

The New _____
INTERNATIONAL

***Twenty-Five Years of
American Trotskyism***

By Max Shachtman

McCarthy and McCarthyism

By Julius Falk

***THE MYTH OF LENIN'S
"REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATISM" — III***

By Hal Draper

***Notes of the Month
Books in Review***

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Marxist Review

Vol. XX, No. 1

Whole No. 163

January-February 1954

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Marxist Review

Vol. XX, No. 1

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1954

Whole No. 163

Notes of the Month

The Shachtman Passport Case

On February 10, 1953, Max Shachtman, national chairman of the Independent Socialist League and editor of the NEW INTERNATIONAL, applied at the State Department Passport Office for a passport to travel to Europe. The application, made on the stationery of the ISL, stated the purpose of the trip to collect material

and information for lectures and articles to be given and written in the United States.

The passport has been denied, but it has taken a year and a month of unceasing pressure to get the Passport Office to make a final and clear decision. For the first six months of this period the State Department was com-

Following is the text of the last communication received from the Passport Office of the State Department, dated March 8, denying Shachtman the right to appeal to the Passport Appeals Board:
My dear Mr. Shachtman:

The Department has received your petition for appeal, dated January 2, 1954, of the decision of the Department refusing you passport facilities.

You are informed that the Department's refusal of a passport to you was not based on the findings that such issue was precluded under the provisions of Section 51.135 or 51.136 of the Passport Regulations. The authority for the refusal is set forth in Section 51.75 of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations which reads as follows: "The Secretary of State is authorized in this direction to refuse to issue a passport. . . ."

In this connection it may be stated that Sections 51.135 and 51.136 do not limit the authority contained in Section 51.75 but merely prescribe certain categories of persons to whom passports must be refused. No regulations have been promulgated providing appeal procedures for persons who are refused passports for reasons other than those set forth in Sections 51.135 and 51.136 of the Passport Regulations since normally these refusals, in effect, are temporary and conditional and further consideration will be given to the application upon removal of the conditions which caused the refusal. As stated in my letter of January 21, further consideration will be given to the issue of a passport to you if there should be a change in the findings of the attorney general respecting your organization. You were granted an informal hearing in the Passport Office similar to that provided in Section 51.137 and your case thereafter carefully considered by the Department. In the circumstances there does not appear to be any further procedure which you can follow in connection with the passport application at this time.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) R. B. Shipley
Director, Passport Office

pletely silent: it neither acknowledged the application, nor answered any correspondence. Now, the denial has been made on such tricky grounds that no recourse is possible on an administrative level and Shachtman is preparing a suit against the State Department in the Federal Court. This suit will have been filed when this issue of the magazine appears.

We are presumably indebted for this situation to the principle under which passports are granted in this country. The granting of passports to citizens of the United States is considered a *privilege* in sharp contrast to other countries where a passport is regarded as a *right* of citizenship. We can think of at least one other country, Stalinist Russia, where a passport to travel abroad is granted as a privilege—and then only to the ruling bureaucracy. There, the internal passport does exist, neither as privilege nor right, but as a necessity. Ironically, too, its purpose is to prevent the free movement of its citizens.

If granting a passport in the United States is a privilege, then criteria have to be established to determine when that privilege is granted or denied. Once such a condition exists, however, it is clear that abuse must accompany the rules where decision depends entirely on bureaucratic, administrative whim. In the specific case of Shachtman's application, we were confronted with a failure or refusal, it amounted to the same thing, of the Passport Office to acknowledge the application or to answer communications. How does one go about remedying such a situation? One writes letters again and again, or telephones, in the hope that the administrative powers will take note of the efforts to establish communication with the office. And if there is no response, as there was not in this case for six

months? Either surrender or continue to make demands upon the responsible persons.

In any case, there exist at least three regulations under which passports are not granted to applicants. They are, not necessarily in their order, as follows:

Section 51.135 of Passport Regulations: "Limitation on Issuance of Passports to Persons Supporting Communist Movement."

Section 51.136 of Passport Regulations: "Limitations on Issuance of Passports to Persons Likely to Violate Laws of the United States."

Section 51.75 of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations. It reads in part: "The Secretary of State is authorized in his discretion to refuse to issue a passport. . . ."

It was assumed in advance by us, given the above fact, that the Passport Office was having difficulty in making up its mind because it had its eyes cocked on the attorney general's list. There was clearly no ground upon which to deny a passport to Shachtman under Sections 51.135 and 51.136. But in these times we could not be certain of that.

THROUGH the intervention of Shachtman's counsel, Attorney Joseph L. Rauh, of Washington, D. C., a hearing was finally obtained from the Passport Office. More accurately, on November 3, ten months after Shachtman's application, an "informal" hearing was held with Mr. Ashley G. Nicholas of the Passport Office. Mr. Nicholas went through the farce of trying to establish the identity of Max Shachtman, even as he sat there with an endless number of documents and "confidential reports." The hearing was brought down to earth with material presented by Shachtman, and Gates for the ISL, and the demand of

Mr. Rauh that the Passport Office either grant a passport immediately or state what Communist movement Shachtman was supporting or what laws of the United States he was likely to violate abroad.

It was with some difficulty that we learned that the Passport Office did not believe that Shachtman was connected with any Communist movement, or that he would violate any law of the United States. But we were advised that the difficulty lay in the existence of the attorney general's list of "subversive organizations." Wasn't there anything we could do to settle the matter with Mr. Brownell? It was obviously proving embarrassing to the State Department, since it could not, or would not grant a passport to anyone prominently associated with an organization on the list. At the same time, it would be hard put to defend the denial of a passport on such a flimsy ground without proof that any law, principle, or perhaps, person, would be violated.

Following this hearing, Shachtman was promised an immediate decision. A decision had in fact already been made when the Passport Office refused to acknowledge the application and failed to answer any letters. Its first confirmation came in writing two weeks before the hearing when Mrs. R. B. Shipley, Director of the Passport Office, wrote to Shachtman denying him a passport on the grounds of membership in an organization on the attorney general's list. *But no specific code was cited for this action.* That is why Attorney Rauh asked Mr. Nicholas the specific questions mentioned above.

The reader should remember that sometime before, the new administration had promised to establish an Appeals Board in the State Department to hear cases of passport denials.

This was the result of considerable pressure put on the administration. But after almost the whole year had passed, no board was in existence. Only the threat of suit against the department by other parties forced the Secretary of State to establish such a board.

When the board was publicly announced, Shachtman at once appealed to it under Sections 51.135 and 51.136. The Appeals Board replied that it had no record of any denial of a passport to him under these sections and therefore no case was before it.

A SHARP COMMUNICATION to Mrs. Shipley finally brought the answer to the above riddle. Mrs. Shipley stated that the denial of a passport to Shachtman was not based on Sections 51.135 and 51.136 which would make the denial mandatory and appealable, but under Section 51.75, which placed the matter within the discretionary powers of the Secretary of State. We were informed that there was no appeal possible from a denial of a passport under that section. Why?

Because the denial of a passport under that section was temporary, since the removal of the condition under which the passport was denied would then permit the issuance of a passport. And the condition? The attorney general's list. Why don't you settle your case with Mr. Brownell, we were advised informally. It would save the fearful State Department, already under so much attack, a great deal of trouble.

There's the rub, as our readers know. How do you get the attorney general to do anything? A year ago, when the new administration came into power and it was rumored that Mr. Herbert Brownell would become the new attorney general, many genuine liberals and democrats sighed

with relief. They believed that Mr. Brownell was democratic (with a small "d") and that the attorney general's office would become a true Department of Justice under him, in sharp contrast to the conduct of Mr. Truman's ward heelers. It didn't take very long for the country to learn that the new attorney general was, above all, a politician, and not on a very high level either. His assaults on essential democratic procedures and policies are even more threatening than anything done under the old administration.

Although the new administration set up procedures which seemed to guarantee certain rights to organizations listed and to be listed, few of them have been carried out. Mr. Brownell is far too busy trying to set up his own telephone company by seeking the passage of a wire tapping bill to be used under his own discretionary powers, to pay much attention to the new procedures under Executive Order 10450.

Under this order a "subversive list" was to be set up but supposedly with this difference: No organizations would, could or should be placed on it without a prior hearing. But Mr. Brownell proceeded to relist every organization, none of which ever had a hearing, from Mr. Truman's list. In his mind, the important provision of the new order applied only to new organizations which his office might contemplate listing. Precisely what this meant to Mr. Brownell was shown when he publicly convicted the National Lawyers Guild as "subversive" without any hearing whatever.

When the new order was announced, the ISL immediately protested to the attorney general and demanded an immediate hearing. That was in May, 1953. In accordance with the new procedures, the attorney gen-

eral, for the first time in five years, presented the ISL its statement of grounds and interrogatories (the reasons for the listing) to which the ISL replied in full (See *Labor Action* for Sept. 3, 1953). The monstrous nature of the grounds and interrogatories brought a number of protests from all quarters, including Norman Thomas, John J. Finerty, Francis Heisler, the *Weekly People*, *The Reading Labor Advocate*, and the *Socialist Call* among others.

IN SUBMITTING ITS REPLIES in proper form and within the time limits provided for in the new procedures, the ISL renewed its demand for an immediate hearing which was mandatory. No reply was received from the attorney general. This is a chronic bureaucratic disease in Washington. Another letter finally brought a response from Assistant Attorney General Warren Olney III that the request was received; no need to worry, for if and when a hearing would be granted, we would be notified in time to prepare for it? If and when! What about the procedures which stated that upon a reply to the interrogatories the attorney general "will" set a date for a hearing? No reply! And that's exactly where the matter stands now.

The State Department refuses a passport to Shachtman under the "discretionary powers" of the Secretary of State. The Passport Office "suggests" that we settle our case with the attorney general. And the august and pompous attorney general sits on his royal seat in the Department of Justice office and does not answer mail; he simply does nothing.

On October 29, 1953, the ISL replied to Mr. Olney pointing out that the matter of a hearing was mandatory; that with the reply to the interrogatories, the attorney general must

set a date for a hearing. Six months have passed and not one word has been received from the attorney general.

We leave to the philosophers the speculation over the meaning of this situation from the moral and democratic point of view; perhaps they can enlighten us further on the significance of "ends and means." For, nothing is more conducive to understanding than the process of life itself!

We do know this: the attorney general's list had its origin as a guide to government employment. It has long since passed far beyond that point to become a national index. That it has no legal standing is quite beside the point. It has all the power it needs without legal standing. The bureaucratic administrative system has operated to avoid a legal test of the listing and the administration, past and present, has achieved its objective just the same.

When in January, 1951, it was pointed out to a Mr. Raymond P. Whearty, then assistant attorney general, that the list has ceased to be a guide to government employment, and that the government itself was responsible for this by its wide publication of the list and by inciting its use in private industry, the professions and the entertainment world, he merely shrugged his shoulders and

said: "Well, it is too bad; but that is not what it was intended for!"

We have gone a long way since then. The attorney general's list still has no legal standing; the attorney general has still zealously avoided a legal test of his action. Yet the list has an incalculable power to do harm to organizations and individuals who have no recourse for legal redress.

The Shachtman passport case is in point. Why should the attorney general's list, which formally, at least, is an employment guide for the government, be used by the State Department as a guide for the issuance of passports, particularly when the Passport Office does not use Sections 51.135 and 51.136 as its criteria? Nevertheless it is. And it is used everywhere whether or not it has legal standing. The attorney general's office prefers it that way; it is not required to test its actions legally while at the same time it achieves its purposes nevertheless.

The Shachtman passport case is important not only because it challenges the bureaucratic actions of the State Department Passport Office, but above all, because it will permit the first fight to be made against the attorney general's list. It needs the widest labor and socialist support.

A. G.

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The Economic Outlook for 1954

The Administration's Anti-Recession Program

The economic outlook for 1954 has now become the dominant question, governing all political forecasts. While it is still eight months to the Congressional elections in November, there can be little doubt that the Republican politicians are worried lest an unfavorable economic outlook accentuate the normal loss of Congressional seats that the party in power must usually expect in a non-presidential election year. The result could easily be that the Democrats will capture a solid majority in both Houses of Congress.

Certainly, if unemployment in November exceeds present levels—barring an all-out hot war—the Republicans will suffer a resounding defeat. Just what the present (March) level of unemployment is—the month Eisenhower stated would be decisive in determining whether the Government would intervene in the economy—is impossible to say. The January figure exceeded 3,000,000. The February figure should have been released on March 1st. Publication has been postponed until March 15th. Why? Ostensibly to permit checking of the new sample used to estimate the amount of unemployment. It might also be that the February figure shows unemployment to have risen sharply. Politically, it may be more convenient to announce a February unemployment figure of 4,000,000 or thereabouts at the end of March, while (the administration must hope) advance indications show a decline in unemployment for March.

The Economic Report of the President to Congress, dated January 28, 1954, concludes its evaluation of the

current economic outlook by stating: "Our economy today is highly prosperous, and enjoys great basic strength. *The minor readjustment under way since mid-1953 is likely soon to come to a close, especially if the recommendations of the Administration are adopted.*" (Italics mine—T. N. V.) Actually, the "minor readjustment" is a full-fledged recession, already amounting to a decline of approximately 10 per cent since it began in the second quarter of 1953. The overwhelming majority of economists attending the annual meetings of the American Economics Association and the American Statistical Association at the end of December is clearly of the opinion that "The United States economy already is in a downturn. It faces the prospect of an 'orthodox recession' in 1954 with total output down \$10,000,000,000 to \$18,000,000,000 from 1953's extraordinarily high levels." (The *New York Times*, Dec. 29, 1953.)

While the American economists do not share the opinion of Colin Clark, leading Australian economist, that the economy is heading for a severe depression, they do appear to expect the decline to last throughout 1954. In other words, the professional economists will be surprised if the "readjustment" ends "soon." As a matter of record, the Joint Committee on the Economic Report (officially established by Congress to appraise the President's Economic Report, and composed of a majority of Republicans) is quoted in the *New York Times* of February 27, 1954 as "not fully satisfied with the Government's anti-recession program, and (it) finds

the administration's farm program particularly unsatisfactory."

Just what is the administration's "anti-recession" program? It was supposed to have been stated explicitly and at length in the President's State of the Union Message, the Budget, and the Economic Report. By and large, the Eisenhower anti-recession program consists of three parts denial that a recession exists and one part piously wishing that it would go away—if it does exist. These three major policy documents can be searched from beginning to end, and any anti-recession program will be found conspicuous by its absence. There is discernible an anti-New Deal philosophy, typically expressed by the following paragraph from the Budget Message: "This budget marks the beginning of a movement to shift to State and local government and to private enterprise Federal activities which can be more appropriately and more efficiently carried on in that way. The lending activities of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation; the services provided by the Inland Waterways Corporation; certain agricultural activities; and some aspects of our health, education, and welfare programs are examples of this type of action."

Nevertheless, there is an administration program. Officially, it can be summarized as providing tax incentives and other necessary stimuli to capital investment. Unofficially, it might be called Turning the Country Back to the Indians (read: Monopoly Capital) or How To Loot the Public Treasury in Three Easy Lessons. Whether it be reducing the taxes on dividends, or more rapid depreciation allowances, or other fiscal policy, the philosophy stems from the theory that what is good for big business (Gener-

al Motors and its allies) is good for the country.

MUCH OF THE THEORETICAL foundation for the administration's program apparently originates with Arthur F. Burns, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, who is interviewed in the *New York Times* of Feb. 22, 1954 by Joseph A. Loftus on the occasion of the publication of a collection of Burns' essays. The heart of the Burns philosophy is revealed by the following exchange:

In an essay written in 1948, he made this observation about Government policy in the depression of the Nineteen Thirties: "On the whole, consumer spending responded much better to the Governmental measures than private investment."

How, then, could he justify an Administration tax policy now that puts emphasis on incentive to private investment rather than on consumer spending?

The circumstances were quite different then, he explained. The present tax program would have made no sense whatever in the early days of that depression. Business confidence was shattered. Now it is different. Stock prices are up, commodity prices are not down. Investment expenditures are being pretty well maintained. Business confidence is running high. There is a good chance of stimulating investment further.

As the question is being stated—"do you want to stimulate consumption or production?"—Dr. Burns continued, the "underconsumptionists" would win.

But, he said, that does not state the issue correctly. As the facts are now, he said, *if you cut a consumer's tax \$1, he may spend from zero to \$1, no more. If you cut business taxes \$1, business may spend as much as \$50.* A new environment for business spending is created.

If business confidence is high, why is there need to stimulate it?

There has been a decline, he said, adding that *no responsible thinker can say positively it will be self-limiting. It could become a spiraling contraction.* (Italics mine—T. N. V.)

Just what good it would do to stimulate capital expansion, when the

source of the present recession is the crisis in agricultural production and in certain consumer durables, especially automobiles, is not explained by Dr. Burns, for he has yet to ask himself (publicly) what is the cause of the present decline? And yet, according to Loftus, in the above-quoted article: "This is some of the thinking of the man who probably does more to shape the economic policies of the Administration than any other individual except the President."

Whether it is a better understanding of economics, or a keener political sense that is responsible, the Democrats have dramatically focused attention on the Administration's pro-Big Business orientation by the proposal of Senator George that income tax exemption credit for dependents be increased from the present \$600 to \$800 and then, next year, to \$1,000. Such a proposal, of course, would benefit the mass of the population and would serve to stimulate consumption.

Although the administration has officially come out against the George proposal, Congressional Republicans are uneasy about entering an election campaign with unemployment at the four or five million mark, and with the Democrats pushing tax relief for

the masses while the Republicans are committed to tax relief for finance capital. That is why the Joint Committee on the Economic Report, mentioned above, is quoted as saying: "Tax relief for the middle and lower income brackets, to bolster consumer demand, might be desirable sooner than President Eisenhower has indicated." And further: "*Better preparations for a public works program are necessary; there should be a public works administrator, responsible directly to the President, and substantial credit should be available to local communities for such projects.*" (Italics mine—T. N. V.) Shades of WPA and PWA!

The Loftus interview with Burns concludes by quoting from one of Burns' essays: "Subtle understanding of economic change comes from a knowledge of history and large affairs, not from statistics or their processing alone—to which our disturbed age has turned so eagerly in its quest for certainty." To which we say "Amen!" Such understanding, however, cannot be found in Burns or in the Eisenhower administration.

T. N. VANCE

March 7, 1954.

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25 Years of American Trotskyism

Part I: The Origins of American Trotskyism

It is now twenty-five years since the Trotskyist movement was launched in the United States under circumstances which had already ceased to be unusual for that movement. The date was October 27, 1928. On that day, an enlarged session of the Political Committee of the Communist Party, upon hearing a statement by three members of the party's Central Committee in which they aligned themselves with the then Russian (or Trotskyist) Opposition, voted to expel the three from the party: James P. Cannon, Martin Abern, and Max Shachtman (an alternate member). This action, as the expelled knew before they made their avowal, was a foregone conclusion. The 6th Congress of the Communist International held only a few months earlier had made the espousal of "Trotskyism" incompatible with membership in the International or any of its affiliates. But if the three clearly expected expulsion the minute after they read their statement to the rest of the Central Committee members, it might almost be said that everything else related to the founding of the Trotskyist movement in this country was unexpected. Indeed, looking backward, it offers an excellent example of how the inevitable often asserts itself in politics through the accidental and in spite of it.

