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EDITORIALS

We begin our series of ANTI-THIRD WORLD WAR editorials with 'THE NEW RESISTANCE IN RUSSIA'

We do not expect to alter the larger course of events, but we do believe that truth and justice require a 'local habitation and a name' and that wherever in the acts and thoughts of the individual man or woman it lives, it is kept alive for everyone.

It is, therefore for ourselves and a few thousand others that we embark on this otherwise unrewarding enterprise.

.....

THE NEW RESISTANCE IN RUSSIA

For the past ten years or more, radicals have been so concerned with exposing the non-revolutionary nature of the Stalinist regime in Russia, that they have tended to create a picture of absolute terror and unrelieved oppression. In renouncing the premise that Russia was a workers' state, they went to the other extreme: in their zeal they have failed to recognize that the workers play *any* active role whatever. They have not been able to separate the State from society. They who formerly had hailed Russia as a 'workers' state', view it now as a 'burocratic' State—with the workers figuring only as passive victims. Both are monolithic concepts and have more in common with each other than with the actual state of affairs.

It is important to remember that the failure to distinguish between the Nazi State and the German people greatly contributed to the potency of the war propoganda before and during the Second World War. From 1932 on, radical writing about Germany concerned itself almost exclusively with depicting the horrors of the regime, with the result that it proved highly useful to the war propagandists. Those radicals who remained faithful to their principles and opposed the war, realized somewhat belatedly the

damage they had done, and attempted to rectify matters by placing greater emphasis on internal dissention and popular resistance in Germany, but this came too late to have much effect. Of the less principled ex-radicals, their support of the war followed easily from this monolithic creation in which the German people and the State were one.

Today the rapidly developing sentiment for war with Russia is making use of the radicals' own revelations of the nature of the Stalinist regime, and many near-radicals are assuming a position that will lead to 'critical' support of the next war on the grounds that a Russian victory would end all posibility of struggling for socialism. It is, therefore, particularly important that radicals should learn to distinguish between the Stalinist regime and the Russian people.

Without doubt, the Stalinist burocracy has perfected techniques of repression that are more effective than any previously developed, and has been successful in eliminating the possibility of the *usual* forms of political and economic struggle against it. One looks in vain for an underground press, trade union activity or any form of intellectual or cultural opposition.

The burocracy received its own early training in such underground activity under the Czar and is therefore all to familiar with its techniques. But it has not been successful in destroying all forms of resistance. Radicals who have come to this conclusion have been looking at the situation from the top down, looking for opposition as Stalinists burocrats themselves might. Since they have not found the forms of opposition with which they are familiar, they have concluded that there are none. They would have learned more by identifying themselves with the workers who had to seek new techniques of resistance when the old ones became too hazardous.

From this it follows that the revelations of disaffected Russian burocrats like Kravchenko give a far from adequate account, in as much as their official position made it impossible for them to become aware of the actual forces of resistance. These new forms of opposition occur in an area that would not be discernible to a burocrat.

Not only does the police terror make written propaganda and political organization impossible, but the state of mind of the Russian worker renders him peculiarly unsusceptible to this form of opposition. Under any totalitarian regime the workers eventually become impervious to the written word:

"'Has no newspaper that says the opposite of what "The News of Rome" says ever come this way?' the priest asked. 'I mean a newspaper that was against the government?'

'May be,' says Magascia. 'May be. But you can't pay attention to every bit of paper that's given you. Once upon a time paper was a rare and precious thing ..In those times, in our part of the world, nobody, speaking with respect, would have dared use a piece of paper to wipe himself..But now we've gone to the other extreme, and so much free and lying paper is handed out that it actually makes you shudder to touch your own body with it.' "(Silone, *Bread and Wine*)

This is also true of the radio;* the mere fact that in a country of such great material privations it is possible for any worker to obtain a radio is sufficient reason for their mistrusting it.

The whole idea of a mass revolutionary overthrow of the regime can have no attraction for a working class that carried out one such revolution, only to be saddled with a worse tyranny than before. It is not because of apathy that the Russian workers have rejected the idea of revolution: in this sense they are the most sophisticated workers in the world; they have had thirty years for evolving techniques of *undermining* the regime rather than wasting their energies in vain attempts to repeat the mistakes of 1917.

Not only is struggle on the political arena meaningless, but a considerable part of the traditional economic struggle of the working class has been rendered impossible by the nature of the regime. Since there is no unemployment, the fight for jobs has no relevance; rather the problem of the Russian worker is to get out of working.

This they have done in two ways: by a systematic slowdown, and by establishing a free market. Both these things, in effect, create a dual economy; this is one instance of *undermining* rather than *directly opposing* the regime.

Trade union activity in the traditional sense has been ruled out by the fact that the trade unions have become part of the state apparatus, and the workers, though 'organized' have no real representatives. Therefore, instead of trying to ameliorate their working conditions, wages, and hours on the job, they have simply endeavored to divorce themselves from the job itself, by working as little as possible, and by engaging in their main economic activity after 'work'.

* The broadcasts are of course completely controlled, no short wave sets are allowed, altho we doubt the efficacy of foreign propaganda, could the Russians hear any.

"Side by side with the official commerce carried on by the State, there exists now in Soviet Russia a kind of free commerce. It acquired considerable importance during the war. It is becoming more and more a factor in Soviet life.

This commerce does not take place in stores, but on the street. Each city and town has its market place...you can find on this market—commonly referred to as the bazaar—almost everything. The bazaar is...the center of town life...the center of most of the preoccupations of the population. The word 'bazaar' constantly crops up in all conversation. On his free day, the worker, man or woman, takes a trip to the town bazaar. This event takes on such proportion that they talk about it during the entire week...

The attraction that a free market exercises on the Soviet individual is of great significance. In it he finds himself face to face with a different world, one that obeys the law of economic liberty. In the bazaar one can sell and buy freely anything he wants. *And everybody has something to sell.* (Our italics: D. R., H. C.) On his after-work patch of soil, worker grows a bit of tobacco. His wife sells the tobacco in the bazaar. He economizes, buys himself a goat or a cow...and sells his milk curd. By the dint of shrewd merchandising, one of my fellow workers who grew and sold tobacco was enabled to buy himself a cow for 27,000 rubles. Another acquired some bees...

In principle, the bazaar is a free market, but now and then the N.K.V.D....swoops down. The street market is then less free..

It is incorrect to speak of an atmosphere of terror in the U.S.S.R. Inside the kind of prison where the Soviet worker finds himself, one is free to work and especially free to do as little work as possible. *Upon the rise of the street market, Stakhanovism lost much of its importance.* (Our italics). Instead of tiring himself in an effort to get a better living by increasing his output, the Soviet worker prefers to make money doing 'business' in his after work hours."

New Views, no. 19: 'The Moral and Economic Condition of the Lower Classes in Contemporary Soviet Russia'...This is an eye-witness report by a Frenchman who after the war worked in the Soviet coal mines until the end of 1946.

The slow-down, which exists side by side with the bazaar, and which provides the Russian worker with the energy required to carry on this other form of work, is one of the oldest forms of opposition that still exists. It was probably used by the slaves of ancient Rome. And it was widely employed by workers of Nazi occupied Europe in the late war. Used alone, it constitutes no more than an annoyance to the masters, but in conjunction with a free market as in Russia, it could become a formidable weapon

against the regime. When the whole population engages in it, police terror is helpless against it.

Not only is it impossible for the regime to imprison everyone, but terror which invariably after a time works for its own destruction, is now actually facilitating the slow-down in Russia!:

"On the first day of my work in the lamp room my immediate overseer.....Victor S. told me: 'Listen, you, you've got to look busy when the natchalnik is around. It doesn't matter what you do, but look busy. As soon as he leaves, drop everything and take it easy. Mustn't kill yourself. Slow and easy does it, that's our law!'

Victor S. lived up to this law with remarkable fidelity. At eight in the morning he stole out of the lamp room and went home. He did not return until about ten so that he could be around when the morning shift was relieved. Away from the job, he attended to his bees and trading...Now and then the natchalnik noticied his truancy and made a scene. But that did not worry Victor S. too much. He said the natchalnik had once stolen kerosene and was concerned in the disappearance of a 200 liter can of benzine. So Victor S. used to say: 'If that son of a —— doesn't stop annoying me, I'll denounce him!' " *op cit.*

While Victor S. was fortunate in having an immediate superior who did not care to turn him in because he, too, was at odds with the state, the penalty for staying away from work or even for being tardy can be as high as six years in prison.

We do not want to create the impression that we are optimistic, merely because we point out the possibilities of this resistance. The objective material at our disposal is scanty, and we can do no more than interpret its implications. Nor do we wish to minimize the brutality of the regime and its ruthlessness in dealing with those dissident elements who are not sufficiently circumspect in their behavior and so become known to them.

We cannot pretend that this resistance is either unified or universal. There are millions of petty officials who benefit sufficiently from the regime to support it. Most of the resistance is in itself on an extremely opportunistic basis. However, even banditry, which is the least political of all forms of opposition, serves, in effect, to sabotage and disorganize the regime.

In view of the intensity and duration of the repression, it is not surprising that there exists no conscious ideological resistance. The very nature of the opposition precludes direct propaganda or or organization; in fact it depends on its being unknown, unorganized, subversive.

However, if and when the resistance gains sufficient momentum to threaten the status quo, the movement will doubtless acquire a more positive character, an ideology and more idealism. Idealism had been conspicuously absent in the resistance up to now. When material considerations are of such magnitude, that one is faced with the prospect of starving, it is extremely unlikely that an individual will be concerned with larger human issues. Where personal survival is the only consideration, and all group values are absent, societal change is highly improbable; at least this is true for the immediate present.

However, it is not inconceivable that the power of the regime may be worn down by the free market and sabotage to a point where immediate material needs are fulfilled, and then the more significant aspects of freedom will be fought for. Only when we stop thinking of societal change in terms of 'proletarian revolution', will the situation in Russia appear less hopeless to us.

Actually, the regime appears less permanent if we view it from some hiatorical perspective. In the past, totalitarian burocracies always existed in a static economy; they existed, in fact, to support the status quo. As soon as the economy started expanding, it burst thru the burocratic bondage. The Bolshevik burocracy has existed for over thirty years—which is little in historical time—and as the tempo of both internal and external expansion continues accelerating, the contradiction between the transitional nature of the Soviet society particularly of its altering economy and the conservative demands of a burocratic state may clash violently. At this moment all elements of internal resistance may have a spectacular opportunity.

It is impossible to say just when and how the two economies in Russia will come into open conflict nor by what means the state may be destroyed. But it is important to recognize that a struggle *is* going on, and that the Russian workers, far from being the passive instruments of the regime that radicals have represented them as being, are employing techniques of opposition which are heartening to us, and from which we shall all have to learn.

"THEIR NECKS OR OURS"

At present, the predominant forces on the 'left' in favor of immediate war with Russia, are the ex-Communists. These gentry seem to feel that they are personally inscribed in Stalin's liquidation file, and that it is necessary to blast hell out of Russia with the bomb at once, before the Russians have time to develop means of retaliation. The arguments used to support this position are almost identical with the lesser evil arguments used to justify 'leftist' support for World War II: a Russian victory over the 'democracies' would end forever all hope of achieving socialism, therefore we must eliminate this threat while we have the the opportunity, and in the Pax Americana which follows we will be able to utilize the freedoms we have preserved for the purpose of struggling for socialism.

