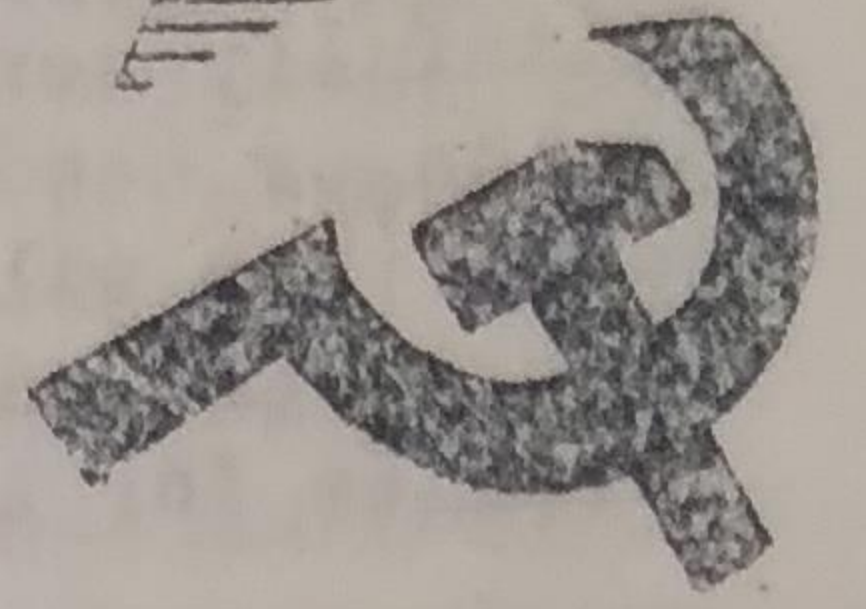


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**Workers  
of the  
World,  
UNITE!**

# THE SPARK



ORGAN OF THE WORKERS' PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA.

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## HOW REFORMISM FIGHTS FASCISM

The coming General Elections, which -- if nothing happens to disturb the expected course of events -- are to take place in May, will be a trial of strength only between the ruling classes themselves. The greater part of the exploited, being deprived of the franchise, will not take part in the elections at all. The rest of the exploited, who do possess the franchise, will consciously or unconsciously support one or other party of their exploiters. There is no question of an independent working-class party with an independent working-class policy participating in these elections. There is no question of attacking, of challenging the rule of the bourgeoisie.

The conflict between different sections of the ruling classes is, as it has always been, for a bigger share of the spoils. Politically this finds its expression today in South Africa, as almost everywhere else, in the alternative of an open or a disguised dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, in fascism or bourgeois democracy. In any case, it is for the bourgeoisie a friendly bout, more for the form than for the substance. But not so for the exploited, for whom the alternative is of life or death. The history of the last ten to fifteen years has been a succession of victories for Fascism and of defeats for the proletariat which was already on the defensive; and where the working class has entrusted the defence of its democratic rights (so dearly won by a century of struggle!) to the bourgeoisie or to the Reformists, the agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers' ranks, invariably the working class has lost its democratic rights and its weapons of self-defence, and has been reduced to a slavery status.

As the General Elections in the Union come nearer, we hear more often and more loudly the familiar cry: "Fight Fascism!" Unfortunately, the danger of Fascism, which will be utilised as an election cry by the politicians on the "left", is not an empty threat, but the bitter present reality. Sternly the question arises: What are the chances for a successful fight against Fascism in South Africa? What are the forces that will fight Fascism? The expression itself -- "Fight Fascism" -- has been so abused and misused, that it is almost necessary to consider the fundamental meaning of the word "fight" (to contend in battle, to maintain by fighting), and to start from that meaning. Our question concerning the chances of a successful fight against Fascism is the more appropriate when we consider that in the past the struggle against Fascism has been conducted by the Reformists; and as no clear perspective for the future is possible without an examination of the past and present, we must enter upon a searching enquiry of how Reformism has in the past fought Fascism, both in general and, more particularly, in South Africa.

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Reformism was always essentially a tool of the bourgeoisie, its agency in the ranks of the proletariat. It was of incalculable use to Capitalism, and naturally therefore was incalculably harmful to the working class. But today, for Capitalism re-

duced to a decaying condition, especially in this stormy epoch of wars and revolutions, the usefulness of its old servants has become not so much doubtful as insufficient. The new conditions demand more efficient tools, more vigorous servants than Reformism can supply. Fascism responds better to the new demands of Capitalism.

It is the privilege of foolish old servants to put their faith unreservedly in their masters. Even when they are thrown out as no longer of any use, they still cling to their masters, thinking their expulsion is only a joke. The Reformists who have so faithfully served their masters simply cannot and will not believe that their service is no longer needed. How will their masters live without them? Who will serve them so well? Who will do such dirty jobs for them? They are unable to understand that their time is passed away for ever, and that the new time and the new conditions require new servants for their master, Capitalism.

So it happened in Germany with Social-Democracy, and later in Austria, and subsequently in every country where Capitalism discarded bourgeois Democracy and accepted instead the Fascist system. But in other countries the old knaves continue in their service as before, persevere in their slavish belief. Yes, they say; the big change you speak of happened somewhere else, but it cannot happen here! The Socialists in France, the Labourites in Britain and the United States, have learnt no lesson from what has taken place elsewhere. Whatever happens, the Reformists are everywhere true to their masters and to themselves, in South Africa as well as in other lands.

They have fostered for so long a time the deceptions of bourgeois democracy, of parliament, of the vote and of elections, they have done their job so thoroughly and so often, that now they almost believe in the reality of their hollow "democracy".

Worse still, just at the time when the old Reformists were beginning to lose their grip on the working masses and the fraud of democracy was being uncovered, an unexpected ally came to their aid. The so-called Communist Parties, or, more correctly, the Stalinists, joined the ranks of Reformism. And so we have now two Internationals, the 2nd and the 3rd (Comintern), both befuddling the working masses with the old deception of democracy.

For five years, ever since the victory of Fascism in Germany, these two sets of Reformists were "fighting" Fascism. And so successful was their "fight" that today the greater part of Europe and South America is already either completely fascist or will be going fascist tomorrow. How could it be otherwise, when those who pretend to be leading the fight against Fascism are either the conscious servants and agents of Capitalism in the ranks of the proletariat, or are unconscious ignoramuses, fools, quacks. No one can fight a disease while he is afraid to kill the germ and eliminate the root of the disease. Nor can anyone fight a disease if his diagnosis is wrong. Starting from wrong promises, he cannot come to correct conclusions. So successful was the "fight" of the Reformists of the two Internationals that today we hardly know which country is not totalitarian! How could it be otherwise, if both sets of Reformists understood by the "fight against Fascism" the parliamentary struggle for the preservation of the present capitalist system under the democratic veil. They call this the fight for democracy!

We are thus confronted with a tragi-comic spectacle. The capitalists are fighting for the preservation of Capitalism and the so-called Communists and Socialists are also fighting for the preservation of Capitalism. But since, in these stormy times of wars and revolutions, Fascism offers a more effective and safer method of preserving the Capitalist system than "Democracy" puts forward, Capitalism turns from its slimy supporters on the left to the firmer and more reliable supporters on the right. It coolly discards the veil of Democracy, so useful in the past, but now outworn and valueless, and concentrates on the precious substance of exploitation, profit, rule.

