of the bourgeoisie and dependent on the landlords.

The Kuomintang, during the Chungking period, became a narrow dictatorship resting on local landlord alliances in the distant provinces and on the Whampoa clique of militarists who were personally sworn to Chiang. The top families of the state utilized their monopoly of political and military power to take over the nation's economy. When the government moved back to Nanking this economic power was extended to the entire country. This bureaucratic state capitalism was anti-bourgeois, its methods and practices were aimed at limiting and hampering the capitalist class. The Kuomintang had gone full cycle and had become a brake on capitalist development.

The Democratic League was largely representative of the intellectuals, the university professors and the students. The key program was prevention of civil war through establishment of a national congress in which all parties would be represented. This coincided with the program of the U. S. for China, and Marshall

later singled out these men of the Democratic League as "the splendid body of men" with whom alone he wished to work. Today the Democratic League is underground in Kuomintang China; its main center is in exile in Hong Kong. Its greatest aspiration is to enter a coalition with the CP in an attempt to win minimal conditions for the survival of the bourgeoisie.

The Democratic League is the last effort of a capitalist political party to play a role in China. Its present condition is a good measure of the miserable insignificance of capitalism. There can be no capitalist development without a capitalist state power and political party; these the enfeebled, demoralized, compromised, economically shattered bourgeois have been unable to create.

### **Failure of Chinese Capitalism**

The historic failure of Chinese capitalism is the fundamental underlying cause of the failure of American policy there. It was the only possible counterweight to socialist or Stalinist development. Its failure opened the dikes to Stalinism as the leader of the "national revolution." It is Stalinism which has fallen heir to the unfinished tasks of the bourgeois revolution begun in 1911. Way since 1938 and five years under puppet rule have exhausted the capitalist class so that today, like the proletariat, it is a spectator in the civil war, unable to determine its own future. Neither of the two great classes of modern society is a leading factor in the present civil war.

Capitalism failed in China because it was unable to solve a single one of its pressing problems. It could not oust the imperialists; it could only shuttle between them to sell itself to the highest bidder. It did not unify the country geographically, politically or economically. It failed to develop a centralized state of representative character. It could not even begin to introduce the most moderate land reform because it was itself corrupted by usury-land relations. Nor did it succeed in achieving the basic requisite of modern national existence—industrialization. Having failed in every one of these essentials, it could not hold power against the landlords or the Stalinists; nor did it have the strength to effectuate a new alliance with U. S. imperialism independent of the Kuomintang.

Chinese capitalism is not alone in this defeat. It is doubtful indeed if any native capitalism will succeed in making itself the dominant force anywhere in Asia. In none of the new states emerging out of the disintegration of capitalist imperialism is there a bourgeoisie strong enough to rule by itself; this class tends to develop its power through state-controlled economy, and it is not likely that it will be able to assert itself on a purely economic basis. This is certainly one aspect of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution which remains valid. It is unlikely that classical capitalism has any more of a future in Asia

than anywhere else. What forms will arise out of the dissolution of Oriental society are not clear as yet.

Between Chinese feudalism and Stalinism, "liberal" capitalism is being crushed. (The same is true in Korea.) The inter-imperialist conflict is precisely what creates the greatest difficulties for the native capitalists in these two countries. Thus the inter-imperialist conflict establishes narrow limits for the national struggle, distorting it in its own interest. And where the U. S. intervenes it forces the national leadership into Stalinist channels.

All over Asia the desire for national freedom goes hand in hand with the struggle against feudalism and the creation of modern industrialism. These are the social aspirations of the rising classes. Chinese Stalinism is an indigenous movement in the sense that it has secured to itself a monopoly of the leadership for these ends in China. Its party, program and leadership are known and have established deep roots in the historic struggles of the last twenty years.

Its name is linked with the desires of the peasantry. Its armies are Chinese and nowhere in these armies is there an important amount of Russian power or Russian armaments—at least none has been revealed to this time. Like the Yugoslavs, the Chinese Stalinists are conquering without the Russian armies. They are establishing their own tradition of victories and their own patriotism.

### **A Native Stalinism**

This means that while the Chinese CP is part and parcel of international Stalinism and takes its lead in all matters from the Kremlin, it is not a movement of Russian expansion in a simple sense but the growth of a native Stalinism, which carries out the needs of Russian foreign policy on its own. It is more like the Yugoslav CP in this sense than (say) like the Polish.

Its leadership has not been Russified by long years of residence in Moscow, although the Russians did bring their own Chinese commissars to Manchuria, who are now major factors in the leadership of the Chinese CP (CCP); and Chu Teh and Cho En-lai have been to Moscow. This party has fought its battles largely without Russian material or even diplomatic help. Not that it has had no help. But its kind and quantity is as nothing compared with U. S. help to the Kuomintang or Russian "aid" to the Polish CP. These distinctions are important for the future.

Thus while the Chinese civil war takes place within the context of the inter-imperialist struggle, this context distorts it but does not so dominate it as to replace or overshadow the elements of national and social conflict. Only if the U. S. altered its policy to one of full intervention and thus precipitated active Russian measures could the civil war become subordinated.

But the inverse is not true either. The CCP is part

and parcel of world Stalinism. Its attitudes have always been governed by the latest requirements of Russian foreign policy just like every other CP. Its internal regime of hierarchy, discipline, bureaucracy and idolatry for the Leaders, including the entire Russian hagiography, as well as its slogans and foreign policy have followed every zig and zag of the Stalintern. When Trotskyists were being purged in Moscow they were also being purged in China. When the Bukharinists' turn came in Moscow, it came in China too.

One of the major crimes of Chinese Stalinism is its utilization of the great agony of the 400 million to the purposes of Russian foreign policy. Victory for the CP does not remove China from the inter-imperialist struggle, as a socialist victory would, but transfers the alliance to Russia. This is one of the major reasons why revolutionary socialists cannot support Chinese Stalinism any more than they can support it anywhere else. Far from bringing peace to China, the CP (no less than the Kuomintang) will involve China in vast international imbroglios and eventually in a war in which it has no possible interest. This is the terrible price Stalinism exacts for its conquests.

## 2

The British historian R. H. Tawney has written that he who achieves an alleviation of the abysmal human degradation which is the lot of the Chinese peasant will win the support of half a million villages. This is the limitless source which feeds the Stalinist flood.

The CP has become a peasant party in the sense that it seeks its base primarily in the countryside and that it has developed a theory which gives leadership of the Chinese social revolution to the peasant class through the instrumentality of the CP. It has not been connected with the struggles of the workers for over a decade. It has not had power in any sizable city. It is a rural party and its entire outlook and membership is rural, as is most of its leadership. The problems of workers and cities are foreign to it.

### **Stalinism and the Peasantry**

Nowhere else in modern history has a national revolution been led by a party based on the peasantry. The unique Chinese experience is possible because Stalinism is that unifying ingredient which is absent in the peasantry as a class. With its discipline, ideology, leadership and indefatigable organizational labors it creates cohesion and gives unified direction.

An extremely revealing and frightening statement of the Stalinist theory of the Chinese revolution has been made by Liu Hsiao-chi, member of the Central Committee, and next to Mao Tse-tung, the leading theoretician; it is worth quoting at length.

A. L. Strong, the reporter of his remarks, paraphrases Liu: "Even the concept of the 'proletariat'

[quotation marks in original] as a base for the Communist Party is given a new meaning." And Liu says:

All this [proletarian leadership applies to the western world. But in China we have only a few such people. Of our 500 million people only two or three million can be called industrial workers, whom the imperialists and capitalists are training to be the reserves of the CP some day. Meanwhile Mai Tse-tung is training two or three million from another kind of people who are not only no less disciplined and devoted, but in fact perhaps even more disciplined and devoted than the industrial workers.

China has only a few industrial workers to be the foundation but we have millions of kids [CP youth] like this. Such people have never known Marx, but they are brought up in the spirit of communism. Their discipline and devotion to public affairs is no less than that of the industrial workers. They give their lives to the fight against foreign imperialism and native oppressors even when very young. They fight now for the "new democracy" but if in the future it is time to build socialism, they will be ready to build it. If it is time for communism, they will be ready for that also. Only one thing they will not build or accept—the old forms of capitalism . . .

Today we are building capitalism but it is a "new capitalism" . . . As the core of this "new democracy" and "new capitalism" we have three million people—the army, the party and the government—who have lived for twenty years in what might be called "military communism." It is not the "military communism" they had in Russia, for here it is applied only to this leading group [the army, the party and the state of three millions]. [*Amerasia*, June 1947, page 162-3.]

In her comment on this statement, Anna L. Strong adds:

China's revolution is a peasant revolution. Its basic characteristic is that the peasants (not the workers) form the principal mass that resists the oppression of foreign capital and left-over medieval elements in the countryside. In the past Marxist analysis has not been applied to guide such a revolution.

### **CP as Embryo State**

Since 1927 Stalinism has not been a political party in China but an armed camp, an embryo state. Party members and leaders were equivalent to state officials. Sometimes the fortunes of the state party were low indeed, as after the Long March when it was reduced to 40,000. In those days, and even today, not only were and are party and state identical, but the two are coefficients of the army's power and are identical with it too.