At this writing it is difficult to think of what Menace to All Civilized Values will be trotted out as an excuse for postponing the struggle for socialism if and when the Pax Americana is achieved, but we have no doubt that the boys will have no difficulty in finding one as soon as the time is propitious.

We can only repeat, a trifle wearily, that if the struggle for socialism depends on the aid of imperialist governments to preserve it from foreign threats, we might as well forget about the whole thing. Any techniques the Russians have developed for rendering the struggle difficult, can and will be used by the United States government when it will be necessary to use them. Of course, as long as the 'Left' obligingly acts as coat-holder for the government, there is some possibility that the government will not bother to resort to drastic measures—altho it is by no means guaranteed that the government will be so benevolent whatever the sacrifices of integrity the 'socialists' make. Governments are whimsical things, and by and large, one would probably survive just about as well as a paid sycophant to Stalin as in the One World which America rules.

THE DOOR NAIL

To the music of 'Anchors Away' and the Marine Corps Anthem alternating with Sousa, played by some pseudo-penguin-attired members of the people's vanguard, 50,000 of the more ordinary workers led by Communist Party and union burocrats, wearily marched, out of step and disinterestedly carrying their American flags and their incredibly fatuous slogans.

—The official party announcement of the MAY DAY parade read: 'For lower prices, better housing, labor unity and lasting peace'.—

The slogans, now taken out of packing boxes, much like last years Christmas decorations from one year to the next—except when sudden shifts of line or 'taste' necessitate a longer storage time—wear out despite care: 'MAKE ANTI-SEMITISM *UNLAWFUL*' [All power to the Worker-cop, hail to the *good* Laws, the *good* State; 'Under no circumstances...is parade discipline to be broken, no matter what the provocation. If steps for the maintenance of order are necessary, the police have promised full cooperation.' *Daily Worker* May 1, 1947]

'STOP THE TERROR IN GREECE!' ('If thine right eye offend thee, pluck it out')

If the Communist Party parade was a return-engagement funeral procession, the Socialist Meeting held to celebrate this festive occasion was a wake. This meeting may be summed up in one of the opening remarks by the chairman: 'A people can only be free when its freedoms are not curbed.'

It was impossible to attend all the gatherings, since each little party and sect had its own ceremony at the same time—the most exclusive being the Workers Party—one of the Trotskyist groups, which charged 50 cents admission!

coda

There was a time when MAY DAY expressed the aspirations of politicalized workers for a classless society. However the fact that they chose to express these aspirations in the form of a pseudo-military parade is one indication why these aspirations have not been realized.

A militant, regimented working-class movement degenerates into an apathetic, regimented working-class movement.

ANTI-BOLSHEVIST COMMUNISM IN GERMANY

PAUL MATTICK

The process of the concentration of capital and political power forces any socially important movement to attempt either to destroy capitalism or to serve it consistently. The old German labor movement could not do the latter and was neither willing nor able to do the former. It functioned neither in accordance with its original ideology nor with its real immediate interests. For a time it served as a control instrument of the ruling classes. First losing its independence, it was soon to lose its very existence.

Essentially the history of this movement is the history of the capitalist market approached from a 'proletarian' point of view. The so-called market laws were to be utilized in favor of the commodity labor power. Collective actions should lead to the highest possible wages. 'Economic power' gained in this manner was to be secured by way of social reform. The capitalists, too, increased the organized control over the market. Both sides fostered the monopolistic reorganization of capitalist society, though, to be sure, behind their consciously conceived activities there was finally nothing but the expansive need of capital itself. Their policies and aspirations, however much based on real considerations of facts and special needs, were still determined by the fetishistic character of their system of production.

Aside from commodity-fetishism, whatever meaning the market laws may have with regard to special fortunes and losses, and however they may be manipulated by one or another interest group, under no circumstances can they be used in favor of the working class as a whole. It is not the market which controls the people and determines the prevailing social relations but rather the fact that a separate group in society either owns or controls both the means of production and the instruments of suppression.

To overcome capitalism, actions outside the labor-capital-market relations are necessary, actions that do away with both the market

and with class relations. Restricted to actions *within* the framework of capitalism, the old labor movement was bound to destroy itself or be destroyed from without. It was destined either to be broken up internally by its own revolutionary opposition, which would give rise to to new organizations, or doomed to be destroyed by the capitalistic change from a market- to a controlled-market economy and the accompanying political alterations.

I

The first world war revealed more than anything else that the labor movement was part and parcel of bourgeois society. The various organizations in every nation proved that they had neither the intention nor the means to fight capitalism, that they were interested only in securing their own existence within the capitalist structure. In Germany this was especially obvious because within the international movement the German organizations were the largest and most unified. To hold onto what had been built up since Bismark's anti-socialist laws, the oppositional minority within the socialist party displayed a self-restriction to an extent unknown in other countries. But, then, the exiled Russian opposition had less to lose; it had, furthermore, split away from the reformists and class-collaborationists a decade before the outbreak of the war. And it is quite difficult to see in the meek pacifistic arguments of the Independent Labor Party any real opposition to the social patriotism that had saturated the British labor movement. But more had been expected of the German left-wing than of any other group in the International and its behavior at the outbreak of the war was therefore particularly disappointing. Apart from the psychological conditions of individuals this behavior was the product of the organization-fetishism prevailing in the movement.

This fetishism demanded discipline and strict adherence to democratic formulas—the minority must submit to the will of the majority. And although it is clear that under capitalistic conditions these 'democratic' formulas merely hide facts to the contrary, the opposition failed to perceive that democracy within the labor movement did not differ from bourgeois democracy in general. A minority owned and controlled the organizations just as the capitalist minority owns and controls the means of production and the state apparatus. In both cases, the minorities by virtue of this control determine the behavior of the majorities. But by force of traditional procedures, in the name of discipline and unity, uneasy and against its better knowledge, the anti-war minority supported social-democratic chauvinism. There was just one man in the German Reichstag of August 1914—Fritz Kunert

—who was not able to vote for war credits but who was also not able to vote against them and thus, to satisfy his conscience, abstained from voting altogether. In the spring of 1915 Liebknecht and Ruehle were the first to vote against the granting of war credits to the government. They remained alone for quite some time and found new companions only to the degree that the chances for a victorious peace disappeared in the military stalemate. After 1916 the radical anti-war attitude was supported and soon swallowed up by a bourgeois movement in search of a negotiated peace, a movement which, finally, was to inherit the bankrupt stock of German imperialism.

As violators of discipline Liebknecht and Ruehle were expelled from the social-democratic Reichstag fraction. Together with Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and others, more or less forgotten by now, they organized the group, *Internationale*, publishing a magazine of the same title in order to uphold the idea of internationalism in the warring world. In 1916 they organized the *Spartakusbund* which cooperated with other left-wing formations such as the *Internationale Socialisten* with Julian Borchardt as their spokesman, and the group around Johann Knief and the radical Bremen paper, *Arbeiterpolitik*. In retrospect it seems that the last-named group was the most advanced, that is, advanced away from social-democratic traditions and toward a new approach to the proletarian class struggle. How much the *Spartakusbund* was still adhering to the organization and unity fetish that ruled the German labor movement came to light in their vacillating attitude toward the first attempts at re-orienting the international socialist movement in Zimmerwald and Kienthal. The spartacists were not in favor of a clean break with the old labor movement in the direction of the earlier bolshevik example. They still hoped to win the party over to their own position and carefully avoided irreconcilable policies. In April 1917 the *Spartakusbund* merged with the Independent Socialists which formed the center of the old labor movement but was no longer willing to cover up the chauvinism of the conservative majority-wing of the social-democratic party. Relatively independent, yet still within the Independent Socialist Party, the *Spartakusbund* left this organization only at the end of the year 1918.

II

Within the *Spartakusbund* Liebknecht's and Luxemburg's position had been attacked by the bolsheviks as inconsistent. And inconsistent it was but for pertinent reasons. At first glance, the main reason seemed to be based on the illusion that the social-democratic party could be reformed. With changing circumstances, it was hoped, the

masses would cease to follow their conservative leaders and support the left-wing of the party. And although such illusions did exist, first with regard to the old party and later with regard to the Independent Socialists, they do not altogether explain the hesitancy on the part of the spartacist leaders to adopt the ways of bolshevism. Actually, the spartacists faced a dilemma no matter in which direction they looked. By not trying—at the right time—to break resolutely wish social-democracy, they forfeited their chance to form a strong organization capable of playing a decisive role in the expected social upheavels. Yet in view of the real situation in Germany, in view of the history of the German labor movement, it was quite difficult to believe in the possibility of quickly forming a counter-party to the dominant labor organizations. Of course, it might have been possible to form a party in the Leninist manner, a party of professional revolutionists, willing to usurp power, if necessary, against the will of the majority of the working class. But this was precisely what the people around Rosa Luxemburg did not aspire to. Throughout the years of their opposition to reformism and revisionism, they had never narrowed their distance from the Russian 'left', from Lenin's concept of organization and revolution. In sharp controversies, Rosa Luxemburg had pointed out that Lenin's concepts were of a Jacobin nature and inapplicable in Western Europe where not a bourgeois but a proletarian revolution was on the order of the day. Although she, too, spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat it meant, to her, in distinction to Lenin, 'the manner in which democracy is employed, not in its abolition:—it was to be the work of the class, and not of a small minority in the name of the class.'

Enthusiastically as the sparticiasts greeted the overthrow of Czarism, they did not lose their critical capacities, nor did they forget the character of the bolshevik party, nor the historical limitations of the Russian Revolution. But regardless of the immediate realities and the final outcome of this revolution, it had to be supported as a first break in the imperialist phalanx and as the forerunner of the expected German revolution. Of the latter many signs had appeared in strikes, hunger riots, mutinies and all kinds of passive resistances. But the growing opposition, to the war to Ludendorff's dictatorship did not find organizational expression to any significant extent. Rather than going to the left, the masses followed their old organizations, which lined up with the liberal bourgeosie. The upheavals in the German Navy and finally the November rebellion were carried on in the spirit of social-democracy,

that is, in the spirit of the defeated German bourgeoisie.

The German Revolution appeared to be more significant than it really was. Tho spontaneous enthusiasm of the workers was more for ending the war than for changing existing social relations. Their demands, expressed through workers' and soldiers' councils, did not transcend the possibilities of bourgeois society. Even the revolutionary minoritity, and here particularly the *Spartakusbund*, failed to develop a consistent revolutionary program. Its political and economic demands were of a two-fold nature: they were constructed to serve as demands to be agreed upon by the bourgeoisie and its social-democratic allies, and as slogans of a revolution which was to do away with both bourgeois society and its supporters.