Unexpected, in the first place, was the extraordinary stupidity and criminality of the Communist Party leadership in its proceedings against the expelled. The party leadership was then in the hands of the Lovestone faction. To embarrass their rivals of the Foster faction, out of whose leading group

the expelled Trotskyists had come, and to show Stalin how reliable they were in hunting Trotskyism, the Lovestoneites promptly launched a reign of terror in the party ranks. Every branch and every member of the party and the youth organization was compelled on the spot to declare his loyalty to the Central Committee in the fight against the Trotskyists, to condemn the three Trotskyists themselves as well as everything they stood for or were said to stand for, and to disavow any "conciliatory" attitude toward them. Conciliationists were designated as those who asked to withhold their vote on the resolution of condemnation until they could see and read the statements of the three expelled members. In this way, dozens of communists were expelled overnight throughout the country without having anything but a vague idea of the opposition's views. Most of them were recruited to the side of the expelled who now called themselves, after their Russian comrades, the Left Opposition and, afterward took the name of Communist League of America.

To this service the Lovestoneites added another, most often with the active aid of the Fosterites as well, who did not want to be outbidded in the Kremlin. For the first time in the history of any radical or socialist movement, we saw not only an expulsion which resulted in the formation of another movement but also an attempt made by the older organization to smash the new group in the egg by the open, direct, conscious and organized use of force and violence. This was not a spontaneous outburst of in-

dignant or exasperated individuals, but the result of deliberate planning by the leadership and mobilization of the organs at its disposal. The three of us were physically assaulted by party toughs armed with clubs and knives when we first appeared around the party center to distribute our paper, the *Militant*, and for a long time afterward. Our very first meeting in New York—probably the first Trotskyist public meeting in the Western hemisphere!—was never really held. The police had to intervene to prevent even greater bloodshed than had already been caused when literally scores of party hoodlums, mobilized that very evening at party headquarters and equipped with blackjacks, knives, leadpipes, brass knuckles and other subtle political arguments, broke into the hall to terrorize the audience and the speakers. At our next meeting in the same New York Labor Temple, we were better prepared for the same mob that came to visit with us, as is evidenced by the emergency-treatment records of neighboring hospitals and by the fact that after some initial incidents the meeting—a magnificent one—went on peaceably to its end. But for two or three years thereafter, literally from one end of the country to the other, our comrades and our public meetings were subjected to the same kind of organized Stalinist gangsterism, which subsided only when groups of sturdy, valiant and resolute militants—female as well as male!—drummed some wholesome homilies in workers' democracy into the skulls of the hooligans and, in general, helped bring a sense of shame into the hearts of the better elements in the C.P. ranks. The Trotskyist movement was certainly not weaned on meek milk. The campaign of violence against it helped it win more supporters from outraged

members and sympathizers of the official party. But it must be admitted that, as with all the madness of Stalinism, there was method in it—cunning, base, sinister method. It not only aimed at intimidating actual and prospective Trotskyists; but it also aimed, probably primarily, to draw between the followers of the official party and the then “unofficial opposition” of Trotskyism the most difficult of all lines to cross in politics, the line of blood.

PROBABLY BECAUSE IT WAS SO unexpected, despite what was being done to the oppositionists inside Russia, this virulent violence of the Stalinists made a deep impression upon us. Eight years after the Trotskyists were expelled from the Communist Party in this country, they were expelled—on grounds just as flimsy and by means just as brusque and bureaucratic—from the Socialist Party which they had joined earlier. Yet the bloody violence that followed our expulsion from the Stalinist party was totally unknown after the split in the Socialist party. The impression which the violence made upon us caused some supercilious souls and empty bonnets to chide the Trotskyists in the following years for their “Stalinophobia.” It was as if they regarded us, with condescending comprehension, as obsessed victims of traumatic personal experiences. To us, however, it never was a psychological problem; it became with increasing clarity a social and political phenomenon of specific significance. The assaults upon us were, it should certainly be obvious now, not a passing incident produced by factional excitations, but manifestations of an essential and distinguishing characteristic of Stalinism. Stalinism is by its social nature a totalitarian movement. It can triumph; it can

maintain itself, only by the physical extirpation of its adversaries in the popular movements, and therewith the extirpation of any and all forms of democracy that impede its rule. The Trotskyists were the adversary with the most perspicacious insight into Stalinism. The violence against us was all the more ruthless and cynical. It was not an “excess” but authentic and durable, and in its most brutal upflaring in this country it was nothing but an anticipation and preparation of what Stalinism aspires to achieve. The early hooliganism against us was a disgrace and discredit to the revolutionary movement as a whole. But it not only helped win us additional recruits; it seeded in us a conviction that any group in the labor movement that resorts to violence against any other group in it—except in self-defense—has no place or right in the organized working-class movement and must be driven out of it without mercy. And it also helped our minds reach into the heart of darkness of Stalinism itself.

Unexpected, in the second place, was the development of the Stalinist movement and, with it, of our own perspectives. We assumed that the C. P. was going to remain ever more firmly under the Lovestone leadership, that the Comintern endorsement which it seemed to get at the 6th Congress would be reiterated and strengthened, that it would be given an ever freer hand in demolishing the Foster faction or driving it into unhappy but silent subservience. This triumph of the Lovestoneite right wing would, as we saw it, speedily bring a large section of unrepentant Fosterites to our side. So we concentrated our fire on the Lovestoneite leadership as the authentic representatives of the Moscow revisionism and on the Fosterite leadership as centrists and capitula-

tors without a future in the party. The deep antagonism that the best militants in the Foster faction felt toward the Lovestoneites as petty-bourgeois intellectuals, snobs, cynics, low-grade manipulators and maneuverists, encouraged us to expect decisive support in the very near future from these militants with whom, after all, we had been so closely tied factionally and even personally up to yesterday. In this entire analysis we were only following the essentials of Trotsky's views on the unrolling of the Russian Thermidor. He looked upon all the victories of the Russian Stalinists over the Russian Bukharinists—inside the Russian party or in the Comintern—as only apparent, trivial and momentary. The right wing would unquestionably and very soon show its real and overwhelming strength in Russia. The center—the Stalinist bureaucracy—would unquestionably and very soon show its real and disastrous weakness. At worst, it would capitulate completely to the right wing; at best, it would try to wage a faltering, apologetic, defensive, ever-eager-for-compromise fight against it. But such a fight it was foredoomed to lose, unless the left opposition snatched the banner from its palsied hands and took command of the fight to save the revolution from the capitalist-restorationist classes represented by the right. As we know, nothing of the kind happened. The Stalinist center not only took up the fight with the Bukharinists but wiped them out root and branch, wiped out all important traces of the possessing classes, wiped out the last remnants of the Bolshevik party, its leaders, traditions and principles, wiped out every shred of democracy, wiped out all possibility of simply restoring the old Trotskyist Opposition, and forced Trotsky himself to the subsequent conclusion that

from the standpoint of the centrist bureaucracy—the Stalinists, that is—the right wing represented a threat from the left. He never explained this enigmatic assertion. It goes without saying that not a single self-styled “Orthodox Trotskyist” today would grasp the meaning of this assertion, let alone try to explain it. In any case, Trotsky’s perspective was radically wrong and he never succeeded in ridding himself of the basic ambiguity it contained.

OUR PERSPECTIVE in the U. S. A. was likewise wrong, although the consequences were far less serious here than in Russia. A bewilderingly few months after our own expulsion by the Lovestoneites, the entire Lovestoneite leadership and the bulk of its national cadre—except for such dregs as Stachel, Minor and their kidney—were unceremoniously booted out of the party and the Comintern. A faster case of biters bit is not on recent record. After a few years of stertorous breathing, the Lovestone group performed the most outstandingly honest act of its existence—it voted to dissolve for want of any contribution it could make to the working class as an organization. Of it too, then, could be said that nothing became it so well in life as its way of taking farewell of it. (It is strange how other futilitarians, so numerous today, spurn the encouragement offered by this example of decent self-interment. It would seem that in politics, at least, some refuse burial services as stubbornly as if they were alive.)

Unexpected, in the last place, was the source from which the American Trotskyist movement sprang. A veritable mythology has been created on this score, modest when compared with the mythology of Stalinism but patterned after it nevertheless. If its

sole result were to feed the vanity that requires such a diet, it could be overlooked with the compassion felt by any Marxist to whom nothing human is alien. But it cannot be ignored when it serves questionable political ends and distorts historical events which demand clear understanding in the interests of today’s needs.

The Trotskyist group in this country was founded by some of the leaders of the Cannon faction in the Communist Party, most prominently by Cannon himself. But the idea that this faction had been, as he likes to say, “prepared by its past” for this distinguished action and role, that it had been moving inside the Communist Party straight or even more or less in the direction of Trotsky’s ideas, that its appearance as a Trotskyist group was only the logical and natural culmination of its preceding fight inside the party, is absurd where it is not pernicious. It is accepted only by uninformed people whose credulity has been coolly imposed upon in the hope that facts will not rudely intrude upon rhetoric and say-so. The reality is quite different from the tales of the mythicizers.

THE ENTIRE COMMUNIST PARTY was astounded, not to say stupefied and even incredulous, at hearing that Cannon had come forward as a supporter of the Russian Opposition. The announcement came as a bombshell, not only to the opponents of his party faction but also to its supporters. There was nothing in the past position or conduct of the faction that offered the slightest advance indication of the announcement that its leader and two of his associates were to make on October 27, 1928. Indeed the indications were of a distinctly different kind. The very way in which the group was born is an example. The Cannon fac-

tion came into existence in the C. P. as an independent group as a result of a split which it organized in 1925 in the Foster-Cannon group, which was by far the more healthy and proletarian of the two contending party factions. When Zinoviev, by an unprecedented cablegram from Moscow, robbed the Foster-Cannon faction of its legally-won majority at the party convention in order to turn the leadership over to the Lovestoneite minority, the rightly embittered Fosterites threatened a passive strike against Zinoviev’s outrage. Cannon thereupon split from the Fosterites, condemned them for “disloyalty to the Comintern” and even charged them with planning a “right-wing split” from the party. Those days and the three years of the party struggle that followed, including the part played in it by the Cannon faction, are like an unbelievable nightmare which a participant cannot recall with pride. From its birth, the Cannon faction never had a distinguishing program of its own, never played an independent role, never had a meaningful solution for the factionalism that incessantly corroded the party but whose roots it did not even begin to understand. If, as a small minority, it nevertheless had the support of a number of excellent militants, it won them not because of any of its virtues in principle or program—in general it had none that anyone, its spokesmen included, could ever define—but because of the out-and-out vices that marked the leadership and program of the Foster and Lovestone factions. Its sole attractive power lay in the repulsive power of the others. Having nothing or virtually nothing to offer the party in its own name, it was doomed to recommend itself to the party in the name of the others. Soon after its birth, it was completely federated with the

Lovestoneites, and jointly with them sought to smash the Foster group on the grounds that it represented a low grade of “trade-union communists” distinctly inferior to the “party communists” or “political communists” of the Lovestone faction. But before very long it created a new group out of a sordid alliance with disgruntled Lovestoneites like Weinstone, Ballam and for a moment Stachel—respectively a careerist, a cynic and plain scum. The alliance began to place distance between itself and its confederate of yesterday, the Lovestone faction, when rumors came from Moscow that new winds were blowing, that Lovestone’s patron, Zinoviev, was finished, that a new star was looming who favored decency, native leadership, worker-communists and simplicity in the Comintern parties and against “intellectuals” and “cablegram leaderships” (this star was Stalin!). The more emphatically this grotesque rumor was repeated, the more energetic became the Cannon and Foster faction in “developing differences” with the Lovestoneites of a kind that they felt would place them in the most favorable position before the new star rising in Moscow. On the eve of the Sixth World Congress, the two factions were reunited against the Lovestoneites on a trumped-up “program” of which a round nine-tenths was political and economic rubbish.* But this re-unification meant far less than appeared. Emissaries of the American factions in Moscow and emissaries of the Moscow factions in the United States made it clear that whether Lovestone or Foster was recognized as the official governor-general for the American party,

*It is noteworthy that after our expulsion from the C.P. as Trotskyists, we continued for some time to champion this perfectly typical sample of Zinovievist ultra-leftism which had as much in common with a Marxist or Trotskyist analysis and position as medicine men have with medical science.

the Cannon faction would carry no weight and would receive no recognition. No wonder Cannon refused to go as delegate to the 6th Congress and consented to attend only when driven to it by his own faction. It was obvious or it should have been that the Cannon faction had reached the end of its road in the party. It goes without saying that the prospect of supporting Trotsky was never so much as mentioned at formal or informal gatherings of the faction. Indeed it is not too much to say that of the three American factions, the Cannonites were generally marked out as those least interested or concerned with what was going on in the Russian party. The best that can be said for us in those days is that while we automatically voted to "endorse the Old Guard" and "condemn Trotskyism" the dubious honors for the outstanding work of denouncing Trotskyism throughout the party ranks and in the party press went to Lovestoneites like Wolfe, Stachel and Olgin and Fosterites like Bitelman and Browder.

Far, then, from being "prepared by our past" for Trotskyism, we were no less startled by Cannon's first (and of course exceedingly confidential) announcement of his support of the Russian Opposition than was the party as a whole when the three of us proclaimed that support to the Political Committee meeting at which we were expelled. I will never want, or be able, to forget the absolutely shattering effect upon my inexcusable indifference to the fight in the Russian party, upon my smug ignorance about the issues involved, upon my sense of shame, that was produced by the first reading of Trotsky's classic *Critique of the Draft Program of the Comintern*. But to Cannon's eternal credit he smuggled out of Moscow and illicitly circulated here among two or three of

his personal and political friends the numbered-copy, wretchedly-translated and brutally-excised *critique* which the Congress Secretariat had loaned to selected delegates with "read-and-return" instructions imperiously stamped on the top page. (What a regime, where Trotsky's writing had to be smuggled out of the country by communists the way revolutionists used to have to smuggle writings into the Russia of the Tsars! What a party, where Trotsky's writing had to be shown, furtively and only in the assured secrecy of a private dwelling, by one Central Committee member to another!) But neither can I forget the equally explosive effect the *Critique* had in lighting new horizons, in clarifying the problems of the revolutionary movement and pointing out new roads to tread in resolving them—horizons and roads, thoughts and perspectives, which the endless, pointless, unprincipled jungle-fighting of the American party factions had so completely obscured that one first-rate militant after another was poisoned by the lack of clean light and air of Marxist principles and Marxist thought, and rotted away to a Stalinist leprosy.

SO LONG AS THERE ARE CLASSES, the class struggle is irrepressible. The formation of a scientific socialist movement—a complex process—is an inevitable product of the modern class struggle and so is its re-formation. The fight begun by Trotsky against the undermining of the Russian Revolution was unquestionably the most important step in the re-formation of the socialist movement since a handful of Marxists set about reconstituting the international socialist movement after its collapse in 1914. The rise of the new, authentically socialist international was inevitable. When it

began to take on flesh and blood in the form of the Communist International and the Communist Parties throughout the world, the inevitable very often asserted itself, then too, through the accidental. Many were the unexpected situations and the unexpected individuals who made the new movement's growth possible. So it was a quarter of a century ago with us. That Cannon should have decided in 1928, out of the clear blue, to support the Russian Opposition, was an accident, and the motives that prompted him have been the subject of all sorts of speculation in the past (some interesting; others preposterous), which it would be out of place to consider here. But it was a lucky accident for us. The Cannon faction in the C. P. was tiny but close-knit. Yet the majority of its leading militants and its supporters in the ranks did not follow Cannon in his adoption of the Trotskyist position, and most of them soon became the most delirious anti-Trotskyists. If a few of us (myself, Marty Abern, Rose Karsner, Tom O'Flaherty and then Arne Swabeck, Albert Gates, V. R. Dunne and Karl Skoglund) did become Trotskyists, it was thanks primarily to the fact that Trotsky's views were sponsored by a party leader who enjoyed the prestige and authority that Cannon had in our eyes. And if the Trotskyist movement in this country showed greater substance, stability, seriousness and tenacity than in many other lands, that, in turn, was thanks primarily to the fact that Trotsky's views were popularized and defended by a basic cadre of communists experienced and known in many fields of activity and habituated to effective collaboration by years of common practice.

History would be mystical in nature, wrote Marx in 1871, if "accidents" played no part in it. That

holds true in particular for the history of the revolutionary movement. Anyone in it with eyes in his head has seen Marx corroborated a hundred times over: for any given period, "accidents" can play a decisive role in advancing or retarding it, "including the 'accident' of the character of the people who first stand at the head of the movement." This sort of "accident" makes it possible to speak not only of the "Trotskyist movement in the United States" but also of an "American Trotskyism." And without grasping what is signified by that, a good deal of the life of the Trotskyist movement in this country is bound to be incomprehensible and a very great deal that is instructive in it is bound to be lost.

The American Trotskyist movement was born with two distinct advantages. Trotsky's views, at the end of five intensive years of struggle in the party, had had a chance to develop far more fully and clearly than they appeared to be in 1923 or even in 1926. Many who solidarized themselves with Trotsky in the earlier years were really under misapprehension about what he stood for in reality and in the long run; and as his views unfolded more extensively, they took their leave with the adequate excuse that they had not realized where they were going. Those who solidarized themselves with Trotsky in 1928 and afterward, had no such excuse and they never dreamed of invoking it—they knew where Trotsky stood and where they themselves stood and they joined him without political reservations. That was one advantage we had over every other Trotskyist group in the world, with the exception of the French. With them we shared another advantage, one that was derived from the acknowledged leader of the organization (at least for the time when

Alfred Rosmer was its spokesman in France), in our case from Cannon. We have listened to many attempts to ignore or deny this fact but we never heard one of any merit.

CANNON GAVE the American Trotskyist movement a personal link with the preceding revolutionary movements and therewith helped to preserve the continuity of the movement, a factor disdained by the dilettante and inordinately worshipped by the bureaucrat but nevertheless regarded as highly important and precious by any responsible militant. Cannon was among the first in this country to become a firm champion of the Bolshevik Revolution; as one of the leaders of the left wing in the old Socialist Party he became a leading founder of the Communist Labor Party in 1919; he helped defeat the faction of professional illegalists who insisted on keeping the communist movement of this country in a sub-cellar; and became first national chairman of the party when it re-emerged as an open, legal organization in 1923. Even before the first world war, Cannon had already attained prominence among the younger militants of the I.W.W., being one of the adherents of Vincent St. John whom he almost succeeded in later years in winning to the communist ranks.

From the beginning of the movement, he was outstanding and steady in his insistence that the organization would never amount to much unless it oriented itself primarily and mainly toward the proletariat, unless it rooted itself strong and deep in the organized labor movement, unless it became itself an overwhelmingly proletarian movement. These ideas may be regarded as the most obvious commonplaces of the Marxist movement, and are thereupon dismissed by some as

of little importance. But it must be remembered that as late as the '30s in this country, the communist movement never had more than scanty, isolated or haphazard contact with the broad labor movement and was to a large extent alien to it; and that the Trotskyist movement, except for estimable but incidental connections with parts of the labor movement, was completely isolated from it for many years. It should be borne in mind, further, that precisely because we were so intensely concerned with profound theoretical problems and so preoccupied with "Russian" or "international" questions to the exclusion (whether real or apparent, is beside the point here) of "American" questions, we tended in the early days to attract mainly the younger people, students, intellectuals good and bad, very few workers, even fewer active trade unionists, still fewer trade unionists active in the basic and most important unions, but more than a few dilettantes, well-meaning blunders, biological chatterboxes, ultra-radical oat-sowers, unattachable wanderers, and many other kinds of sociological curiosities. Most of them made bivouac with us for a while, but not for too long. Of the movement, the best were those who completely assimilated the meaning of the proletarian character that the living and genuine socialist movement must have. If he sometimes injected an unjustified polemical or factional warp into his emphasis, it was nonetheless Cannon who was most persistent throughout the early, difficult years of isolation in imbuing all the serious people with an alertness to the need of a proletarian movement; and on the whole he was likewise the most effective of us all.