Liu is exaggerating when he says "we have three million people who have lived twenty years in what might be called 'military communism,'" for the present CP and army of two and a half to three million are post-war developments. But the process he so clearly describes is important.

For twenty years this group, acting as a state, military and political power, isolated from the working class and the cultural influences of the coast cities, has developed a hard bureaucratic corp. Carefully selected through numerous purges the leadership is a tight homogeneous hierarchy. Not part of the peasantry, its self-arrogated role is to lead, organize, discipline and provide policy for the peasant

but never to become part of his class. While the peasantry remains the atomized mass it naturally is, the CP takes its best sons to itself and manipulates the real needs of the masses in its struggle for power. All this it does consciously. Relations between party and class are fixed from above.

The bureaucracy for the entire country is developed in advance, in isolation, almost in laboratory fashion. This is the cadre of the state, which advances with military victory, carries through the agrarian policy and organizes the new citadels of political power. It deals with social groupings as a separate entity and by retention of its social independence determines the relationship between classes on the basis of the needs of its own rule. Thus Liu informs us that the policy for today is construction of a "new capitalism" but that the party retains the liberty to move against this "new capitalism" and its economic classes when it decides the time has come for "socialism." It is the party—or more accurately, the state-party-army—which is the bearer of historic change, no matter in whose name it acts at the moment.

### **Distortion of the Revolution**

A close study of Mao Tse-tung's writings indicates, as Liu implies in the opening sentences above, that the CP considers itself the leader of the nation, of all classes in Chinese society and as such it fulfills a program which is above classes, i.e., in its own interests as the state power. This Bonapartist conception gives the CP great tactical flexibility. At the same time it is a theory of social revolution, but not of the bourgeois-democratic revolution nor of the proletarian socialist revolution; it is the theory of the bureaucratic-collectivist revolution.

The social revolution which is clamoring for birth in China, as elsewhere in Asia, is conquered and distorted. As Liu puts it: "Today we are building capitalism, but it is a 'new capitalism' like the 'new democracies' of Eastern Europe, and for this a national alliance of classes eases the ascent to power and also serves to keep the masses quiescent. But as Mao put it so succinctly: "The United Front must be under the firm leadership of the CP." (Turning Point, p. 20) But when "it is time to build socialism [read Stalinism—J. B.]," after the consolidation of power, the CP "will be ready for that also." This is the answer to those who speculate about the Chinese CP following a path different from that of Stalinism elsewhere.

### **3**

When placed against the background of the Great Revolution of 1925-27 the most striking feature of current events in China is the absence of the working class in an active role. Where are Canton's millions who in 1925 challenged the might of foreign gunboats and Kwangtung warlords, gave the power to the Kuomintang and forced their way into the CP by

tens of thousands? Where are the heroic masses of workingmen who paved the way for the Northern Expeditions by their independent militancy?

The steel workers and coal miners of Hankow and Wuhan are silent today, but in the turbulent years two decades ago they performed miracles, defied the British gunboats, organized mass unions in the cities and organizations of the poor peasants on the countryside, and still had enough left to man the armies of the Kuomintang, later the "left" Kuomintang. And still later, when Chiang's terror had wounded and bled the aroused giant of China's revolution and Stalinism had eviscerated its spirit, this proletariat was still capable of the final defiance of the Canton commune.

It was under the leadership of this great urban class that the peasantry organized the struggle against medieval leftovers and militarist tyranny. The democracy of the upheaval was self-evident in the rise of local leaderships everywhere, freedom from traditional restraints, the enormously rapid progress in political education of millions of the submerged and illiterate.

The people held the stage and the workers took the lead, allying themselves with and creating political groups which acted on the people's needs. The masses taught the leaders, very often marching far ahead of them. The revolution in the villages was not a peasant revolt in geographic or social magnitude but, under the advanced lead of the proletariat, it took on the radical character of an agrarian revolt, not reform. Ties between urban and rural masses were indissoluble in the common struggle.

This heroic popular social movement of twenty years ago is a measure of the conservative, manipulated, primarily military march of Stalinism today.

### **Position of Working Class**

Today the Chinese proletariat does not have a party of its own; it is not an active, organized, cohesive social class. It does not have a program of leadership to express its desires in the present situation. The intervening decades have brought cumulative disasters. When the Canton commune was suppressed thousands of workers were slaughtered, and in the Kuomintang reaction in every city followed the massacre of the militants. Police terror, assisted by underworld hoodlumism and secret police, established a regime over the working class which did not permit widespread organization. With the best militants assassinated or in hiding, the proletariat was left leaderless and beheaded. The links with the peasantry were broken. Political organization was non-existent.

The treason of Stalinist policy culminated in the exodus to the South. The workers were abandoned to the Kuomintang; many of the surviving militants left with the CP peasant armies in the hills and mountains of South-central China.

The CP desertion of the cities was a betrayal



from which the workers never recovered. After these shattering defeats even an underground of serious proportions could not develop. On occasions since 1927 the CP has raided the cities and universities for new leadership elements which had aroused the police of the Kuomintang. This has been the only relationship the CP has had with the urban workers.

In addition to police terror and gangsterism the Kuomintang organized the workers into its own "blue unions." When after the war even these "unions" became restive, Chu Hsen-fan, Kuomintang-appointed president of the Chinese Federation of Labor, was driven to exile in Hong Kong. Chu joined with Marshal Li in the "Kuomintang-Revolutionary League" and is now a Stalinist front in their recently launched Labor Federation.

Under Japanese and puppet rule the workers were unable to raise their heads. They were cut off from the anti-Japanese struggle. It is a weakened class which has not recovered from the disasters of 1927 and the subsequent twenty years of oppression. These were the cumulative disasters which permitted the control of the revolution and its transformation into a new reaction by the CP:

### **CP Attitude Toward Proletariat**

The CP of 1948 is not the party of 1928. It does not look upon the workers as the leading class. Its attitude toward the workers is that they are necessary for production and to carry out directives, but its politics are not directed toward the workers.

Piece work and speedup have been made universal. Production quotas for the individual worker as well as for each productive unit are established. Payment is made according to achievement. The entire Stalinist incentive system has been introduced under oppressive conditions. Stakhanovism and "labor heroes" are the means of establishing fear on the job, for it is not well to fail to meet the goals set by the pace-setters. "Labor heroes" receive public awards and state recognition in the presence of their fellow workers. Congresses of "labor heroes" are held at which methods of speedup are discussed. The process of differentiation in the factory is begun with the new "labor heroes" being set above their class.

Since the CP is tied to its agrarian base it will project the cost of industrialization onto the workers as the only class from which the tremendous burdens that are inevitable in such a program can be safely extracted. From this indicated assumption we may conclude that Stalinism will from the beginning be especially oppressive to the workers of China. With their first contact with cities, there are already reports of declining standards of living.

In its relation to the working class the CP acts as a ruling bureaucracy exercising state power. Its separation from urban culture and urban classes and its complete Stalinization in the last twenty years has transformed it into a party alien to the proletari-

at; it is a bureaucratized agrarian party. It does not even manipulate the workers through detailed control of its organizations because its estrangement is so complete.

During August 1947 in the Manchurian city of Harbin the CP began to re-establish connections with the urban working class through an All-China Labor Congress. Delegates are supposed to have come from Kuomintang cities representing underground unions. It is significant that it is three years after the war and after almost an equal period of Manchurian rule that such a congress is called. The scanty reports available on this meeting are all from official Stalinist sources. What comes through clearly is that the workers were given no role in the overthrow of the Kuomintang — except to "prepare to welcome the People's Liberation Army; and to support and take part in revolutionary movements of the people [the CP, that is—J.B.]."

### **Relation to Capitalist Class**

Relations to the capitalist class are carefully defined: ". . . workers should make a distinction between the 'comprador' capitalists of the ruling bureaucracy and national capitalists who are also oppressed. They should endeavor to win the latter for struggle against imperialism and the Kuomintang." (Above quotations from *China Digest*, August 24, 1948.)

The final official resolutions of the congress established two programs for labor, one for Kuomintang areas and one for the "liberated areas." These statements are important statements of policy. In Kuomintang areas:

- (1) The consolidation of their [workers'] own strength and the expansion of their fighting ranks so as to prepare for the arrival of the Liberation Army.
- (2) Cooperation with national industrialists in their common fight against the bureaucratic capitalists.
- (3) The dispatch of skilled technicians into Liberated Areas . . .
- (4) The protection of all factories and machines. [*China Digest*, August 21, 1948].

The relation of the workers to the CP armies is clearly defined as a passive one of "preparing" for the CP armies to take power. If there is to be "liberation" the CP will bring it, and this task is exclusively and uniquely the CP's.

In the directive on administration of newly conquered cities (*China Digest*, August 13, 1948) the Central Committee orders:

All law-abiding enemy functionaries, personnel of economic and educational organs and policemen should not be taken prisoner or arrested. They must be given duties and remain at their original posts under the orders of definite organs and personnel, to watch over their original organs.