Of course, within the ocean of political mediocrity that was the German revolution there were revolutionary streams which warmed the hearts of the radicals and induced them to undertake actions historically quite out of place. Partial successes, due to the temporary stunning of the ruling classes and the general passivity of the broad masses—exhausted as they were by four years of hunger and war—nourished the hope that the revolution might end in a socialist society. Only no one really knew what a socialist society would be like, what steps ought to be taken to usher it into existence. "All power to the workers' and soldiers' councils," however attractive as a slogan, still left all essential questions open. The revolutionary struggles that followed November 1918 were thus not determined by the consciously concocted plans of the revolutionary minority but were thrust upon it by the slowly developing counter-revolution which was backed by a majority of the people. The fact was that the broad German masses inside and outside the labor movement did not look forward to the establishment of a new society, but backwards to the restoration of liberal capitalism without its bad aspects, its political inequalities, its militarism and imperialism. They merely desired the completion of the reforms started before the war which were designed to lead into a benevolent capitalistic system.

The ambiguity which characterized the policy of the *Spartakusbund* was largely the result of the conservatism of the masses. The spartacist leaders were ready, on the one hand, to follow the clear revolutionary course desired by the so-called 'ultra-left' and on the other hand they felt sure that such a policy could not be successful in view of the prevailing mass attitude and the international situation.

The effect of the Russian Revolution upon Germany had hardly been noticable. Nor was there any reason to expect that a radical

turn in Germany would have any greater repercussions in France, England and America. If it had been difficult for the Allies to interfere decisively in Russia, they would face lesser difficulties in crushing a German communist uprising. Emerging from the war victorious, the capitalism of these nations had been enormously strengthened; there was no real indication that their patriotic masses would refuse to fight against a weaker revolutionary Germany. At any rate, aside from such considerations there was little reason to believe that the German masses, engaged in getting rid of their arms, would resume a war against foreign capitalism in order to get rid of their own. The policy which was apparently the most 'realistic' for dealing with the international situation and which was soon to be proposed by Wolfheim and Lauffenberg under the name of National-Bolshevism was still unrealistic in view of the real power relations after the war.

The plan to resume the war with Russia's help against Allied capitalism failed to consider that the bolsheviks were neither ready nor able to participate in such a venture. Of course, the bolsheviks were not adverse to Germany or any other nation making difficulties for the victorious imperialists, yet they did not encourage the idea of a new-scale war to carrry on the 'world revolution'. They desired support for their own regime, whose permanency was still questioned by the bolsheviks themselves, but they were not interested in supporting revolutions in other countries by military means. Both to follow a nationalistic course, independent of the question of alliances, and to unite Germany once more for a war of 'liberation' from foreign oppression was out of the question for the additional reason that those social layers which the 'national revolutionists' would have to win over to their cause were precisely the people who ended the war before the complete defeat of the German armies in order to prevent a further spreading of 'bolshevism'. Unable to become the masters of international capitalism, they had preferred to maintain themselves as its best servants. Yet, there was no way of dealing with international German questions which did not involve a definite foreign policy. The radical German revolution was thus defeated even before it could arise both by its own and by world capitalism.

The need to consider seriously international relations never arose, however, for the German *Left*. Perhaps this was the clearest indication of its insignificance. Neither was the question as to what to do with political power, once it was captured, raised concretely No one seemed to believe that these questions would have to be

answered. Liebknecht and Luxemburg felt sure that a long period of class struggle was facing the German proletariat with no sign of an early victory. They wanted to make the best of it, suggesting a return to parliament and to trade-union work. However, in their previous activities they had already overstepped the boundaries of bourgeois politics; they could not return to the prisons of tradition. They had rallied around themselves the most radical element of the German proletariat which was now determined to consider any fight the final struggle against capitalism. These workers interpreted the Russian revolution in accordance with their own needs and their own mentality; they cared less about difficulties lurking in the future than about destroying as much as possible of the forces of the past. There were only two ways open for the revolutionists: either to go down with the forces whose cause was lost in advance, or to return to the fold of bourgeois democracy and perform social work for the ruling classes. For the real revolutionist there was, of course, only one way: to go down with the fighting workers. This is why Eugen Levine spoke of the revolutionist as a "dead person on furlough," and why Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht went to their death almost somnambulistically.

III

The fact that the international bourgeoisie could conclude its war with no more than the temporary loss of the Russian business determined the whole post war history down to the second world war. In retrospect, the struggle of the German proletariat from 1912 to 1923 appear as minor frictions that accompanied the capitalistic re-organization process which followed the war-crisis. But there has always been a tendency to consider the by-products of violent changes in the capitalistic structure as expressions of the revolutionary will of the proletariat. The radical optimists, however, were merely whistling in the dark. The darkness was real, to be sure, and the noise was encouraging, yet at this late hour there is no need to take it seriously. As exciting as it is to recall the days of proletarian actions in Germany—the mass-meetings, demonstrations, strikes, street-fights, the heated discussions, the hopes, fears and disappointments, the bitterness of defeat and the pain of prison and death—yet no lessons but negative ones can now be drawn from all these undertakings. All the energy and all the enthusiasm were not enough to bring about a social change or to alter the contemporary mind. The lesson learned was how *not* to proceed. How to realize the revolutionary needs of the proletariat was not discovered.

The emotional upheavals provided a never-ending incentive for research. Revolution, which for so long had been a mere theory and a vague hope, had appeared for a moment as a practical possibility. The chance had been missed, no doubt, but it would return to be better utilized next time. If not the people, at least the 'times' were revolutionary and the prevailing crisis conditions would sooner or later revolutionize the minds of the workers. If actions had been brought to an end by the firing-squads of social-democratic police, if the workers' initiative was once more destroyed through the emasculation of their councils by way of legislation, if their leaders were again acting not with the class but 'in behalf of the class' in the various capitalistic institutions—nevertheless the war had revealed that the fundamental capitalistic contradictions could not be solved and that crisis conditions were now the 'normal' conditions of capitalism. New revolutionary actions were probable and would find the revolutionists better prepared.

Although the revolutions in Germany, Austria and Hungary had failed, there was still the Russian Revolution to remind the world of the reality of the proletarian claims. All discussions circled around this revolution, and rightly so, for this revolution was to determine the future course of the German *Left*. In December 1919 the Communist Party of Germany was formed. After the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg it was led by Paul Levi and Karl Radek. This new leadership was at once attacked by a left opposition because of its tendency to advocate a return to parliamentary activities. At the foundation of the party its radical elements had succeeded in giving it an anti-parliamentarian character and a wide democratic control in distinction to the Leninist type of organization. An anti-trade union policy had also been adopted. Liebknecht and Luxumberg subordinated their own divergent views to those of the radical majority. Not so Levi and Radek. Already in the summer of 1919 they made it clear that they would split the party in order to participate in parliamentary elections. Simultaneously they began to propagandize for a return to trade-union work despite the fact that the party was already engaged in the formation of new organizations no longer based on trades or even industries, but on factories. These factory organizations were combined into one class organization, the General Labor Union. At the Heidelberg convention in October 1919 all delegates who disagreed with the new central committee and maintained the position taken at the founding of the Communist Party were expelled. The following February the central

committee decided to get rid of all districts controlled by the left opposition. The opposition had the Amsterdam bureau of the Communist International on its side, which led to the dissolution of that bureau by the International in order to support the Levi-Radek combination. And finally in April 1920 the left wing founded the Communist Workers Party.

The Communist Workers Party (K.A.P.D.) did not as yet realize that its struggle against the groups around Levi and Radek was the resumption of the old fight of the German *Left* against bolshevism, and in a larger sense against the new structure of world capitalism which was slowly taking shape. It decided to enter the Communist International. It seemed more bolshevik than the bolsheviks. But the Communist International did not need to decide anew against the 'ultra-left'; its leaders had made their decision twenty years before. Nevertheless, the executive committee of the Communist International still tried to keep in contact with the Communist Workers Party not only because it still contained the majority of the old Communist Party, but also because both Levi and Radek, although doing the work of the bolsheviks in Germany had been the closest disciples not of Lenin but of Rosa Luxemburg.

At the second world congress of the Third International in 1920 the Russian bolsheviks were already in a position to dictate the policy of the International. The Communist Workers Party's reactions were summed up in Herman Gorter's 'Open Letter to Lenin', which answered Lenin's 'Left Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder'. The actions of the International against the 'ultra-left' were the first attempts to interfere with and control all the various national sections. The pressure upon the Communist Workers Party to return to parliamentarianism and trade unionism was constantly increased, but the Communist Workers Party withdrew from the International after its third congress.

IV

At the second world congress the bolshevik leaders, in order to secure control over the International proposed twenty-one conditions of admission to the Communist International. Since they controlled the congress they had no difficulty getting these conditions adopted. Thereupon the struggle on questions of organization which, twenty years previously, had caused the controversies between Luxemburg and Lenin were openly resumed. Behind the debated organizational questions were, of course, the fundamental differences between the bolshevik revolution and the Western workers.

These twenty-one conditions endowed the executive of the International, that is, the leaders of the Russian party, with complete control and authority over all national sections. In Lenin's opinion, it was not possible to realize dictatorship on an international scale "without a strictly centralized, disciplined party, capable of leading and managing every branch, every sphere, every variety of political and cultural work." This attitude—which insisted on applying the Russian experience to Western Europe where entirely different conditions prevailed—appeared to the left opposition as an error, a political mistake, a lack of understanding of the peculiarities of Western capitalism and the result of Lenin's fanatical preoccupation with Russian problems. Lenin's policy seemed to be determined by the backwardness of Russian capitalistic development, and though it had to be fought in Western Europe since it tended to support the capitalist restoration, it could not be called an outright counter-revolutionary force. This benevolent view towards the bolshevik revolution was soon to be destroyed by the further activities of the bolsheviks themselves.

The bolsheviks went from small 'mistakes' to always greater 'mistakes.' Although the German communist party which was affiliated with the Third International grew steadily, particularly after its unification with the Independent Socialists, the proletarian class, already on the defensive, lost one position after another to the forces of capitalist reaction. Competing with the social democratic party, which represented parts of the middle class and the so-called trade-unionist labor aristocracy, the Communist Party could not help growing as these layers became pauperized in the permanent depression in which German capitalism found itself. With the steady growth of unemployment, dissatisfaction with the status quo and its staunchest supporters, the German social democrats, also increased.

Only the heroic side of the Russian Revolution was popularized, the real every day character of the bolshevik regime was hidden by both its friends and foes. For, at this time, the state capitalism that was unfolding in Russia was still as foreign to the bourgeoisie, indoctrinated with laissez faire ideology, as was socialism proper. And socialism was conceived by most socialists as a kind of state control of industry and natural resources. The Russian Revolution became a powerful and skillfully fostered myth, accepted by the impoverished sections of the German proletariat to compensate for their increasing misery. The myth was bolstered by the reactionaries to increase their followers' hatred for the German workers and for all revolutionary tendencies generally.

Against the myth, against the powerful propaganda apparatus of

the Communist International that built up the myth, which was accompanied and supported by a general onslaught of capital against labor all over the world—against all this, reason could not prevail. All radical groups to the left of the Communist Party went from stagnation to disintegration. It did not help that these groups had the 'right' policy and the Communist Party the 'wrong' one, for no questions of revolutionary strategy were here involved. What was taking place was that world capitalism was going through a stabilization process and ridding itself of the disturbing proletarian elements which under the crisis conditions of war and military collapse had tried to assert themselves.