And what of the old servants? However much they are kicked and flogged, they come crawling back like curs to lie prostrate at their master's feet, waiting for a renewal of his favour. They are pitifully crying: "Fascism is growing, Fascism is a danger to our civilisation, let us all defend Democracy". Moreover, this pitiful wail is not even addressed to the workers, but to the capitalists. It implores the capitalists not to turn to Fascism; it seeks to reassure them of their safety. This is how the old servants, the People's Front in France, the Labour Party in Britain, and the rest, are "fighting" Fascism!

Those for whom Marxism is a science for study and research, the science which underlies the problem of how to change Society, a serious science and not a cover for empty phrases and the betrayal of the working class, those who are not in the pay of capitalist masters, or corrupted by Stalin and his clique, know why country after country

turns fascist, know the cause of all these defeats of the working class. They know also that, so long as the workers continue to follow the Reformists of either the 2nd or the 3rd International, they will witness more and more of these defeats, because Fascism cannot be fought, and still less can it be defeated, without a clear understanding of its cause and a determined attack upon the roots of the system which breeds this disease; and because Fascism cannot be defeated by parliamentary methods, by parliamentary majorities, by the People's Front, by class collaboration; and, in short, because the real fight against Fascism is a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of Capitalism.

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Even more ridiculous than in Europe has been the "fight" against the growth of Fascism in South Africa. Numerous short-lived Anti-Fascist organisations here have raised the cry: "Fascism is the enemy of democracy. Fascism must be defeated", and has repeated it so often during the last few years that it has become a sterile commonplace. At the outset a group here and there would be really excited by this cry. But as it remained a mere phrase, as those who used it as part of their daily stock in trade did not mean business, it gradually became stale, too stale to excite anyone. The same thing has happened to the cry of imminent war. In spite of the fact that all but the utterly ignorant are aware that war is at our doors, that war (and by war today is meant a world war) may break out any day, in spite of this the alarm of "War!" is not producing the least excitement. Simply because people have resigned themselves to the idea that war is unavoidable and pessimistically suppose that nothing can be done about it. How much more is this true in the matter of Fascism! For, while all, except the big bourgeoisie and certain sections of the middle bourgeoisie, do not want war and are mortally afraid of a new World War, this cannot be said concerning the fear of Fascism, even by the greatest stretch of imagination. It is astonishing how few people in South Africa are aware of what threatens them under a fascist regime, incomparably fewer than those who know what the consequences of war will bring upon them.

This may not be surprising in regard to the petty bourgeoisie, or to the poor whites, the declassed elements, the lumpen proletariat, who here, as everywhere, have fallen an easy prey to demagogic fascist propaganda. But what about the workers, particularly the white workers, who have more than anyone else to lose by a victory of Fascism? The black proletariat, which is already in a state of semi-slavery, supplying indentured labour in the mines, on the farms, on the roads, without the right to move, without the right to strike, without the right to combine in trade unions, without the vote, without freedom of speech, without the right to hold meetings, caught in a net of most brutal laws (Master and Servants Act, Tax and Pass Laws, Riotous Assemblies' Act, Urban Areas Act, etc.), which are in all respects fascist laws, the black proletariat is so oppressed and exploited that even a Fascist Dictatorship could hardly make their position very much worse. But what about the white workers? Are they aware of the threatening catastrophe?

They have been told by their "Labour" leaders that this cannot happen here, because the democratic tradition is too deeply rooted in the people of South Africa for a fascist victory to be possible! They have been told that, if only the trouble-makers, the Communists, would keep quiet, Fascism would die away naturally, for it is Communism that breeds Fascism! They have been told that Fascism in South Africa consists only of the few Grey Shirts in the pay of Hitler and Germany, that it is only an imported growth alien to South African soil, and that there is no future for it. For years these Labour Party leaders and Trade Union leaders have consoled themselves and fed their followers with these fallacies.

But in the meantime Fascism has been steadily gaining ground and growing. It is no longer confined to Grey Shirts, Black Shirts and Orange Shirts. It is no longer confined to a few hotheads in the Nationalist Party. It has grown to enormous dimensions. It is here, there, and everywhere. It is in the Government party just as it is in Malan's party. It is in the country and it is in the towns. It has settled itself firmly in the Universities and in the High Schools, in the Cultural Societies and in Religious bodies, in the Farmers' Associations and even in the Trade Unions. Fascist propaganda is made openly from University chairs and from Church pulpits, by Administrators of Provinces and by Ministers of the Crown. It has a stronghold in the Government itself. The present Prime Minister is undisguisedly sympathetic to it. His son is an open Fascist; and so is the oft-acclaimed future Prime Minister, the present Minister of the key-departments of Defence, Railways, Airways, Communications, who is diligently preparing militarised hordes in his Special Service Battalions. The Reformists point to the Malanites as the fascist ogres, and this is perfectly correct so far as it goes. But it is not the whole truth. For, in fact, it is not Malan, but Pirow, who is the budding Hitler of South Africa. A great, and we might perhaps even say the greater sec-

tion of the United Party is as warmly devoted to Fascism as the Malanites are.

The great strides which Fascism has made in South Africa are evident, not only in the public speeches of the Malanites and of Pirow and Co., not only in the growing anti-semitism and Jew-baiting, but also in the trend of legislation for the last two years. The curtailing of the freedom of the Press, the establishment of a censorship of literature and films, the handing over of the wireless control to the military authorities, the Fire-arms Act, the Immigration Laws against non-Aryans and against Indians, all these are semi-fascist or avowedly fascist measures, and the agitation against mixed marriages points in the same direction. This, then, is the position of the country on the eve of the General Elections. These are the results of four years of the Reformist "fight" against Fascism.

In the rank and file of the Reformists there are some honest individuals who admit that this is perfectly true so far as the past is concerned. But they think the position is now changing, that the Labour leaders and the Trade Union leaders are waking up and are realising the need for a bold stand. These honest individuals mistake their wish for the reality. They are idealists and simpletons who have not yet grasped the nature of Reformism. They cannot understand that this miserable South African Labour Party is not even the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie as the Labour Party of Britain is, but is the reactionary wing of the bourgeoisie. They do not perceive that it has broken all records (even of "Labour Parties") for chauvinism, for treachery to the working-class cause. Among all the legislation directed against the great mass of the exploited and oppressed -- Bantu, Coloured and Indian -- there is no record of a single measure passed by Parliament, which had not either the initiative and full support of the Labour Party, or its adverse criticism because the proposals were too mild for these white chauvinists and haters of the Native. To expect a change in these Labour leaders, who can boast of 25 years of faithful service (to Capitalism), a change in such hardened evildoers as Madeley, Briggs, Costello, Roche, Boydell, etc., etc., is no longer merely simple-minded. It is the height of foolishness.

The Labour Party has indeed waked up -- the Elections are approaching, and there is a chance to exploit the sentiment of those who are opposed to Fascism and by diligent use of the slogan, "Fight Fascism in South Africa", to win back some of the lost plums. They have started a big election campaign, a big drive for the revival of the stinking corpse. Yet we must give them credit for one thing. They have remained true to the old platform, and they have remained true to their old master, Capitalism. Whatever happens, they will serve Capitalism to the bitter end. Those who have been hoping to see a change in them, may think our judgment too harsh, perhaps even biassed. But let them look to what these Labour leaders stand for today.