The directive very carefully states the role of each section of the bureaucracy and bourgeoisie but has not one single word on the part workers or their organizations are to have in the "liberation" and reorganization of the cities. On the contrary every effort is made, as the above quotation shows, to keep



the administration intact until the CP political commissars arrive to take over. Those "who violate these policies must be thoroughly taken to task . . ." The policy is fixed and imposed, and woe to him of any class who dares to struggle against it.

In relation to the civil war the CP pursues a conservative military policy. Popular activities independent of its own troops are frowned upon. There is no call for workers or peasants to rise in revolt in Kuomintang areas. Social policy is likewise a function arrogated by the CP and carefully imposed by advance bureaucratic determination of its limits, stages and methods.

### **No Surrender to Capitalism**

Every last element of spontaneity or mass participation is strained out of the movement. In this way the entire direction of the real social revolution which is the profoundest desire of the people is transformed into a new tyranny of bureaucratic collectivism. The "new democracy" of Stalinism does not aim at eliminating the bourgeoisie or the agrarian rich at this time. The only group put out of the pale of acceptance by the CP is the Kuomintang itself. With all other classes it proposes a period of "joint reconstruction."

In order to carry through such a program the CP must guarantee the quiescence of the masses. However, this does not constitute a surrender by the CP to native capitalism. Nothing would be further from the mark. For the power of all classes is strictly defined and limited by the CP, which retains all real power. Through its control of the peasant unions and the village poor, the CP can and will launch an offensive against the new kulaks which its present policy is producing. Through similar control in the cities, the CP will (when it is decided) be able to use the workers and petty bourgeois against the capitalists.

The CP, by its position above the classes manipulates all of them to its own state needs. The class struggle is replaced by class manipulation.

This is the actual relationship which is emerging under the "new democracy." Instead of a pro-labor state we have the emergence of an anti-labor state; instead of a peasant power, an anti-peasant power; in the name of democracy the new tyranny of Stalinism arises out of the failure of capitalism and proletarian independence.

### **4**

It is hardly likely, since no serious alternative exists, that the urban working class will be able to avoid the fatal embrace of the CP. Yet it will take a long time before this party's roots are secure among the workers. Memories of the betrayal of '27 persist among older workers, and tendencies to reject the labor-capitalist collaboration policy of the CP are inevitable. A period of economic chaos is probable and restlessness with CP rule and with the bourgeoisie will develop. Also, Stalinism's labor policy is one of

intensified work and increasing production at labor's expense. The agrarian policy of Stalinism tends to create a newly rich kulak in the village who will threaten the food supply of the cities. All this is in prospect and the sailing will not be easy for the new masters.

That the present Stalinist revolution in China is led from and gives prior leadership to the village is of enormous importance. Much of the peculiar political maneuvering in China today — the coalition program of the CP, its hesitancy to utilize the masses except under closest control, its slogan of "return the factories to their owners" — arise from this original difficulty. The CP may actually be unable to organize and administer all of China because of this alienation.

The key to the uprooting of feudalism, to a modern revolution in the village as well as national unification, lies in the cities. Unless modern transport and communications are constructed the country cannot be held together physically. Unless agriculture is reorganized to the needs of industry city and country will not be integrated. Only an industrially-oriented agriculture can create the mentality which will accept sharp breaks from traditional peasant patterns and introduce new methods adapted to local use as well as deal with such otherwise "insoluble problems" as land fragmentation.

The lesson of the Great Revolution of 1927 is the very opposite of that stated by Liu above. The revolutionary urban masses, at the head of which was the working class, did prove sufficient to take and organize the power. The Stalinists have put this tremendous dynamic force in fetters, substituting themselves for it. It may well be that its alienation from the working class will prove to be the Achilles heel of Chinese Stalinism.

### **Notes for a Program**

At this moment a socialist program must begin with this working class which is not yet committed to or permeated by Stalinism. This working class can still be imbued with independence. The CP is, as we have stressed, an agrarian party primarily. An independent proletariat could eventually organize its own organs, take the power in the rich coastal cities, organize an independent democratic movement which could call the peasants to revolutionary action.

It could organize under the program of ousting the capitalists regardless of party; for social and political democracy, not a new one-party regime; for maximum freedom to organize freely, without CP direction, through the democratic activities of the masses; against the CP doctrine of revolution by "stages"; restoration of the revolutionary leadership to the workers; for full freedom of speech and press. Such a movement could extend its hand in comradeship to the peasantry with the call to arms, for an immediate arming of all the people in fighting units of their own, under elected officers of their own.

Against the central national political slogan of Stalinism (bureaucratic party coalitions in a new political consultative conference) can be posed the call to democratic assemblies of freely elected delegates, first in each city and province and then nationally; rejection of a new political consultative conference as a coalition of leaders in which the CP is bound to establish one-party rule, since the other leaders represent nothing. And above all peace to China, not the "new democracy" of Stalinist totalitarianism but the socialist democracy of the workers and peasant poor.

The struggle against imperialism is the fight against all imperialism and its agents, American and Russian. Drive American dollars out of Kuomintang China and renounce Russian control of Manchuria through its control of the South Manchurian Railway. Free the cities of Dairen and Harbin from the Russian army; national freedom requires an end to Russian as well as American rule and spheres of influence.

These are points in broad outline for a revolutionary socialist program. The chief need is for a party, an independent workers' party. For the social base of the proletariat remains untapped. It is still possible to reorient the Chinese revolution by a leadership which believes in the ability and necessity of proletarian hegemony, which believes that the cities must lead the villages.

Such an orientation strikes at the heart of Chinese Stalinism and is the basis of democracy. The workers

of China need a party of their own. That is the beginning of a program.

However, Chinese Stalinism has prepared the repressive machinery with which to prevent activities designed to undermine its rule. Whatever temporary liberties are allowed to the small bourgeoisie of the cities it will not permit any expression whatsoever to the working class outside of its own fully controlled organs. For it is a universal characteristic of Stalinism that it fastens itself on the working class and that this class is its first victim. This means that what is most necessary, the closest relations between revolutionary anti-Stalinist socialists and the workers, is the most hazardous and most difficult and will be met by the severest counter-measures. The program described above is an orientation fraught with enormous difficulties and it is by no means certain that it can be effectuated in the immediate future. For the attack on all socialist and left opponents is already under way and it is a campaign of extermination. In these circumstances the problem of survival is of chief importance; the vigilant assistance of socialists everywhere will be necessary if these cadres are to be saved. All manner of special forms of organization and struggle will be necessary and these very instruments of survival can also become the means of making connection with the workers and organizing the struggle with them.

JACK BRAD

December 1948.

# One Year of Czech Dictatorship

## **Before and After the February Coup**

One cannot fully understand the developments of the past period in Czechoslovakia without a knowledge of some of the background events prior to the coup of February 1948.

### I

The Versailles Treaty—that most monstrous robber-treaty, as Lenin termed it in ignorance of our present times—threw together, into this country of hardly 15 million inhabitants, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Ruthenians and Jews, without asking the individual minorities as to their national aspirations, even though the First World War was waged by the great powers under the slogan of the right of self-determination of all nations. The Czech economy inherited the larger part of its industry from the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy but had no outlet to the high seas or to the great Continental markets. It was France which played the biggest role in influencing its politics and economics, and it was France which

forced the country into the system of the anti-Soviet *cordon sanitaire*.

These circumstances permitted Czechoslovakia, soon after the First World War, to achieve self-sufficiency in agriculture. Agricultural reform, which largely contributed to this, imposed limitations upon but did not liquidate the Austro-German and Hungarian nobility. But the state did come into possession of large areas of forest and land.

Soon, however, agricultural production increased to such an extent that prices threatened to fall far below those of the world market; a state grain monopoly was therefore created to maintain a balance between production, prices and acreage. These economic measures were politically possible because the bourgeoisie had vested political leadership in the hands of the Czech Agrarian Party, even though agriculture and industry were of equal social weight in the country. This could take place only because the large processing industries solidarized themselves with the land-

owners (breweries, paper, wood-processing industries, and distilleries).

Industry as a whole based itself mainly upon heavy industry and the armament industry, upon mining, glass, textile and porcelain manufacture, besides the already mentioned agrarian sector. Besides glass, it was the shoe industry and sugar refineries which played an important role as export industries.

The predominantly agrarian character and the rule of the Agrarian Party made necessary a coalition government of the parties representing the interests of industry. Foremost among these parties was the Social-Democracy, split up as it was into different nationalities. This party not only represented the needs of heavy industry but also rallied the most conservative and best-paid layers of the working class, and also based itself upon broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie. The party of Benes—the Czech People's Socialists—was supported by small public employees, the small businessmen, and the rather reactionary nationalist elements of the free professions and the students.

To this all-national coalition of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat counterposed a single all-national party which was not differentiated by nationality, the Communist Party, which (in relation to the size of the population) was the strongest in the world, and which was the only CP generally, outside of the USSR, with a significant trade-union movement of its own. The CP was made up of German, Czech and Polish industrial workers together with Slovak and Hungarian farmhands and there were no internal national tensions.