Russia, which of all nations was most in need of stabilization, was the first country to destroy its labor movement by way of the bolshevik party dictatorship. Under cond tions of imperialism, however, internal stabilization is possible only by external power politics. The character of Russia's foreign policy under the bolsheviks was determined by the peculiarities of the European post war situation. Modern imperialism is no longer content with merely asserting itself by means of military pressure and actual welfare, the 'fifth column' is the recognized weapon of all nations. Yet the imperialistic virtue of today was still a sheer necessity for the bolsheviks who were trying to hold their own in a world of imperialist competition. There was nothing contradictory in the bolshevik policy of taking all power from the Russian workers, and, at the same time, attempting to build up strong labor organizations in other nations.

Of course, the bolsheviks did not regard the various sections of their International as mere foreign legions in the service of the 'workers' fatherland;' they believed that what helped Russia was also serving progress elsewhere. They believed, and rightly so, that the Russian revolution had initiated a general and world-wide movement from monopoly capitalism to state capitalism, and they held that this new state of affairs was a step in the direction of socialism. In other words, if not in their tactics, then in their theory they were still social-democrats and from their point of view the social-democratic leaders were really traitors to their own cause when they helped preserve the laissez faire capitalism of yesterday. Against social-democracy they felt themselves to be true revolutionists; against the 'ultra-left' they felt they were realists, the true representatives of 'scientific socialism'.

But what they thought of themselves and what they really were are different things. Insofar as they continued to misunderstand their historical mission, they were continuously defeating their own cause; insofar as they were forced to live up to the objective needs of their

revolution, they became the greatest counter-revolutionary force of modern capitalism. By fighting as true social democrats for predominance in the socialist movement of the world, by identifying the narrow nationalistic interests of state-capitalistic Russia with the interests of the world proletariat, and by attempting to maintain at all costs the power position they had won in 1917, they were merely preparing their own downfall, which was dramatized in numerous factional struggles, reached its climax in the Moscow trials, and ended in the Stalinist Russia of today —one imperialist nation among others.

In view of this development, what was more important than criticism of the actual policies of the bolsheviks in Germany and the world at large was the recogition of the real historical importance of the bolshevist movement, that is, of militant social-democracy. What a conservative social-democratic movement was capable of doing and not doing, the parties in Germany, France, and England had revealed only too clearly. The bolsheviks showed what they would have done had they still been a subversive movement. They would have attempted to organize unorganized capitalism and to replace individual entrepreneurs by bureaucrats. They had no other plans and even these were only extensions of the process of cartellization, trustification and centralization which was going on all over the capitalist world. In Western Europe, the socialist parties could no longer act bolshevistically, for their bourgeosie was already instituting this kind of 'socialization'. All that the socialists could do was to lend them a hand; that is, to 'grow slowly' into the 'emerging socialist society'.

The meaning of bolshevism was completely revealed only with the emergence of fascism. And in the light of the present, the 'ultra-left' groups in Germany and Holland must be considered the first anti-fascist organizations, anticipating in their struggle against the communist parties the future need of the working class to fight the fascist form of capitalism. The first theorists of anti-fascism are to be found among the spokesmen of the radical sects: Gorter and Pannekoek in Holland; Ruehle, Pfempfert, Broh and Fraenkel in Germany; and they can be considered as such by reason of their struggle against the concept of party-rule and state control, by their attempts to actualize the concepts of the council movement towards the direct determination of its destiny, and by their upholding the struggle of the German *Left* against both social-democracy and its Leninistic branch.

V

The Russian soviets and the German workers' and soldiers'

councils represented the proletarian element in both the Russian and the German revolution. In both nations these movements were soon suppressed by military and judicial means. What remained of the Russian soviets after the firm entrenchment of the bolshevik party dictatorship was merely the Russian version of the later Nazi labor-front. The legalized German council movement turned into an appendage of trade-unionism and soon into a capitalistic form of control. Even the spontaneously formed councils of 1918 were—the majority of them—far from revolutionary. Their form of organization, based on class needs and not on the various special interests resulting from the capitalistic division of labor was all that was radical about them. But whatever their shortcomings, it must be said that there was nothing else on which to base revolutionary hopes. Although they frequently turned against the *Left*, still it was expected that the objective needs of this movement would bring it inevitably into conflict with the traditional powers. This form of organization was to be preserved in its original character and built up in preparation for coming struggles.

Thinking in terms of a continued German revolution, the 'ultra-left' was committed to a fight to the finish against trade-unions and against the existing parliamentary parties; in brief, against all forms of opportunism and compromise. Thinking in terms of the probability of a side-by-side existence with the old capitalist powers, the Russian bolsheviks could not conceive a policy without compromise. Lenin's arguments in defense of the bolshevik position in relation to trade-unions, parliamentarianism and opportunism in general elevated the particular needs of bolshevism into false revolutionary principles. Yet it would not do to show the illogical character of the bolshevik arguments, for as illogical as the arguments were from a revolutionary point of view, they emanated logically from the peculiar role of the bolsheviks within the Russian capitalistic emancipation and from the bolshevik international policy which supported Russia's national interests.

One part of the 'ultra left' movement went one step beyond the anti bolshevism of the Communist Workers Party and its adherents in the General Labor Union (A.A.U.) It thought that the history of the social democratic parties and the practices of the bolshevik parties proved sufficiently that it was futile to attempt to replace reactionary parties for the reason that the party form of organization itself had become useless and even dangerous. The movement split: one section discarded the party form altogether, the other remained as the 'economic organization' of the Communist Workers Party. The

former leaned toward the syndicalist and anarchist movements without, however, giving up its Marxian Weltanschauung. The other considered itself the heir to all that had been revolutionary in the Marxian movement of the past. It attempted to bring about a Fourth International but succeeded only in effecting a closer co-operation with similar groups in a few European countries.

History bypassed both groups; they argued in a vacuum. Neither the Communist Workers Party nor the anti-party section of the General Labor Union overcame their status of being 'ultra left' sects. Their internal problems became quite artificial for, as regards activities, there was actually no difference between them.

These organizations—remnants of the proletarian attempt to play a role in the upheavals of 1918—attempted to apply their experiences within a development which was consistently moving in the opposite direction from that in which these experiences originated. The Communist Party alone, by virtue of Russian control, could really grow within the trend toward fascism. But by representing Russian, not German fascism, it, too, had to succumb to the emerging Nazi-movement which, recognizing and accepting prevailing capitalist tendencies, finally inherited the old German labor movement in its entirety.

After 1923 the German 'ultra-left' movement ceased to be a serious political factor in the German labor movement. Its last attempt to force the trend of development in its direction was dissipated in the short-lived activity in March 1921 under the popular leadership of Max Hoelz. Its militant members, being forced into illegality, introduced methods of conspiricy and expropriation into the movement, thereby hastening its disintegration. Altho organizationally the 'ultra-left' groups continued to exist up to the beginning of Hitler's dictatorship, their functions were restricted to that of discussion clubs trying to understand their own failures and that of the German revolution.

VI

The decline of the 'ultra-left' movement, the changes in Russia and in the composition of the bolshevik parties, the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany restored the old relationship between economics and politics that had been disturbed during and after the first world war. All over the world capitalism was now sufficiently stabilized to determine the main political trend. Fascism and bolshevism, products of crisis conditions—were like the crisis itself—also mediums for a new prosperity, a new expansion of capital and the resumption of the imperialistic competitive struggles. But just as any major crisis appears as the 'final' crisis to those who suffer most, so the

accompanying political changes appeared as expressions of the breakdown of capitalism. But the wide gap between appearance and reality sooner or later changes an exaggerated optimism into exaggerated pessimism with regard to revolutionary possibilities. Two ways, then, remain open for the revolutionist: he can capitulate to the dominant political processes, or he can retire into a life of contemplation and wait for the turn of events.

Until the final collapse of the German labor movement, the retreat of the 'ultra-left' appeared to be a return to theoretical work. The organizations existed in the form of weekly and monthly publications, pamphlets and books. The publications secured the organizations, the organizations the publications. While mass-organizations served small capitalistic minorities, the mass of the workers were represented by individuals. The contradiction between the theories of the 'ultra-left' and the prevailing conditions became unbearable. The more one thought in collective terms the more isolated one became. Capitalism, in its fascistic form, appeared as the only real collectivism, and anti-fascism as a return to an early bourgeois individualism. The mediocrity of capitalist man, and therefore of the revolutionist under capitalist conditions, became painfully obvious within the small stagnating organizations. More people, starting from the premise that the 'objective conditions' were ripe for revolution, explained its absence with such 'subjective factors' as lack of class consciousness and lack of of understanding and character on the part of the workers. These lacks themselves, had again to be explained by 'objective conditions', for the shortcomings of the proletariat undoubtedly resultedly from their special position within the social relations of capitalism. The necessity of restricting activity to educational work became a virtue: developing the class consciousness of the workers was regarded as the most essential of all revolutionary tasks. But the old social-democratic belief that 'knowledge is power' was no longer convincing for there is no direct connection between knowledge and its application.

The triumph of German fascism ended the long period of revolutionary discouragement, disillusionment and despair. Everything became once more extremely clear; the immediate future was outlined in all its brutality. The labor movement proved for the last time that the criticism directed against it by the revolutionists was more than justified. The fight of the 'ultra-left' against the official labor movement proved to have been the only consistent struggle against capitalism that had thus far been waged.

ART IN THE DESERT

GEORGE WOODCOCK

To discuss the cultural state of England today is not easy, unless one is prepared to take the smooth course of the 'popular culture' advocates, and describe with blushing enthusiasm the spread of 'artistic consciousness' among the masses. On the other hand, it would be only slightly less accurate to follow the line of many understandably disillusioned highbrows, who are prepared to assert roundly that 'culture' is dead in England, and that what is taken to represent its growth is merely a spreading of rarified kitsch standards into a wider circle of the petty-bourgeoisie, the slopping over of Mayfair bad taste into the lives of the typist and the shop girl.

The reality, as always, lies somewhere between. My own provisional formula to represent the present situation of English 'culture' is that there is a real and growing demand for good music, ballet, and films, and even, to a much slighter extent, an enhanced interest in sound writing. On the other hand, there is a very much lower rate of supply, and the production of *new* books, music or paintings of any importance is very scanty indeed.

Perhaps the most extreme form of this contrast is shown in music. Through the influence of radio and gramophones, a surprising number of people in all classes have developed a fairly sound taste for music. Some of them are people with no musical background or training of any kind, who have, by dint of constant listening, developed a real enthusiasm for Bach or Mozart or Beethoven. Concerts in London and all the provincial towns are always very well attended, and now it is always easy to fill the largest hall in London for a concert with comparatively unknown soloists, so long as it provides a reasonably good programme. The effect of this revived interest on standards of performance has been good. Before the war, the orchestral musician was a member of an overcrowded and ill-paid trade. The few symphony orchestras worked always on

the edge of bankrupcy, and the lot of executants, except for the few at the head of their profession, was characterized by insecurity and long periods of inactivity, during which they often succumbed to the temptation to play in dance bands and restaurant orchestras. The result of this situation was a generally low standard of playing, and English orchestras always compared badly with continental orchestras.