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The first thing the hopeful people will be surprised at is that the Labour Party is not so much concerned with the danger of Fascism as with the "danger of Communism". In its issue of 8.10.37, "Forward", now the official organ of the Labour Party, bursts into its heaviest type for extra-bold headlines: "Address by Leader: Senator Briggs explains how Labour is stemming tide of Communism". And truly, in this address to the Labour Party Conference in Transvaal, Senator Briggs was mainly occupied with the theme that "the Labour Party has done much to stem the tide of Communism", and in showing how it has done this "in two ways". Had we not known from General Smuts that Communism is today no danger in South Africa, that its ranks are reduced to a few individuals, we might have thought that Capitalism had assigned to the Labour Party the task of "stemming the tide of Communism". Stemming the tide! There is a most striking resemblance between this speech by the "Leader" of the Labour Party and the utterances of Mr. van Rensburg, the fascist, the Administrator of the Free State. But more important is its relation to the proceedings at the Annual Conference of the Labour Party, which was held in Johannesburg on the 1st and 2nd of January. At this Conference a "short term" policy for the General Elections was adopted, and "Forward" reported as follows:

"This short term programme includes none of the Utopian measures which Socialists can advocate -- measures which are usually condemned because they are 'Utopian'. Every point of this short term policy is of such a nature that a capitalist government could accept it immediately..... If the people of South Africa return the S.A.L.P. as the official Opposition -- and there is every indication that they will do so -- then this Congress gives its solemn pledge to the people that it will agitate for legislation to be introduced to ensure that these two vitally important tasks will not be neglected..... To strengthen the forces of Democracy in the fight against Nazism the S.A.L.P. proposes the following measures: (i) To prohibit the wearing of political uniforms; (ii) To prohibit the importation into South Africa

of Nazi propaganda literature from Germany and to prohibit the organisation of all movements which have as their openly declared policy the overthrow of the democratic system and substitution of a dictatorship; (iii) To establish a National Propaganda Bureau with special powers to use the radio and the Press, to bring once again the message of democracy and freedom; (iv) The protection of the right of minorities from attacks based on religious or racial prejudice".

We have no intention of examining and criticising this idiotic babble. We know that in the eyes of the S.A. Labour Party even the Reformist programme of a British Labour Party proposes "Utopian" measures! We know that its brightest dream is to be the official Opposition in Parliament. Its new measures for combatting Fascism are even more idiotic than the old ones. But what stands out prominently in this "programme" is the echoing of the Malenkov cry for the suppression of the Communist movement. For this is the meaning of the second point of their programme, which seeks to prohibit the organisation of all movements aiming at a dictatorship. (The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is for the Briggses and Roches more abhorrent even than Fascism).

It was at this Conference, by the way, that Mr. Walter Madeley (the Parliamentary leader of the S.A.L.P.) said "that the separation policy evolved 27 years ago by the party was best. The party's native policy was to set the native people apart on their own territory, to develop along their own lines, and keep the country for the white population". (Cape Argus, 2.1.38). Mark you: "To keep the country for the white population! But again, why be surprised at the S.A.L.P.? They were always lickspittles and reptiles of Capitalism. They are still the same today, and they will be the same when they perish, kicked out by their master.

And now, what about the new converts to Reformism, the Stalinists? They came crawling on their bellies to the Labour Party, hoping desperately to form together a People's Front. But of course the very idea of associating themselves with a Communist party, even if the said party completely discarded Communism, was anathema to the Labour Party leaders. They were horrified at the thought of so compromising their unstained record in the eyes of Capitalism and flatly rejected the offer. Still, the Stalinists had to follow "the line of the Seventh Congress" and continue by long drawn out efforts the policy of approach to the Labour Party. In spite of kicks and abuse from the latter, they go on shouting, or rather whispering from failure of voice and strength: "Support the Labour Party. Help build a powerful Labour Party! Rally all the democratic forces round the Labour Party for the defence of Democracy against the onslaught of Fascism in South Africa!" They swallowed Briggs' boast about stemming the tide of Communism in South Africa. And they will now swallow the second point of the Labour Party's short term programme, suggesting the prohibition of all parties which aim at a dictatorship, and this would include the Communist Party itself! But in honesty the threat is not applicable to it, for the Communist Party (the Stalinists) no longer aim at a dictatorship of the proletariat. All they want is the preservation of bourgeois democracy. Nothing today really separates the Communist Party of South Africa from the Labour Party, except the question of "the Defence of the Soviet Union", and that can be conveniently omitted during the Election Campaign!

So we need not be surprised on reading in the only Stalinist organ, "The Guardian" (the "Umsebenzi" appearing only on anniversary occasions), a glowing eulogy of the Labour Party Conference and of its short term programme. The inch-high headlines run: "Labour faces the issue. Success of the Annual Congress!" And then we read in the editorial (7.1.38):

"It is heartening to read of the enthusiasm and eagerness which marked the gathering. At long last the Labour Party has regained that elan without which a party can achieve no success. It is a sign of realistic good sense that a concrete political programme for the immediate future has emerged".

And so it proceeds to the conclusion that the Labour Party "merits the support of every decent-minded citizen". But then, are they not "comrades in arms" with "Forward"? They announced the fact themselves with pride!

And to these Reformists is entrusted the task of conducting the fight against Fascism in South Africa! Those who do not understand what Fascism is, those who do not know the history of the last twenty-five years, of the class struggle, of the revolutionary movement, may think it a matter of really great importance whether the S.A.L.P. will come out of the General Election with their five seats, or whether they will gain another five, or lose those they now have. For a clear-thinking Revolutionary Marxist it is of no importance at all. For in the coming struggle of Fascism for power, the "victory" or defeat of the Labour Party (which in any case can be no political force) will be of no consequence. If in the approaching conflict the fight against Fascism, that

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ruthless and determined enemy, is left wholly in the hands of the South African Labour Party, then the future of the working class in South Africa is sealed. This bitter lesson must be spoken before it is too late.

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THE NET IS BREAKING

When the first Moscow Trials, of Zinoviev and Kamenev, were following their tragic course, Trotsky, against whom and against whose influence the trials were really directed, stated that the mesh of lies and falsifications which comprised the network of the trials, would slowly weaken and break. Immediately after the second trials, of Sokolov, etc., already a body of authenticated evidence existed; about the Hotel Bristol, about the time-table and official information of the landing of aeroplanes at Oslo, about Trotsky's whereabouts at the time when he was stated, according to the "confessions", to be plotting the murder of Stalin, etc., etc.

As a result of the palpably grotesque character of the trials and the "confessions" as a result of the obvious impossibility of the statements made, which, if they were to be believed, would negate all human reason and commonsense, a Commission was set up to inquire into the charges made against Leon Trotsky in the course of the Moscow Trials. For no one except a direct or indirect hireling of the Soviet bureaucracy, that is, a person whose standards of honesty include bribery, or an ignorant, poor, misled worker who still considers the Stalinist bureaucracy to be clothed with the authority of October, or an unfortunate whose position, and, in Russia, whose very life depends on agreement with the cynical bureaucracy -- no one except persons in those three categories believed in the truth of the infamous trials. The American section of this Commission, in reality a sub-commission of the World Commission, between 10th and 17th April, 1937, examined Leon Trotsky, a refugee in Mexico, at Coyocacan, Mexico.