The zigzag course of the Comintern, at the beginning of the world economic crisis which caused the Czech bourgeoisie to impose the major burden of the crisis upon the national minorities, changed this relationship so that the cadres of the working class turned toward the Social-Democracy. The Communist trade unions lost their influence almost completely by their policy of strikes-at-any-price and because the party became more and more the party of the unemployed. Hitler's victory in Germany gave it the decisive blow: the German proletarians of Czechoslovakia were exhausted by years of misery and unemployment, and though not in their majority turning toward Hitler, they fell into hopeless passivity. They left the ranks of the CP, which instead was flooded with a tremendous number of petty bourgeois who, in fear of Hitler, wanted to crawl under the protective wings of Stalin.

This was approximately the situation existing at the time of the Munich agreement. The CP, through its spokesman Gottwald, together with the fascist general Gajda, supported the government of General Syrový only because the latter was in favor of immediate war against Germany. But the masses were deeply disappointed, especially because of the non-

intervention policy of Stalin with regard to the Munich agreement.

Immediately after Benes' flight, and after the cession of the Sudeten areas, large parts of eastern Slovakia and the Carpatho-Ukraine, the government banned the CP, but nobody shed any tears over it. Except for a few dozen paid secretaries and a few stalwarts, it had been virtually liquidated.

Hitler's march into the country on March 15, 1939 merely completed what had already been an accomplished fact. The proletariat, petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie were still in the same condition of paralysis into which the Munich agreement had thrown them. The Stalin-Hitler pact contributed to this further, and the CP was unable to throw off its lethargy until shortly before the war's end.

Hitler liquidated important parts of the bourgeoisie by compelling the Jews—who had played a leading rôle in industry and especially in banking—to flee, or by exterminating them physically. Similarly, those elements of the ruling class who attempted to revolt were liquidated, while the small and unimportant remnants of the bourgeoisie collaborated with the Nazis.

The working class, for the time being, profited from the intensified armament boom and had no objection to the liquidation of their hated masters; but this did not in the least mean that it was friendly to the Nazis. It looked upon the imposition of their rule as a mere changing-of-the-guards on top. The only elements who strove to fight Hitler were from the petty bourgeoisie, which was hardest hit by the Nazi dictatorship economically as well as in national feeling.

### **The May Days of 1945**

The sharpening of the internal difficulties, increasing shortages of food in the latter years of the war, and—last but not least—the great military successes of the Russian army brought about a stiffening of resistance. But again it was especially Benes who became the symbol of this resistance; the CP limited itself to backing him without qualification, and added to his slogans still more chauvinist slogans.

The first significant action of the CP made itself felt only when Russian troops entered the city exactly twenty-four hours after the Prague insurrection of May 5-9, that is, exactly a day after the last German troops had capitulated. Immediately posters appeared everywhere with the inscription: "They came in time," with a picture of a Russian tank rolling through the Prague city gate. The major burden of the struggle was borne by the police and by former professional soldiers, with the proletariat participating only in small numbers and with the CP acting as an undifferentiated section of the insurrectionists.

In the May days of 1945 the power was in the streets. The bourgeoisie was practically non-existent, as we indicated above; but the proletariat, as a class

force of its own, was without leadership. Benes triumphantly moved in with his government-in-exile.

Did power really lie in the streets? The Yalta agreement had provided for the inclusion of Czechoslovakia in Stalin's sphere of influence. The West had handed over this area to Stalin. American and Russian troops could therefore be withdrawn without hesitation; the bureaucratic apparatus of Benes had the leadership of the country in firm hands. The expulsion of 3.5 million Germans took place with the consent and desire of all the great powers, at the same time representing the fulfillment of one of Benes' dreams.

Stalin smiled slyly: the national homogeneity of the country—the Slovaks were easily held in check, on the one hand through the collaboration of their leadership, the backwardness of their country, the absence of significant layers of industrial proletariat, and on the other hand through pressure—compelled Benes to turn more toward his immediate neighbors. One of these was the USSR through its seizure of the Carpatho-Ukraine. Internally, Benes was likewise compelled to make all conceivable concessions to the agents of that closest of the great powers, the CP. If today former diplomats from Benes' circle maintain that Benes already recognized as far back as 1945 that he had fallen into Stalin's trap, then this is (considering what has been said above) quite credible. It is indicative of the conditions prevailing that he never, not even in the February days, undertook to counterpose his own authority to that of Stalin. Upon whom after all was he to base himself, considering that the West had approved all the measures of the bureaucratic USSR in advance?

### **Upswing of Stalinism**

The expulsion of the Germans, the confiscation of the property of the collaborationists, of the Hungarians, of the traitors (and of those who were so labeled) all this facilitated statification. The Stalinists took credit for the successes of this statification, which was welcomed not only by the proletariat but also by other large sectors of the popular masses. Almost all believed the end of the exploitation of man by man had come. Those who were less naive received land from the confiscated properties or became trustees of confiscated small industries or retail shops.

In addition to local administrative authorities (for whom the best term is "kleptocrats") who had organized the robbery of the property of the Germans (which means especially also of anti-fascist proletarians), there were bad elements who enriched themselves in great numbers and who were laughed at by the people as gold-diggers but who were given a free hand by the authorities.

The elections to the first national assembly bore rich fruit for the Stalinists: in the Czech-speaking provinces they received almost 40 per cent of all

votes, while Slovakia remained aloof to them. Because of its uncritical attitude—it became known as the anteroom of the CP—the SP became one of the weakest of the Czech parties, and the Benes party too remained far behind the CP in strength.

The Stalinists had utilized the year between the collapse of fascism and the first elections to occupy all the decisive posts in the state and the economy exclusively with their own people; it was a well-known fact that admission to one of the leading posts depended upon possession of a CP membership card. The nationalization of all industries with more than 100 employees, as well as the distribution of all land of more than 100 hectares, expanded its powers still more.

At the same time the food situation was very good—not the least reason being aid by UNRRA. The non-nationalized light industry was in full swing, for the few smaller bourgeois who were left felt that this was their last chance. Since they were able to work without much overhead, they were able to pay wages above that prescribed by law. The CP began a campaign against these so-called "black wages." The revolutionary elements in the trade-union movement—whose top ranks and apparatus was already in the hands of the Stalinists, but whose rank and file was still able to rebel—counterposed the slogan of "Black wages for all" against this CP drive.

### **Stalinism in Decline**

The CP began to organize workers' militia in the factories—that is, those already existing were built up further. The pretext for the existence of these armed bodies was to protect the shops from German revenge and from acts of sabotage. The members of the militia received full wages, without performing any other work except guard duty and engaging in military training and drills. They were therefore looked upon by the other workers with distrust.

The trade unions were gradually deprived of their democratic rights; the works councils were subjected to severe pressure from the trade-union apparatus; and an incredible law governing the election of works councils was introduced. This law provided that, if the workers of a factory disapproved of a list of candidates proposed by the trade unions, the trade-union bureaucracy had the power to appoint works councils by administrative decree. The result was that half of these official lists were rejected in all factories.

The influence of the CP was decreasing. Ever wider circles of the proletariat resisted the imposition of extra work, which was to be performed under the guise of voluntary work brigades. The introduction of a system of rationalization in the factories which was not dissimilar to the so-called *Refa* system under Hitler (which had given the main impetus to the resistance of the workers under the occupation)

encountered decisive resistance from the workers. The rapid swelling of the state, communal and economic apparatuses, and the immense income of the "national administrators," the directors, and the party and trade-union bureaucrats, caused widespread dissatisfaction. With infallible instinct the workers referred to this new rising stratum as the "new nobility."

The drought of the year 1947 gave the Russian bureaucracy the opportunity to force upon Czechoslovakia an unheard-of trade agreement, which was touted by the CP as if Russia were presenting great amounts of grain as a gift. They appealed to the people to be grateful for this robbery of almost the entire industrial production. A preferential system permitted the Russians to buy export goods for the same price as did a Western buyer, and then to sell them for foreign exchange to these interested parties, while the Czechs were credited with the amount in rubles. On the other hand, goods were ordered in Czechoslovakia, the raw materials for which had to be paid in foreign exchange while Russia paid for them in rubles—or rather, these rubles were credited to the Czechs for the grain deliveries from Russia.

All these events caused a drop in the influence of the CP. The next elections would have been bound to bring it a decisive defeat. It became clearer from day to day that a coup was necessary if they were to maintain their position; that the foreign situation of Czechoslovakia did not permit a defeat of Stalinism was clear. Thus arose the February crisis.

## 2

Upon whom was the anti-CP opposition to base itself? The proletariat was without leadership; the petty bourgeoisie as well as the peasantry was incapable of action on its own. The bourgeoisie was no longer existent, with the exception of insignificant remnants. Since May 1945 capitalist production in Czechoslovakia had gradually ceased.

The congress of works councils, in which the trade-union apparatus and reliable Communist delegates had made sure of a majority for themselves, was compelled to use the Russian methods notorious since the time of the Moscow trials in order to suppress all opposition. The delegates who dared to vote against the resolution despite open voting were exposed to the sharp glare of spotlights and were yelled down as traitors by organized cliques. It is no small thing that there were nevertheless eighty courageous delegates, out of 2,000, who voted against the resolution. This is especially significant since the number of those abstaining was not ascertainable.