Today the situation is wholly changed. A number of good orchestras are making incomes sufficient to ensure their own existence, and the security of their players. Chronic unemployment has disappeared from the industry, and the musicians' organisations are in a position to bargain for good conditions. The lack of insecurity enables musicians to work wholeheartedly, and continuity of orchestral work gives them sufficient practice, while the less frequent breaking up of orchestras provides greater opportunities for developing genuine cooperation in playing. The consequence has been that the standard of English orchestral playing has risen sharply during the last six years and that, given a good conductor, the best English orchestras, like the Halle of Manchester under John Barbirolli, can compete very well with any continental group.

As against this good condition of musical execution and popular appreciation, it must be admitted that the standard of contemporary composition in England is low. There are, of course, a few notable exceptions. Michael Tippett and Benjamin Britten have between them done work which would replace England in its seventeenth century position as a musical nation, if only their achievements represented a movement of any real magnitude among English composers. But, to my mind at least, none among the young composers is in any real way developing the work of Britten and Tippet. Both of these men have genuine musical genius, but one cannot praise the general level of English composition merely for the work of two isolated men. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that both are war-resisters, and that in Tippett's case, an anarchistic social attitude plays a great part in inspiring his work.

Generally speaking, the people who have been affected by the enthusiasm for music have tended to go back the source. There has been nothing very revolutionary about their tastes, but at the same time they have tended to prefer sincere music like Mozart or Brahms to the meretricious work of composers like Mendellsohn and Wagner, whose position has suffered an abrupt devaluation rather

like that of Landseer in painting. Nineteenth century lushness is definitely out of taste in music.

In ballet, however, which was the other art with a wide popular appeal during the war years, there has been a great degeneration of standards in performance, creation and appreciation. Not only has the technical standard of dancing fallen in the nine years since the last appearance of the de Basil company, but the actual style has suffered a breakdown of precision and sincerity. Homosexual exhibitionism, which has become a standardised affectation in certain arty circle in England, is nowhere so evident as in the ballet. In dancing the defiant self-consciousness of the English 'queens' reaches its most extreme manifestation.* But so lopsided a form of ballet is naturally inferior to the balanced art, and the most recent English performances have been charcterised by ostentation, melodrama and exhibitionist dancing. This has all been shown up by the return of Massine to Covent Garden. At 51, Massine can still out-dance anybody in England, and the competant artistry of his performance in *The Three Cornered Hat* has been a kind of revelation to those who had been sickened of ballet during six years of showy incompetance.

The theatre proper is at a standstill. In all the large theatres we are regaled ad nauseum with the traditional commercial play on middleclass 'situations', There is undoubtedly a public for good plays as has been shown by some recent revivals of classics, such as *Lady Windermere's Fan*, which ran for nearly 600 performances, at one of the largest theatres, but no new play of any significance appears. The arty theatre shows little more hope. It has been taken out of the hands of the 1930's Leftists like Auden and Spender, by a group of Catholic poets, Norman Nicholson, Ronald Duncan, Anne Ridler, and their work, while some of it has been poetically fairly competent, has been dramatically useless.

The English film is in an equally poor state. Its productions often seem sincere, and the acting is sometimes good, but, except for a few whimsical fantasies, the production lags behind American films in competence and French films in style. In consequence,

* Don't get me wrong--I am not a 'queer-baiter', nor do I even take what seems to me the insulting attitude that "these poor creatures should be subiected to medical treatment and cured of their disease". I believe that if homosexuals were allowed complete freedom they would find their own basis in society and be useful individuals. As it is, many of them are good artists and writers. But there remains a section of homosexuals on whom the effect of social discrimination is to produce an aggressive and unpleasant affectation. These people tend to make English ballet their own, and give it an unhealthy nature because of their own exaggerated reaction to social hostility.

American films are still the favourites of the masses, while for the 'cultured', no less than five cinemas in London alone are regularly showing French films. English productions fall uneasily between the two stools, and arouse the enthusiasm of neither public. Nor, for the most part, do they deserve it.

In literature we are faced with the general decline which is evident after every war. There is no literary movement of any vigour among the young, and those who represented 'youth' before the war have sunk into a grave and uninteresting respectability. *Horizon*, poor as it is, does represent the attitude of a very large section of the literary world. The people who are not writing in a *Horizon* style, who do not accept *Horizon's* smug attitude of bourgeois complacency, represent only small groups of literary malcontents, and, although they may show more originality than the orthodox writers, and at times more honesty, they have recently produced little in the way of important literature. I know that it may seem very easy to issue such a general condemnation, but when one realizes the difficulty of naming a single novel or book of criticism which has been published during the last year and which is of really outstanding importance, one sees how hard it is to arrive at any other conclusion. In these fields English literature has certainly not seen so barren a period during the last thirty years. In poetry the situation is a little better. Poets like George Barker and Dylan Thomas are still doing vigourous work and one or two recent volumes by young writers like Louis Adeane and Denise Levertov have shown real ability. For the rest, most of the good poets, like Symons, Savage and Fuller, are silent, and most of the poets who are vocal would be better silent.

As a whole the literary situation remains stagnant. There is no real current of movement, except for a kind of anarchist-romantic tendency among the young, but even that is a movement of social attitude rather than a literary developmant. The fact that the younger writers are all reading Kropotkin and Godwin does not make their work any better *as writing*; on the other hand, the acceptance of anarchism does at least show a tendency to return to the individual as the motive unit in artistic activity, and out of this rediscovery that their own ideas are more important than party directives the young may eventually produce something better than the 'Marxist' writing of a previous generation.

However, no such development has yet assumed important pro-

portions, and the barrenness of the present period is shown by nothing so much as the enthusiasm for revivals. Poets of the 1920's, like Edith Sitwell, whose work had declined into a well-earned obscurity, are being exhumed by ex-avant-gardists like John Lehmann, and such whimsical poetry as they produce is actually being set up as a model of contemporary writing. Nothing could illustrate more dismally the collapse of critical standards in our time. But the revivals go farther back. Not only do we have justified revivals of people like Melville and Wilde, but we are also subjected to the heavy tread of such dull spooks as Trollope, who has been seriously lauded by a number of younger critics. And, indeed, on this note I might end our present survey. We are so devoid of really talented writing in our time that perhaps Trollope is worth reading. Even such a minor Victorian has roots in real life, which few of our contemporary writers can show.

Ich lebe mein Leben in wachsenden Ringen—Rilke

in the search for a center,
there is only the speeding train and the distance
transpired and ahead, only the smoke shadows
that fall on ice and snow like clouds
of formless birds; and the petrified river, stiff
like a mud frozen soldier

suck the green out of stems
and spit a white foam back at them
like spring throwing its promise into the midst
of red sedge on shore
with hint of tufted grasses
uselessly cleansing the air

dachine rainer

RETORTING:

Dear Editor:

In your review of 'Dickens Dali and Others' (RETORT, Winter 47) you give no sense of either the book or Orwell's thinking in general, but snipe at rather arbitrarily chosen statements, and with—to me—quite unjustified abuse. 'Orwell's moral intolerance is matched only by his political density, and that only by his bad taste.' This is an appalling statement; Orwell has always seemed to me one of the most tolerant writers going, in the sense of being openminded and trying to be fair in judging people he disagrees with. He *is*, in my opinion, sometimes 'dense' politically—but let's remember he for years was the leading British anti-Stalinist intellectual, at a time when it was decidedly unfashionable to be such. I don't understand the 'bad taste', maybe my taste is not so refined as yours; he doesn't particularly offend me, anyhow.

Your point re the six or seven unnecessary words in the Yeats poem seems to misunderstand Orwell. Doesn't he mean that the words are unnecessary to convey the meaning; naturally they are necessary to make the verses scan—but that would be just his point: that they are thrown in to make the verse. Or if not his point, can't we assume that when a critic thinks there are unnecessary words in a poem, he is aware that if they are just omited, the scansion will suffer? So that we don't take this to be his meaning. All this is apart from whether Orwell's judgment is right or not.

Can't you object to Orwell's calling Yeats authoritarian without dragging in that horribly strained reasoning about the progressiveness of fascism—and the absurd conclusion that Orwell and the B.L.P. thus somehow become tainted with fascism? And the crude point at the end: that one can 'dismiss' any writer who professes concern with moral problems by pointing to his support of the late war. That's Stalinoid stuff. Thus Reinhold Niebuhr and Victor Gollancz—to name two examples that spring to mind of writers who seem to me, at least, to have contributed something to my own moral perceptions—are both brushed aside because they supported World War II!

As for Orwell's alleged futurism—please read his piece in POLITICS called 'Catastrophic Gradualism'. What you do is take a single sentence of the poor man, and one that I myself have to agree with, and because it admits the existence of a future, you make it the basis of a fantastic construction alleging that 'futurism' is one of his intellectual tendencies. If there is one thing he is really good at, it is seeing what is right under his nose and honestly reporting it, regardless of any damage to any futuristic systems.

In short, I have to react to the review completely negatively, as unfair to Orwell, and as special pleading for an unsound thesis. Orwell does need a little deflating, but he cannot be deflated by making a false image and then demolishing it.

NEW YORK DWIGHT MACDONALD

Since I felt considerable identification with the ideas in your article 'The Root is Man', I am surprised at the above remarks, and not a little sorry that one of us is in error about the consistency of your position. I rather suspect it might be you.

Appropos of Orwell's moral tolerance—is it possible that you could have failed to read—or remember, the exchange between Orwell, who attacked the British anarchists for being Fascists, and the anarchists, who explained their anti-war position, printed by *you* as editor of PARTISAN REVIEW, and would you care to cite *that* as one of the many similar performances of 'one of the most tolerant writers going'. The only tolerance, of a sort, that I recall, is Orwell's toning down on the Stalinists during the period when Russia and England were war allies. . . which leads me to your second point:

'The leading anti-Stalinist intellectual'; by 'leading' do you mean best known? to whom? the readers of the London TRIBUNE? I don't believe Woodcock or Comfort or Savage would consider Orwell the leading anti-Stalinist *they* know. Since when do we form amalgams so that those who have the same enemies as we do become our friends? J.P. Cannon and J.T. Farrell are just such 'leading anti-Stalinists'. Does that prevent you from attacking their ideas?

Actually Orwell is as much a bolshevik as any Stalinist; in his piece 'Catastrophic Gradualism', he writes: Centralized control is a

necessary precondition of Socialism'. It is some time since you could accept that. Do you agree with yourself or with Orwell? How long must it be before you realize the full and unalterable progressive fascist meaning of 'centralised control', of nationalization, of the BLP, and of a position and an attitude such as Orwell's? How can you write—finally! in 'The Root is Man': 'Bureaucratic collectivism, not capitalism, is the most dangerous future enemy of socialism', and a few months later consider the progressive coloring of fascism to be 'horribly strained reasoning'? You seem to have an extraordinary amount of difficulty in understanding what you write.