It is important to state that the Commission at Mexico was made up of individuals whose personal honesty and integrity, whose reputations as social scientists and humanists, are world famous. Even the Stalinists had, before they joined the Commission, grovelled and whined, trying to win over the personnel of the Commission to the support of the bureaucracy. That their efforts were not altogether without success is revealed by the incident which culminated in the "resignation" of Carleton Beals. John Dewey was Chairman of the Inquiry, and no one who has any knowledge of twentieth century philosophy, of liberal thought and honesty, will fail to appreciate the eminence and integrity of this great idealist and educationalist. Let us here say that while politically John Dewey, by virtue of his liberalism, must and does exercise a definitely harmful influence, nevertheless, in the function which he fulfilled as head of an inquiry very few living men and women are more competent than he. For the function of the Inquiry was to ascertain facts and present them to the world. In this Inquiry, the purpose of which was to interrogate Trotsky and hear his statements on the charges of which he had been found guilty at Moscow -- guilty without a trial or even a hearing -- it was not possible for the Commissioners to express, and so influence, any political sentiment as this was outside its scope. And the name of Dewey gives the inquiry the stamp of integrity and reliability.

The Commission has finished its hearing in Mexico and the verbatim report has been published. It is called "The Case of Leon Trotsky". The reporter of the proceedings was a Court Reporter from Chicago. John Finerty, former counsel for Sacco and Vanzetti and counsel for Tom Mooney, acted as Counsel for this Preliminary Commission of Inquiry. Trotsky was represented by Albert Goldman, an attorney from Chicago. The Commissioners included John Dewey, Otto Ruehle, former member of the Reichstag and biographer of Karl Marx, Suzanne LaFollette, Benjamin Stolberg and Carleton Beals.

The scope of the inquiry fall into three categories:

- 1) The biography of Trotsky, with special reference to his relations with the defendants in the Moscow Trials;
- 2) Factual material relating to the decisive accusations against him;
- 3) Trotsky's theoretical and historical writings as they bear upon the credibility of the accusations, the testimony, the confessions, and the summations in the two Moscow Trials.

It can readily be seen that the examination and cross-examination of Trotsky on these matters necessarily brought out a wealth of valuable Marxist comment and criticism

on numerous subjects. The greatest living Marxist, Trotsky was also the closest collaborator of Lenin during the decisive years of the Revolution. Current politics, historical information, masterly analyses of country after country, are contained within the covers of this report. Nobody who lays the slightest claim to being interested in Socialism, in current affairs, can afford to miss reading and studying this book. It is a mine of incisive analysis, of Marxist interpretation, and is a clear legal and political proof of the falsity of the Moscow Trials and the "confessions". Documents were produced, verified affidavits and sworn statements that decisively refuted the allegations made at the Trials.

But that is not the main importance of the book to Marxists. For none of us believed the "confessions" and lies of the accused and Vichinsky. It does not require a legal, formal exposure of the contradictions, lies and equivocations of the Moscow Trial to convince a Marxist that the trials were one of the biggest set-ups, arranged "frame-ups" in the history of mankind. The obvious degeneration inside the Soviet Union, the blatant abandonment of every principle of the class struggle, the new turns and twists of the Comintern (all within the framework of reformism and reaction) -- these were sufficient proof to anyone who has not discarded the ABC of revolutionary Marxism. To us the importance of this book lies primarily in what it can teach us concerning the continuation of the struggle for the liberation of the working class from the shackles of capitalism. The liberal elements have been suspending judgment on the trial. They said that they could hardly believe the allegations, but, after all, the Soviet Union..... Well, here Mr. Liberal, is the proof of their falsity, here is their exposure. You wanted formal, mechanical proof. You asked for legalistic rebuttal according to accepted laws of evidence. We give it to you. Read the book! The permeification of your standpoint, the purest liberal of you all, conducted the trial. Dr. John Dewey signs the report. He says that Trotsky "answered readily and with every appearance of helpfulness and candour all questions put to him by the counsel for the sub-commission and by its members". You liberal gentlemen who have flirted with Stalinism, blurring yourselves that it was revolutionary Marxism that you were adopting! You must abandon all that. Return to your liberal feather-beds or go forward into the class struggle, into the workers' fight for the dictatorship of the workers. By your own small, petty standards Stalinism is finally and absolutely exposed for the greatest influence for harm on the working classes of every country.

But we get more out of this book than the satisfaction of knowing that legally Trotsky is not guilty. (We, as Marxists already knew that). Here we have Trotsky recounting in detail the history of the Comintern since the Revolution; the circumstances surrounding Brest-Litovsk; an historical analysis of the growth of the bureaucracy in relation to the economic circumstances of the Soviet Union; the reasons for the Moscow Trials; the situation in Spain and the extent of Stalinist extra-territorial authority there; the dictatorship of the proletariat in relation to the party and the workers; the attitude of the Bolsheviks to the peasantry. All these and a host of other questions exercising the minds of Marxists and historians are effectively answered and proven by documentary evidence. There is a good deal of the same matter contained in other books by Trotsky. But some are out of print and others not yet translated. Here the material is short, logically marshalled and presented in the form of question and answer. The attitude of the workers in the coming war, a vital and burning question, is argued and explained. The differences between a Popular Front and the United Front is discussed and the attitude of Marxism triumphantly vindicated by history and practice. This book is a compendium of Marxism applied to this decade. It is true to say that Trotskyism is Marxism in the epoch of Stalinist betrayal and degeneration.

The final speech by Trotsky is a triumph. Not so much a triumph for Trotsky, as a triumph for Revolutionary Marxism. Here we see the weapon of historical materialism, here we see the dialectic brought to bear with iron force and controlled indignation on the web of the Moscow Trials. Acknowledged as one of the greatest orators of the day, Trotsky combines the relentless methods of Marxist analysis with the personal brilliance and power which proved so effective a force in the Russian Revolution. This closing speech is destined to remain one of the "most powerful indictments of all time".

There are many significant features about the inquiry. Representatives of the Stalinist parties in America, U.S.A., and Mexico, were invited to attend and put what questions they liked, to cross-examine Trotsky. Representatives were invited from the Soviet bureaucracy and the Comintern. Not one attended. Here, when the opportunity was afforded them to question this "fascist dog", to embarrass him by producing "proofs" of his guilt -- the Stalinists lie low. Of course they do. For open discussion is the death of "Stalinism" and reaction. And here again Trotsky reaffirms his willingness to fight an extrajudicial order of the Soviet Union and proceed to any country where an extradition treaty with the U.S.S.R. exists.

Yes! The Stalinists through Beals did try to "disrupt and sabotage" the work of the Commission. Beals asked a question based on alleged private information which could not be checked by the Commission. Trotsky answered the question. Then when the demand for the sources of the information was about to be made to Beals, he resigned. Of course he resigned, for attendance at one more sitting would have revealed the influences that had been brought to bear on him. He is a wise man, and a careful one! He is back among the Stalinists, discredited, and consoled only by the more tangible proofs of their "friendship".