The peasant congress, which met the next Sunday in Prague and which consisted mostly of employees of the cooperatives as well as of people who only a few months or even weeks before had received land, was a fiasco. Despite the fact that the delegates were brought to Prague in special trains and were fed and

lodged free of charge the attendance was small.

But when Benes confirmed the new and almost completely CP government, thereby sanctioning and legalizing the coup, the Stalinists could no longer be ousted from their seat of power. The student groups which attempted to demonstrate against the coup were dispersed with police carbines, with the populace looking upon the massacre without making any move. There was hopeless passivity everywhere and an atmosphere of doom was general.

## 3

This atmosphere became evident with the suicide of Foreign Minister Masaryk. The streets were lined with people weeping at his funeral — but neither Benes, who was to speak there, nor any other representative of the petty bourgeoisie moved as much as a finger. The police, concentrated in Prague for the security of the Stalinist power, had no occasion to intervene.

The elections, which were held in May as scheduled, were a farce. The only list of candidates, that of the government, was openly favored: anyone who dared to think of voting the white ballot against the government was labeled an agent of Hitler. Nonetheless, the result for the government was so thin that it was necessary to deprive the elections of their secret character even in the early hours of voting, and finally to falsify the very election results. Moreover there sat in every polling place an agent of the minister of the interior, taking written notice of the kind of ballot voted by each individual.

### **Elections a Farce**

The writer of these lines broke the "unity" of one of the Prague polling places by openly voting the white list against the government. The result was that immediately after him a number of voters exhibited equal courage. Having lived in this working-class district for many years and having been well known in political circles, he was able to confirm that the result of the election had been clumsily falsified. They simply counted all the empty ballot envelopes, as well as all the torn-up lists and all those votes in which were both lists of candidates, as errors in favor of the government.

The death of Benes, as well as the suicide of Masaryk, was taken to be an act of grief; and the last flare-up of a petty-bourgeois and peasant opposition on the occasion of the Sokol congress was quickly liquidated by administrative measures against the leadership of that gymnastic society.

Already prior to February the Stalinists had attempted to strengthen their basis in the ranks of the proletariat by providing certain large plants with especially good supplies in the factory kitchens and by the allocation of special provisions of shoes and clothing. Since, however, it was just these shops which had been old strongholds of the working-class



movement, it was necessary to pump fresh human material into them and to withdraw old working-class functionaries from them. After February, at any rate, they proved anything but the reliable points of support which the bureaucratic clique had hoped.

The first steps of the new government—the statification of all enterprises with more than fifty employees, the distribution of land up to fifty hectares, and the statification of the food-processing industry and of the wholesale trade—here and there perhaps still called forth certain illusions. These became intensified especially because the CP promised that if the Two Year Plan, begun in 1946, were fulfilled, there would be an increase in the standard of living by ten per cent over that of 1937, given a similar increase of production.

The Two Year Plan—“two steps to prosperity”—proved to be, however, the necessary preliminary groundwork for a complete assimilation of Czechoslovakian to Russian conditions. That this assimilation brought about a steep decline in the standard of living of the population generally and of the working class especially was a circumstance not entirely undesired by Moscow. Since Russia was able to pay only with grain, it was compelled to smash the formerly self-sufficient food-supply basis of Czechoslovakia; the highly organized agriculture had to be “distributed,” and had to be transformed into unprofitable petty farm enterprises, rendering them uneconomical from the social point of view, if the republic was to be at the mercy of the Russians in the field of food provisions.

### **Russification of Economy**

With this stranglehold on the throat of the Czechoslovak economy, with a powerful Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus, with the specter that the Germans might return to claim their property, it was possible to Russify the Czechoslovak economy—that is, to plunder it—without encountering the slightest resistance. If the bureaucratic Stalinist apparatus had had, prior to February, the tendency to swell in numbers, now all those who were not 100 per cent Stalinists were sent into the factories under the pretext of increasing the productive labor forces.

In this manner the social product which would have been consumed by the native bureaucracy fell to the share of the Russian bureaucracy. At any rate, the state budget for 1949 shows that the Ministry of Propaganda received an allocation 82 per cent above that of the previous year, while the Ministry for Social Welfare had to content itself with an increase of only 23 per cent, and the Ministry of Defense with only 15 per cent.

How strong the discontent is in the plants can be gathered from the complaint of the official organ of the trade unions—and thus of Minister-President Zapotocky—that the citizens have no understanding for the plan, admitting at the same time that “thou-

sands of carloads of iron and steel are of no consequence in the eyes of those who argue about why there are no needles available.”

A new phenomenon is the “free market,” introduced on New Year’s Day of 1949. The new rationing cards, which are also valid for shoe purchases, are available to only four-fifths of the population, as is admitted by the Ministry for Domestic Trade. Only those who have performed forty hours of work a week are entitled to these rations; and only intellectual workers, teachers, university professors and students are exempted from this provision. Farmers are entitled to goods available in the closed market only if their acreage does not exceed a certain maximum and if they have fulfilled their official delivery quota.

Thus this policy strikes in the first instance against the independent small entrepreneur, especially the small businessman and artisan, whom the Stalinists had, after February, not only assured their special protection, but had even written this formally into the new constitution. And there are still people in the West who believe that it is just these strata which determine the Czech economy! It is, in this connection, perhaps worth mentioning that the Hungarian “People’s Democracy,” founded on the occasion of the third anniversary of the proclamation of the republic, which is still behind the stage of complete assimilation to Russian conditions achieved by Czechoslovakia, has made the protection of the small entrepreneur one of the first points in its program.

The open economic aim for the next period is the elimination of rationing. As a first step, the prices of rationed goods, especially of textiles and shoes, were increased fifteen, twenty, even twenty-five per cent. This Zapotocky calls “minor corrections.”

But the introduction of the free market did not fail to meet with opposition from the factories. Thus the central organ of the trade unions writes that at well-attended factory meetings there were “certain people who expressed concern lest the goods to be sold in the free market would be withdrawn from the closed economy and that thus the working people would be deprived of them.

### **Working-Class Discontent**

It is especially interesting that the paper calls attention to the fact that it was necessary to explain to the workers of the AVIA works how the new price policies would redound to the great advantage of the proletariat, and that this explanation was finally “received with enthusiasm by the workers.” It was, after all, from these very works that the shop militia, which were mobilized by the Stalinists in February 1948 to take over the central secretariats of the three non-Stalinist parties, had been drawn. In the Zbrojovka (Bren gun) works, it was necessary to explain in regard to the new price policies a “number of obscure points,” and in the MEOPTA works the “ini-



tial rejection" was transformed into "full satisfaction."

So as not to be in the position of helplessly confronting a united proletarian front, the bureaucracy attempts to drive wedges into the proletariat, to destroy its unity. The favorite means of the Russian bureaucracy, Stakhanovism, is taken over without change, and a press campaign is started in its support against "dangerous equalization." The "free market" is to give the worker the incentive to achieve greater productivity.

Among the customers in the free textile shops there were supposed to have been (according to a report of the central organ of the CP, *Rude Pravo*) large numbers of workers' wives buying baby clothing and bedding not available in the closed market. The paper further says that the open market is open to every worker who has increased his income through his increased efforts so that he is able to buy goods above and outside of his ration, and this at prices which are below those of the black market. The Prague radio, reporting on the same subject from one of the free retail shops, makes clear how gratifying all this is. One of the workers' wives, speaking over the microphone, says that she has just bought her working daughter a pair of panties at 250 kronen (half a week's wages of a skilled worker) — they were quite expensive but the girl couldn't run around without panties, after all!

### Exporting Bureaucratism

Years ago we wrote on another occasion that Stalinism — which at that time denied that it wanted to export Communism — could only ship its own bureaucratic methods abroad. This has come true to a monstrous extent in all the border countries.

In the Czechoslovakian administration bureaucratic intervention can be felt as much as or even more than in the economy. Since the administration of the provinces gave certain possibilities of autonomy to the Slovaks, Stalinism won a new victory by splitting up the administration into nineteen county executives. The chairmen of these provincial executives of the counties are in possession of almost unlimited powers; they can invalidate decisions of the plenary sessions of the committees just as they can annul measures of individual department chiefs if these seem to be in contradiction with Stalinist policy. Not one of these chairmen is elected. All are appointed by the Stalinist Ministry of the Interior — that is, the secret policy — and all nineteen are, of course, members of the CP.

The working class, under these conditions, not only withdraws itself from politics but also abstains from trade-union work. Time and again there are competitions organized between various organizations of the party or of the trade unions aiming at bringing more members down for an evening; and not even the performance of an entertaining film or of vaudeville

acts seems to be able to increase attendance. The scorn and wrath of the working class is more likely to make itself felt spontaneously.

Thus there are many measures taken by the Stalinists and they remain apparently unopposed, but this should not lead to the conclusion that the proletariat agrees with them. Even such a monstrous act as the call to "socialist competition" issued by the county health insurance office in Nove Meste in Moravia a competition to see which health insurance office recognizes fewer workers who report themselves sick causes a noticeable storm of protest.

To be sure, the working class has been disarmed; but it resists and it is capable of resistance, even though it cannot liberate itself and, in the absence of a firmly rooted opposition party and leadership, withdraws into deep passivity.