I mean by progressive a temporal and trend futurity. Do you not think that the BLP with its pseudo-radical base, its 'labor imperialism', its economic planning, its creation of thousands of offices and office-holders is, as is the American burocratic trend best expressed by the 'New Deal' and Wallace, progressive, in its rejection of the status quo in non-anarchist terms, and fascist, in that it is totalitarian? What is strained about that?

Orwell is not nearly as precise about whom he calls fascist. You seem to have missed the point about Yeats; I protested first the label 'affectation', and then, what is more important, that neither 'affectation' nor any other arbitrary aesthetic category can be 'translated into political terms'—and discovered to be fascist!; the words Yeats used appear to me to be more than functional, that is, as I pointed out before, it is required for reasons other than scansion; even if that were not so, it would be a technical matter in a free society, a political one, in a totalitarian society.

By bad taste I mean a moral, not an aesthetic evaluation. It is Orwell who has aesthetic absolutes. If you do not consider that a man's support of a war is a weighty, *the most weighty* factor against accepting his moral strictures, then perhaps I must agree with you, that your taste is as refined as mine. (This point about Orwell and the war is elaborated on page 35 of this issue.)

Orwell's position as a futurist is again reaffirmed in his piece quoted above. It is that substantially held by liberals for at least the total of this century: that Power or Revolution corrupts, and

that whether they believe in a benevolent despot, a republican president, or a revolutionary elite, they must discover some way in which power will not corrupt *them*: in their utopian concept which is curried from the materialist flavors of the present there is no room for abstract corruption. Meanwhile they go on believing and supporting, as Orwell does, in the BLP or in a war, for example, in those ideas and events, which in practice inevitably (in an historical, not metaphysical sense) lead to a maximum amount of corruption.

DACHINE RAINER

ORWELL: ROUND 2

To say that your review does injustice to Orwell is not to say, as you apparently assume, that I feel myself in basic agreement with Orwell. I don't. He's a liblab [tho of the first quality, in my opinion], I'm a radical; he supported the late war, I didn't; he has hopes from the Labor Party, I haven't; etc.

Your difficulty is that you cannot distinguish beyond simple black and white. It is just not true that Orwell is 'as much a bolshevik as any Stalinist', even granting, which I don't, that there is no distinction between Bolshevism and Stalinism. Orwell is a British liberal and he means by 'centralized control' something very different from what the Bolsheviks meant.

There are two weighty things to be said for Orwell. One is that he is a very competent journalist, with a flair for seeing the reality of commonplace, everyday things—his book, 'Down and Out in London and Paris' gives one, for example, a real sense of what life is like at the very bottom of French and British society. His present book is not one of his best, but it has some very good things in it—one of them of such superlative quality as to have been printed in POLITICS! Your review shows no awareness of Orwell's qualities or even any interest in them. The other great good thing about Orwell is that he is concerned about truth and freedom and civil liberties enough to be constantly sticking his neck way out in their defense. He played a most honorable part in the Spanish Civil War, cooperating with the POUM and fighting the Commies. And he took the lead in the anti-Stalinist struggle in England at a time when great personal disadvantages came to him for it.

If we are to deny all excellence to every writer who does not share our Radical viewpoint, our problem as critics will be much

simplified. But it is just this simplification which is to be avoided, as the Stalinist literary maneuvers should have warned us. Orwell's little piece, 'Catastrophic Gradualism', seems to me to be obviously, as the title alone would suggest, written *against* the idea of sacrificing the present to the future on behalf of an ideology. I would not write it as he does, but I find it possible to disagree strongly on some major points and yet to see it, as a whole, as written from my point of view, *ours*, indeed! DWIGHT MACDONALD

1-a- What *other* possible meaning can 'centralised control' have?

-b- I used bolshevik synonymously with authoritarian. Since no two things are absolutely identical, there are certain minor distinctions between the Bolsheviks and other authoritarians. But in the historical sense in which I used the word, the Incas could be considered bolsheviks, too. Between the Bolsheviks and the Stalinists there is no distinction save in time — abundant time being that commodity Dwight Macdonald requires to impress him there is no difference... However, if you prefer to believe that Orwell is authoritarian rather than bolshevik, that's quite alright.

2 I do not believe in an ad hominum defense any more than such an attack; but in some combination of ideas and good works. By itself, if Orwell wrote a good book a dozen years ago or fights the Communists, that is of interest to St. Peter. He disclaims any heroic motives in joining the POUM—in his exchange with the anarchists—and knowing his partiality towards other wars and his indulgence in violence in general—like his job with the British police in India, I rather suspect he may even like civil wars.

3 I rather suspected that POLITICS was not the *sine qua non* of radical writing—that is, that Orwell had a piece in the magazine is not a definitive statement of its value. My suspicions have been, confirmed with the issue number 7 of NOW, English anarchist magazine, in which Alex Comfort in an article on the same theme manifests acute psychological and political insight and stylistic excellence that far outdistances Orwell's contribution.

4 Since I am not choosing sides, you may keep Orwell on yours. My ideas and values are radically different from his, and I had mistakenly supposed, yours were too. *DACHINE RAINER*

RETORT I like. . .specially the format. But I was very much disturbed by your comment—in a review of Orwell, to the effect that we can dispense with a man's ethical ideas by pointing to the fact that he is not a pacifist. . .Do you dispense with Dewey, Hook, Jeremiah, etc. so easily?

CHICAGO LORRAINE NAUSS

If I dispensed with Orwell's efficacy as a moral teacher *only* by pointing to his support of the war that *might* (altho it shouldn't, as I shall attempt to make plain) call for objections. That is a liberty I do not take: that remark is towards the end of a long review in which I have been at considerable pains in examining Orwell's individual ideas. Further, I point out that his support of the war is itself, on an incredibly irresponsible level. . . 'getting rid of Hitler is still. . . a necessary bit of scavenging. . .'

Should it not be to us a glaring inconsistency that a man professing a concern with moral problems, supports—and not passively, but vehemently, the most amoral of all things?

Is it not right to require that when a man concerned with being and doing good, has an opportunity to profit by his own concerns, that he should not sink into such depravity as to support a war.

The radical seems to view with abhorrence any correlation between a man's words and his deeds. If anyone sees a correlation he is roundly attacked. It is true that for most of us the gap is unnecessarily wide. We create an artificial leniency for ourselves.

But we must eventually recognize that if we are at all concerned with social change rather than literary teas or ostentatious left-bank sensationalism, we must judge ourselves and others by our deeds as well as our ideas. In a world of annihilating relativism, I have come to view support of any war, or capital punishment, or coercion of *any* sort—including 'volunteer' coercion—as absolute evil. A man's ideas cannot fail to show either tacit or overt support. Orwell's cannot.

Your second question should have been answered first: YES. (Advanced age is the first out; neither Hook nor etc. are worth mentioning, and the worth of the moral teachings of Jeremiah, the god of Wrath and Destruction is dubious enuf.) *DACHINE RAINER*

ZIONISM: THE RETURN OF THE 'CHOSEN PEOPLE'

"By fire and blood Judea fell; by fire and blood Judea will rise again!"

With these words, chanted in the perfect unison of disciplined, regimented and unthinking minds, two Jewish murderers in Palestine received a death sentence for their offenses. They were not 'common' murderers, killing their victims in a fit of passion or as an undesired outcome of a holdup or fist fight. They were 'principled' murderers' inspired by the concept quoted above, and plotting and carrying out murderous conspiracies as part of a Holy War—a war to establish a Jewish State over Palestine.

The basic concept of Zionism is the establishment of this specifically Jewish State, to which the native Arab inhabitants of Palestine are to be forced to agree. In the words of David Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine:

"We are not willing to become the subjects of the Mufti... the aims of Zionist policy in this generation are a Jewish state and a Jewish-Arab agreement and in that order."

Thera are differences among various groups of Zionists with regard to tactics, but international Zionism today pursues the aim of a specifically Jewish state in Palestine, regardless of the wishes of the native *goyim* of that country. Zionist propagandists utilize a great variety of arguments, depending on their audience. Basically, however, their doctrine always includes the assertion that the Jews have some special 'right' to Palestine. The Zionists, indeed, prefer not to use the term 'Palestine'. To the True Believer, the country is 'Eretz Israel'—the Land of Israel.

Many Zionists, today, are not religious in any orthodox sense. Actually, their claim to Palestine can be reduced to a religious one. More than three thousand years ago, the Jews invaded Palestine, in one of the most murderous and bloody aggressions in history. After exterminating most of the inhabitants, the invaders settled down as rulers for a few centuries—by right of conquest. But the Jewish state thus established by fire and blood fell in the same way. For more than 2000years Palestine has been in other hands.Many Jews migrated elsewhere; many adhered to Christian or Mohammedan offshoots of Judaism.

The claim of the Zionists to Palestine rests upon this brief period of Jewish rule after a cruel invasion. Associated with this however, is a religious claim. The Jewish prophet Moses [paternity unknown] learned from his father-in-law, the Midianite priest Jethro, the worship and the propogandist techniques of the Midianite god Jehovah, and preached the new deity to the Jews, as one who would 'drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite' and other peoples from their homelands and give the Jews a 'land flowing with milk and honey'.

Messianic promises were not quite enough. The new religion was only enforced on the Jews, after terrible 'liquidations' comparable to those accompanying the establishment of the Communist Evangel in Russia. But the 'promise' remained. Jehovah himself gave the order to his new Jewish disciples:

'.....ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.'

The story of brutal invasion and conquest takes up scores of chapters of the Bible—and constitutes a 'philosophy of history'.

Present day Zionism represents the completion of a full cycle of the messianic idea, in which it developed from the tribal faith of a 'Chosen People' into the 'universal' messianism of Pauline Christianity, Mohammedanism, Marxism, and similar doctrines, and finally into the messianic nationalism of the past century—which came right back to the Jews themselves, with the revival of their own messianic concepts in the form of 'nationalism'—the Zionist appeal. The Chosen People are again entering Palestine—this time from overseas—'to dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell therein'.

The extraordinary fact that many well-meaning Western *goyim* are actually aiding and supporting the Zionists against the *goyim* of Palestine is the result not only of shrewd propaganda, but of the vast spread of the messianic idea itself in the Western world. Jehovah, taken from the Midianites by the Jews, was passed on by them to the Gentiles through the Christian faith. Jehovah—as Hans Kohn has pointed out—is a God of History, of the Historical Dead: 'I am the lord your God who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage'. Thus it is not conscious human decisions that create history, but the Will of God. History is the Way of God—a story of Divine Determinism.

It is significant that Moses Hess, the 'Communist rabbi' who played such an important part in the launching of Marxist messianism, was also the 'spiritual father' of modern Zionist messianism. Marxism developed first—a 'secular' application of messianism and 'philosophy of history', influenced by Hegel much as Moses had been influenced

by Jethro. In the Marxist as in the Mosaic system, history was 'determined' by extra-human forces. Marx, however, substituted Economics for Jehovah as the 'prime mover'—Economic Determinism. This was understandable, since this had happened in Marx's own family. His own father, a descendant of rabbis, had shown the triumph of Economics over Jehovah by being baptized as a Christian. Karl, himself, born a Jew, went through the same saving process at the age of five.