These two advantages that the American Trotskyist movement drew out of its own midst, particularly from

the leadership which founded it, were much more considerable than might appear to the passing observer. Yet, if it were not for the ideas and leadership of Trotsky himself, which were obviously the really decisive factors in maintaining the integrity and cohesiveness of the American movement, these advantages would long before now have been cancelled out by the disadvantages that stemmed from the same source.

CANNON RECEIVED HIS FIRST TRAINING in the revolutionary movement as an I.W.W. and in the better half of it, at that. But, as the final development of the I.W.W. underscored with such tragic finality, its great and even glorious contributions to the advancement of the revolution in this country were undermined and finally destroyed by its negative aspects. Of these, no matter how understandable they are in the light of conditions of the times, there were not few. The most disastrous in the long run was its attitude toward revolutionary theory, ranging from indifference to derision to contemptuous hostility. French syndicalist theory was skinny enough in its best day, but it was positively robust compared to what came out of the I.W.W. On the battlefields of the class war, the I.W.W. was an exemplar of brotherhood, combativity, incorruptibility and uncompromising hatred of exploitation and injustice. But theoretically and politically, the I.W.W. was simply a desert with only occasional and seldom-used oases which were not enough to sustain its life in the ripping crises of the World War and the Bolshevik Revolution. Like many European syndicalists and anarchists, some notable Wobblies found the basic dilemma of their movement resolved by the ideas that triumphed in the Bolshevik Revolution and the

Comintern, and many of them remained better revolutionists than scores of incorrigible social-democratic parliamentarians who hastily jumped on the new bandwagon. Among the Wobblies who came over to the communist movement, men like Bill Haywood and George Andreychine were better known, but Cannon was nevertheless outstanding as a party man. So were the contributions he made to a movement which, above all in this country, was cursed at the outset by a predominance of elements alien to a proletarian movement, to a socialist movement, to an internationalist movement and even to an American movement. But while he left far behind him the prejudices which most Wobblies carried as their distinguishing badge, he did not (or could not) free himself in reality from the worst of them—that corroding contempt for theory.

The communist movement was not the I.W.W., and no leader could live long in it who expressed the same attitude toward scientific thinking and generalization which was so popular among Wobblies (including Wobbly demagogues, of whom there was a countable number). Everyone learned to repeat Lenin's phrase "Without revolutionary theory, no revolutionary practice," and Cannon learned it and repeated it as often and as devoutly as the next man. Unfortunately, that changed very little and most of the change was on the surface. The American communist movement did not live in an atmosphere which encouraged Marxian thought beyond the assimilation of some of the basic ideas put forward by Lenin or popularized by Zinoviev. It encouraged instead the kind of fraudulent, unprincipled factional polemics that helped to destroy it eventually. The Trotsky-

ist movement which succeeded it was radically different in this respect. It was compelled to start and for a long time to remain almost exclusively a movement passionately and earnestly devoted to a theoretical reconsideration of many basic suppositions, theoretical re-evaluations, theoretical criticism, clarity and preciseness, as the prerequisites of revolutionary political practice. In this field Cannon was, to put it bluntly, helpless, much more so than had been so notoriously the case with him in the Communist Party. As his equipment in this field, he had a considerable quantity of commonplaces and truisms which he accumulated from his extensive experience and sparse studies in the revolutionary movement. They were not merely valuable, but indispensable, especially in a movement whose recruits included people with little or no experience or well-assimilated knowledge of many of its basic principles. To the untutored mind, a truism is a revelation indeed and one, moreover, that he needs more than he thinks.

But as the critical thinker—including the man of action who has learned how greatly preliminary thought adds to the effectiveness and lasting value of his action—passes beyond the A B C's and the simple formulae for simple situations, and confronts more complex political problems, more intricate social relations and conflicts, he feels more acutely the importance and power of Marxian theory. These are situations and problems for which "common sense" (as Marx used to call it derisively) and "sound intuition" are inadequate at best and unreliable as a rule. In the Trotskyist movement in particular, very few people could be impressed by a solemniferous repetition of Lenin's famous phrase. From their leaders they expected more than the sonorous phrase,

and even more than an ability to repeat the theoretical propositions so brilliantly put forward by Trotsky. They expected their leaders to show a respect for Marxian theory that would be manifested in a *knowledge* of its historical development and an *ability* to employ that knowledge in dealing with problems of the day. Cannon had neither the knowledge nor the ability, as was known to all his old friends and critics, but above all to himself; and it did not take a new recruit many years in the movement to become painfully aware of this grave, if not fatal, defect in the leader of a Marxian revolutionary movement. As the movement grew, so grew also the number of comrades who realized that the most prominent leader of their organization could go from year to year (to date, the record covers twenty-five unbroken years) without writing a single article on any question of Marxism, on any vital theoretical problem of the movement, historical or contemporary, on any question of international politics or even, for that matter, on any vital question of American politics. There are some articles in which some of these questions are dealt with and disposed of by quoting or paraphrasing what Trotsky wrote; there are some agitational articles against capitalism, Stalinism, or reformism; there are many, many articles or speeches on factional fighting—and that is all. If some of it rises above the trivial, none of it bursts out of the commonplace by design. The ideas that Cannon accumulated in the movement were not only enough but more than enough to enable him to explode the position of any defender of capitalist exploitation or politics, any apologist for Stalinism, any spokesman for class collaboration. But in any debate in the party over questions that directly involved Marx-

ian theory and politics, his performance, where it was not banal, could only create the embarrassment that it did, not only among older comrades but, alas, among many younger ones as well.

Extremely conscious of this shortcoming, and just as sensitive to the awareness of it in others, Cannon choked off the potential for political development in literally dozens of comrades who came under his influence by instilling in them a disdainful attitude toward "theory" and "theorizers" and "intellectuals" in general. His insistence on a proletarian orientation for the movement—so incontestably right in and of itself, now as much as at the beginning—was subverted to the denigration of "theorizers" and people "abnormally" concerned with analyzing political and theoretical problems. As a result he raised up, by and large, factional adherents to a cult of pseudo-proletarian ignorance, instead of earnest revolutionists anxious to suck as much scientific knowledge and understanding as they can out of the riches available in the movement in order to make themselves increasingly free from enforced reliance upon authority. The kind of leadership that he produced in this image and the kind of education it gave to the organization is practically without precedent in the Marxian movement and, in one harsh word, is a disgrace to its traditions.

While Trotsky was alive, the vast esteem in which he was held by the movement made it possible for him to exert a counteracting influence so great that it heavily mitigated the baleful effects of Cannon's leadership. It was thanks to Trotsky's efforts that a small but precious generation of militants was trained in an understanding and respect for the achievements of socialist thought, a knowl-

edge of its history and traditions, a realization of the innate shortcomings of that unique American brand of vulgar practicalism which, however it is explained in the light of the historical development of the country, is nevertheless the curse of the radical and labor movements. With very few exceptions, the intimate followers of Cannon never played more than a passive role in sustaining Trotsky's efforts in this respect. Cannon himself played as good as no role at all. It is hard to believe that of the leader of the American Trotskyist movement—now the officially crowned leader of something called "Orthodox Trotskyism"—but it is true. Cannon liked to repeat again and again to his cronies and to young comrades who came under his fleeting influence that "In politics I am a Trotskyist; but in organizational questions I am a Leninist." It was his way of saying that he left all the big political and theoretical questions to Trotsky, provided he remained in control of the organization (Lenin's "organizational principles" he understood solely in the form in which they were transcribed and taught to him in the Communist Party by Zinoviev, who had infinitely more in common in this field with Stalin than with the real Lenin; and to this day Cannon does not clearly know the difference between Zinoviev and Lenin). So it was, on the whole. Cannon never showed more than the most nominal interest in the tremendous work done in this country, by myself in particular, to select, translate, edit and publish the theoretical, polemical and political works of Trotsky. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL was founded against Cannon's opposition and maintained year in year out against his indifference. He never showed any interest in its work and development and of course practically never wrote for it.

If questions of theoretical or historical importance or of wider political importance and value interest him, he has not allowed himself to be carried off by them. His concern has always been: questions of trade-union tactics and maneuver, inner-party and factional manipulations, questions of leadership, above all the prestige and control of the leadership.*

TROTSKY ALWAYS REFUSED to support the complaints against Cannon that were made repeatedly by comrades who enumerated not only his theoretical and political shortcomings but his bureaucratic regime inside the organization. There is ample reason to believe that Trotsky had few illusions about Cannon on either score.

With regard to the first complaint, he used to repeat to the critical and often embittered comrades that he would not support any struggle against Cannon's leadership on such grounds. To some of them he would add, as discreetly as possible, that Cannon was not to be attacked but, within certain limits, supported. As he indicated to some of the critics, it was necessary to understand that Cannon

*It would be too much to ask for a more self-revealing portrait than is provided by Cannon himself in a recent inner-party speech celebrating another of the splits he succeeded in consummating. Speaking of the split in 1940, he says: "Shachtman and Burnham were by no means mere ornaments in the Political Committee. They were the editors of the magazine and of the paper, and they did practically all the literary work. There was a division of labor between them and me, whereby I took care of the organizational and trade union direction, administration and finances—and all the rest of the chores that intellectuals don't like to bother with as a rule—and they did the writing, most of it. And when they were on the right line they wrote very well, as you know." (Fourth International, Nov.-Dec., 1953.) What Cannon refers to casually as "all the literary work" was the work of presenting, applying, popularizing and defending the ideas, principles, theories, program of Marxism or, if you will, of Trotskyism. It is absolutely impossible even to imagine people like Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, or socialist leaders of lesser stature, boasting of the kind of "division of labor" in a revolutionary party leadership that Cannon proclaims between himself—as the "practical man," the "organization man"—and the "intellectuals." Despite its conciseness, Cannon has seldom, if ever, given a truer idea of his conception of party leadership and of his own role in it.

was a product of the American labor and revolutionary movements as they have developed in their own social and historical environment; that if he had some of the shortcomings of these movements he also had their virtues; and that he would be superseded by a superior leadership not as a result of a factional fight in which opponents would win a numerical majority, but only when the advancement of the class struggle in the United States would lift the proletariat to a higher level and lift out of itself leaders who in turn stood on a higher level. These views, carefully reflected in some of his writings on the factional struggles in the American movement, were rather objective but somewhat philosophical.

With regard to the other complaint, he was less philosophical, because he had fewer illusions. He understood that Cannon was not only a product of the American working class (and in an even wider sense, of the American type of politics—that is, American bourgeois politics), but also a product of the Comintern of Zinoviev's days. This eminent and tragic figure was not only a highly successful popularizer of Lenin's ideas but also a highly successful distorter of them. He taught a whole generation of communists some of the fundamental ideas of modern Marxism whose validity remains essentially intact today. But he also mistaught and ruined most of that generation, some only in part and others completely. More than any other individual, he poisoned the Comintern's life with methods, procedures, and party conceptions that contributed heavily to the eventual triumph of Stalinism. What Cannon learned about Lenin's conceptions of the role of the party, of the party cadre, of the party leadership, of party democracy, he learned not from

Lenin but, like virtually all the Communist Party leaders of his time, from Zinoviev, that is, from the ridiculous caricature of Lenin's ideas and traditions that flowered in the disastrous days of Zinoviev's "Bolshevization" campaign. In the American Communist Party, Cannon was one of the first and most ardent champions of that ill-begotten, ill-fated, anti-Bolshevik "Bolshevization." To this day, he acts no better; worst of all is the fact that he does not even know that better exists and that Zinoviev's campaign was a forgery and a calamity from start to finish, from purpose to consequence. Trotsky did know it, however. In the course of the very first factional struggle which Cannon precipitated in the Trotskyist organization here, Trotsky found himself impelled to write to us that he could not fail to see in it the methods and traditions of Zinovievism. It was a gentle and restrained rebuke to Cannon, but its meaning was unequivocal. It is doubtful if Cannon has grasped its real import to this day. In any case, his conduct in a whole series of factional struggles does not betray any awareness of it on his part. He suffers, as he always did, from that Zinovievist evil which endeavors to solve significant political differences and conflicts primarily by organizational means and preferably by ruthless splits—to say nothing of half a dozen other evils which helped to make up the name of Zinovievism in the history of the movement. In some of Cannon's own speeches can be found instance after instance of how Trotsky, aware of the Comintern school that had produced Cannon, tried as diplomatically and pedagogically as possible to induce Cannon to follow a democratic and reasonable course in a factional situation or in the organization of the internal life of the party, rather than the bureau-

cratic and surgical methods toward which Cannon turned almost spontaneously. Fortunately, Trotsky was often successful, even if he was not right in every instance. However that may be, Cannon has not had to suffer from this sort of intervention for many years. The utterly bureaucratic regime that he has succeeded in establishing in his organization—up to and including the idolatrous burning of incense to The Leader in the party press, to say nothing of party-sponsored public birthday banquets to various Leaders (the mere thought of which is like a cathartic to a self-respecting socialist)—is of a piece with the utter theoretical, political and, in general, intellectual aridity which reigns there.

WHILE TROTSKY WAS ALIVE, it was, after all, his ideas which prevailed and they were the ones that fertilized and fructified the movement. But even in the last political conflict inside the movement, he involuntarily gave us an adequate glimpse of his real appraisal of the Cannonite leadership. That was the conflict produced in 1939 by the war crisis. Even though our own position (that of the minority combination) was not clearly thought out or, at any rate, fully developed, we were not only on the right path but were already politically sound enough to shatter the traditional position of the Trotskyist movement which the Cannonite leadership tried to defend (namely, Russia is a degenerated workers' state and must be unconditionally defended in the war). The word "shatter" is used deliberately and without a trace of boastfulness or exaggeration. In the debate that opened up on the "Russian question," the position of the Cannonites was so hopeless that their leader, after one or two incredible speeches, withdrew completely from participation in

the discussion on that question and settled down instead to the factional task of organizing the mass expulsion of the minority and therewith the split. Trotsky's intervention in the conflict was, so far as I can recall, absolutely without parallel in the history of the international leadership of the Marxist movement. World leaders like Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky himself had intervened more than once in the disputes of this or that national section of the movement, for it was their right and duty to express their opinions and to seek to influence the outcome. But never before in such a way and on such a scale as did Trotsky in the S.W.P. in 1939-1940. Virtually from the first day of the fight to the day of the final break, he took over completely the conduct and direction of the fight against the minority in every respect and in every particular, from the decisive political question itself down to the most trivial detail. He brought to bear every ounce of his knowledge, his experience, his polemical talent, his esteemed authority, to gain support for his views. The official party leadership, the majority, the Cannonites, were simply relieved of all initiative, all enterprise and at bottom all responsibility in the discussion—just as if they simply did not exist. That they were not overcome with a sense of humiliation was itself a sad sign. Every document we put out was immediately subjected to a counter-document by Trotsky, who rushed in immediately as if he feared what the party leadership would say in reply to us if left to its own resources. This went so far that Trotsky found it necessary to mail one of his documents against us directly to all the party branches throughout the country, without waiting to have it sent out in the normal way, that is, through the

national office of the organization! Down to the sorriest organizational minutiae, Trotsky substituted himself completely for the leadership he supported. The Cannonites became a mimeographing machine for Trotsky's articles and letters. They had nothing whatever of their own to say in the debate except to parrot mechanically what was written in Trotsky's latest polemic, whether they understood it or not. In no internal dispute in the Trotskyist movement had Trotsky ever before found himself impelled to go to such incredible extremes in his intervention. He always had enough confidence in the group he supported to allow it independent initiative and responsibility in a fight. In 1939, the detailed and, one might say, the desperately anxious way he intervened could only show he had no confidence at all in the ability of the Cannonites to conduct the political or even the organizational fight. The role he took upon himself in that struggle (regardless for the moment of who was right or wrong in the issues at stake) constituted an absolutely annihilating judgment against the qualities of the Cannonites as party leaders in a serious crisis. Even worse, if that were possible, were the gratitude and glee that the Cannonite leaders displayed in having thus been released by Trotsky from the responsibilities (to say nothing of the dignity) of leadership. Cannon left the discussion to the Old Man and ourselves, and concentrated his talents upon getting rid of annoying critics by organizing the split, that is, the outcome that Trotsky was at the same time trying his best, by means of exerting pressure on both sides, to avert ("in politics I am a Trotskyist; but in organizational questions I am a Leninist").

THE OUTCOME OF THAT CONFLICT marks the broad dividing line in the development of the Trotskyist movement all over the world. It only emphasized the damning judgment which Trotsky's very support of the Cannonites pronounced against them. Despite the comparative weakness of our own undeveloped position; despite the power with which long tradition invested the official position; despite the long-standing prestige which Cannon enjoyed, generally speaking, in the party; and above and beyond all other considerations, despite the unprecedented authority which Trotsky rightfully had throughout the movement and which he used to the full in the debate—the Cannonites skinned through at the concluding convention with a bare formal majority, that is, a slight majority of the voting party membership, but a minority if the votes of both the party and the youth organizations were counted. (Among the youth, it is significant to note, Cannon had practically no support at all, either then, before or since.) The victory was truly Pyrrhic. Actually it was a resounding repudiation of Cannon. Everyone was aware of this: if Trotsky had not intervened the way he did, or if he had not been in a position to intervene at all, the Cannonites, on their own, would have been routed and overwhelmed beyond recovery. If that was not the case, it is Trotsky and only Trotsky they have to thank. By the same token, it is Trotsky who must bear his share of the responsibility for the subsequent evolution of the movement he inspired and led.

His share, however, should not be exaggerated. Despite some external appearances to the contrary, there was a basic difference between the current in the socialist movement most brilliantly and consistently represented

by Trotsky during his lifetime, and the current represented more or less consistently by the present "Orthodox Trotskyists." Of the latter, Trotsky might well say now, paraphrasing the sardonically bitter words Marx used to describe some French "Orthodox Marxists" of his time, "I sowed dragon's teeth and reaped Cannonites." For the latter represent a current which, while allied with Trotskyism for some time, was essentially inimical to it and distorted its development. In this country it can be characterized as a variety of Zinovievism, infused with scattered elements of Trotskyism and with heavy doses of the specifically American contempt for theory and equally American admiration for the concept and practice of the "party boss" or its equivalent in the labor movement, the "trade-union boss." If this current—contrary to Trotsky's wishes and urgings—found it impossible to tolerate us Marxists in the same organization but instead expelled us *en masse* in a way that would evoke the admiration of any Stalinist; and if it found it impossible years later to consummate re-unification with us—that cannot be explained away as accidental. We represent indeed two different currents.

But we must leave to the next issue a consideration of how each of the two has developed since the split and just what each of them does represent or seeks to represent today. In the course of this consideration it will be possible to summarize what there is, after the experiences of the last twenty-five years, that must be discarded or neglected in Trotskyism, and what remains alive, valid and durable for the socialist movement.