### Sources of Opposition

Open opposition is thus offered only by romantic youth, frenzied petty bourgeois and, now and then, individual peasants. Since these forces lack any mass base and, as a class, possess no strength of their own, their efforts remain isolated. They can be suppressed through the usual police and court methods. It would be wrong to bank upon them since they are unable to counterpose to Stalinism anything but a purely negative program: that is, they know exactly what they do not want but not what they would like to have.

The restoration of private capitalism today is not a program with which, in Czechoslovakia, one could lure a dog from behind a warm stove. Moreover, there seem to be only very small remnants of the bourgeoisie left still speculating on it.

The struggle for the democratic rights of the workers and the peasants, the struggle for the control of the statified industry, the struggle against the Russian bureaucracy, the police terror, the privileges of the members of the "new nobility" — this can only be led by the working class itself; when the time comes it will find the full support of the middle strata in this struggle.

To expect that the isolated Czech working class, without the aid of a strong proletarian movement in the West, should be able to shake off the yoke of Stalinism means to succumb to illusions. As little as the German proletariat after its defeat by Hitler was able to liberate itself, as little can the proletariat of the border countries do more than prepare its liberation, stiffen its resistance against Gottwald and Stalin and, for the rest, hope for a new socialist movement in the West. The longer the waiting period not only for the Czech proletarians but of the working classes of all the border countries, the harder will be the liberation, the smaller the resisting socialist cadres, the greater the danger of a counter-revolutionary solution.

RUDY SVOBODA

*Beginning of February 1949*

*(Translated by Eugene Keller)*

# The Year One of the Russian Revolution

## IX—Suppression of the Anarchists

April and May [1918] saw an extreme aggravation of the famine.

Remember that the autocracy had fallen in February 1917, with cries of "Bread! Bread!" from the workers' districts of Petrograd. Since 1916 the supply of even the army had become so poor that in 1917 the troops received only 57 per cent of their meat ration.

The disorganization of the railway system had been completed by the spontaneous demobilization of the army, and then by the German offensive and the sporadic resistance of guerrilla bands. The best proletarian elements left the factories to fight or devote themselves to the needs of the revolution; the owners supported by the technicians sabotaged production. The price of manufactured goods, which became rarer and rarer, rose with the inflation. The value of the paper money depreciated with every new and frequent issue. The peasants began to refuse to sell their wheat to the state, which forbade them to sell it elsewhere, and offered them only a scandalous price, paid in paper money in the bargain, or in various manufactured articles. Under pressure of speculation the price of wheat rose to four or five times its previous price.

These were the tragic realities of the problem of supplying the cities, the working class, the living force of the revolution, and the new army.

### Grain Monopoly Combats Speculation by Kulaks

A monopoly of the wheat market had been established by the Provisional Government after the fall of the autocracy; but the monopoly had been entrusted to Supply Committees formed of merchants, industrialists, proprietors, and rich peasants. The Soviet government gave them an altogether different character. The Mensheviks, the S-Rs and the peasants called on the People's Commissars to dissolve them. But the monopoly was a vital necessity. A free grain market would leave the poverty-stricken government powerless before speculation. The rich or well-to-do sections of the population would be the best fed, the only ones fed in fact. It would be practically impossible to control the transportation of food. It was necessary to defend the monopoly to the last ditch, and that is just what was done.

An April 2 decree instituted the exchange of commodities with the country, the first attempt to regulate difficult and chaotic relations with the peasants. The depreciation of paper money called for direct exchange of commodities for

wheat; but the commodities bartered by the state fell into the hands of the rich peasants, the kulaks. The new decree confined the exchange to the middle and poor peasants.

Thus began the struggle between the rich and the poor peasants, which in several months was to grow into a fierce civil war. Finally on May 13 the government was forced to proclaim a "dictatorship over supplies." The decree which instituted this dictatorship compelled the delivery to the state of all excess grain held by the farmers, with deductions for the support of the peasant family, and for the next sowing, etc. These deductions were fixed by averages. The poor people and the workers were urged to unite against the kulaks in the battle for grain.

### Famine, Discontent and Counter-Revolutionary Propaganda

The Commissariat of Supplies was given the fullest powers. In short, it was a declaration of war between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the kulaks. On May 20 a "Supply Army" was formed. Its forces varied between forty and forty-five thousand men until 1919. It was sent to make requisitions in the country.

The famine was so great that at Tsarskoye-Selo, not far from Petrograd, the population received only one hundred

grams of bread a day. There were disturbances, with shouts of "Long live the Constituent Assembly!" and even "Long live Nicholas II!" on April 6 and 7. On April 19 there were "hunger riots" at Smolensk, "fomented" (?) by Anarchists. In April, entry into overpopulated and exhausted Samara was forbidden.

The sharpness, despair, and anger caused by the famine, which even touched the working class, made the ruined urban middle classes, who were totally incapable of understanding the revolution, fertile ground for all kinds of counter-revolutionary propaganda. The discontent of middle and wealthy peasantry seemed to foreshadow a formidable Vendean uprising.

"In those days," a worker writes, "you couldn't find a horse in Petrograd; they were all killed and eaten, or requisitioned, or hidden away in the country. There weren't even any dogs or cats to be found. . . . The people lived on tea and potato pancakes fried in linseed oil. As a member of the Vyborg (Petrograd) Soviet Executive, I know that there were whole weeks during which the workers received neither bread nor potatoes; they were given sunflower seeds and nuts. . . ." "With this relation of forces—the starving cities faced with one hundred million hostile peasants—the situation of the Soviet government seemed desperate."

## THE DISARMING OF THE ANARCHISTS

It was under these conditions that the Anarchists were disarmed during the night of August 11.

The small influence of the Anarchists over the working masses is attested by the number of seats they received in the soviets and in the soviet congresses, where as a rule they had no more than half a dozen out of several hundred delegates (however, a certain number of the libertarians boycotted the soviets). Their energetic little groups had distinguished themselves in June 1917 during the bloody incident at Durnovo villa, in Petrograd, then by their part in the July riots, the forerunners of the October insurrection. These demonstrations were in part their work. At Kronstadt and elsewhere they had fought courageously with the Bolsheviks against Kerenskyism.

Despite their ideological confusion, most of them fought well in October. Their movement experienced an exceptional growth on the morrow of the proletarian insurrection. No power opposed

them. They went ahead requisitioning houses without any control.

The Bolshevik Party treated their organizations as equals. They had a large daily paper in Moscow, *Anarchy*. The libertarian syndicalist paper in Petrograd, *Golos Truda* (Workers' Voice), which disputed the influence of Lenin's *Pravda* for a time, only disappeared when its editors fell out over the question of revolutionary war. Volin, the editor-in-chief, and his friends abandoned propaganda for partisan guerrilla warfare, and went to the front, where they were useless.

*Anarchy*, edited by the Gordin brothers, devoted itself to feverish propaganda, exclusively idealistic and demagogic, which took account of absolutely no reality. Let us look over several numbers of this sheet for April 1918. Remember that we are on the eve of the collapse of anarchism in the Russian Revolution; after April 12 it no longer existed.

"We are against the soviets in principle," wrote the Gordin brothers on

April 7, "as we are against all states."

"They say we are plotting to overthrow the Bolsheviks. Absurd! We were even opposed to overthrowing the Mensheviks."

From the same on April 10: "We considered and still consider the seizure of power a fatal error . . . but we fought in the front ranks in October."

"We are threatened, but we are quite calm. We cannot perish, for great things never perish."

There was one single practical slogan, in big black letters across two pages of the paper, a humanitarian slogan directed at the Cheka, which was comparatively mild at that moment: "Don't shoot men who are arrested without arms." This agitation, although often violent, was really inoffensive. But that was not the question at stake.

In Moscow alone the Anarchist forces, which were divided into a multitude of groups, sub-groups, factions, and sub-factions, varying all the way from individualism to syndicalism, passing through communism and not a few fantastic new isms, amounted to several thousand men, for the most part armed. In this period of famine, the sinceré demagoguery of the libertarian propagandists found not a little support among the backward elements of the population.

#### **The Black General Staff: State Within the State**

A Black General Staff directed these forces, which formed a sort of armed state — irresponsible, uncontrolled, and uncontrollable — within the state. The Anarchists themselves admitted that suspected elements, adventurers, common-law criminals, and counter-revolutionists found a refuge among them, as Anarchist principle did not allow them to close their organizations to anyone nor exercise any real control over anyone. They understood clearly the necessity for purging their groups, but this was impossible without either authority or disciplined organization. The diversity and inviolability of their principles gradually led to the political suicide of the movement, which every day found itself more compromised.

*Anarchy* often published "important notices" like the following:

"Anarchist Federal Council. Regrettable abuses are occurring. Unknown persons have proceeded to arrest and extort funds in the name of the Federation. The Federation declares that it will not tolerate any requisitions intended for individual enrichment." (April 1.)

"The Black General Staff announces that it will not assume responsibility except for operations carried out on an order signed by at least three of its members, and in the presence of at least one member." The General Staff suspected its own members so much that two signa-

tures were not enough! Vain precautions against banditry.