Moses Hess, who converted Engels to Communism, wrote much of Marx's 'German Ideology' and other works, but did not accept the absolute determinism of Economics. Neither did he accept Marx's intense German nationalism; Hess affrimed Jewish nationalism, and regarded France instead of Germany as the 'creative genius of human progress'. He saw the Jews, rather than the Revolutionary proletariat, as the 'guarantee' of the approaching Messianic age, whose communal life would be based on the recognition of Jehovah, instead of Economics, as supreme. In 1862 Hess wrote his 'Rome and Jerusalem—the Last National Problem', advocating Jewish colonization of Palestine—with the support of France. For the supernational task before humanity, the Jews must be preserved as a 'nation', and secured by a 'national home' in Palestine. The 'creative genius' of Israel' must be revived, both for the Chosen People themselves and in the 'interests of mankind' the final fulfillment of universal messianism.

From Hess to Herzl, from Herzl to Brandeis and Rothschild, and from then on to Jabotinsky, Ben-Gurion, Ziff, Hecht and their ilk is a tale as significant as the development from Marx to Lenin, Hitler, Stalin and their kind. Present-day Zionism marks the return of the messianic concept to the 'Chosen People' itself, even as present-day communism marks an expansion of the messianic concept far beyond the Judeo-Christian world. Both, of course, are manifestations of deep and tragic social decay—a part of the ever darkening age or unreason, to which messianism has made notable contribution.✣

✣ Many 'secular' messianists, whether devotees of national or social messianism, are quite ignorant of the real roots of their bizarre beliefs, such as the concept that a 'Chosen People' (Americans, Germans or others) would by a Holy War inaugurate forever a reign of peace and justice, or the idea that a period of terrible social wars --the Social Revolution--would similarly be followed by a Perfect Society, with all men dwelling together in peace and harmony. Such concepts, of course, have no basis whatever in human experience, human history, in logic or in reasen, and are quite incontrovertably expressions of deep-rooted messianic beliefs. In sober fact, great wars and bloody social upheavals have at all times resulted in terrible human suffering, and intensified every evil in human life, strenthening all the elements of force, violence coercion, inequality and unreason. No 'good society' has ever developed from such horrors. The only 'good' that can emerge is when violent conflict ceases--like the happiness of the man who enjoyed himself by knocking his head violently against a wall, for 'it felt so good when he stopped'.

In Zionism, messianism is centered on the fate of the 'Chosen People' who supplied the theological basis for 'Holy Wars' in the world, after taking their god from the Midianites and their land from the Canaanites. From the viewpoint of 'divine justice', the Zionist claim to Palestine is a rather curious one, since some might think that the Jews expulsion from the land they had so brutally invaded and conquered was itself an act of 'divine justice'. During the first World War, however, men like Brandeis and Rothschild shook down the British imperialists for a Zionist 'cut' in the spoils of the defeated Turkish Empire as provided for in the Balfour memorandum to Baron Rothschild.

The Zionists, promised a 'national home' in Palestine, became active allies of British imperialism in that area, and gave enthusiastic cooperation to the British in crushing the Arab revolts there during the 1920's and 1930's. This had terrible repercussions on European Jewry, as some Arab leaders supported and encouraged Hitler in his extermination of European Jews—the great reservoir of Zionist invasion, terrorism, and political ambitions in Palestine. Ultimately, the Zionists gained greatly. Hitler's atrocities, and the great numbers of unhappy Jewish refugees from Soviet Russia and Poland (including many trained 'partisans'), were a great boon to the professional Zionists. The more anti-Jewish feeling was developed, and the more wretched refugees there were, the more the professional Zionists were able to shake down well-meaning people of all religions in the U.S. and elsewhere, and by well organized political pressures even make the American government a mouthpiece for Zionist demands on Britain.

The activities of homicidal and aggressive Zionism, and those of such creatures as Morganthau who schemed to treat German Gentiles in the way Hitler had treated European Jews, have roused great and increasing anti-Semitism everywhere, with ever more serious repercussions on the ordinary Jews of the world. Persecution of the Jews, however, is the very material by which the professional Zionists prosper. The more anti Semitism there is, the better off are the Zionist bureaucrats and 'traveling salesmen'. The better also for Communist propaganda, and for the chances of a third World war—with Palestine and the Middle East as a starting point, and 'fire and blood' as the methods of the New Evangel.

NEW YORK HARRY PAXTON HOWARD

REVIEWS

POLITICS. bi-monthly. 45 Astor Plase, N.Y.C. Edited by Dwight Macdonald. 50c a copy, $3.00 a year.

Of all the independent radical magazine which have appeared in America since the *Modern Quarterly* died in 1941, *Politics*, which is now three years old, has unquestionably achieved the largest circulation and influence. Started at a time when American radicalism had reached bottom, in terms of influence, integrity, and clarity of purpose, it almost immediately provided a rallying point for those discontented persons who could feel no enthusiasm for any of the existing radical organizations but who had not yet broken sufficiently with the dominant radical attitudes of the thirties to strike out for a fundamently new approach. Not the least of its achievements is that it helped at least some of these people to penetrate more deeply into the problems confronting present day radicalism, and to move, following the example of its editor, Dwight Macdonald, away from Marxism and political action, in the general direction of anarchism and pacifism.

Macdonald was peculiarly suited to this task; he had been swept into the radical movement during the great leftward trend of the early thirties, and had played a fairly prominent role in the Trotskyists for several years, but he had never lost his boyish idealism nor been fully indoctrinated into the devious ways of bolshevism. Thus, once the inadequacy of his party became apparent to him, he was able to avoid falling into the cynicism of more sophisticated ex-Trotskyists like James Burnham and begin to bring his beliefs into some semblance of harmony with his ideals. This process was very slow and timid, but this proved to be a great advantange, since he thereby ran a much smaller risk of alienating those readers who were not yet ready for a fully developed new program.

The first six or seven issues of *Politics* did not deviate conspicuously from the position of a considerable number of 'left-wing' Socialists, and slightly disaffected Trotskyists. The emphasis was

primarily negative, altho not in an especially fundamental way; the chief objects of attack being the usual ones—imperialism, racial discrimination, and Stalinism: The existing labor movement and the idea of a mass labor party were given virtually unqualified support and were implicitly accepted as the basis of a new socialist movement, but such questions were not investigated at all closely.

The predominent flavor of these early issues was surprisingly reminiscent of the *Nation* or *New Republic* of around 1935 (where Macdonald had, incidentally, made his leftist debut) and many of the articles might have been lifted bodily from one of those magazines of that period. Thus, the principal feature of the first issue was a long article developing John Flynn's old thesis that war industry had become the new stabilizer of capitalist economy, and several of the anti-imperialist pieces in subsequent issues were in the same tradition.

Likewise the great crusade against Jim-crow in the army, which ran through all of these issues, reaching a sort of climax in June 1944, with two 'sensational documents' which clearly revealed that negroes were discriminated against in the armed forces in much the same way as in the southern states. This campaign was marked by an amazing political naivete—many of the contributors to it were self-evidently pro-war, and even supported conscription in principle if only the negro were treated the same as the white man. Thus Conrad Lynn in the first issue: "The draft law represents the democratic nation in arms...'Conscription...dates from the French Revolution and was exactly adapted to the environment of its times, namely equality of service, liberty of popular opinion backed by force, and fraternity of all classes of society...' The preamble of the current conscription law of the US binds it inescapably to this tradition." (In an editorial note Macdonald referred to the piece in which the above occurs as "...in the great tradition of the social brief...It does not confine itself to legal technicalities but cuts to the heart of the issue, arguing in broad social and historical terms.") Isaac McNatt in the Jume issue plaintively concludes his account of his expulsion from the Seabees: "We have asked to be reinstated and have been told that there is no authority whereby we may be reinstated...I tried to help my country to the utmost of ability but was penalized for being a Negro during the year when I was a Seabee." And Macdonald comments: "...the case...will not be closed until the 19 Seabees have received full justice and re-

parations from the authorities who have treated them so unjustly."

In general, *Politics*' position on the war was quite confusing in the beginning. The editorial statement in the first issue set out to explain the magazine's war policy, but got so thoroughly bogged down in side issues that one couldn't be sure whether it favored 'critical' support or some form of opposition. The tone of most of the comment in the first several issues was pretty much in the broad lefist tradition of those days; sniping at the conduct of the war and the imperialist policies of the allied goverments but avoiding definite commitment pro or contra. Those contributors who dealt with the war were as frequently pro-war as not. However, in replying to Don Calhoun on the subject of conscientious objection in July, Macdonald asserted that he had been anti-war all along and seemed genuinely surprised that Calhoun could have come to the opposite conclusion. In this exchange Macdonald upheld the Trotskyist position that it is the revolutionary duty of radicals to enter the army rather than take a CO stand, but he was distinctly on the defensive and concluded by acknowledging that a time might come when he would be willing to consider the position of conscientious objector.

As time went on the magazine became increasingly forthright and explicit in its opposition to the war. The Jim-crow issue gradually petered out, and in September, Macdonald, in an article called 'The Psychology of Killing' went a long way towards a thoroughly anti-militarist position. In January 1945, there appeared a really excellent anti-war piece by one 'Gallicus' which developed the thesis that a negotiated peace would have been the surest way of destroying Nazism. By the time the war had ended, Macdonald definitely came out for conscientious objection, and since then the emphasis of the magazine has been distinctly pacifist.

Macdonald's journalistic talents, which are considerable, have had ample space to proliferate in *Politics*. During the war, he was forever launching into extremely thoroughly documented exposes of various sordid episodes, such as the Russian betrayal of Warsaw or the British machinations in Greece. Politically, these pieces tended to be rather simple-minded; they were marked by a fine rousing moral indignation towards the rulers, and virtually unqualifed enthusiasm for the masses—viz. "The Rottenest Episode of a Rotten War: The Churchill-Labor Government's Provocative Intrigues. The Full Story, Documented. Salute to the Heroic Greek Resistance!"

In a somewhat different category was 'The Responsibility of

Peoples' (March, 1935), an article which dealt with the problem of war guilt. Although some of its theoretical aspects were rather naive, it did an excellent job of documenting the thesis that war guilt cannot be laid to an entire population, since the modern atate is so complicated and uncontrollable that what it does is completely beyond the grasp of the ordinary man.

The magazine's general political tendency was described in the editorial statement as democratic socialist and its predominent theoretical approach, Marxist. While it supported none of the existing Marxist parties—in fact, it was sharply critical of most of them—it supported most of their general program: an independent labor party, higher wages, unionization, etc. This policy persisted for about a year and a half.