Max SHACHTMAN

McCarthy and McCarthyism

The New Look of America's Post War Reaction

McCarthyism has become the political issue of the day in America. Even the most cynical sophisticate who reflects for a moment on such a grotesque fact cannot fail to be amazed at this degradation of political life in the United States. The newspaper accounts of the present conflict of McCarthy-Cohn versus the U. S. Army has the quality of parody. An alleged Communist dentist drafted into the army, who, at most, could have kept the Kremlin well-informed on the national state of G.I. cavities becomes a *cause célèbre*, the basis for McCarthy's usual accusation, this time directed at the army, of "coddling Communists." The senator's wild accusation is then "substantiated" by the sensational exposure of another allegedly dangerous and coddled Communist in the Pentagon, this time a 60 dollar-a-week "code-clerk," who, it is now apparent, knew as little about codes as she does of communism, the Communist Party or why she was subpoenaed.

The skit-like quality of McCarthyism is by no means monopolized by McCarthy. The former conservative president of Harvard, Dr. James Conant, upon his appointment as American High Commissioner to Germany, was opposed by Senator Mundt because, "he is too bookish a fellow." As Stuart Chase sardonically noted in a recent letter to the *New York Times*, "Anyone who can read" can be made an object of suspicion. These McCarthyist techniques and accusations are not limited to the political arena. McCarthyism has spread from Washington like a plague of insects carrying a noxious disease, penetrating

every area of social and cultural life. Recently two teachers were fired for having the audacity to read in class belle-lettristic essays by D. H. Lawrence. The principal remarked that it was a disgrace and that Lawrence was probably a Communist.

The arts have been victimized no less than our educational institutions. Recently a 2300-year-old play by the Greek playwright, Aristophanes, "The Ecclesiazusae" was sharply cut in its performance for fear that the censored lines were too pro-communistic.

These, of course, are but a minute sampling of atrocities committed in this flowering age of McCarthyism. What removes them from the stage of pure burlesque is not only the criminal injustices perpetrated against personal victims and artistic sensibilities, but that they are symptomatic of substantial changes taking place in the American political system. They are the indices of a falling barometer.

How is it possible for the shift in American politics to assume such unprecedentedly crude, clumsy and universal manifestations? This is the question which disturbs American liberals and confounds Europeans.

McCarthyism is a peculiarly American phenomenon. It is the warped product of the growing disproportion between the capacities of American capitalism and the momentous problems which confront it. It is not the inevitably begotten fruit of capitalism in the abstract but is revealed by its specific features as the natural product of American capitalism. We doubt that any European bourgeois class would emulate the methods and techniques of McCarthyism under similar

circumstances. It is not a matter of the superior morality or virtue of European capitalism; its history is bloody; the actions of French imperialism in Indo-China and North Africa, the brutality of British imperialism in Kenya, the memory of nazism embraced by the German bourgeoisie and fascism in Italy unmasks their affected moral indignation. The European bourgeoisie is perturbed by the fact that they, too, are being victimized by American McCarthyism; and they are confounded by what appears to them as its needless elements of irrationality, grossness and stupidity.

The perplexity of European critics of McCarthyism stems from their failure to understand that every reaction assumes specific forms reflecting the character, background and psychology of its ruling class. The fascist reactions in Germany and Italy for example, while fundamentally identical, assumed different forms in each country. The racism and anti-Semitism most peculiar to German fascism were, in a sense, not an essential part of fascism but a reflection of the training, history and temperament of German capitalism. We cannot compare McCarthyism with fascism as parallel reactions; our comparison with fascism is merely designed to illustrate that while a reaction in post war America would have been propelled by any type of bourgeoisie, the level on which this reaction manifests itself reflects the special development of American capitalism.

In the United States capitalism came into its own relatively recently; its industrial revolution is less than a century old. America has no pre-capitalist history as is the case with Europe. It had no Old Order to combat, not only physically but intellectually. Feudalism was already a thing of the past when capitalism was consolidated

here. It didn't have to depend as much on its wits, it did not need to develop trained diplomats and felt no compelling need for men of learning to represent it in struggle against competing capitalisms or the Old Order. In short what America developed were many politicians but few statesmen. Capitalism here grew rich on its native resources, relatively independent of European capitalism and divorced from the refinements of European culture. It became a hard-headed class of practical men, pre-occupied with compounding their wealth, distrustful of "bookish fellows" or anything smacking of intellectuality.

The European bourgeoisie, given its heritage, achieved varying degrees of sophistication, unknown to modern American capitalism. Europe developed a certain tradition of literate statesmen while the United States has specialized in the manufacture of a special breed of web-footed politicians. Whatever fine traditions existed in the early period of post-colonial American capitalism have long since been lost.

THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION is a clinical example of the backwardness of American politics; McCarthyism is its sick offspring. In what other age could one find an administration so totally lacking in subtlety and sophistication? In what other period have the forces of pedestrianism and philistinism established such a tight stranglehold on official political life? In what other administration can we fail to find an interesting personality?

In the president's chair sits a smiling, bumbling trout fisherman and golfer whose favorite reading material, he genially informs us, are cowboy stories. In the vice-presidency is a miserable huckster, a cheap publicity salesman whose pose as a modern Clay

is marred only by the fact that he can neither think, write nor speak with the intelligence of the great compromiser. His recent speech, supposedly a rebuke to McCarthy, but more like a gentle pat, is required reading for any person willing to inflict upon himself a study of platitudes in American political life. Note the following passage from the speech by this "anti"-McCarthy McCarthyist, the vice-president of a nation of 160 millions and the international trouble-shooter of the most powerful nation in the world. It is the only passage that resembles a rebuke to McCarthy, and should be read for its typical richness of thought, imagery and prose style:

Now I can imagine that some of you who are listening will say "well, why all of this hullabaloo about being fair when you're dealing with a gang of traitors?"

As a matter of fact I've heard people say, "After all, they're a bunch of rats. What we ought to do is to go out and shoot 'em." Well, I'll agree they're a bunch of rats, but just remember this. When you go out to shoot rats, you have to shoot straight, because when you shoot wildly it not only means that the rat may get away more easily, you make it easier on the rat.

But you might hit someone else who's trying to shoot rats too. And so we've got to be fair.

On the nation's top advisory council, the exalted cabinet, sit some of America's most noted nonentities. It is truly the Executive Committee of American Babbitry: a collection of business men who were no less convinced than their golfing president that what the nation needed was an added touch of good-old American business techniques applied to national and international affairs. Many of them have already retired from politics, and returned to the business of making money. And what of the American legislature which has become a circus of and a haven for stumpers, sheriffs,

narrow and malicious inquisitors? Does this Congress have any rival for plain old fashioned dullness and obtuseness? And on every level of local and national politics charges are exchanged — and substantiated — by the two parties against each other of graft and corruption.

This primitivism of a type which has no parallel in European politics provides the necessary bacteriological-culture in which McCarthyism can fester.

WHETHER THE IDES OF MARCH have cast their baleful spell upon McCarthy or not, McCarthyism will remain firmly implanted in American bourgeois life. In this fact lies the weakness of the term. For McCarthyism represents no thought out social philosophy of a particular senator from Wisconsin, but can best be understood in its broadest sense as the excesses of the post-war reaction. This reaction preceded McCarthy and will continue should he be eclipsed; it was induced by the fear, panic and paralysis of the bourgeoisie in the face of Stalinist expansionism, alreading assuming dangerous proportions under the Truman administration. It was during the Fair Deal reign that the foundation of what is popularly known today as McCarthyism was solidly established. The loyalty oaths, the subversive lists, Congressional inquisitions, Executive Order Number 9835, all familiar activities of the Truman administration, planted the seeds of the now lush political jungle in America in which McCarthyite cave-men conduct their barbarous, and sometimes cannibalistic rites. It was under the Truman administration that the character of the present Supreme Court was finally shaped with the selection of four political backwoods-men to the nation's highest ju-

dicial body; men who have used every shabby argument to keep the offensive against democratic liberties free of legal and constitutional booby traps. It was under the Truman administration that the whole political atmosphere in this country became poisonous and intellectually asphyxiating with but the feeblest protest from left-wing Democrats and the approval of the Democratic Party as a whole. It was Truman who suggested personally and publicly, that neighbor spy on neighbor, reporting suspicions to the FBI. It was under the Truman administration that the denial of the right of a member of the Communist Party to teach became an accepted doctrine of Democrat and Republican alike. These activities of the Fair Dealers were carried out with hesitation and even with reluctance. Let us give the devil his due, even when it is so little. But conscience could not compete with what seemed in their eyes political expediency; with what liberals thought was a necessary liberal compromise with their abstract democratic values. However, our analysis while taking their conscience into account, gives prime importance to the cold fact that their concessions and capitulations mark the first phase of McCarthyism in America.

This first phase provided McCarthy with the political tenor and precedent from which he could proceed with the wisdom, cunning and logic of a shrewd and brutal politician.

This poisoned atmosphere was to the arch reactionaries as oxygen to life. It gave hope and courage to elements in the antediluvian political spectrum ranging from the American Legion and the Grant Wood Ladies to the professional race baiters and fascists; the semi-repressed xenophobes of the mid-West were revived

by the foul air, America Firsters and ex-Bundists felt their oats once again, the Texas oil millionaires whose wealth is in direct proportion to their ignorance became the social and financial benefactors of the scum of American society. These are the cadres of the current phase of McCarthyism carrying through with inexorable logic the aforementioned policies of Truman, and, tragically, winning wide popular support through demagogic passion and vigor.

MCCARTHYISM AS IT NOW EXISTS cannot be defined with a single phrase. It has no organization which it can call its own, but is a force which operates within and outside of both major parties. It has nothing which can properly be called an ideology. McCarthyism is a reaction which is more easily recognized by its specific acts and techniques. Nevertheless, for all its lack of formal organization and programmatic detail, McCarthyism is a social reaction with sufficiently visible characteristics and effects to mark it as something unique in American politics.

We have already mentioned in passing one fundamentally different characteristic of McCarthyism as compared to previous reactions: its durability. Its impact has been made on every phase of political and social life in America and those conditions, primarily international, which facilitated the growth of McCarthyism show no signs of soon disappearing or even receding. McCarthyism is fated to remain as a symmetrical political parallel to the permanent war economy.

The beginning of the cold war signified the beginning of the end of the traditional bourgeois democratic values *as we knew them in the Thirties*. This does not mean by any stretch of the imagination that we are on the

brink of fascism or that totalitarianism is imminent or that McCarthyism has no limits beyond which it cannot successfully trespass in this period. It is simply a recognition of the more than quantitative difference between the era of hard won rights the American people enjoyed in the Thirties and the wretched state of political freedoms today. It is the American form of retrogression, a reflex to the last imperialist war and its aftermath—the cold war and the sweep of Stalinism over half of Europe and Asia. In Europe retrogression was manifested in the loss of national dignity, increasingly enforced dependence on the United States and political stagnation. McCarthyism's corrupting impact on democratic rights is America's throwback and no less revealing of the futility of bourgeois opposition to Stalinism.

A victory of the Democratic Party in the coming Congressional elections would, at best, tend to level off the present McCarthyite reaction, but reasonable people, above all, among the Democrats, cannot foresee in a Democratic victory a return to anything resembling the bourgeois liberalism of the Thirties.

The whole political scene in the United States has so pronouncedly changed that even our terminology has been affected by it. Individuals and groups are referred to as "liberals" or "standard-bearers of liberalism" who just two short decades ago would have been considered conservative by early New Deal liberal standards. There is hardly a single prominent individual or group in the top echelons of either wing of either party who advocates a return to the relative freedom of this earlier period. One of the few exceptions, perhaps, is Senator Lehman but even he, the most

outspoken and for a while the only opponent of rabid McCarthyism on the Senate floor, saw fit to vote with all other Democrats (except Fulbright) in favor of granting McCarthy the funds necessary for the perpetuation of his committee on the ground that he agreed in principle with the right of Congress to organize such investigations.

The method employed by the Democrats in their defense against the more fantastic of McCarthy's charges has been me-tooism. Adlai Stevenson, now a liberal by our shift in values, but actually a conservative thinker, has proudly pointed out that it was under the Truman administration that loyalty oaths, subversive lists, government purges and the use of the Smith Act were initiated. This is presumably a "liberal" defense of a "liberal" regime by a "liberal" intellectual politician.

It is taken for granted among the Fair Dealers that at least for the duration of the cold war the democratic liberties which have been abandoned one after the other will continue to remain things of the past. It is interesting to note how the thinking of liberals has been so corrupted in the present period that the argumentation they offered in opposition to the Bricker Amendment was replete with anti-democratic overtones. They elevated the presidency to a point almost beyond the reach of Congress, a move dictated not by liberal conscience but, once again, by political expediency. Paradoxically enough, the proponents of the Bricker Amendment (an expression of McCarthyism in foreign affairs, thoroughly reactionary in its motives, objectives and would-be effects) proved capable of marshalling liberal arguments against the conservative arguments of their liberal op-

ponents. More recently the behavior of the liberals in the McCarthy-Cohn-Schine-Army fracas reveals the fragility of their liberal values. Again, in the interests of political expediency they have resorted to an absolutely shameless defense of the military as a virtually untouchable caste, whose inviolability is not to be trespassed upon by popularly elected legislators, thus diluting their liberal appeal and at the same time weakening the struggle against McCarthy.

The conduct of the liberals on these two issues is a measure of their bankruptcy. McCarthyism has committed one outrage after another against liberal ideas, liberal institutions and liberal people and all that the liberals could do was seek cover or apologize, with but rare voices of principled liberal protest. The liberal world has rallied on only two occasions—not in defense of liberalism but in defense of the principle of the independence of the executive from the legislative powers, and the rights of the military!

AT NO OTHER TIME in American history could one living in a retrograde era fail to see some hope for a dissipation of the reactionary mood and a democratic revival, even within the framework of capitalist governments. That the best that can be hoped for today under either a Democratic or Republican administration is a relaxation of the reaction, and possibly an attempt to restrain McCarthy is related to another distinctive feature of McCarthyism. Reactionary movements and moods in the United States in the past have been, for the most part, a product of internal conflict. Economic crises and acute class struggles provided their impulse. These elements are totally absent as causal factors in the rise of McCarthy and McCarthyism. McCarthyism was al-

ready flourishing when family income and employment were at the highest level in history, and the labor movement was not engaged in any militant class struggle activities which would sound the alarm for industrialists or politicians. It would be futile to seek primary reasons for the growth of McCarthyism strictly in internal political problems. McCarthyism was essentially generated by the fear of international Stalinism and thrived upon revelations of espionage. With or without McCarthy this movement has become the pathetic answer of the American bourgeoisie to Stalinism. Every victory of Stalinism has been accompanied by a McCarthyite advance, and every advance of McCarthyism facilitates further victories of Stalinism.

There is a third distinctive aspect of McCarthyism and one which bodes perhaps the greatest ill. For the first time we have a powerful force which operates within the framework of bourgeois democracy, yet in defiance of and against it. McCarthyism has achieved sufficient power in and outside of government to attack and at times devitalize institutions of government and state. Not only are Stalinists and non-conformists threatened and persecuted, but some of the most honored bourgeois personalities, liberal and conservative, have been victimized. The epithets "traitor," "spy" and "conspirator" are hurled not only at alleged members of the Communist Party but also at the Democratic Party and the former president of the United States. In one instance after another we have seen how the State Department, the Voice of America, the United States Information Service, the American Occupation authorities in Europe have been demoralized by fantastic accusations. These accusations by McCarthy have proven

to be more than just rhetoric, but have been acted upon by Congressional committees with only occasional token resistance by what may charitably be referred to as the more responsible heads of the administration.

It was McCarthy who popularized the new language of abuse. But his reduction of "Truman-Acheson" to an epithet has been taken over lock, stock and barrel without so much as a credit line by the Republican administration. Official spokesmen for the Republican Party now see fit to make public references to the previous administration in terms which just two years earlier would have been considered a trade mark of the junior senator from Wisconsin. These attacks, the denigration and sabotage of past and present government agencies, tolerated and sometimes fostered by the administration, identifies the McCarthyite reaction as one which is qualitatively different from reactionary movements in the past.

The unique features of McCarthyism can be summed up in a comparison with the reaction following World War I. At that time the Palmer raids, the activities of the Lusk Committee in New York, and the wholesale arrests, prosecutions and deportations carried out by local and federal agencies were a hysterical outburst by a bourgeoisie made newly aware of its role as a world power and terrified by the very real prospect of a European socialist revolution. This fear of international socialism—similar in effect to the present fear of international Stalinism—was aggravated by the rapid decline in living standards and the growing militancy of the labor movement. The bourgeoisie reacted with a violence then much greater than is the case today but one which did not outlast the decline of the European revolution, the disembowling of the

IWW and the Communist Party and the economic upswing of the early twenties. McCarthyism is different in that it is fed by an increasingly powerful world Stalinist force which shows no signs of abating its drive for world supremacy. It developed at a time when there was neither depression nor general strikes, and it victimizes more than Wobblies or Communists—it attacks the institutions of bourgeois democracy.

IN DISCUSSING MCCARTHYISM one must be careful to avoid the pitfall of characterizing this movement in the same terms which might be applied to a few of its more notorious spokesmen and supporters. Most pointedly, a distinction must be made between the man, McCarthy, and the movement named in his dubious honor. McCarthy may with justice be referred to as America's totalitarian personality. He is brutal, ruthless, intolerant, demagogic, a conscientious liar, ego driven, power hungry, vigorous and a cunning political barbarian. He has, in more moderate words, all the pathological and political equipment of a totalitarian fascist type. This does not concern us at the moment. Of paramount importance is to recognize that McCarthyism, though it is a new phenomenon, cannot be equated to fascism nor does it present the nation with any imminent threat of fascism.

To maintain that McCarthyism in its present phase is the instrumentality of fascism is to impute to it characteristics it does not possess. It would imply, above all, that it is a well organized and integrated movement. It is not. McCarthyism has no recognized press of its own, no rounded ideology, no party of its own, no tight internal discipline, no acknowledged and consciously organized leadership. It continues to function within the frame-

work of both parties, whereas every powerful fascist movement we know of has been conceived outside the framework of traditional bourgeois democratic parties.

Of greater import is the absence of those social conditions which have been proved essential to the rise of a powerful fascist movement. Fascism, as we know it, comes to power in periods of irreconcilable class conflicts and economic disintegration. The bourgeoisie does not turn to the mailed fist because of intellectual conviction or boredom with bourgeois parliamentarianism. It resorts to fascism out of necessity—when its life is menaced by its native working-class and its economic functioning is paralyzed.

Fascism, by definition, presupposes the ruthless suppression of the working-class, not only as a contender for power, but as an independent political force. But fascism, again by definition, imposes restrictions on the rights of individual capitalists, limiting their area of political and economic maneuverability. The bourgeoisie sacrifices in the interests of the bourgeoisie, placing power in the hands of a totalitarian elite, under which he may writhe, but seeing in it the only means of personal and class salvation.

We need not go beyond this elementary definition of fascism and its origins to rule it out as a possible evolution from McCarthyism in the coming period. The American bourgeoisie can find neither reason nor need today to crush the American labor movement as an independent class force. On the other hand the labor movement, fifteen million strong, for all its apathy and class collaborationism is anything but an easily crushable force.