Did some of the Anarchists think of delivering a *coup de grace* to the Bolsheviks? There is a logic of power, and it is strong.

On April 7 or 8, Jacques Sadoul met one of them, one of the leaders who had rallied to the Soviets, Alexander Gay. He thundered against the Bolsheviks (Gay nevertheless was at the extreme right wing of anarchism; he was among the "sovietists," allied with the Communists). Several cities in the South were already in the hands of the Anarchists. Gay believed that he had several thousand armed men in Moscow at that time. But it was not yet time to act. The anarchists had joined the movement, hoping to turn it to their own purposes. First these impure and dangerous elements must be purged. In a month or two the Anarchists would dig the grave of Bolshevism — and the reign of the beast would be at an end.

I myself know that a meeting of the leaders of the Anarchist Federation had taken place some time before in which the question of an uprising against the Bolsheviks had been discussed. But what next? How were they to escape taking power?

Two influential speakers, B. and N., fought the uprising on the ground that it would be "stupid to assume the responsibilities and the fatal discredit for an inextricable economic situation" and that "they couldn't hold out for long. . . ."

Incidents such as an attack on an American automobile, the murder of several Cheka agents followed by the summary execution of several bandits, and arrests of "expropriators" who were immediately claimed by the Anarchist Federation, led the president of the Cheka, Dzerzhinsky, to demand the liquidation of the Black Guard. Five thousand soviet troops participated in this military operation on the night of April 11-12. The hotels which were occupied by the Anarchists and defended by machine guns were surrounded. The occupants were given twenty minutes to surrender. In several places blood flowed; artillery took the Anarchy Club; the siege of one libertarian fortress lasted ten hours. Twenty-seven houses were captured, twenty groups disarmed, five hundred persons arrested. There were several dozen killed and wounded. Not one single well-known Anarchist died in this maneuver, which was not followed, as has been rumored, by any summary executions or any rigorous measures of any kind. The daily, *Anarchy*, reappeared on the 21st with a headline: "Down with Absolutism!"

#### **Counter-Revolutionists Infiltrate The Anarchist Clubs**

To what extent did the counter-revolutionists take advantage of the privileged

position of the Black Guard? We can cite as a witness General Hopper, who took part in the conspiracies of the officers' League for the Defense of Country and Liberty.

The leaders of the League did not know where to barrack their members in Moscow. "One can only rely on the fighting capacity of an organization," wrote Hopper, "if its members are under a military regime and under the command of a leader. The Anarchist Clubs offered us the opportunity for such organization. The Bolsheviks tolerated them. By the beginning of April, sixty to seventy of our members were installed in these clubs. We no longer had to rack our brains to find a place for our members who were arriving from the provinces. I had only to give them a passport and direct them to the head of the Anarchist Service, who soon installed them in a libertarian hotel. We had put an artillery captain whose appearance and character tallied with the literary anarchist type at the head of our Anarchist group."

The counter-revolutionary officers who were arrested in the course of disarming the Anarchists had only to persevere in their roles to be liberated at the end of several weeks. I know of several other analogous examples from counter-revolutionary sources. They establish the fact that foreign officers also frequented the clubs of the "Third Revolution."

#### **Why the Black Guard Had Little Political Influence**

The disarmament of the Anarchists was affected without much trouble at Petrograd, Vologda and elsewhere. At Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad) there was an Anarchist uprising on May 15. An uprising of Maximalists and libertarians also occurred at Saratov on May 17. The Anarchist movement remained alive in the Ukraine, where guerrilla warfare continued for years.

Thus a simple police operation put an end to anarchism's role in the Russian Revolution. It was not even necessary to take any political steps against the danger. No press campaign, no agitation prepared, and no campaign justified the disarmament of the libertarians before the masses. Redoubtable as their Black Guard was, their political influence was practically nil. Their whole strength lay in a few machine guns that had fallen into the hands of a few determined men.

Its divisions, its utopianism, its disdain for reality, its resounding phrases and its lack of organization and discipline rendered the Anarchist "Party" incapable of any useful endeavor. Whatever real capacities and energies it may have possessed were wasted in chaotic little struggles. It was a distinct and armed party, as we have seen, that tried to organize a federation and a general staff; but it was an amorphous party, without any definite outline, without any

leadership—that is to say, without a brain or a nervous system—a party prey to the most divergent aspirations and without the slightest control over itself. It was an irresponsible party in which intelligent individuals, overruled by cliques, by unsuspected foreign interests, and by group instincts, stagnated uselessly.

It was an impossible party for times of social war; for under modern conditions war requires centralization, intelligence, and direction of the fighting forces; war requires the clear understanding of fact and possibility that only a clear-cut doctrine can give.

In disarming the Anarchists, the Bolsheviks—and the S-Rs who at least gave tacit consent to the maneuver—merely obeyed the imperious necessity for protecting the rear of the revolution. Could the revolution tolerate uncontrollable Anarchist strongholds behind its front lines? The formation of the Red Army opened a long period of struggle between the guerrilla bands and the organizers of the regular troops. We shall return to this struggle.

The attempted defense of the Ukraine had revealed the cruel insufficiency of partisan troops. Frequently formed of adventurers, and frequently of excellent revolutionists, most often formed of a mixture of the two, they refused to take orders “from above,” and tried to make war according to their own whim. This

resistance had to be broken before a regular army could be recruited. And to break their resistance, the partisan regime in the capital itself had first to be done away with.

#### **Democracy for Dissidents— Disarmament for Armed Body**

The Anarchists obliged the Bolsheviks to use force against a minority of revolutionary dissidents. Sentimental revolutionists would have hesitated. But what would have happened? Either the Black Guard would finally have started an uprising and Moscow would have undergone days of infinitely dangerous rioting (think of the famine and the already well-organized counter-revolution), or else the Anarchists would have been gradually dissolved only after a long series of embarrassing incidents. A revolution which did not master dissidents who formed an armed state within the state would expose itself, weakened by internal division, to the blows of its enemies.

The proletarian party must know how to break the resistance of backward elements of the masses in decisive hours. It must know how to go against the masses whom hunger, for example, may drive to defeatist feelings at times. It must know how to swim against the current and make proletarian intelligence prevail over lack of intelligence or the influence

of alien classes. All the more must it know how to reduce dissidents, the minorities whom it would be stupid to encourage.

But a firm distinction must be made between dissidents who are faithful to the revolution, and true counter-revolutionary elements. The former are not enemies; they belong to our class; they belong to the revolution; they want to, can, and should serve it somehow or other. They are neither fatally, necessarily, nor absolutely wrong. To employ the methods of repression which are indispensable against the counter-revolution against them, would evidently be criminal and tragic; for instead of mere disagreement there would be profound and bloody splits in the working class.

The Bolsheviks did not fall into that error. Their press continued to point out that no difficulties would be placed in the way of the continued existence and propaganda of the Anarchists. Once disarmed, the latter kept their press, their organizations, and their clubs. The little groups of four or five Anarchist factions, composed of men who were constantly influenced in opposite directions—some approaching Bolshevism and being assimilated by the Communist Party, the others taking the road to the most resolute anti-sovietism—vegetated henceforth without exercising any noticeable political influence.

VICTOR SERGE.

## **THE REAL RDR — —**

*(Continued from page 47)*

jective kind of way. Truism though it may be, experience is still the greatest teacher and the membership of the RDR must learn in this way, together with the ideological and analytic assistance provided them by its Marxist wing.

The real weakness of the RDR movement, as we suggested, has not even been mentioned by Jacques. The RDR has no solid trade-union ties, nor much support among the workers of France in their actual organizations. Thus, it tends to be still largely a movement of students, intellectuals, middle class, etc, and its working-class composition is small indeed. It must find a means of creating these ties, but here we come upon its principal *political* weakness: namely, its unwillingness to openly confront the issue of Stalinism, political and ideological, and its pursuit (in its press, etc.) of an essentially ostrich-policy about Stalinism in general and French Stalinism in particular. There seems to exist a widespread belief that since Stalinism still leads the majority of the French proletariat, the RDR's best hope

of getting workers' support is not to antagonize “their party. We believe the RDR membership will rapidly learn this is an illusion.

Where the RDR has been at its best is in the development of a specific program for current French issues of economy, inflation, etc. On broader political issues, only a beginning has been made for discussion and clarity. The organizational weaknesses of the RDR are apparent, and certainly better known to those in its ranks than to us (including Jacques and myself) at a distance. But all these criticisms, of course, assume the justified, progressive nature of the RDR and look forward to a “bigger and better” movement.

The RDR is no finished product but a fluid and live movement with an intensive political and intellectual life of its own. In this sense, it is precisely what was needed in France; and the long, revolutionary tradition of that country (above all replete with examples of the creation of just the right organization to fit an historic need) indicates the potentialities for a bright and healthy future for the RDR.

HENRY JUDD

# Books in Review

## Through Hopkins' Eyes

*ROOSEVELT AND HOPKINS: AN INTIMATE HISTORY*, by Robert E. Sherwood. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1948, 979 pp.

Sherwood's intimate history of Roosevelt and Hopkins is an interesting and valuable book, one well worth reading. It is really three books in one—a biography of Hopkins, the story of the unusual friendship and working relationship between Roosevelt and Hopkins, and an inside story of the war as seen from the White House. It unquestionably will be a widely used source book for future historians.