The Commission will appoint another sub-committee to hear Trotsky's son, Sedov, in Paris and to examine further documents. We shall be given more proof of the role of the hangmen of the working class. Already one attempt has been made on the life of Sedov. Fortunately it was unsuccessful. But there will be more. For Stalinism has overstepped the final limits and its only protection is murder and bribery. Already Roiss has been assassinated by GPU agents. Murder and terrorism will continue, as defection after defection from the Stalinist ranks gains force. The only protection we have is the international working class, firm and resolute behind the banner of the Fourth International.

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IMPRESSIONS  
OF THE ALL-AFRICAN CONVENTION

On Monday, 13th December, the two of us arrive punctually in the Bloemfontein Location, there to attend the third All-African Convention, which is to open at 10 a.m.

Outside the hall of meeting we become aware of a strange quiet, compared with the cheery noise and bustle that preceded the opening of doors at previous Convention gatherings. Here are no busy, shifting groups, no eager talk and laughter, no members walking about to greet old friends and make new acquaintances. The scene might be a Sunday morning in our home town. We look around for familiar faces, but see none.

Ten o'clock finds the doors still fast shut, but a few more figures come strolling along at their leisure. One or two groups are formed, discussing things in desultory fashion, punctuating their words with an occasional lift of the eyebrows or a shrug of the shoulders.

The "lefts" are tacking themselves on to the radical group, to find out what is to be the radical line of action. But they are met with silence and more shoulder-shrugging, and slowly but very significantly the group melts away.

A profound pessimism prevails.

Presently the great Jabavu comes in sight, walking jauntily, careless of the approaching demise of the All-African Convention, which might have been the living voice and parliament of his own people, an independent and courageous voice. He murmurs something about a mislaid key and general bad management.

The agenda paper is distributed, and the general impression is that the bulk of the subjects included in it would be very interesting and wholly suitable for a Teachers' Association Conference. The order of priority is remarkable: Teachers' salary cuts come first, then old age pensions, then African Youth and attendant social evils, then the African Educational System. The most pressingly urgent subjects of all, namely, the policy and the Draft Constitution of the All-African Convention, are set down for one hour each on the last day!!

Protests are heard from all quarters, but Jabavu allows no one but himself to make changes in the agenda. He shelters himself behind the notification that the four members of the Native Representative Council are in Pretoria attending the Council session and will only arrive in Bloemfontein on Wednesday! (N.B. For this clashing of the dates of the two bodies the Government is to blame, but who is to say whether it is a blunder of culpable negligence or a calculated snub?). So the agenda must stand, and the Convention programme for the next three years must be fixed up in one hour on the closing day! And the hour will in all probability be cut down to half-an-hour! For the white Senators present -- there are seven of them -- are all in turn delivering smart little speeches in the old familiar strain. "The good of the African people"....."Need of modernisation....."The self-sacrifice shown by the worthy senators", etc., etc. Each day we



get a half-hour dose of this smug hypocrisy, but as no time has been allowed for it on the agenda, it is stolen from the scanty periods allotted for real business. And, needless to say, the African is far too courteous to protest!

There are, of course, exceptionally interesting moments, and we enjoy the outburst of a very able young man, Mr. Mosaka, a teacher in Bloemfontein, who roundly denounces the "Bantuisation" of schools so highly praised by Dr. Edgar Brookes, exposing it as a trick to introduce a lower curriculum, to be carried out by an underpaid Bantu staff. Mrs. Ballinger gets a good hearing when she declares that she represents a new form of Liberalism -- Neo-Liberalism, it calls itself. The Neo-Liberals, by their own account, are adepts at "making the best of it" -- for their own profit, naturally, adds the cynic.

But on the whole this Convention is sleepy, passive, unresponsive, sadly different from the last, which was a lively and eager gathering, cheering and boing excitedly, ready with cries of expostulation or a burst of appreciative laughter.

With the last day come the four members of the Native Representative Council, elaborately welcomed and introduced by Jabavu. One of them, Mr. Godlo, violently attacks the policy of the "left extremists", and is able to do this without eliciting any mark of disapproval from his apathetic audience. Mr. Max Jabavu succeeds in rousing a storm by moving that only Natives be allowed to become members of the All-African Convention. The assembly breaks out in a spurt of anger and defeats the motion by a big majority.

Nevertheless, pessimism prevails. The attendance at the meetings becomes smaller and smaller; and, when the policy and Draft Constitution are being discussed, it barely reaches 30.

The final touch is added to all this failure and disappointment, when Section 12 of the Draft Constitution, recognising the members of the Native Representative Council as "The accepted mouthpiece" of the All-African Convention, is actually passed -- only by a small majority, it is true, but definitely passed. Eighteen months ago the Convention was an independent and outspoken body. Now it has handed over its independence to the Native Representative Council, the slavish ally of the rulers and slave-drivers.

The slavish attitude of the Native Representative Council is well known. In its first session it happened that some of the members came in late, and Mr. Smit, Secretary for Native Affairs, who was in the chair, sternly rebuked them for their unpunctuality, warning them publicly that, if it occurred again, he would withhold the day's pay from them. It may be hard to believe, but it is a fact that no one protested against this intolerable insolence.

And it is these slavish men of the N.R.C. who are now authorised to represent the All-African Convention, to represent the African people! These men are the so-called "leaders", who creep and crawl at the feet of the Government, meekly accepting threats and discipline against which a schoolboy would revolt. These men have used the All-African Convention for their own ends, they have laid hold of it and choked the life out of it, till it lies there, a dead, unburied thing.

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AFTER THE POPULAR FRONT?

After a year and a half in office the Popular Front government of Blum and Chauvins has at last collapsed, and the French workers will now have an opportunity of learning the bitter lessons of their mistakes. Whether they will actually learn those lessons in time will depend partly on the skill with which Stalin devises a new turn to divert them from the revolutionary road, and partly on the speed with which the bourgeoisie acts.

There is no need to consider in any detail the lessons of the Popular Front. Right from the beginning we have maintained that it was a counter-revolutionary movement, that it would fail in its expressed aim of combatting fascism and preventing war, that it would instead weaken the proletariat and pave the way for fascism. Our views on this subject are fully and clearly expressed in the pamphlet by Comrade Burnham which we have been reprinting for some months past. But since that pamphlet was written certain additional facts have come to light, which fully justify our "pessimism". We shall consider here two of those facts.