While we fail to see wherein Mc-

Carthyism can be equated to fascism we would be guilty of an ostrich-like self-deception not to recognize the seeds of an authoritarian movement in it. More than that, we should not exclude the long range possibility of this authoritarian movement coming to power, either through a successful struggle for control of the Republican Party or, failing that, through a consolidation of the forces of total McCarthyism in some new alignment of political parties and groups, the precise nature of which is impossible to foresee. This authoritarian government would not necessarily destroy every vestige of opposition political functioning as is the case with fascism. It would not necessarily be compelled to conduct a struggle for survival with the labor movement; it might instead attempt to neutralize it, partly through threats and in part by persuading the labor movement to accommodate itself. Such an authoritarian regime might liquidate the Communist Party without the total terror of fascism, it might eliminate any bi-partisanship in national or foreign affairs without eliminating all other parties, it might attempt to assert its authority over all cultural and social institutions without attempting to incorporate them fully into the state. It would be a repressive government, but not one of total terror.

SENATOR MCCARTHY who represents the most conscious, outspoken and extremist type of McCarthyism, must be given credit for understanding that the limitations of McCarthyism today can be countered or turned to his advantage tomorrow. These boundaries are set by the following: one, as we have already mentioned, is the lack of a social program, and, second, is the current economic recession with no big upswing in sight.

Until recently McCarthy's political pulse has been kept throbbing almost exclusively by the existence of Stalinism. The World Conspiracy of Communism Operating in the United States provided McCarthy with his enormous successes. The fact that his inquisitions proved nothing, exposed nobody, revealed no hitherto unknown espionage rings, is beside the point. His supporters were cleverly kept under the impression that McCarthy was single-handedly slaying the red dragon which threatened their way of life.

The recession is putting an end to the illusion that McCarthy is saving the Republic from chaos. The senator is no less active than last year in his witchhunting, the "Truman-Acheson gang" has been replaced by Eisenhower-Dulles, leaders of McCarthy's own party; thus the "Red Menace" from within is obviously diminished, and, yet, despite all these "achievements" the average American feels immeasurably less secure this year than last.

Nothing is as sobering to the marginal man as having his margin narrowed down. The sound and fury of McCarthy begin to signify to numbers of his supporters exactly what Shakespeare said: Nothing. If the electoral success of the Republican Party and McCarthy's free-swinging mace could not somehow keep the high living standard intact then suspicions are naturally aroused: first about the Republicans, second, about McCarthy's activities. A man waiting on line for an unemployment insurance check is likely to get a little annoyed at another man who makes his fame and fortune by running around with the scalp of an army dentist.

McCarthy may well be no less aware of this limit to McCarthy and McCarthyism in its present form than we are. But he also understands that

this economic factor which tends to stall McCarthyism—it can only be stalled, not repudiated, under either party given present conditions—can become the source of added strength for himself. What he requires is the broad social program as yet absent: McCarthy needs to develop views, not only on the menace of Communism, but on the very real and immediate problems which are hitting at the American budget. That McCarthy is toying with the idea of branching out is apparent from his provocative remarks directed at Secretary of Agriculture Benson in the middle of March. McCarthy criticized the secretary's farm program, declaring himself in favor of no less than 100 per cent farm parity and warning the secretary that he has a bone to pick with him. The senator's sudden interest in the plight of the farmers is motivated, (1) by his concern with the recall-McCarthy petition campaign now being waged in Wisconsin, a farm state; and (2) reflects a more general need to sustain his popularity by participating in genuine national political problems in such manner as to sustain and increase his prestige and power.

OUR OBSERVATION that McCarthy has not developed a social program needs some modification. In the realm of world politics McCarthy has achieved something which with some imagination might be called a foreign "program." The essence of this program can be summed up in a single phrase: denounce Europe. It is an attitude which is neither responsible nor original but it is effective for a demagogue who wishes to maintain and enlarge his appeal among political illiterates. In the past two years the specific planks of this program have more or less crystallized: neither recognition nor trade with China or other Stalin-

ist countries under any conditions, and eternal enmity toward European nations casting a covetous glance at the potential market behind the Iron Curtain. For England, particularly, which already carries on an insignificant trade with China, McCarthy's anger knows no bounds. He proposes to cut the British off from any assistance as long as this trade continues; a proposal designed to please large numbers of Anglophobes in this country.

St. Joe of Appleton is not to be denied his red dragons or treacherous knights. Those he cannot find he manufactures out of papier-mâché and tears to shreds with his poison-tipped lance which is now poised against Europe for all its treacherous and perfidious "dealings" with China, Russia and her satellites. This Europhobia is a natural by-product of his ferocious attacks on the Democratic Party as a party of "internationalists" and traitors. As long as McCarthy referred to the internationalist Democratic Party "betrayers" who sold out to Stalin at Yalta, Teheran and Potsdam he did not have too much to fear. But to transfer his criticisms of past performance to the tactic of denouncing, if not abandoning, America's allies in Europe at present would bring McCarthy into conflict with the most powerful sections of the American bourgeoisie. For all its backwardness, the American ruling class knows one thing: America is in mortal combat with Stalinism and she cannot "go it alone." If Europe and Asia—including their markets and sources of raw material—are abandoned to Stalinism then the effective capitalist world becomes an American island, which, for all its strength, could not maintain its position.

In the Indo-Chinese situation Mc-

Carthy is in a potentially powerful position. If France makes a deal with Russia—one which could only improve the Stalinist position in Indo-China—at the forthcoming Geneva Conference, then McCarthy's Europhobia will be heightened and appear justified. His attack on the foreign policy of the Eisenhower administration would become clearer and more blatant, winning a wide sympathetic audience among the voting population. If France does not make concessions on Indo-China then it is all the more probable that American combat troops will be sent to Indo-China on a large scale. This would be a war toward which the American people would be even more hostile than was the case in the Korean "police action." McCarthy might not attack the preparations for this new military venture; he might even urge its extension to include the atomic bombing of China. No one can predict what McCarthy would do before possible American participation in Indo-China; it cannot be excluded that in an effort to increase his popular support he would adopt an isolationist line during the preparatory stages of military intervention. It is safe to predict, though, that if large American forces are sent to Indo-China McCarthy will blow his demagogic tune as American troops either meet reverses or the war becomes a prolonged and costly experience.

On the Indo-China question bipartisanship is getting a new lease on life. The Democratic Party has been begging for the opportunity to "educate" the American people to the importance of seeing Dulles' "united action" against the Stalinists through to the end. Any attempt by McCarthy to sabotage this united front of both parties either before or during American participation in the war would

meet strong opposition from American capitalism as a whole and would force McCarthy to collide with the Republican Party including some of its most reactionary, McCarthyist elements. However, by appealing to the American people's natural isolationism McCarthy might be able to retain his influence even in the Republican Party, and could extend it outside the confines of party organization.

WHILE MCCARTHY MAY DEVELOP a social program it would not necessarily presage a break with the Republican Party. On the contrary, there is no reason to believe that he is at all interested in organizationally splitting his party. Despite McCarthy's power as an individual he would be a man without a future if he were now to foster a formal break. It is no accident that McCarthy has conspicuously avoided any obvious identification with reactionary and fascist organizations of the lunatic fringe. He has no direct public contact with men like Gerald Smith or organizations such as the KKK. McCarthy is too clever a politician to acknowledge support from these discredited types. Without pretending to a clinical analysis of the senator's psyche—though a fit subject for such study—politics dictates that on this question the following must be the uppermost consideration in his mind:

McCarthy's career was made in the Republican Party. Since his election to the Senate in 1946, the junior senator from Wisconsin has become one of the most powerful members of Congress, and one of the most influential men in American politics. He is certainly one of the most feared. All this was accomplished in less than a decade in the Republican Party. According to an article by William S. White (*Look* magazine, June 16, 1953), McCarthy's power has been influential

if not decisive in the election of eight to ten Republican senators. This represents almost one-fourth of Republican power in the upper chamber.

If McCarthy has achieved all this why should he break from the party to which he owes so much? It is not a question of gratitude, of course, but politics: McCarthy's fame does not rest on any sense of loyalty (witness his clever antics in preparing to scuttle his protégé and adulator, Roy Cohn). McCarthy still needs the Republican Party, which offers him even more than he has already received.

McCarthy's need for the Republican Party is a reciprocal relationship. The Republican Party needs McCarthy. Its leaders are "practical politicians" first and men of principle last. They are well aware of the effectiveness of McCarthy's techniques for winning votes from the Democrats without soiling their own hands. McCarthy's personal intervention in the last Senatorial elections in Maryland produced one of the filthiest campaigns in political history. But the result was that Millard Tydings, an extremely conservative Democrat who could not be purged by Roosevelt and Truman, was defeated by McCarthy's candidate. Such services are appreciated by the Republican leadership.

McCarthy is not one to perform yeoman's work without rewards. He knows that the Republican Party needs his services and his price is a free hand in his investigating activities and the approbation of Republican leaders in his bizarre mud-slinging campaigns against all opponents. Some Republicans may consider this price high but it has been given and McCarthy knows that it will be continued through the coming elections, at least.

Above all, McCarthy has no legitimate political basis for a break with

the Republican Party. There may be a great deal of antipathy between the arrogant senator and some of his Republican colleagues but the gap is by no means wide between McCarthyism and the Republican Party. One must not mistake the pique with and fear of McCarthy by some Republicans as indicative of fundamental differences. The Republican Party is gradually becoming the party of McCarthyism, so much so that the Republican President, representing what might generously be called the "liberal" wing of the party, is frequently a minority leader in his own organization, with the Democrats coming to his rescue time and again: witness the vote on the Bricker amendment, on which the President was deserted by his Majority Leader, Knowland, along with the bulk of Republican congressmen. The advent of McCarthyism in the Republican Party does not necessarily mean the ultimate arrival of McCarthy, but it certainly does provide him today with a much better field of operations than anything he could organize independently.

McCarthy over-reached himself in his attack on the army. It was bad timing from a man who is, after all, ahead of his times. His public stock has dropped considerably—though not as much as the press makes out—and he frightened even his warmest supporters. It will take considerable time for McCarthy to recoup his losses. If only for this mistake a split with the party in which he takes the initiative is out of the question. If McCarthy is to split with the party he will choose the propitious moment when following some particularly dramatic event he feels capable of riding a tremendous wave of mass discontent.

For the moment, then, a split in the Republican Party is not in sight. McCarthy's increasingly obvious tac-

tic is to wear down any resistance to total McCarthyism inside the organization and to discredit the Eisenhower and Dulles "internationalists" in preparation for a bid for party power at the convention two years hence. The well-informed columnists for the *Herald Tribune*, Joseph and Stewart Alsop, detail in their March 5th column the feverish efforts of McCarthy's fact-finders, collecting documentary proof of Eisenhower's "coddling" of Communists from the period during the war, through his command in occupied Germany and up to the present.

THE ROLE of the labor movement vis-a-vis McCarthyism has been nothing short of disgraceful. With the exception of occasional speeches and articles, the leaders of organized labor are remarkable only for their do-nothingism. They have made virtually no attempt to actually mobilize the working class against McCarthyism or McCarthy. For a local union to pass an anti-McCarthyist resolution is an occasion for headlines. It is almost as if a truce existed between McCarthy and the labor leadership. McCarthy has shrewdly refrained from attacking the non-Stalinist labor movement as such; the labor leadership in return has placed narrow limits on their anti-McCarthy activities. Yet the labor leadership must be given credit for understanding that the end-all of McCarthy's activities can only be an attack on the free labor movement. The existence of democratic institutions is a necessary element for a free labor movement and a free trade union organization is ultimately intolerable to authoritarian movements.

How is it possible, then, for the labor leaders to behave in so cowardly a fashion? They no doubt claim they would like to mobilize the workers against McCarthy but that the work-

ers, themselves, do not feel particularly outraged by McCarthy's activities. To the extent that this is true, it is a sad commentary, indeed, on the type of leadership with which the American working class is saddled. How is it possible that after 70 years of the AFL and 20 years of the CIO, the working class has not been sufficiently educated by its leadership to the minimum extent of recognizing and being willing to fight against one of its most deadly enemies today? For this political backwardness of the American working class, the labor leadership must accept its share of responsibility. It has failed to bring the working class into the political arena as an independent political force, aware of its own social needs and interests.

In some cases the labor leadership has not only failed to take a serious offensive against McCarthy or McCarthyism, but has tried to utilize the activities of McCarthy to its own benefit. In the case of the Schenectady G. E. Local 301, formerly of the Stalinist dominated United Electrical Workers, the role of the International Union of Electrical Workers, CIO, has been to take "advantage" of the activities of McCarthy, not to fight them in any principled and honorable fashion. At a time when McCarthy was busily engaged in attacking Local 301 of the U. E., submitting its members to all the abusive treatment which has made him notorious, forcing men out of their jobs because of their alleged political views, the CIO rival of the U. E. was busily engaged in jockeying for leadership of the 20,000 General Electric workers. Instead of waging an all-out attack on McCarthy's tactics, instead of defending the elementary right of a Communist or alleged Communist worker to earn his livelihood the I. U. E. played on the fears and prejudices aroused

by McCarthy's invasion of Schenectady to consolidate its own power and oust the U. E. in a manner which was at best questionable.

Fundamentally, the union leadership is restricted in any fight against McCarthy by its lack of a dynamic, social program. It remains tied to bourgeois politics. It is deeply committed to the Democratic Party, above all to the Fair Deal wing which, when in power, created the acts, the precedents and the mood which fertilized the soil in which McCarthyism and McCarthy could grow like a rank and stultifying bed of weeds.

But for all the political infirmity of the American labor movement it is the only force today which is potentially capable of leading a major struggle against McCarthyism. The truce between McCarthy and the labor movement is tenuous and cannot be maintained permanently if the latter is to preserve its freedom of organization and movement.

McCarthyism has given an urgent note to the need of an independent labor party. Before the war socialists proposed the political organization of the working class in its own party as an offensive class struggle activity. Today, the need for a labor party is made more pressing by its additional importance as a defensive move against the inevitable encroachments of McCarthyism on the free trade union movement. Should the labor leadership fail to educate its rank and file, fail to respond to the need for building a party of labor, but, instead, cower before McCarthy, compromise with McCarthyism and sink deeper into the Democratic Party, then democracy will have been dealt a foul blow. This is not our ultimatum but one presented by the reality of the political character of the permanent war economy.

Julius FALK

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

Myth of Lenin's Defeatism — III

Defeatism After Lenin: Concluding Discussion Article

It remains now to follow the history of "revolutionary defeatism" after the First World War, and, most especially, after Lenin. In fact, it is from the reinterpretation that

took place in this period that the recent couple of generations of Marxists have taken their ideas on the subject. We have to see why and how this reinterpretation took place.

VI. After Lenin: Revival and Reinterpretation

While Lenin abandoned the defeat-slogan in 1917, we have pointed out, he never himself set down his motivation for this change, and even outside his collected public and private writings it is not recorded that he ever explicitly re-examined his

positions of 1914-16. The question of defeatism is not peculiar in this regard; the same thing is true of his position on the peace-slogan, and on the theory of permanent revolution. But for the six years of his life following the November Revolution, the defeat-slogan remained a dead letter, even in historical retrospect.

During this whole period we find only three *mentions* of the defeat-slogan in his writings and speeches. One is in his 1918 reply to the S-R Kamkov, which we have already quoted, where he mentions the defeat-slogan only in order to point out that it had been dropped "under Tseretelli and Chernov." A second, also in connection with the Brest-Litovsk dispute, is the one we have quoted in the footnote on page 259 (Sept.-Oct., 1953 issue). The third is the ambiguous remark in passing in his "Notes on the Question of the Tasks of Our Delegation at the Hague," December 4, 1922, in which he jots down notes for the guidance of the Bolshevik delegates to the Hague Peace Conference. Among these notes is the remark—

...first, explanation of "defense of the fatherland." Second, in connection with the latter, explanation of the question of "defeatism."¹²⁴

That is all, and the "Notes" are then concerned with quite other matters.

NOTE

There is one correction and one qualification to be made to statements contained in the first installment of this article (NI, Sept.-Oct. 1953).

CORRECTION: On page 256, the dates of Second International congresses before 1914 are mixed up. The Stuttgart congress took place in 1907; the Copenhagen congress in 1910; and the Basle congress in 1912.

QUALIFICATION: to the sentence on page 266 which remarked that "as far as we know" the facts about Lenin's real position on the Russo-Japanese war have never been told in any literature familiar to our movement:

In Bertram Wolfe's *Three Who Made a Revolution*, the author includes a quotation from Lenin's article on "The Fall of Port Arthur" which would itself be enough to convey to the informed reader that Lenin's position was one of support to Japan's side of the war, or at least that Lenin considered Japan to be fighting a "progressive" war.

However Wolfe's own text does not indicate that he understood what he was quoting. In fact he states that "[Lenin's] words are worth pondering . . . because they contain within them the germ of his future 'revolutionary defeatism' in World War I. . . ." This is precisely what is not true, as I have tried to make clear. Lenin's position was merely a continuation of the then-orthodox approach to the war question and particularly to Russia's participation therein, and was the near-unanimous line of the whole International.

Wolfe also comments that Lenin "expected Japan to win, and thought that this would be an aid to the progressive forces in Russia. . . ." Again, this formulation quite misses the point, which is that Lenin DESIRED Japan to win. Wolfe comes closest with the remark that Lenin's article was "a scarce-concealed cry of exultation that 'progressive Japan' had defeated 'backward and reactionary Europe. . . .'"

However, all in all, Wolfe's passage on this point (pages 278-9) is better informed than any other I have yet seen.

—H. D.

But during these six years, in his writings, speeches, reports, etc. there were numerous occasions when he harked back to the world-war period to summarize and reanalyze the position on the war taken by the different socialist tendencies—the social-patriotic right, the centrist shadings, and the internationalist left. In places too numerous to list, he revives “Turn the imperialist war into civil war,” “The main enemy is in your own country,” etc. But precisely in these contexts, there is no hint of recollection of the defeat-slogan.

But we know that defeatism was destined to become a prominent and oft-repeated “principle” of the Communist movement, continued as such by the Stalinists in their own way, and also continued as such by the Trotskyist movement. Obviously it was given a real revival at some point. When? where? how? why? and by whom?

1. THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THE C.I.—NO DEFEATISM

This revival of defeatism did not take place while Lenin was alive, that is, during the first five years of the Comintern.

We are not in a position to state categorically that up to Lenin’s death, defeatism is *never* mentioned in the documents of the Comintern. The elimination of all possibilities in that tremendous bulk of material is a research task we have not been in a position to perform.

But a check of the resolutions and theses, major documents, and publications of the Comintern permits us to say very confidently: if anyone referred to defeatism at all, it certainly played no role in the program, policy and principles of the Communist International under Lenin.

The first four congresses of the

Comintern (1919-1922) adopted a large number of long, detailed, analytical theses on all the major (and any number of minor) questions of revolutionary policy. These “theses” are not infrequently marked by discursive historical sections, moreover.

Especially at the Second Congress in 1920, the aim of these theses was not to make it “easy” for individuals or groups to adhere to the new revolutionary international but on the contrary: one of the main dangers, as the Bolsheviks saw it, was the tendency of all kinds of centrists and dubious elements to flock to the new banner, since the Second International was thoroughly discredited (even in the eyes of elements who fundamentally agreed with its politics!) and there were too many who were only too anxious to cover their pasts with present acceptance of the most “revolutionary” slogans, provided only they didn’t have to *act* like Communists. This was indeed the reason for the adoption by the Second Congress of the famous “21 Points” of admission to the C. I.