If there were any doubt that Hopkins played the role of assistant president and secretary of state during the war, Sherwood's documentation should dispel it. On May 10, 1940 the frail social worker, who had bossed WPA and who was undergoing a treatment of "respectability" as secretary of commerce, was invited to the White House for dinner and stayed for three and a half years. During that time he served as Roosevelt's alter ego, whipping the Democratic national convention of 1940 into line, establishing lend-lease, visiting Churchill and Stalin, and trouble-shooting on every front of the war.

Anyone who wanted to get to Roosevelt cultivated Hopkins. The great and near-great parade through these pages like page boys in the Waldorf-Astoria. As the author puts it, Hopkins was "the supreme office boy of them all"—an office boy having been previously defined by Hopkins as the "real Big Shot" who could put the caller through to the one man who could help.

Four aspects of the book are especially worth noticing in this review.

### (1) Pearl Harbor:

Such was Roosevelt's fear of the strength of the isolationists that he was waiting to be "pushed" into the war. There is no doubt that Roosevelt considered war against Hitler inevitable, but he was obviously chafing at the bit because of his inability to get the country into direct military action. Pearl Harbor was clearly a godsend. As Hopkins put it in notes on December 7, 1941: ". . . all of us believed that in the last analysis the enemy was Hitler and that he could never be defeated without force of arms; that sooner or later we were bound to be in the war and that Japan had given us an opportunity."

### (2) Stalingrad:

Churchill compared the victories at Stalingrad and in Tunisia to Gettysburg.

Those who like to speculate on the might-have-beens of history may learn with surprise that prior to Stalingrad, Stalin had not only agreed to permit an American army on the Russian front but was particularly anxious to have an Anglo-American air force stationed in the Caucasus. On October 7, 1942 Stalin sent a rather desperate cable to Roosevelt, detailing the superiority of the Nazis and requesting aid. Roosevelt replied, according to Sherwood, "that arrangements for the Allied air force in the Caucasus were being expedited."

On October 24, Sherwood continues, "Churchill cabled Roosevelt that he was baffled and perplexed by the correspondence from Moscow—or, rather, the almost total lack of it. Two weeks previously he and the president had sent long, parallel messages to Stalin detailing the proposals for supplies and for the air force in the Caucasus. The only reply that Churchill had received consisted of two words, 'Thank you.'"

Roosevelt answered Churchill: "Having come to the conclusion that the Russians do not use speech for the same purposes that we do, I am not unduly disturbed about the responses or lack of them that we have received from Moscow."

As Sherwood puts it, "The mysterious silence out of Moscow at that time . . . was the direct result of the historic circumstance of improvement in the situation at Stalingrad. The need for immediate help became less desperate day by day and the Russians never did agree to the project for a British-American air force in the Caucasus."

### (3) Roosevelt's Super-Ambassador:

At virtually every critical juncture in the war, Hopkins (usually from a sick bed) flew to London or Moscow to bring about the "meeting of the minds" that was so dear to the heart of Roosevelt. On these occasions he was much more than Roosevelt's amanuensis. He was Roosevelt's super-ambassador and was treated as such by Churchill and Stalin.

The most interesting of these trips occurred in July 1941 during Hopkins' second visit to London. While preparing the Atlantic Conference with Churchill, Hopkins conceived the idea of a quick trip to Moscow to obtain from Stalin the answer to the question how long the Russians could hold out. There is no evidence that Roosevelt or Churchill suggested this hazardous mission via Archangel.

Hopkins' own cable to Roosevelt states: "I am wondering whether you would think it important and useful for me to go to Moscow. Air transportation good and can reach there in twenty-four hours.

I have a feeling that everything possible should be done to make certain the Russians maintain a permanent front even though they may be defeated in this immediate battle. If Stalin should in any way be influenced at a critical time I think it would be worth doing by a direct communication from you through a personal envoy. I think the stakes are so great that it should be done. Stalin would then know in an unmistakable way that we mean business on a long-term supply job."

Roosevelt welcomed the suggestion and Hopkins spent virtually two full days in conference with Stalin, obtaining a first-hand picture of the actual military situation and Russian supply needs, as well as some insight into the workings of dictatorship. In proposing a conference among Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, Hopkins' report to Roosevelt emphasizes the fact that: "There is literally no one in the whole government who is willing to give any important information other than Mr. Stalin himself. Therefore, it is essential that such a conference be held with Mr. Stalin personally."

Sherwood summarizes the importance of this first Stalin-Hopkins conference as follows: "In two days he had gained far more information about Russia's strength and prospects than had ever been vouchsafed to any outsider. Stalin had certainly taken Roosevelt's request to heart and had reposed complete confidence in Hopkins, and Hopkins for his part left the Kremlin with the profound conviction that Stalin was not talking through his or anyone else's hat. This was indeed the turning point in the wartime relations of Britain and the United States with the Soviet Union. No longer would all Anglo-American calculations be based on the probability of early Russian collapse—after this, the whole approach to the problem was changed."

### (4) Naïveté in Power:

If any impression stands out concerning the wartime relations between Russia and the Allies, it is one of colossal naïveté on the part of the English-speaking world. To be sure, Churchill possessed a much better understanding of the Stalinist animal than did Roosevelt. Perhaps that was a tribute to British intelligence: It is clear, at any rate, that Churchill's opposition to the second front was based not so much on military consideration, but on his desire to get into the Balkans ahead of Stalin.

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Hopkins' own evaluation of Yalta clearly expresses Roosevelt's point of view and the thinking of the American government. "We really believed in our hearts that this was the dawn of the new day we had all been praying for and talking about for so many years. We were absolutely certain that we had won the first great victory of the peace—and by 'we' I mean *all* of us, the whole civilized human race. The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine. But I have to make one amendment to that—I think we all had in our minds the reservation that we could not foretell what the results would be if anything should happen to Stalin. We felt sure that we could count on him to be reasonable and sensible and understanding—but we never could be sure who or what might be in back of him there in the Kremlin."

This type of thinking may or may not be the source of the current talk about the split in the Politbureau, but it certainly made it easy for Stalinist imperialism to score impressive gains in the immediate post-war period. All that was necessary was to promise that certain meaningless guarantees about democracy and free elections would be adhered to.

Among the more dramatic of Hopkins' exploits was his last trip to Moscow, undertaken in May 1945 at the request of President Truman when the United Nations' conference in San Francisco had bogged down. While many subjects were discussed during the six meetings Hopkins held with Stalin, the crucial question was the Polish one. Hopkins' cables and notes are extremely revealing, especially those of a private conversation with only an interpreter present. After summarizing the American position about the formation of a new provisional government of Poland and the release of fourteen Poles arrested by the Russians, Hopkins noted:

"I made it clear again to Stalin that Poland was only a symbol, that the United States had equal interests in all coun-

tries in this part of the world and that if we were going to act or maintain our interests on a tripartite basis, it was hopeless to do so without a strong American public opinion. . . .

"Stalin then said that he was unwilling to order those Poles released who were charged only with use of illegal radio sets. He stated that he had information in regard to these prisoners which was not available to us and inferred that all of them were engaged in what he called diversionist activities. He stated that he believed that Churchill had misled the United States in regard to the facts and had made the American Government believe that the statement of the Polish London Government was accurate. Just the opposite was the case.

"Marshal Stalin stated that he did not intend to have the British manage the affairs of Poland and that is exactly what they want to do. Nevertheless, he stated that he believed me when I told him it was having an unfavorable effect on public opinion in America and he assumed the same was true in Great Britain, and therefore he was inclined to do everything he could to make it easy for

Churchill to get out of a bad situation because if and when all the evidence is published it would look very bad for the British and he does not want to make the situation worse than it is. . . . He said that we must take into consideration Russian opinion as well as American opinion; that it was the Russian forces that had liberated Poland and said that if they had not gained the victory in Poland, with such a great loss of Russian life, nobody would be talking about a new Poland."

Thus, in the course of saving the San Francisco conference, which involved getting Stalin to live up to the voting formula he had agreed to at Yalta, Poland was delivered to Stalin's tender mercies through the formula expressed by Hopkins, "That we would accept any government in Poland which was desired by the Polish people and was at the same time friendly to the Soviet Government."

It is interesting to note that this was the first time during the entire war that Hopkins reported through official State Department channels. With Roosevelt, this was not only unnecessary but was considered dangerous in view of the fact that both the military and the White House felt the State Department to be unreliable, as it was known their code had been broken. In the light of the Hiss-Chambers case, the by-passing of the State Department assumes added significance.

Whether Churchill's memoirs of this period will throw additional light on the material presented by Sherwood remains to be seen. One thing is certain, however: already during the war it was clear that only two great powers remained on this globe—the U.S. and Russia. It is equally clear that the leaders of these two powers have had, and will continue to have, a far greater influence on the course of history than has ever been true since the rise of capitalism to power. It may not be very comforting to realize that the fate of hundreds of millions of people depends on Stalin and Truman, but that assuredly is the state of the world so long as the masses of humanity develop no true spokesman for their real interests.

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