It will be remembered that one of the first measures passed by the Blum government

was the dissolution of the fascist leagues, among which the best known was Colonel de la Rocque's "Croix de Feu". The "Communists" hailed this as a striking proof of the correctness of their action in joining the Popular Front. They congratulated themselves that the Damoclean sword of fascism was no longer suspended over their heads by a single thread that might break at any moment, but was now supported by a stout chain that would endure for ages. With the simple-mindedness of imbeciles those pretended revolutionaries imagined that the threat of fascism could be removed by the mere destruction of its outward and visible manifestations. Because they had formed the habit of blindly accepting the orders of Stalin, no matter how they might contradict his previous orders, and because they had abandoned all pretence of Marxist analysis, they could completely overlook the fact that the driving force behind fascism was absolutely unaffected by the dissolution of the leagues, that on the contrary it was inevitably increased by the other "successes" of the Popular Front -- the 40-hour week, the "reform" of the Bank of France, the nationalisation of the armaments industry, etc. They did not see -- or if they saw, they criminally said nothing about it -- that the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was rapidly developing to a critical stage, and that if the capitalists were prevented from making open preparations for the next great battle in the class war, they would make their preparations in secret with renewed vigour. Those dolts of "Communists" accepted without question the theory that the outlawing of the fascist leagues by the bourgeois state was an adequate substitute for direct revolutionary action. They shut their eyes to the plain fact that the only way to avert the menace of fascism is to strike at its roots, that is, to abolish private ownership of the means of production, to establish the workers' own state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. In short, they abandoned the class war, and handed every strategic advantage to the enemies of the working class.

How utterly wrong their calculations were is shown by the discovery last November of a secret military organisation popularly known as the "Cagoullards" (Hooded men), which had been quietly collecting huge stores of guns and ammunition in readiness for an armed attack on the workers. One might have thought that the discovery of this plot would have opened the eyes of the workers to the extremely dangerous position into which the Popular Front policy had led them. Here they had the clearest possible proof that the disbanding of the leagues was nothing but a meaningless gesture, no more effective than a diplomatic protest to the Japanese government. But how did they react to it? Did they cut themselves adrift from their treacherous allies in the Popular Front, who by their futile measures had connived at the preparation of the Cagoullard plot? Did they begin to get ready for the coming struggle by resuming genuinely revolutionary propaganda, by building a workers' army? No. They had received no orders from Stalin to that effect. Revolution is not among the exports of the Soviet Union! Instead, they accepted the assurance of the government that the plot would be fully investigated, and the ringleaders unearthed and brought to trial.

The Cagoullard plot was a clear warning to the working class that the government of the Popular Front could not be trusted to fight against fascism, and yet the leaders of the C.P. continued tamely to call upon the government to fulfil its promises to punish the conspirators. On the 2nd December "Humanite" published a report, "from a reliable source," that Tardieu (a former prime minister) was to be arrested and examined by a judge. Three days later it complained in a leading article that "The leaders, the real leaders, are still free. Nevertheless, the Minister of the Interior, M. Dormoy, had stated in a memorable announcement that a blow would be aimed at the head of the conspiracy! At the same time the national police had promised to reveal the names of the leaders of the plot! Up to now not a word has been said about those names, except by "Humanite". "And Mr. Tardieu continues his impudent struttings at Mentone". (Quoted in "La Lutte Ouvriere", Brussels edition, 11.12.37). Since there is not a word in the article about the workers preparing to establish their own machinery of justice, this means that the French C.P. entertains the ludicrous hope that it can persuade the bourgeois state to use its police apparatus to fight the battles of the working class.

The handling of the Cagoullard plot by the Chautemps government is the most convincing proof that could be desired that a government of the Popular Front is no better than any other bourgeois government, that it runs the machinery of the state in the interests of the capitalist class and not in the interests of the proletariat. Of course a Marxist needs no such proof, because he understands the nature of the state, but even this striking demonstration is not enough to convince the blind followers of the blind leader, Stalin, for in the course of the final debate in the Chamber of Deputies before the resignation of the Chautemps cabinet, the "Communists" declared that in order to save the Popular Front they would refrain from voting against the government. Whereupon Chautemps contemptuously gave them back their freedom of action, knowing full well that by harnessing themselves to the bourgeois chariot they had lost all capacity for independent action. They had succeeded in diverting the workers from the road to revolution.

and if a new government could be formed without their assistance, so much the better for the bourgeoisie.

It is not only in the political field that the Popular Front has betrayed the workers. Even in the day-to-day economic struggle for better working conditions it has let them down. The gains resulting from the general strike following Blum's assumption of power were hailed by the "Communists" as a victory for the Popular Front. Of course every Marxist knew then that those gains were achieved not because of the Popular Front, but in spite of it. Now, however, there is evidence, obvious enough to anyone who is not quite dead, that even in the economic struggle the Popular Front plays into the hands of the bosses. Thus we learn from "La Lutte Ouvriere" (Paris edition) of 11.11.37 that as far back as last March organisations of employers were making plans for a new type of collective action to break strikes. The manufacturers in any one industry agreed to share between them the orders of any member firm whose workers were on strike, to refrain, for a period of one year after the end of the strike, from seeking to capture the market they had thus temporarily entered, to take over supplies, ordered by the affected firm, which could not be delivered on account of the strike, and so on. The wholesalers agreed to co-operate in the scheme. The object of the agreement was to reduce to a minimum the after-effects of a strike, and therefore to increase the employers' resistance to collective action by the workers. Naturally the government had full knowledge of these plans, but it did absolutely nothing to prevent their execution. Indeed, it worked in exactly the opposite direction, by trying to prevent the workers from defending themselves by the only means at their disposal, short of the revolution, that is by general strikes within the affected industries.

The lessons of the Popular Front are as clear as daylight. But will the French workers learn them in time to avoid the catastrophe of fascism? The answer to this question will depend on two main factors. The first is Stalin. The collapse of the Popular Front imposes on him the necessity for devising a new turn. Up to the time of writing (three days after the resignation of Chautemps) no new orders have been issued, for the press reports that the C.P. refuses to support any government containing individuals or parties who do not accept the principle of the Popular Front. But that is not surprising, for Stalin has no clear political principles, and he must therefore adopt a "wait and see" policy for the time being.

Unless he dissolves the Comintern and abandons the French Communists to their own devices, there are only three courses open to Stalin. He must either turn to the right, or to the left, or remain exactly where he is. It is unthinkable that he should abandon the C.P., for that would mean the sacrificing of his most effective counter-revolutionary weapon. It would mean that the more militant members of the C.P. would be free to resume the revolutionary struggle. Above all, it would mean a striking defeat in his long battle against "Trotskyism".

Of the remaining courses a turn to the left would be almost equally dangerous, for that would involve concessions to Marxism, and would open the way to a united front between the Bolshevik-Leninists and a dissatisfied section of the C.P. with the object of taking direct action against fascism. On the other hand, the growing discontent and militancy of the masses will force the leaders of the C.P. to adopt a more leftward policy or to find themselves at the head of a party that has no members. Stalin is placed, as a result of his own criminal policy, between two forces that are pulling him in opposite directions at the same time.

Should he resist both forces and stand still -- and in view of the enormous difficulties attending a swing either to the right or to the left that is the line of least resistance -- then the C.P. will either have to defy him and withdraw from the Comintern, or to continue its absurd policy of refusing to support anything but an all-Popular Front government after such a government has been proved to be impossible. Deeply ingrained habits of slavish subservience make the former course exceedingly unlikely. But the alternative would play directly into the hands of the fascists, for the Radical and Socialist parties will undoubtedly find some means of composing their differences with the Right. We may then expect to see a vigorous drive against the organisations of the working class. The preparations for a fascist coup will proceed unhindered, and when it succeeds, the Franco-Soviet pact will be denounced, and the fruits of Stalin's foreign policy will crumble into dust in his hands. The Soviet Union will be completely isolated, ready to fall a prey to the fascist robbers surrounding it.