Yet there is not a hint of any kind of defeat-slogan in any of the documents of the first four congresses of the Comintern.

By 1924 the International and many of its parties were considering the question of new over-all programs. Even at this date (which is after the period we are now discussing, as we shall see) the draft program for the C. I. presented by Bukharin ignores defeatism. Even at the Fifth Congress in 1924 the reports on the Program Question delivered by Bukharin and August Thalheimer ignore defeatism under the head of the war question. At the same time the Young Communist International, the German party and others were also developing new draft programs—without defeatism.

From the revolution up to Lenin’s death, books and pamphlets were issued which contained discussions of the war positions of the world-war period and Lenin’s ideas. Checking many of these, including a number by Zinoviev, we find no recollection of defeatism.

There was the monthly organ of the International, the *Communist International*. There is no lack of articles from 1919 to 1923 inclusive which review the war question, the world-war period, Lenin’s distinctive ideas, etc. Of these we have been able to check all but eight numbers, including all of the first year (1919) when the war question was freshest and all of 1923. Defeatism is not raised.*

Even allowing for the hiatuses, then, one thing is perfectly clear: defeatism does not have the role which was later assigned to it. The modern myth has not yet been started.

2. HOW ZINOVIEV REVIVED DEFEATISM IN 1924

The suspicion which this is bound to awaken in the minds of all who know the history of this period can be given strong documentary evidence to confirm it.

*With one exception which can be considered to “prove” the rule: In issue No. 25 of 1923, the magazine reprinted a polemical exchange of articles that had appeared in the German organ *Die Internationale* between Thalheimer and a critic named Sommer, on policy with respect to the French invasion of the Ruhr. In this situation (which also evoked the notorious “Schlageter” speech by Radek heavily tinged with a sort of “national-Bolshevism”) Thalheimer’s articles did all but take a defensist position. In this context, one of the articles by Thalheimer which is reprinted mentions the defeatism of 1914-16—in order to reject it now!

Not an exception to the rule but an example of it is an article by Karl Radek in the April-May 1921 issue, where the consequences of defeat are not painted as too happy. Radek wrote: “Not a proletarian revolution but Wilsonianism was the slogan of the working masses in the victorious countries. In the defeated countries on the contrary the thirst for peace and quiet predominated over all other proletarian feelings: a morsel of bacon was of more value than dreams for the liberation of mankind . . .” and so on along the same lines. We do not cite this distorted picture, reflecting Radek’s tendency to journalistic subjectivity at its worst, as a contribution to history; but in order to point out: How far were Lenin’s formulas about defeat!

Defeatism was revived as a “principle of Leninism” in the beginnings of the Stalinist counter-revolution, most specifically by Stalin’s partner in the “troika” which succeeded to Lenin’s leadership—Zinoviev.

The sign under which this “troika” of Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev took over was the struggle against Trotsky and “Trotskyism.” Defeatism was revived as one lever among others in this struggle. The ideological cover under which this anti-Trotsky coalition worked, created by Zinoviev, was the slogan of “Bolshevization” of the cadres of the Comintern. *Defeatism was revived as one of the elements in this anti-Trotskyist “Bolshevization.”*

By the time of Lenin’s death in January 1924 Stalin was already in control of the main levers of the party apparatus and Zinoviev, his accomplice, was the “boss” of the Comintern and public ideological mentor of the anti-Trotsky cabal. They were ready to go into high gear before Lenin’s body was cold. They had, in fact, had a rehearsal in the factional “literary discussion” over Trotsky’s *Lessons of October*.

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The first time that we find defeatism recalled as a "principle of Leninism" in the pages of the *Communist International* is in the very first issue of that organ published after the death of Lenin! This number is, of course, mostly made up of articles on Lenin, his ideas, his role, etc. One of the most prominent articles among these is by Martynov on "The Great Proletarian Leader." In it Martynov, yesterday a Menshevik and now a hatchetman for the *troika* who had joined the Bolshevik bandwagon with the NEP wave, loads his gun with the defeat-slogan and fires its shot openly and by name—straight at Trotsky.

This is what he wrote:

Lenin was not the only one to protest against this treason [support of the war] at the very outbreak of the war; a similar attitude was taken by the internationalist minorities of the various socialist parties. But the slogans launched by Lenin at that time were so daring, I should say so defiant, that they contained a challenge not only to the social-patriots but also to all the internationalists. . . . He said: "In order to put an end to the imperialist war, it should be transformed into civil war. Those who will start the civil war may be menaced by defeat in the imperialist war, but we have no fear about that. Particularly to us Russian Social-Democrats, defeat in the war is the lesser evil." This "defeatism" aroused the protests not only of social-patriots but even of all the internationalists, including the most Left ones, as for instance Comrade Trotsky. He [Lenin] was told: "You want Russia to be defeated, consequently you want Germany to win, and in this case it is social-patriotism inside out! You reason the same way as the social-patriots, but for another country, not your own." This accusation, as everyone can now see, was quite beside the mark. . . . Lenin knew and did not disguise the fact that if we start the revolution during the war, it will lead directly to our military defeat. But he knew more than that; he knew that the revolution started by us will spread also to Germany and that our defeat like the German victory will be but short-lived.

He therefore said: "Dare!" and he was fully vindicated by history. . . . Lenin could see farther than his nose, and he therefore launched such slogans as appeared rather unreasonable to the other socialists.¹²⁵

There can be little doubt why, all of a sudden, after six years of silence, this article gives more space to the defeat-slogan than to any other idea in Lenin's war position.* A few issues later Zinoviev himself picked up the refrain which he had put Martynov up to launch, in an article on "War and Leninism." Here too the sharp point of the reference is turned against Trotsky, anonymously this time, but the dig was lost on no one:

Leninism was much taken to task for its "defeatism." Even some of the internationalists, on reaching this point, would turn their backs on Bolshevism and their faces to social-chauvinism. Nevertheless, Leninism, remaining true unto itself, said . . . [and here Zinoviev quotes the sentence on defeatism from *Socialism and War*, which just happens to be the pamphlet which he signed together with Lenin. The meaning is: This is how I, Zinoviev, stood at Lenin's side while Trotsky was attacking him. . . .]¹²⁶

This was the beginning.

It was not until the Sixth Congress that defeatism was canonized as an article of program for the Stalinist movement (by the Fifth Congress in 1924 the sly references were only getting under way). The resolution on "The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Commu-

*Incidentally, this same Martynov, just six months before in the July 1923 issue of the *Communist International*, had written another article with a section on the world-war period. In this earlier article, not only is there no mention of defeatism but one of its main points is quite contrary in implication: during an imperialist war, as the Russian and German Revolutions proved, he says, "the widening of the scope of a revolution does far more in the long run to protect the country from foreign domination than does strengthening the old military apparatus, which, at any moment, is prepared to serve as an instrument of the foreign and native bourgeoisie against the working class." If anything, it is the bourgeoisie which is being accused of a sort of "defeatism" here!

nists" at the Sixth Congress (1928) put defeatism almost at the head of "the political program of the Communists in an imperialist war":

Defeatism, i.e., to work for the defeat of the home imperialist government in the war.

We need not follow its further progress in the Stalinist movement as an article of faith. The more interesting question that comes up is the reaction to the revival of defeatism by Trotsky himself, who was its butt.

Obviously, the whole point of Zinoviev's resuscitation of this old difference between Lenin and Trotsky was as a part of what he later confessed to be the "invention of 'Trotskyism,'" as an instrument in the power struggle being developed by the Stalin-Zinoviev group to oust Trotsky from the party leadership in spite of the fact that Lenin's death left him the

single most popular and authentic leader of the Russian Revolution. Every difference that Trotsky had ever had with Lenin was revived, and if defeatism has the distinction of being the very first one to be given the treatment after Lenin's death, it was not the most important. As is well known, the theory of the permanent revolution, the peasant question, the dispute over the trade-union question, Trotsky's "organizational" criticisms of the Bolsheviks before 1917, the conflict over Brest-Litovsk, etc., etc.—all of these were systematically recalled. Trotsky was not an "old Bolshevik" but a comparative newcomer to the Bolshevik ranks, in spite of his already pre-eminent position; and the leaders of the Thermidorean reaction struck the pose of "old Bolsheviks" who were defending historical Leninism against an old foe. Thus they threw up a smokescreen of old outlived differ-

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ences in order to press forward their new revisionist line of national-socialism and bureaucratization.

On these artificially revived historical questions, Trotsky's approach was quite rightly to minimize the significance of the differences. On some he openly admitted that he had been wrong and Lenin right, as on his pre-1917 "organizational" differences. On others, as on the theory of permanent revolution, he fought back vigorously in defense of his views, while seeking to prove that the difference had never been as fundamental and irreconcilable as the Stalinists made out. But on defeatism—he "passed," as they say in poker.

When Zinoviev and his henchman Martynov hastened, on the day after Lenin's death, to bring up defeatism as their maneuver in this process, and openly direct it against Trotsky, they were hoping that Trotsky would bite. Trotsky did not. The conspirators had to go on to other red herrings.

3. TROTSKY SIDESTEPS

But for himself, if not only for polemical purposes, Trotsky had to face the question in his own mind. He had always been against the defeat-slogan; when he joined the Bolshevik party in 1917 it was dead; for the next six years it remained virtually buried. *He* certainly had no reason to change his opinion on the issue. Now, along with the rest, its disloyal revival was tactically embarrassing, even though all political logic and truth was on his side. We have already said that he sought, within the limits of honesty and political clarity, to minimize his differences with Lenin. On this point, it would seem, he managed to convince himself, under the difficult cir-

cumstances, that there was no real difference at all.

We say "it would seem" so, because Trotsky nowhere has discussed this change of view through which he obviously went. In his book *The Stalin School of Falsification* (which consists mainly of documents from the late '20s), the question of defeatism comes up only in one place, Trotsky's speech of August 1, 1927 on "The War Danger and the Opposition" at a joint plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission in the midst of the Stalinists' drive toward his expulsion. The reference is enough to show that the "defeatism" question is being thrown at Trotsky's head and that he is dodging it. Trotsky opens his speech with this point:

Your theses assert that the Opposition allegedly holds some sort of Trotskyist formulation on the questions of war and defeatism. New fictions! Paragraph 13 of your theses is entirely devoted to this twaddle. So far as the Opposition as a whole is concerned, it can in no way be held accountable for my former differences with Lenin, differences which, upon these questions, were altogether secondary in character. So far as I am personally concerned, I can make here a brief reply to the silly insinuations.¹²⁷

But his brief reply turns out to be merely a citation of facts showing that *since the revolution* he, Trotsky, has often been assigned to write the war position of the party (he does not refer to the differences on defeatism of 1914-16). And then he continues:

Now it suddenly appears, after my rejection of "economic defeatism" in 1926—an absurd and illiterate slogan advanced by Molotov for the English workers—that I had presumably parted company with Leninism. Why then did Molotov hide his silly slogan in his back-pocket after my criticism of it? . . . Why then was it deemed necessary to exaggerate rudely old differences which, moreover, were liquidated long ago? For

what purpose? For the purpose of covering up and camouflaging the actual palpable and current differences.¹²⁸

That is all. In the same book, Trotsky's "Letter to the Bureau of Party History" (October 21, 1927) takes up some dozens of examples of the Stalin clique's falsification of his political biography. The first two pages deal with the world-war period. "The organs of the Bureau of Party History," he writes, "are trying at this late date to describe my work during the war as bordering on social-patriotism."¹²⁹ As we have just seen, the Stalinists' theses had devoted a whole paragraph to the "defeatist" difference in substantiation of this slander. But Trotsky does not mention it here. He cites various general testimonials to the fact that Lenin and the movement considered him to have taken a clear-cut internationalist position during the war.

Did, then, Trotsky come to agree with Lenin's defeat-slogan? We have to judge by what he wrote in formulating the defeat-slogan in the '30s, as theoretical leader of the Trotskyist movement. From this we must conclude that he convinced himself to accept the term—but that he never did accept it in the sense given to it by Lenin or anyone else. What happened is that he sought to reinterpret it in a peculiar fashion which not only deprived it of Lenin's content but sometimes of any content whatsoever. If the history of defeatism has been one of confusion and muddle up to now, with this period of Trotskyist reinterpretation the muddle reaches awe-inspiring proportions.

4. TROTSKY'S FORMULA IN 1934

Trotsky, under the pressure of the Stalinist campaign against his Bolshevik bona fides, wishes to be "orthodox," but he also wishes to write

nothing that he does not believe. None of his defeatist formulations, therefore, comes within a mile of "wishing defeat." Of Lenin's four formulas, he sometimes paraphrases the one which is furthest away from "wishing defeat," namely, No. 4: do not stop before the risk of defeat. But in addition, and mainly, he developed for his purpose an ingenious formula of his own which had the advantage of *sounding* like the "lesser evil" formulation.

We find the latter in his theses *War and the Fourth International* (1934), under the heading "Defeatism' and Imperialist War." This is what he works out:

Lenin's formula "*defeat is the lesser evil*" means not that defeat of one's own country is the lesser evil as compared with the defeat of the enemy country but. . . .

Pausing at this point for a moment, what we have is already rather peculiar. This meaning which is "not Lenin's" is also not anybody else's: whatever it might mean, which is moot, the counterposition was not "defeat of one's own country" against "defeat of the enemy country," but rather this: "defeat of one's own coun-

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try" is the lesser evil as compared with "victory of one's own country." And this was so indubitably Lenin's conscious and explicit idea that it would be quite impossible to deny it. The peculiar thing that Trotsky does here is to invent a brand-new set of words in order to deny that Lenin ever said it!—in which he is undeniably right since he has just invented it himself. Why? Perhaps because the necessary conclusion from Lenin's actual formula is "wish defeat," and this is the last thought that Trotsky even desires to suggest.*

[But, Trotsky continues, Lenin's formula means] that a military defeat resulting from the growth of the revolutionary movement is infinitely more beneficial to the proletariat and to the whole people than military victory assured by "civil peace."¹³⁰

Of course, we have seen that Lenin never indicated that he meant any such bowdlerized version at all. This is what Trotsky wants to mean, and he is trying to convince himself that it has some relation to Lenin's slogan because he has managed to use the word "defeat" and the words "lesser evil" in close association. But let us see how Trotsky has juggled the words to get his effect.

"Military defeat resulting from growth of the revolutionary movement is better than military victory assured by civil peace." The italicized qualifiers are what do the trick. To see how little it actually says, let us put other terms into the same algebraic formula and note the effect:

"Hunger due to continuing a hard

*There is also the minor point that Lenin never spoke of "defeat of one's own COUNTRY," except in one slip.—We should also remind the reader at this point that Lenin never proposed the "lesser evil" formula for international use. But in the attempt to be "orthodox," Trotsky is here combining the well-known "lesser evil" phrase with the equally well-known fact that Lenin internationalized the defeat-slogan—perhaps without being aware of the fact that these two well-known features never come together in Lenin.

strike is better than getting a raise which is conditioned on the capitulation and destruction of the union."—This is obviously the analogous slogan of "hungerism," which proves that "hunger is the lesser evil." And there is no doubt that hunger is a lesser evil, as compared with an astronomical number of other evils. If this is all that is proved about "defeat," then an open door is being kicked into splinters. But above all, the exercise in words does not convince us to "wish" hunger any more than to "wish" defeat. The case is, at it were, that we "continue the strike even at the cost of hunger."^{*}

Secondly, however indubitable Trotsky's well-qualified version may be in itself (in the case of defeat as in the case of anything else), such a formulation is *no positive guide whatsoever* on the war question, and this is fundamentally because it poses the question in terms of a defeat or victory of the government. For this reason it is not itself a "formula of proletarian policy" but, at best, a warning against a bad one. Trotsky here has fallen precisely into the methodological error of putting the question in the form of a choice between military outcomes on the government plane—the error which he saw so clearly in Lenin before he started to find "orthodox" formulations.

Thirdly, Trotsky limits his formula to "military defeat resulting from the growth of the revolutionary movement." Lenin never did. Lenin was thinking in precisely the reverse terms: growth of the revolutionary movement resulting from military defeat at the hands of the enemy government. The hollowness of Trotsky's at-

*Or try this: "Defeat of a socialist party [in an election] resulting from a revolutionary program is better than its victory assured by compromising deals, class collaboration, etc." Then call this the principle of "electoral defeatism," and you have Trotsky's formula.

tempt at a paraphrase could not be more apparent.

Therefore, also, this limitation of Trotsky's does not make sense when we try to apply it to the formula "defeat facilitates revolution." What defeat "facilitates"?—only that defeat "which results from the growth of the revolutionary movement"? Of course not.

Fourthly, and finally: Trotsky presents this set of words as a formula for defeatists. Yet it clearly applies also to situations in which we are *defensists!* Take, for example, Trotsky's position on the Spanish civil war, in which he was for revolutionary defensism in the Loyalist camp against Franco. Yet, as a defensist he would have to say—and it would be politically important to say—that "military defeat which results from the growth of the revolutionary movement" is, at any rate, the "lesser evil" as compared with "military victory which is assured by" the Marxists' abandonment of their revolutionary role and support to popular-frontism and the bourgeois-Stalinist government.

What this illustrates is that the truth which is contained in Trotsky's formula is of so general a nature, indeed so fundamental a nature, that it applies not only in situations where we oppose war but even where we are supporting a progressive war. It is not a formula for "defeatism"; it is not even a formula for an anti-war policy *without* defeatism; it is a general formula for proletarian class independence!

It simply has nothing to do with defeatism.*

5. HOW TROTSKY HUNG ON TO THE TERM DEFEATISM

In his 1938 theses on "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," Trotsky

*In another section of War and the Fourth International (point 25), Trotsky has another mention of defeatism which is tell-tale: "In reality no possessing class ever recognized the defense of the fatherland as such. . . . Overthrown privileged classes always become 'defeatists'; that is, are ready to restore their privileged position with the aid of foreign arms."—Note that here, in the most casual sort of way, Trotsky is identifying defeatism with support to the victory of the other side. Without going into the possible explanations that Trotsky might have given, we must admit that it is bound to be a little confusing. . . .

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limits himself to a pious quotation in referring to defeatism:

In this struggle [against imperialism and war] the basic principle is: "the chief enemy is in *your own country*," or "the defeat of *your own* (imperialist) government is the lesser evil."¹³¹

But further down Trotsky is so intent on getting that "lesser evil" formulation in, that he commits an instructive boner. He takes up socialist policy in an imperialist war *against a workers' state* and says:

The defeat of *every* imperialist government in the struggle with the workers' state or with a colonial country is the lesser evil.¹³²

But in this case he *wishes the victory* of the workers' state on the other side of the lines, which is *not any evil at all*.^{*} But the phrase "lesser evil" has to be used somehow, as the badge of defeatism.

In 1939 Trotsky engaged in a particularly interesting exchange of views on defeatism with a group of Palestinian Trotskyists. His article "A Step Toward Social-Patriotism"¹³³ was a polemic against the idea being advanced by this group (just before the Second World War broke out) that defeatism would apply in the fascist war bloc but not in the democratic camp, even though the latter was considered imperialist too. In both we oppose the war, they said, but only in one of them are we "defeatists."