Macdonal's own thinking showed a tendency to go beyond this position at times, but never very far or very consistently. His Marxist prejudices were still sufficiently strong when he wrote 'The Responsibility of Peoples' that he could describe Nazi extermination of the Jews as an atrocity worse than any other in modern history for the simple reason that the Nazis, unlike the imperialist butchers of colonial peoples during the 19th century or the Stalin regime, did not stand to gain economically from killing off the Jews. "...there is at least the justification for the State-induced famine of 1932 that it represented the carrying out, by brutal and abhorrent means ...of an agricultural policy whose aim was to increase productivity. This may not be a good end in itself but it is surely not a bad one. It is, in any case, rational." However "There was no ulterior motive behind Maidanek, no possible advantage to its creators beyond the gratification of neurotic racial hatreds."

A few months later he was still enough of a Trotskyist to publish an indignant denial that Stalin was Lenin's logical successor, and to write, while speculating about the possible termination of the war with Japan: "A nation may taken out of a war from the top or from the bottom. The Bolsheviki did it from the bottom, inciting the people...with the slogan 'Peace, Land, Bread.'" This is a splendid example of both the fetishism of the Slogan and the concept that the masses are simply the pawns of political leaders —the two basic attributes of Trotskyist thinking.

The previous autumn, writing about France, he had said: "...the ultimate arbitor must be the unforced spontaneous wishes of the majority of the people. But...people want what their environment

tells them to want, and revolutionary committees are as legitimate a way to change that environment as parliamentary elections. So are rebels with guns in their hands." This was probably his most extreme bolshevik utterance in *Politics*.

The change, when it came was rather abrupt. It dated from the end of the war in Europe. The contributors in the May, 1945 issue were still largely Marxists—Louis Clair, Daniel Bell, Frank Marquart; the next issue has several anarchist and pacifist contributors, and from that point on this emphasis increased until by the end of the year Marxist contributors are rare. An important factor in speeding up this transition was the atom bomb, which seemed to be the catalytic event in Macdonald's own transition, causing him to renounce overnight theory of progress, since it opened up the possibility of a too short a future for humanity to progress in.

In the December 1945 issue, there started a series of articles called 'New Roads in Politics' which was designed to "criticize the dominent ideology of the left today—which is roughly Marxian—in the light of recent experience..." The contributors of this series were either anarchists like Paul Goodman and Nicola Chiaramonte, pacifists like Don Calhoun, or decentralists of some sort. The major theme of the series was individual moral responsibility, with or without a religious emphasis. When Macdonald wound up the series with his own interminable 'The Root is Man' which he had been writing and rewriting since *Politics* was started, it turned out that he had completely renounced his Marxist convictions and fallen in step with his current contributors.

'The Root is Man' appeared in two installment (April and July, 1946); each installment taking up approximately half of the issue in which it appeared. Stylistically it was rather inferior to most of Macdonald's writings, being pedestrian, full of cliches, and seldom manifesting the flashes of humor which usually grace his work. From a political standpoint, there is much to recommend it—it favors a decentralized, non-authoritarian socialist movement, with emphasis on personal responsibility and spontaneity but it contains little that had not already been discussed in previous articles in the series.

Philosophically, 'The Root' is quite flimsy. Macdonald seems to have acquired his new ideas piecemeal and has not yet been able to provide them with an adequate philosophical base. He repudiates both science and religion as guides for establishing basic values, and is left with a sort of secularized intuition, which is

almost entirely subjective—"I think each man's values come from intuitions which are peculiar to himself, and yet—if he is talented as a moralist—also strike common chords that vibrate respondingly in other people's consciences." This belief would seem to imply the existence of an Oversoul or at least some kind of mystical essense to moral values—a pantheism like Gerald Heard's. Macdonald has about as much philosophical consistency as a rabbit, however, so it is not very likely that this has occurred to him. What seems to have happened is that in throwing over Marxism, and his belief in progress generally, he simply made a clean sweep of all his materialistic beliefs—a common enough phenomenon. But, having a tempermental repugnance towards religion, he must persuade himself that he has found a 'third alternative'. The only analogue to this approach he can find is in esthetic judgement—which is obviously not scientific nor necessarily based on supernatural sanctions.

This example strikes me as thoroughly inadequate, since in the field of esthetics, there is little agreement—even among professional critics—about the worth of any specefic work of art; each of the various schools of critical opinion sets up its own arbitrary standards for measuring works of art and these standards vary widely; in many cases being mutually contradictory. Anyone who has ever observed, for instance, a surrealist and a non-objectivist arguing the merits of their respective schools can have little confidence in using the esthetic approach to determine the ultimate value of anything. Moreover, while esthetic judgements do not have very profound influence on one's way of life, moral decisions can have drastic consequences.

It is no doubt true, as Macdonald maintains, that at the simplest level science is incompetant to determine values. But if one is willing to take it on faith that it is better to be alive than dead and healthy than sick—and I don't think that it requires serious modification of a materialist position to accept these unverifiable assumptions—I believe that with the data accumulated in the fields of psychology and anthropology it is possible to work out a scientific morality which is more dependable than any intuitive system.

Macdonald's new anti-progressivism leads him into some rather odd bypaths. For instance, as a counterpoise to the 'progressive' dogma that the present should be sacrificed for the sake of the future, he sets up a principle which, if taken literally, would rule out almost any kind of responsible behavior: "If people don't enjoy

what they are doing, they shouldn't do it." It is certainly important to advocate resistance to the 'progressive' fetish of the Future, and to avoid sacrificing oneself to it, but this formulation is much too loose. There are many activities which are entirely unpleasant—fighting forest fires, for example—which one clearly cannot refuse to participate in on principle. The criterion of immediate pleasure can be too easily used to justify irresponsibility to be acceptable as a revolutionary principle unless it is qualified to take account of activities which cannot be dispensed with but which are essentially unpleasant.

Since 'The Root' appeared, Macdonald has shown little inclination to pursue his philosophical quest any furthur. He has confined himself largely to journalism and polemic, none of which has been distinguished by much insight. His only excursion into analysis is a piece on the coal strike in the December, '46 issue, in which he does a fair job of demonstrating that a simple economic interpretation is inadequate. His own explanation of the strike, however —that Lewis is senile and is ordering the miners around to gratify his dramatic impulses—is hardly an improvement on the Marxist one, nor does it indicate that his conversion to anarchism has penetrated very deeply as yet. Macdonald is apparently still somewhat under the influence of the Trotskyist leader-myth. For an anarchist, the question is not why the miners strike but why they return to work afterward. Why, in a dangerous and exhausting occupation like mining coal is it necessary to assume that the workers have to be *ordered* to strike? It seems to me that the miners *must* strike periodically because the tension of the work necessitates occasional letting off of steam, whether or not there is a plausible objective. Lewis has achieved and held his position because he is better than most at thinking up plausible reasons for striking.

Without doubt, Macdonald has not had time fully to digest his new political philosophy and refine it of ambiguities and inconsistencies. His break with official Trotskyism only occured a short time before *Politics* was started, and it is less than two years since he repudiated Marxism. Moreover, the pressure of his journalistic activities has prevented him from devoting as much time and energy to philosophical questions as such a major reorientation requires.

HOLLEY CANTINE

RECORDS

PROKOFIEF: *Sonata in D Major for Violin & Piano Op. 94. Joseph Szigeti, Violin; Leonid Hambro, Piano. Columbia Set MM-620. 3 12 inch records. $4.20.*

This work is at once deeply, strongly moving in its melodies, harmonic movement & rhythms, & classically clear in structure; typical of Prokofiev at his best. The performance by Szigeti & Hambro is spirited, subtle & deeply understanding. An excellent recording.

HAYDN: *Quartet No. 30 in G minor, Op. 74 No. 3 'The Horseman' Budapest String Quartet. 2 12 inch records. Columbia Set MX274 $3.15*

This quartet is full of harmonies, modulations & other material commonly believed to be typically 'romantic' products of the 'Beethovenian Revolution', &c. One more illustration of the inadequacy of the popular conceptions of musical history. A beautiful work, excellently performed.

Folk Songs and Ballads. Susan Reed, singer. 3 10-inch records. Victor M-1086. $3.15

The singing is dull, unmoving or embarrassingly 'cute'. Miss Reed cant decide whether she's a folk-singer, blues-singer or opera star. But the songs are 1st-rate: even Miss Reed cant ruin beautiful 'Venezuela'.

Early American Carols. John Jacob Niles, singer. 3 10 inch records. Disc Set. $3.94

It is sad to report that Niles, the greatest of our folk-singers is losing his voice. In these records he melodramatically hams & sobs. The traditional songs [eg: 'I wonder as I wander'] are very beautiful. Niles' own compositions are mediocre. Poorly recorded.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 'Pastorale'. Bruno Walter conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. 5 12 inch records Columbia Set MM-931. $6.30

This is a good careful performance but not excellent. Everything is kept too nearly at the same level of intensity. This may be a deliberate avoidance of 'romantic' excesses in order to emphasize the 'classical' structure of this work, usually overlooked because of the programmatic subtitles & extra movement; if so it is a mistake.

Celebrated Operatic Arias. Bidu Sayao, Soprano; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra conducted by Fausto Cleva. 4 12-in. records Columbia M-612 $5.25. Miss Sayao's great sensibility & pure tones bring out unsuspected beauties in these well-known arias of Mozart, Bellini, Puccini, Massenet & Gounod.

STRAVINSKY: *Firebird Suite (New Augmented Version) & Fireworks. Igor Stravinsky conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. 4 12 inch records. Columbia Set MM-653. $5.25.*

The 'augmentation' consists of 2 sections previously omitted & some connective phrases. The work doesnt sound as wild as it did in our youth but this may be due to the somewhat restrained interpretation by 'classicist' Stravinsky of today. A great conductor, he makes this convincing & moving nevertheless.'Fireworks' is a delite.

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 95. 'New World'. Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia Set MM-570. 5 12 inch records. $6.30.*

A good clear rendition of a work too often underestimated because of too-frequent & mediocre perfomances.

COPLAND: *Appalachian Spring. Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. Victor Set DM-1046. 3 12-in. records. $4.*

Altho this work has been accorded high praise, I cannot see it as more than a set of American-modern & fake-folk cliches. Copland has done far better in the past. Well-performed—tho one wonders why

MOUSSORGSKY-RAVEL: *Pictures at an Exhibition & Gopak. Artur Rodzinski conducting the Philharmonic Symphony of New York. 4 12 inch records. Columbia Set MM-641. $5.25*

Ravel's stunning orchestration emphasizes the deep brooding significance of this intense labor of love, the composer's memorial to his friend Hartmann, the painter-architect. An excellent performance.

WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll. Artur Rodzinski conducting the Philharmonic Symphony of N.Y. Columbia Set MX-265. 2 12-inch records.$ 3.15.*

A sympathetic interpretation of what is perhaps Wagner's most pleasant work; a tour de force in that it sustains thru-out the atmosphere of peace yet holds the attention thru the gradual movement to & away from the climax in part III.

SCHUBERT: *Songs from Die Schoene Muellerin. Lotte Lehmann, Soprano; Paul Ulanowsky, piano. Columbia Set MM-615. 7 12 inch ecords. $8.40*

Mme. Lehmann has entirely subordinated virtuosity to the communication of the subtlest—most intimate details of meaning. Tho a few songs are omitted, the unified dramatic movement of the cycle is made quite clear. The accompaniment is excellent. An inspired & inspiring performance.

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