A turn to the right is equally impossible, and for the same reasons. In short, Stalin is in the unenviable position of being unable to make any move, including no move at all, without facing disaster. It is "checkmate". The metaphor from chess is not inappropriate, for Stalin has, during the last ten years, used the proletariats of the

capitalist countries merely as pawns in his game against world capitalism, instead of relying on their full power of attack. The result is that he has lost them one by one, and is now facing defeat.

Whatever course is adopted by the C.P., the situation in France is exceedingly grave, and only the promptest possible action will save the proletariat from a crushing defeat. The best thing that could happen would be for the C.P. to break with Stalin at once, and come to an immediate agreement with the Bolsheviki-Leninists on the basis of an active revolutionary programme. Of course such a move cannot possibly come from the top. Thorez and company have travelled too far along the road of betrayal. But if it came from the rank and file the prospects would be distinctly good. Failing that, it is certain that many workers will become confused and apathetic. Some will join our party, and we are confident that they will do so in increasing numbers as time goes on. But that is just the crux of the matter. Time is short, terribly short. The capitalists have not been asleep during all those months when Stalin was feeding opiates to the workers. And this brings us to the second important factor in the situation.

The difficulties in the way of forming a stable government are so colossal that it is almost certain none will be formed, that is, none that can last more than a few days, or a few weeks at the most. But the bourgeois state cannot exist without a government, and if one way of getting one fails, then another must be tried. The democratic parliamentary way, useful as it was while capitalism was in the ascendent, is no longer reliable in this revolutionary era, and the logical consequence of its unreliability has already been realised and acted upon by the bourgeoisie of several European countries. It would be sheer folly to imagine that the capitalists of France are more stupid or more humane than the capitalists of other countries, that for the sake of "liberty, equality, fraternity" they will refrain from scrapping the machinery of government that has now proved to be obsolete, and a menace to their profits. They will scrap it without compunction, as it was scrapped in Italy and Germany.

But how is this to be accomplished? It obviously cannot be done by "constitutional" means, as in Germany, for there is no freak party that can be paid to deceive the masses into giving absolute power to the bourgeoisie. The failure of the attempted coup d'etat of February, 1934, shows that it cannot be done by a simple "march" on the capital, as in Italy. There remains only one way, and that is civil war. The discovery of the Cagoulard plot shows that preparations for this are already far advanced. But it must not be supposed that the mere discovery of the conspiracy means that it is checked. The real leaders have not been arrested, and it is almost certain that they never will be, at least not before the revolution. They are therefore still free to accumulate the instruments of war. Even if they are arrested, the conspiracy will not be ended, for it is the product not of a criminal gang, but of a whole class engaged in a life and death struggle. It will be carried on and matured, even while the police continue to stumble across new stores of ammunition, and arrest the unfortunate dupes who are paid to look after them.

It is impossible, without access to the inner councils of the bourgeoisie, to predict when zero hour will strike, but it must be soon or not at all. For the capitalists dare not wait until the Stalinist poison has ceased to paralyse the workers; they dare not allow the proletariat to take the initiative. If the workers attack, they will do so in the full consciousness that they are entering on a revolutionary struggle from which not even Stalin will be able to deflect them, and they will arouse the active sympathy and support of workers in other lands. But if the capitalists strike first, there will still be a chance that Stalin will be able to deceive the workers into thinking they are fighting in a war between fascism and democracy, that the civil war in France will follow the same course as course as the war in Spain.

Unknown to the workers who have been fooled and fuddled by Stalinism, a grim race is going on between a small band of revolutionaries, who are seeking to awaken the workers to the dangers that lie immediately ahead of them, and the capitalists, who are forging new and heavier chains to bind the workers before they are awake. And the outcome of this race will have a profound effect on the history of the world for years to come. If the capitalists win, there will be no escape from a new world war in which the Soviet Union, the first workers' state, will stand alone against the combined forces of capitalism. If the revolutionaries win, it will be the dawn of the world revolution, the coming-of-age of humanity.

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"SUBSCRIBE TO 'THE SPARK'!"

"SUBSCRIBE TO 'THE SPARK'!"

J A B A V U ' S   A D D R E S S

The more oppressive and tyrannical becomes the rule of the Government, the more it fears even the smallest voice of criticism. The more the ruling class arms itself with laws aimed against the Bantu, the more it demands absolute obedience and quiet from its victims.

The address of Professor D.D.T. Jabavu to the All African Convention was the speech of a tired man, a hopeless speech, a speech that neither informed the listeners nor led them to take any action. Jabavu ended with a plea for education, honesty, character, mutual respect and unity. Fine words, all of them, but quite empty. But because the speech dealt with, among other things, a matter not yet settled to the heart's delight of the rulers and because the speech opposed the interests of the rulers on this matter, the good Professor, for many long years an able servant of the rulers, was sharply attacked.

The Government, through the three Acts of the last two years, has built a modern prison for the Bantu of the Union, a prison complete with a sports field, the Native Representative Council, where the Bantu can, if they shut their eyes very tightly, play and feel like free men. And with the help of Jabavu and all the would-be Jabavus, the Godlos, Dubos, Ka Somes, etc., the Government has nicely rounded up the Bantu into its prison, without outcry, without shouting, neatly and peacefully, in fact, as if it were doing the Bantu a great kindness. But, to keep the wheels of capitalist economy and domination turning, more and more victims are needed: Capitalism has squeezed the Bantu of the Union ruthlessly, has used up and destroyed generation after generation of the people and must now get new supplies. And the three Protectorates lie close at hand.

The Government needs the Protectorates. It needs them not only for economic reasons, as sources of more cheap labour for Capitalism, but also for political reasons, to show the Dutch farmers that Fusion can deliver the goods, can bargain successfully with the Mother of Imperialists, and to show them that Malan can gain nothing for them.

Will Britain give Fusion the Protectorates? The answer is: yes. But the question remains: when? And that is what the little squabble is about. Hertzog and Co. demand immediate delivery, preferably before the coming Elections: Britain delays, and, most cunningly, uses as an excuse for delay the fact that the Bantu of the Protectorates were promised consultation before any change would be made in their status. Everyone knows of course that this promise is after all only a ..... promise and that it means no more and no less than nothing. Already this promise has been ignored -- in 1927 when the Protectorates, without consultation with the Bantu, were handed over from the Colonial Office to the Dominions Office. The South African Government and Britain both know that the former will receive the coveted territory, naturally, at a price, but the South African Government is grieved that Britain uses a promise, which both know will not be kept, in order to put off the joyful day. (From the standpoint of the Imperialists, this borders near rascality.)

And, obviously, Hertzog and Co. are more than annoyed when objections are raised to the handing over because those objections strengthen Britain's delaying game. The objections come from two sources, from within Britain and from South Africa. Within Britain, the humanitarians, the philanthropists, those interested in aborigines and whatnot, the liberals, feel that unless at least some safe-guard be improvised for the benefit of the Protectorate Bantu, their conscience will be pricked. (Conscience is one of the lesser valuable by-products of old, wealthy, and fat Imperialisms: it is seldom exported and can always be lulled to quiet by a few soft words, by a promise.)