Apart from Trotsky's reply, this position of the Palestinians has great interest for us in itself. It is the first case we know of where serious thinking about Lenin's concept of defeatism led a group in an objectively social-patriotic direction; where, so to speak,

^{*}It happens that this very same point is made (in a different connection, not as a criticism of Trotsky's theses) by the article of W. St., "Principles and Tactics in War," written the same year (NI, May 1938, p. 146). The author was the then secretary of the Fourth International.

the social-patriotic potential in it was acted out in politics.

Their document said:

The general schema is defeatism in all imperialist countries. . . . Defeatism, according to Lenin's definition and as it has been generally understood, signifies a *desire* for defeat and giving aid to the latter. Is that slogan applicable in any imperialist country in *any* war?

No, they answered, it is not applicable in every war. These Palestinians are thinking specifically of the coming war with Nazi Germany. "Do we really *desire* the defeat of the democratic camp which is at war with Hitler?" they no doubt asked themselves, and they could not find it in them to say yes—while *accepting* the "generally understood" meaning of defeatism. There can be little doubt that the course of thinking through which they were going was "a step toward social-patriotism," but the *form* it took with them was the development of a "theory" of one-way or one-sided defeatism (so to speak)—a "defeatist" anti-war line in one camp, a "non-defeatist" but still presumably anti-war line in the other camp.

Given the fact that this distinction was being drawn on the basis of accepting the defeatist methodology itself, and not through an emancipation from it, it could mean only that they were saying: Let us be completely against the war in the Nazi camp, but in the democratic camp we are against the war only in part, or only in a certain sense, or only with certain reservations. The latter part was naturally not thought-out, as it never could be, since it was essentially a mood of uncertainty poised between social-patriotism and a Third Camp line.

But, we see, they posed the question: Defeatism means we *desire* defeat—well, do we?

Trotsky's reply sidesteps on this,

the crucial point in meeting the real train of thought of the Palestinians.

. . . they have in our opinion [Trotsky replied] given far too nebulous, and especially far too equivocal a definition of "defeatism" as of some special and independent system of actions aimed to bring defeat. That is not so. . . .

That is the only comment he makes on the formulation "desire defeat," which, as he must have known, was Lenin's standard formula. It was not the Palestinians only who were being equivocal or nebulous.

The rest of this passage from Trotsky's reply continues as follows:

. . . Defeatism is the class policy of the proletariat, which even during a war sees the main enemy at home, within its particular imperialist country. Patriotism, on the other hand, is a policy which locates the main enemy outside one's own country. The idea of defeatism signifies in reality the following: conducting an irreconcilable revolutionary struggle against one's own bourgeoisie as the main enemy, without being deterred by the fact that this struggle may result in the defeat of one's own government;

given a revolutionary movement the defeat of one's own government is a lesser evil. Lenin did not say nor did he wish to say anything else. There cannot even be talk of any other kind of "aid" to defeat.

Certainly Trotsky in this period is no authority on what Lenin said or wished to say on defeatism. *Ad hoc*, while assuring the reader that he knows just what Lenin wished to say, he rings in an entirely new qualification, italicized to boot, "given a revolutionary movement," which was no qualification in Lenin's formulations. Otherwise Trotsky presents the claim (this time, anyway) that defeatism is merely the idea which we met under Formulation No. 4.

6. EXEGESIS IN THE TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT

Trotsky's course of dealing with the defeatist orthodoxy by "interpreting it away" is reflected in all the literature of the Trotskyist movement, which interprets it in virtually every

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conceivable fashion.* About 1935-6 James Burnham's pamphlet *War and the Workers* (signed "John West," published by the Workers Party) gave a version which had been hovering on the fringes as the "authoritative" one:

The Marxists fight, but within each country they fight not for the victory but for the defeat of their own government—not for its defeat by the opposing capitalist powers but for its defeat by its own working class.¹³⁴

This was a very "acceptable" formula since it obligingly made defeatism mean nothing special—nothing except "the revolution." The term is retained only as a ritualistic bow to the memory of Lenin and to the myth that no position on war is completely "revolutionary" without something called defeatism.

On the other hand, C. L. R. James' *World Revolution*, written by a more conscientious ritualist, writes of 1914:

Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg had early called for the new international,

*As a curio, we mention the formulation used by the sect which split off from the Trotskyist movement, the "Oehlerites," in a pamphlet called *The Workers' Answer to Boss War*. It is the one and only place where the full enormity of the defeatist concept is to be found set down in black and white: defeatism means "to work for the military defeat of their 'own' army by the 'enemy' army."

On the other hand, this is as good a point as any to pay respects to Alfred Rosmer, who, in his great historical work *Le Mouvement Ouvrier Pendant la Guerre*, has a short passage which stands out in post-war Marxist literature as one of the few (if there are any others) that indicates the hollowness of the defeat-slogan as used by Lenin. As mentioned, Rosmer was a collaborator with Trotsky on *Nashe Slovo* during the war and his point of view no doubt stems from that period, "unreconstructed." His first point is that there is no validity to Lenin's claim that defeatism is necessary to a fearless and thoroughly consistent anti-war fight. Besides "I see clearly the dangers which it involves. The word 'defeatism' is very widely used during war. The press utilizes it unceasingly to scare and frighten. It is useless to reinforce this if it is not absolutely necessary. I will recall here a retort by Noah Ablett that I mentioned in 1915. When the Welsh miners went out on strike, all of chauvinist England rose up against them, crying: 'You are helping the enemy! You are Germanophiles!' And Noah Ablett, in the name of the miners, calmly answered: 'We are not Germanophiles; we are the working class.' I believe that is the best basis, a sure and sufficient basis to carry on the working-class struggle against war and justify it in the eyes of all workers. 'Defeatism,' even though preceded by the qualification 'revolutionary,' puts the accent on defeat while we ought to put it on revolution." (Pages 478-9.)

but Trotsky refused to accept Lenin's uncompromising demand that each socialist should fight for the defeat of his own country.¹³⁵

It is amusing that, only a few pages before, James had devoted a long passage to summarizing Lenin's position on the war—and had not even mentioned defeatism at *that* point! As is not uncommon in references to defeatism, he "remembered" the slogan only when it was a question of showing how much more "revolutionary" Lenin was than the other anti-war socialists, in line with the myth. In a sense, indeed, this reflects the role which the defeat-slogan actually did play with Lenin, who "forgot" it himself on more than one occasion.

In 1937 the program adopted by the foundation convention of the Socialist Workers Party formulated defeatism (without the term itself being used) as follows, as a variant of Formulation No. 4:

The SWP will advocate the continuance of the class struggle during the war regardless of the consequences for the outcome of the American military struggle. . . .¹³⁶

A good part of the movement, especially that part which had entered about this time and later, came to regard this formula as if it were *the* classic and canonical meaning of defeatism, or at least as particularly "authentic" in some sense. As mentioned before, the political concept embodied in this formulation and its like will be further discussed in another article; but as a definition of "defeatism" it was only one of the numerous tries.

The "defeatism" confusion came in for another working-out in 1939 when the outbreak of the Second World War, and Russia's role in it, precipitated a fiercely fought political conflict in the SWP, a split, and the for-

mation of the Workers Party (now ISL). The majority led by J. P. Cannon stuck with, and was stuck with, the "defense of the Soviet Union" in response to Moscow's invasion of Poland and Finland. The minority led by Max Shachtman reacted to the war crisis with a Third Camp policy, rejecting the line of defense of Russia in the war.

"You are against the defense of the Soviet Union?" said the Cannonites. "Then that means you are defeatists in Russia. That means you wish the defeat of Russia by reactionary Finland and Poland. It means you wish the victory of imperialism against the 'workers state'!"

This faced the anti-defensist minority with the task of defining defeatism. The situation was ironic. The Cannonites knew well enough that *they* had never considered defeatism to mean favoring the victory of the opposing side. Yet out of sheer demagoguery—which was their main stock-in-trade as a substitute for political theory—they began to insist that defeatism meant just that. And little as they knew it, it happened to be basically true, as we have seen, in the sense that the defeatist tradition arose in this way! Yet—and such things were possible only in the Babel of ideas known as defeatism—these same Cannonites considered themselves to be defeatists with respect to *American* imperialism, and nevertheless indignantly rejected the idea that this put them in favor of the victory of an opposing imperialist camp.

In reply, the minority sought to make clear its belief that being a defeatist did *not* mean favoring the other side's victory. In a document summarizing the minority's position, "War and Bureaucratic Conservatism," a new term was even coined to make the distinction: the kind of de-

featism where you *do* wish the other side's victory was tagged "military defeatism"; the kind of defeatism where you don't, was left at "revolutionary defeatism." The newly minted term thereupon entered into the labyrinth of ideas on the subject.

As for the meaning of "revolutionary defeatism," the document asserted:

Does revolutionary defeatism mean the defeat of "our" army by the "enemy" army—the American army by the Japanese, the British army by the German, the Italian army by the French? Not at all. It means the defeat of one's "own" government by one's own proletariat.¹³⁷

In point of fact, from here on, at least in the Workers Party formed by the minority, more and more "defeatism" began to mean nothing more than "non-defensism." Indeed, with the development of the movement's Third Camp position on the Second World War, all reference to the term pretty much died out, since in this case the term was somewhat worse than useless. So thoroughly had the term been peeled of all significance, in the process begun by Trotsky.

It may be that in the minds of some comrades who thought about it at all, this may have been considered "tactical"—that is, "defeatism" was a "horrid word" (as Cremo cigars' ads said about spit in those days). But in 1941-42 when the present writer gave a number of talks presenting the viewpoint of this article—namely, that defeatism was a jumble of political confusion in Lenin's ideas and should be conscientiously buried — there was next to no dissent and certainly no suspicion of "softness" on the war question.*

*At any rate, such was my impression at the time, and it is certainly a fact that I did not feel sufficiently exercised about the question to publish an article about it then. In retrospect, it would seem that the question hung on in a sort of suspended animation.

In September 1941 an article by Max Shachtman in *Labor Action* recommended, at any rate, dropping "the word out of our vocabulary":

Finally, it is necessary to have a little more clarity on the question of defeatism. You remember in the SWP dispute, the gifted Marxist, Cannon, explained to us that the Leninist theory of defeatism means that you PREFER the victory of the enemy to the victory of your own government. That is, you PREFER the defeat of your country by the enemy country, to the defeat of the enemy country by your country. Of course, Lenin never had such an idea, but trifles like that never bothered Cannon in his theoretical flights. I personally think that so much confusion has been introduced in the concept of defeatism that I doubt if we would be losing too much if we dropped the word out of our vocabulary.¹³⁸

And all in all, for the reasons mentioned as well as the actual line of attack on the war which the movement engaged in (to be touched on in our next article), this is just what happened. "Defeatism" fortunately played no part in our consideration of war policy all through the Second World War—not even as watered down, reinterpreted, emasculated or diluted by the reduction-process it had already gone through. And it stayed that way after the war was over.

7. SHACHTMAN'S NEW LINE

The picture seems to have changed recently in response to problems raised by the looming Third World War of the Western capitalist powers against the Russian empire. Most particularly, two articles in the NEW INTERNATIONALIST for 1951 on "Socialist Policy and the War," by Max Shachtman,¹³⁹ have served to revive the old exegeses on "what Lenin meant" by defeatism in 1914-16, and this precisely in connection with the question: Will this "defeatism" apply in the next Third World War?

Obviously, from the point of view of the present article, this re-raising of the old confusions from their grave (or, if you will, suspended animation) cannot serve any useful purpose or make for clarity. That is the lesser concern. More than that, *inherent* in any such approach to the problems of the Third World War is an ambiguity which obtrudes despite the most flawless presentation of the issues of the war in every other respect.

This fundamental ambiguity arises from the following dual characteristic of Comrade Shachtman's treatment of defeatism in his articles: *He presents Lenin's defeatism as the correct and necessary policy for 1914-16, but rejects it for the Third World War.* (Likewise, for Lenin's insistence on defeatism in 1914-16 as compared with his abandonment of defeatism after the March revolution.)

Now we have tried to show in this article that defeatism had no valid place in a consistent, thoroughgoing anti-war policy *throughout* the First World War, and it goes without saying, as a consequence, that it only disorients consideration of a concrete Marxist anti-war policy for the present war crisis. Contrariwise, there is a certain meaning (though an incorrect one) in the view that defeatism is just as valid today as in 1914-16 provided only that we "reinterpret" it properly, etc., etc. One view is to throw it out for both periods; one is to accept it for both periods.

But what is the meaning of the alternative, split position which Comrade Shachtman proposes, and which puts forward a brand-new variant on the whole defeatist confusion? Let us consider (a) his discussion of Lenin's views in the First World War, and (b) his application of this discussion to today.

Comrade Shachtman devotes a rela-

tively large amount of space to expounding Lenin's defeatism during the war, and presumably this aspect of Lenin's policy is included when he remarks (at the end of his first article) that there is no need "of adding anything to the justification of Lenin's policy which was so richly supplied by the living events."¹⁴⁰ If, on the other hand, this particular remark is intended only to apply to Lenin's position of 1917, it is still perfectly clear that his acceptance of Lenin's defeatism is entirely uncritical and approving. Indeed, at the beginning of his article he asserts that "We will dwell mainly upon Lenin's position . . . because the *method* he employed in arriving at his views remains the model for Marxists today."¹⁴¹ We have, on the contrary, seen that *with regard to method above all* Lenin's defeatism bears within itself a serious social-patriotic potential.

8. HOW SHACHTMAN EXPLAINS LENIN'S DEFEATISM

What is Comrade Shachtman's understanding of Lenin's defeatism? He gives it, at one point, as follows:

What if prosecution of the class struggle imperils the military position of the government, even to the point where it may be defeated by the enemy and lose the war? No matter. The class struggle must be continued in all countries regardless of the cost to the existing governments. This was Lenin's famous (but not always very clearly understood) theory of "defeatism" or "revolutionary defeatism."¹⁴²

At this point, then, to Shachtman, defeatism is Formulation No. 4: continue the class struggle despite the cost of defeat. (Shachtman adds: despite "the cost to the existing governments," which is an excellent addition in many respects but which was not a qualification that was or could have

been made by Lenin from his viewpoint.)

This defeatism, continues Shachtman, applied to *all* the warring governments.

Yet we find that the next solid page and a half of his article is devoted to quoting, in the same apparently approving vein, five passages in which Lenin put forward the quite different version No. 1 of the "lesser evil" formula—which Lenin never applied to *all the governments, but only to tsarist Russia.*

This "lesser evil" formulation, which Shachtman thus emphasizes, was at bottom based on the conception of the specially reactionary role of tsarism, which was "a hundred times worse than kaiserism" or the other governments, which therefore merited a "special Russian" policy by the socialists which could not apply in the other countries. We have seen the contradiction that this entailed and which Lenin never resolved except by abandoning the original motivation and shifting, from time to time, to other formulations.

But in the world of today this must remind us of what is going on today, when so many disoriented socialists (not to speak of others) are thinking of Stalinist Russia *in precisely the way which formed the heart of the old Marx-Engels-Second International methodology on the war question of the pre-imperialist era.* It was this same methodology which gave rise to Lenin's "lesser evil" formula.

Comrade Shachtman's treatment of this methodology is exactly as "split" in its thinking as Lenin's, which he is following. He explains¹⁴³ that Marx and Engels used to ask: "The success of which bourgeoisie is more desirable?" He quotes Lenin's analysis that this approach can no longer apply today in the imperialist epoch. (He

could have added that the Marx-Engels approach, mechanically transplanted to a different epoch, had actually become the theoretical rationale of "Marxist" social-patriotism.) Yet, a couple of pages later, Comrade Shachtman writes the following:

He [Lenin] was not blind, either, to the question raised in millions of minds: Whose victory will be the lesser evil from the standpoint of the working class? This question he answered, as it were, on two levels which were closely connected with one another.¹⁴⁴

The "two levels," we find out in effect, refer to—Lenin's *contradiction*: the old "lesser evil" criterion does not apply "from the standpoint of the international proletariat" but it does apply to one country and one country alone, tsarist Russia. With this reference to "two levels" Shachtman accepts both sides of the contradiction, and therefore devotes the space he does to the "lesser evil" methodology.

And so, like Lenin, he must contradict himself. Thus Comrade Shachtman introduces one of Lenin's "lesser evil" passages with the remark that Lenin was "still making it clear that he was speaking not simply of the defeat of tsarism by the socialist proletariat but of its military defeat by Germany. . . ."¹⁴⁵ This, of course, is perfectly true, even though it is what most of the movement, including Comrade Shachtman, have denied for many years. Lenin's "defeat is the evil" meant defeat by the enemy camp. Yet we find Comrade Shachtman writing in a later article (reply to letter by Gordon Haskell in the September-October *NI*):

The ordinary citizen, who can think only in terms of his present government winning the war or being defeated and crushed by the arms of the enemy—Russia, the Stalinists—comes to the conclusion that if the socialists are not for the victory of the government in the war,

they are for its defeat by the enemy. And so, we regret to note, are some radicals who have misread Lenin badly and misapplied him worse.¹⁴⁶

The ambivalence is striking, above all in the context of the present war crisis. On the one hand, the idea is suggested (if not by Shachtman, then inherently by his course of argumentation): Stalinism is "a hundred times worse" than American capitalism, its rival*; therefore its defeat is the "lesser evil," and by its defeat we make clear that we are "speaking not simply of the defeat of [Stalinism] by the socialist proletariat but of its *military defeat by [America]*."

And the "lesser evil" formula means we are *for* this defeat. Then we are for the *victory* of the war camp opposed to Russia? At this point Lenin used to protest indignantly, in all outraged sincerity, without ever discussing what is wrong with this perfectly necessary conclusion from his confused methodology. Comrade Shachtman does likewise in his reply to Haskell, just as cogently pointing out that all his *other* ideas leave absolutely no room for this conclusion.

This is one reason for what Shachtman describes as the "completely unexpected and just as completely unwarranted conclusion that some readers of my articles seem to have drawn."¹⁴⁷ We can point out that he is in somewhat the same boat as Lenin, whose contradiction he duplicated; and we saw that Lenin was amazed, indignant or furious when the social-patriotic potential in his approach

*This idea is emphasized by Comrade Shachtman: "Without hesitation or ambiguity, we can say that the only greater disaster that humanity could suffer than the war itself, which would be disastrous enough if it broke out, would be the victory of Stalinism as the outcome of the war." (Page 198.) And again: "We repeat: no greater disaster can be expected in connection with the Third World War than the victory of Stalinism." (Page 200.) The question, of course, is not whether this statement is true in itself, but whether it plays the same role in a political line as was played by Lenin's motivation that "tsarism is a hundred times worse than kaiserism."

was pointed out to him by Karpinsky, Bukharin and others among his own comrades, by Trotsky and other *anti-war* political opponents, by Mensheviks and other *pro-war* political opponents. The first chided, the second attacked, the third sought to cover their own social-patriotic inclinations by gleeful exploitation of his mistake.

9. WHAT DOES SHACHTMAN'S POSITION MEAN?

But such a mistake today can be more serious than it was for Lenin. This is especially true when the duplication of Lenin's confusion of 1914-16 is complicated further by the view that, while this defeatist confusion was correct for the First World War, it must be rejected in a war against Stalinist Russia.

This is Comrade Shachtman's conclusion:

Socialist policy in the coming war, then, does not put forward any such slogans as "revolutionary defeatism." . . .¹⁴⁸

He makes the counterposition explicit:

We are not for suspending the class struggle of the toilers. . . . We are not for subordinating that struggle to the military triumph of imperialism, to the "victory." . . . But because we take this view, it does not follow for us that we are for the defeat of the American bourgeoisie and its arms by Stalinism.

It is right here that we emphasize the difference between the first world war and the third. It is in this connection that I cited Lenin's position in 1914 to show why it could not simply be repeated by socialists today, and his position in 1917 to show the extent to which it should be repeated today.¹⁴⁹

But when Comrade Shachtman formulates his "different" line for the Third World War, we find that every essential formulation in it *should have held good in 1914*—if we look not at Lenin's distinctive mistakes but at

the anti-war line pursued by internationalists like Trotsky and Luxemburg. For example, Shachtman writes:

We are not indifferent to *who* defeats Stalinism, because that involves *how* it is being defeated and what are the *consequences* of such a defeat; therefore we are not for support of capitalist imperialism in the war. By the same token, we are not indifferent to *who* defeats capitalism (in general) or our own bourgeoisie (in particular): therefore we are not for support of Stalinism in the war.¹⁵⁰

This is absolutely correct. *Its analogue was absolutely correct in 1914 also*, as Trotsky and Luxemburg always saw and Lenin did not. It was impossible for Russian socialists to "wish for the defeat" of their own oppressive regime by the imperialist enemy, Germany. It was equally impermissible for the German anti-war fighters to wish for the defeat of their own Prussianism by the imperialist enemy, tsarism. We add: just as it was impermissible for either to politically stand for the *victory* of their own bourgeoisie over the enemy imperialist. The Marxist alternative is to reject the whole victory-or-defeat dilemma with its "lesser evil" trap, in the consistent Third Camp fashion which characterized Trotsky and Luxemburg's approach.

The same applies to Comrade Shachtman's summary formulation (in his reply to Haskell) which he apparently considers to be peculiar to the Third World War:

We do not for a moment suspend the class struggle, even in wartime. But, not being Stalinists and not being cretins, we do not prosecute it in *such a way* as to produce a defeat of the government by Stalinism. We are for the working class defeating the bourgeoisie in the class war and that is all we work for. We do not work for it in such a way as assures the defeat of the bourgeoisie by a reaction that would crush the proletariat itself. . . . Our position is: "The class

struggle during the war must be 'subordinated' not to the victory of capitalism, and not to the victory of Stalinism, but only to the victory of the independent working class over them both."¹⁵¹

Again, absolutely correct. *Analogously, this was also the only consistent Marxist line in 1914-16, as far as it goes—and of course, in both cases it is primarily a warning against what not to do, and is not intended as a full positive statement on war policy such as is to be found in the ISL resolutions.*

If "some readers" of Comrade Shachtman's articles reacted differently, their reaction has to be understood in the light of this train of thought: (1) Defeatism, we "know" from Lenin, is the full, undiluted, uncompromising policy of anti-war opposition in an imperialist war which we do not support; (2) *Shachtman admits this for 1914-16 but rejects this for the war against Stalinist Russia;* (3) it is clear therefore that, somehow or other, he is developing a position which is not a full, undiluted, uncompromising anti-war position. QED.

10. ON LENIN'S MOTIVATION

This whole confusion of errors (on both sides) is given reinforcement by certain other points made by Comrade Shachtman on defeatism. Thus, he gives the reason why, he believes, Lenin abandoned defeatism in 1917 after March. The passage purports to paraphrase Lenin's thought as follows:

Precisely because the working class is now so organized that it can take all the power into its hands peacefully, it is necessary to abandon all talk of civil war, all talk about transforming the imperialist war into civil war, all talk about defeatism.¹⁵²

It is true that the slogan of "civil war" was dropped as a direct consequence of the opinion that a "peace-

ful" transfer of power was possible under the dual power of the Soviets. But not so for defeatism. Notwithstanding Lenin's claims, which were no clearer on this aspect of the "defeat" question than on others, the connection he had seen between "wishing defeat" and "facilitating revolution" cannot automatically depend on whether the "revolution" is seen as peaceful or violent. We saw, indeed, that even in the period of 1917 when Lenin specifically gave up the hope of a peaceful transfer of power, his line on the war and defeatism did not change. Also, we saw the immediate influences which caused Lenin to give up defeatism, and more important, we expressed the view that he dropped defeatism not because of any thought-out deduction from any new set of conditions but because the *fundamental* errors of defeatism made the policy impossible when politics had to be acted out before the masses, and not just in polemical articles against political critics.

But what may it suggest to a reader when Comrade Shachtman claims (unwarrantedly) that the decisive motive was the possibility of peaceful assumption of power? In contemporary terms, it tends to establish a "principle" that defeatism (i.e., the "full" anti-war position) is valid only under a totalitarianism, whereas under "democratic" capitalism we must not hold a "full" anti-war position. It seems to suggest a kind of "one-way defeatism" such as was proposed in 1939 by the Palestinian Trotskyists, and which Trotsky quite rightly called "a step to social-patriotism."

In another passage Shachtman purports to explain why Lenin originally adopted the defeat-slogan. "It was motivated by two considerations," he writes, and he is entirely wrong on both counts.

One was that it had to be and could be applied to *all* the warring countries. To dispute the "slogan," wrote Lenin, it would be necessary to prove "that a revolution in connection with it [the war] is impossible," or "that coordination and mutual aid of the revolutionary movement in *all* belligerent countries is impossible."¹⁵³

This one is simply blankly irrelevant as a "motivation." Lenin did not adopt defeatism because he was looking for something that would apply to all warring countries. The quotation from Lenin is one that we have already discussed, from the latter's deplorable anti-Trotsky polemic, and it is somewhat more irrelevant here than it was there. In his article, at least, Lenin did not present these points as *motivation*: he said that "He who wishes earnestly to dispute the 'slogan' . . . would have to prove" three propositions, of which Shachtman quotes two. (The remaining one is the proposition "that the war . . . is not reactionary.") But agreement with Lenin on all three propositions, and a dozen more for good measure, would not even get near motivating the specific defeat-slogan; it motivates only opposition to the war.

The other was that the proletarian classes could follow a policy of intensified class struggle against their own governments as the main enemy—a struggle that would be facilitated by military defeat and would at the same time contribute to military defeat of their own country—because even if such a defeat were to occur the country would not run the risk of being subjugated by the enemy.¹⁵⁴

This "motivation" for defeatism was surely not Lenin's, who does not present any such argument for defeatism, let alone any such *motivation*. This idea—that the warring countries themselves do not run the risk of being subjugated by the enemy since the war is really being fought over who

shall rule over *other* peoples—occurs in Lenin only in connection with the argument that the war is imperialist in nature. Also, we ourselves referred to this idea in the Russo-Japanese War as supplying part of the reason why liberal-bourgeois elements were willing to embrace defeatism then. Finally we can add: although Lenin himself never linked this idea up with *defeatism*, and although it certainly was not his motivation, one can argue speculatively that it must have constituted an unrecognized precondition for his position. Zinoviev had come pretty close to making it explicit.

But, given all that, "some readers" may be led to wonder what conclusions are supposed to be drawn from this "motivation" as far as the present situation is concerned. Is it bound up with reasons for rejecting defeatism *now* while approving it for 1914? Does it suggest to them the idea that the U. S., being democratic and all, would not "subjugate" a defeated Russia, whereas a victorious Russia *would* "subjugate" a defeated United States—and that therefore "we have something to fight for" whereas the slaves of Stalin do not, for which reason *they* might as well go all-out against war and be "defeatists" while we cannot? And what relationship does this course of thinking have to another one, very well-known indeed, which uses the same *methodology*, but which comes to the conclusion not merely that there must be a difference in attitude toward the two war camps on the fine point of defeatism but that—for the same reasons—"we" must support war on this side while "they" must oppose the war on their side?

11. "ONE-WAY" DEFEATISM?

The proposal for a "one-way" or "one-sided" defeatism raises another

question: What exactly is the difference between a "defeatist" anti-war policy and a "non-defeatist" anti-war policy? We have already quoted Comrade Shachtman's suggestion on this point, in his summary formulation: a "non-defeatist" policy means that we do not wish (seek to produce) the defeat of our own government by the enemy, specifically, by Stalinism. Now it is no wonder that "some readers" are confused, since virtually every comrade in the movement has been under the impression that this was also true of the defeatist position! True, Comrade Shachtman had casually remarked earlier in his article, in a participial phrase, that Lenin's lesser-evil formula had involved defeat-by-the-

enemy, but this passing mention of a basic point (even if noticed) could hardly be expected to outweigh some years of contrary "education" in the movement.

In view of this fact, in the context of an article where Lenin's defeatism of 1914-16 is given a premier place as a component of his intransigent anti-war policy, it is not at all surprising that suspicions are awakened that this new talk of a "non-defeatist" policy entails more serious changes than the article seems to admit.

We wish to repeat and re-emphasize that all of this is an inherent and objective consequence of the confusion which is ineradicable from the defeat-concept of Lenin's, and was not due

to the otherwise excellent explanation by Comrade Shachtman of the bases of a socialist anti-war policy today. But we cannot afford to nourish the ambiguity and ambivalence which the defeat-slogan enforces. It is an untenable position, and like many another untenable position it gives rise to opposite errors as a way out. On the one hand it may encourage a tendency, in reaction, to cling to Lenin's defeat-formulas in all their crudity, since at least these will "guard against social-patriotism" like a blessed medallion (which they will not); and on the other hand, as an equal and opposite reaction, it may encourage a tendency to push the objectively indicated conclusions from a "one-sided" defeatism to their politically disastrous end.

Bury the dead. The tradition of Lenin's defeatism was born in a political mistake in 1904-5; it was revived in confusion in 1914, to be shelved without stock-taking in 1917; it was revived again in malice and reaction in 1924; it was turned into a hollow phrase by "explaining away" in the '30s; it was ignored in the '40s; and now in the '50s any war policy based on it can only be disorienting—or worse. It can only stand in the way of a clear, "full," uncompromising

Marxist anti-war position, the position of the Third Camp.

Hal DRAPER

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Irresponsibility in Disguise

CONTAINMENT OR LIBERATION, An Inquiry Into the Aims of United States Foreign Policy, by James Burnham. Published by John Day. 254 pp, \$3.50.

WHAT EUROPE THINKS OF AMERICA, Edited and with an Introduction by James Burnham. Published by John Day. 222 pp., \$3.50.

Several months ago Max Eastman and others wrote a letter to the *New Leader* complaining that James Burnham's "Containment or Liberation" was being sabotaged by bookstores and reviewers. They were certain that some kind of plot was afoot to prevent people from learning of this devastating criticism of American foreign policy. Had they that opportunity they would presumably rise in wrath at what the author describes as administration and State Department "appeasement" of Stalin and the Russian State. We are inclined to doubt the existence of such a plot. It would have been superfluous since the book, by itself and unaided, is deadly enough to drive readers from it.

Like most of Burnham's books, this one has died quickly. It deserved to die, too, for it is, like his other books, a highly irresponsible one. With a special gift for over-simplification, Burnham has presented the whole problem of American foreign policy so that it would seem that the successive administrators of American foreign policy (indeed, Burnham denies that a foreign policy, except in wartime, ever existed) were made up of imbeciles or outright enemies of the country.

For those of us who are socialists and see the dangerous folly of American bourgeois policy toward Stalinism, it is embarrassing to discuss a book like this. Criticism of it might be interpreted as a brief for those whom Burnham attacks. But we trust our readers are fully acquainted with our socialist program and

views to understand our criticism of the irrepressible, irresponsible Burnham.

Is it possible that the United States has never had a foreign policy, except in war, as Burnham claims? "At other times," he writes, "there has ordinarily been no foreign policy at all." Is this really accurate? Is this what we learn from history? No, the United States, until recent years, had the foreign policy that it required, that suited its needs and purposes.

It is true that the United States did not prior to the two World Wars have great and insoluble world problems. The great world bourgeois problems were indeed borne by Great Britain. But the problems thrust upon this country in the First World War and which were increased in the Second have become so crucial that an inexperienced bourgeoisie bumbles and stumbles on its way, using its tremendous resources and power as a substitute for intelligent policy. What is nearer the truth, is that a bourgeois-imperialist policy is not an effective diplomatic or political weapon against Stalinism.

Burnham obviously equates an ineffective policy with no policy. That is why he proposes, instead of an intelligent bourgeois foreign policy, one that is irresponsible in that its purpose would result in a war quicker than anyone desires or expects.

Burnham is certain that if peace continues it can only mean such a consolidation of Russian power as will end for all time the possibility of its defeat. In this sense he is a defeatist who sees nothing but strength in Stalinism—a system without inner contradictions. This is not the first time that this ex-Marxist has issued his apocalyptic prophecies (does anyone remember his "Managerial Revolution"?). So certain is Burnham that Russia must be destroyed now that he is willing to chance the prospect of an early third world war, even though his side is politically and militarily unprepared. Since it costs him little, he is quite willing to guarantee that "Moscow will not deliberately start a general war in the next period."

If it will not start a war in the next period, what must be done? End the policy of containment and go over to an offensive. With whom? The peoples of the Iron Curtain and the Russian masses? How? That is not quite clear. At any rate, that is the only policy for the United States because its allies in Western Europe are not reliable. What makes the Western European allies unreliable and what makes the people in the Iron Curtain countries very reliable? What program shall be offered to these peoples to make them rally around the American banner, a banner which hasn't yet been able to rally the masses who are free of Stalinist domination?

There is no answer to these all-important questions from the man who writes in clichés ("Western culture," "civilization," "property rights," etc.) which he himself not so long ago rejected as bourgeois myths. The book is unhistorical in its analyses, shallow in its proposals and haughty in its appreciation of the problems and feelings of the masses in Western Europe. It is, above all, snobbishly chauvinistic and imperialistic, and does not even have the quality of bourgeois realism, conveying a spurious and passionless *Realpolitik*.

There is a fair measure of sneering criticism of the "internationalist minded," the "world government enthusiasts," the "global humanitarians," and the "all-out United Nationalists," which ends with a dull homily: "Nations like individual men must put their first reliance on themselves."

Burnham maintains that, if Europe won't defend herself, the United States must nevertheless defend the continent against Asia. But only through "liberation"—not "containment." For if "they (the Russians) merely stabilize, then we have already lost. That is why the policy of containment, even if one hundred per cent successful, is a formula for Soviet victory. . . . We are lost if our opponent so much as holds his own. There remains only a limited time during which it will continue to be possible to move against him. Americans will not even be granted much longer the desperate comfort that as a last resort there are always the bombs to turn to. If the political offensive is long delayed, it will be too late for bombs."

If Burnham is serious, then there isn't

much time for his policy of liberation either; there is only time for immediate mobilization for war. As a matter of fact, that is the actual theme of the book. In his plea for an offensive against the Russians short of war or as a prelude to war, Burnham seems to care nothing at all about the post-war facts of life, the war-weariness of the great masses of the world, the war-weariness at home, the demobilization of Allied armed forces, the inability of the West to mount a military offensive since the close of the war.

Does Burnham think the United States can do the job alone? No, he doesn't quite venture such an opinion. But if the United States must win allies in Europe and Asia, what kind of program can accomplish this exceedingly difficult and thus far unrealized goal? Burnham offers the world a Pax Americana against a Pax Stalinensis. That is why his whole book is truly a grim and irresponsible joke.

In a world of disintegration, dominated at one end by Stalinist totalitarianism and oppression, and at the other by a decadent bourgeois society maintained by an American power limited in its capacity to keep the system alive on a world scale, Burnham has no social program to offer and no single vibrant idea that could rally behind it the great masses unencompassed by Stalinist rule. Incredible as this may seem, it is inevitable for a man who fled the movement of socialism to embrace a bourgeois society that can barely hold itself together.

If "Containment or Liberation" adds little or nothing to one's knowledge of the world and its problems, "What Europe Thinks of America," the anthology compiled by the same author and also recently published, does pinpoint in part the problem of the Continent and American failures there.

The book is a collection of essays by Europeans of the Right, "friends" of America. Most are sheer exercises dealing in secondary or trivial questions of the likes and dislikes of the Europeans and Americans for each other.

One, by a British Conservative, Julian Amery, voices the common complaint of the British bourgeoisie against American economic policy and begs American capitalism to understand the economic problems of Great Britain and the Continent, to give the latter the possibility of func-

tioning in competition with the United States in the world market. The plea will be of no avail.

There are three essays, however, which are outstanding in their analysis and appreciation of the problem of the relation of the United States to Europe. They are by an Italian journalist, Guido Piovene; a Pole, Juliusz Mieroszewski, and a French professor, Raymond Aron.

There is an underlying common chord in their writings: the old social order on the Continent is dead; you cannot fight Stalinism by merely pointing to the capitalism of the United States; a vigorous social program is indispensable to any

progress in Europe; such progress must begin with the premise that the old order is dead. Their essays do not base themselves on vituperative denunciations of Stalinism; rather, they try to understand the attractiveness that Stalinism has for such large numbers of people. Although at least one of them is sympathetic to Burnham's thesis of "liberation," he cautions that this idea must be filled with a definite social content appealing to people who do not want to return to the good old evil days.

These three raise precisely the issues which Burnham has so studiously avoided in his own thesis. Albert GATES

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REVIEW AND REFLECTIONS, by
Cyrus S. Ching, Forbes Pub. Co.
204 pp., \$3.95.

Cyrus Ching was labor relations director for the Boston Elevated Co. and then the United States Rubber Co. before becoming Federal Mediator. In 1951, during labor's walkout from all war boards, he served as chairman of the Wage Stabilization Board; during the 1952 steel strike he was director of the Federal Mediation Service.

In his book of discursive reminiscences, "Review and Reflection," he tells of the time he and a co-thinker addressed the employers Metal Trades Council in 1920, suggesting the establishment of joint worker-management plant committees. "We did not suggest anything so 'radical' as unionization of the plants." When they had been finished, the chairman, a they had finished, the chairman, a prominent industrialist, commented, "Gentlemen, you have just heard two talks on Bolshevism. We will now proceed with the business of the meeting."

Such an attitude, he deplors. His homely philosophy belongs to the "There's a lot to be said on both sides" school; and he says it. He stands firmly for the happy medium applying himself to the Taft-Hartley law, as follows: "I do not think the law is half as good as industry thinks it is and I do not think

it is half as bad as labor says it is." He looks forward to an era of peaceful understanding between enlightened management and labor; an attitude publicly shared by most labor officials but still unable to avoid big strikes and political struggles over all decisive matters.

The book is of occasional interest for its sidelight stories of important events. The UAW gets credit for the defense of wage levels during the 1951 fight over wage freeze. "I realize," he writes, "that the reason this 'escalator' principle was approved was that it had been written into the big automobile industry contracts, and apparently the emergency was not considered great enough for the government to override existing contracts."

Because he is a mild man who hates to make a categorical statement when an ambiguous one will serve as well, his testimony on the question of "emergency" strikes is significant.

"Although there is a terrific amount of shouting about the 'grave' problem of 'national emergency' strikes and how to handle them, I don't think this country, as a whole, ever really suffered seriously as a result of a strike, for the last 50 years. . . . A good case can be made for the statement that the nation has never really suffered seriously from a strike. I am not ignoring the impact of strikes on certain of our industries and communities but there have been few, if any, real national emergencies resulting from labor-management conflicts." B. H.

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