The objections from South Africa are less articulate. Of course no section of the European population, from the South African Labour Party to the defunct Stallardites, is really opposed to receiving the Protectorates. All in fact are licking their lips in anticipation. The objection which is none the less real because it is not so often heard comes from the Bantu of the Union and the Protectorates. And that is why Professor Jabavu is snapped at. He dares to call the transfer "evil", he asks the question, "Is this urged to annex the Protectorates prompted by a concern for the welfare of their inhabitants or by a desire to replace wastage of man-power?..... For, should the Protectorates be transferred, what reason have the Natives to suppose that they would receive better treatment than those living in the Transkei, should the Union continue to pursue her present policy?"

The "Cape Times" of 14.12.37 hurried to undo the "mischief" caused by these plain questions. It pontificated about Jabavu's "unseemly and most inaccurate language", about his "wild and whirling words", and the "Cape Argus" of the same day, under the heading

"A Native Extremist" (!!), modestly confined itself to "excesses of language" and "inaccuracies" before thundering out, "And we feel obliged to tell him (Jabavu) bluntly that to mislead the Convention in this wholesale manner is to do a grave disservice to the native cause".

The rulers want the Protectorates now, quickly, and they want them badly, and they don't like anyone, not even faithful old servants, to let out a peep, against it. The more oppressive and tyrannical they are, the more they fear criticism.

And Jabavu is still their faithful servant. Slightly shaken, it is true, not quite so sure of himself, but still faithful. The rest of his Address shows this very plainly and it is significant that neither the "Argus" nor the "Times" commented on the rest of his speech. This was not quite fair. Surely they should have said a few kind words about the statesmanlike way in which Jabavu evaded the burning questions that faced the Convention?

The central problem before the Convention, the problem of its relations with and attitude to the Native Representative Council, the sports field within the prison, and flowing from this, the attitude of the Convention to the whole prison, to the whole structure of oppression now completed, this central problem was entirely evaded by Jabavu. He said, "We then (at the last Convention) decided to try out, rather than boycott, the substitute of an admittedly emasculated franchise, a franchise branded with inferiority, with results all too well known by now". (Our emphasis)

With this ambiguous, loose, empty and meaningless phrase, "with results all too well known by now", Jabavu passes over, ignores, runs away from the central issue before the Convention. What are these "results all too well known by now"? Does Jabavu approve of these results? Is Jabavu for or against the Act, part of a series of Acts, that established the Native Representative Council? Jabavu calls the franchise now enjoyed by the Bantu an "emasculated" one, an "inferior" one, but he says not a word about struggling against it. Why did he not tell the Convention openly that now it is an appendage of the Native Representative Council, that now the Convention has, so far as he can see, no right to an independent existence?

Jabavu is against the segregation policy of the Government. He correctly calls the Native Laws Amendment Act a "most condemnable Act shot through and through with rabid anti-African prejudice and repression, an Act probably unparalleled in Christendom or in pagan despotism for ruthless injustice...." Good, or at least, as good as can be expected. What then can be done? What does Jabavu say can be done? Jabavu appeals to Great Britain! He says:

"Remember that the Union Government is now an out-and-out independent country from England. It is able to do just what it likes with us without being answerable to England. It has full power to dispossess us of our vote, as it did last year..... In granting this unlimited freedom to the Union Government, England acted magnanimously, in the belief that this sacred trust would be used in a Christian manner, but was manifestly outwitted by the superior political adroitness of our local politicians. The result we all know to our cost. Nevertheless the present demand by South Africa for the Protectorates, gives England the privilege to examine and approve or castigate the Native policy of the Union Government, because if the Protectorates are handed over, the Native chiefs and their people will automatically lose their present freedom of "Indirect Rule", lose their rights of owning the land they dwell on, fall under the notorious 1913 Native Lands Act with its harrowing horrors, be forced to undergo the repressive Transvaal Pass Laws, be subjected to the Native Servants' Contract Laws, and many other unpleasant and humiliating ordinances that England knows nothing about". (Our emphasis)

"Magnanimous England outwitted by our local politicians"!! But England, Imperialist robber, is not only magnanimous..... She is also "ignorant"!! She is not aware of the "many unpleasant and humiliating ordinances" devised by the South African ruling class. Poor magnanimous and ignorant England!!! She does not read the papers. She is not aware of what is going on and the local politicians, second-raters though they are, have succeeded not only in "outwitting" England, but have also deprived her of brain and tongue.

Jabavu protests against the transfer of the Protectorates. He hopes that England will exercise "the privilege to examine and approve or castigate the Native policy of the Union Government". He hopes that Britain, as her price for handing over the Protectorates, will demand that Hertzog and Co. modify their policy, soften their policy towards the Bantu. A vain hope and a deception! And he who spreads this hope deceives the people. The greater the exploitation of the Bantu, the greater is Britain's profit.

The more there is misery, hunger, disease, and death among the Basques, the greater are the profits, the luxuries, the power of Britain. That is the law of Capitalism. The exploit-  
 and execution of the reign of terror against the Basques to the local ruling class instead  
 of carrying it out personally as in India, will the British ruling class, the most reac-  
 sionary force in Europe today, forgo even an infinitesimal fraction of its profits for  
 the benefit of the Basques? Vain hopes! And only a still fiercer support of Imperialism  
 like Hitler would dare to broadcast such an idea.

The prisons will be enlarged. It will take in the Basques of the Protectorates. It  
 will enlarge the sports field, the Native Representative Council, so that the Basques of the  
 Protectorates too may be "represented". For a time, no one can say how long or short, the  
 Basques will remain prisoners; but one day the prison walls will be leveled to the earth.

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THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

THE NEW SPAIN, BY JAMES MURPHY

(Pioneer Publishers, 100 Fifth Avenue, N.Y.)

REVISED 1938 EDITION

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN SPAIN

Step by step the consequences have been drawn out. The government, as a bourgeois  
 government, has been compelled to check the extension of proletarian class power, and pro-  
 gressively to liquidate the steps that had already been taken. In the name of a "unified  
 command" it has cut off the development toward a genuine workers' army, and reconstituted  
 the militia into a republican army. In the name of law and order, it has eliminated the  
 workers' police in the cities, enforcing proletarian justice, and has set up a republican  
 police force, incorporating institutions and individuals already demonstrated to be be-  
 trayers of the workers' struggle. In the name of efficient production, it breaks down  
 genuine workers' control of the factories. Its great positive accomplishment to date,  
 proudly hailed and announced by Deullors, is -- to have balanced the budget! In this  
 manner, the Peoples' Front government becomes a second line of defense for capitalism. If  
 the workers succeed, in spite of the government, in defeating the armies of Franco, they  
 will only find themselves bound to the capitalist order as enforced by the Peoples' Front.  
 Unless they break with Popular Frontism, they will find -- and this is the real tragedy of  
 Spain -- that they have given their lives and their blood in vain, that their sacrifices and  
 heroic sacrifices, far from bringing emancipation, will have left them where they began,  
 tied hand and foot in the property relations of capitalist exploitation.

Even more treacherous is the role of the Peoples' Front in Catalonia, for in Cata-  
 lonia the process of extending workers' power had gone much further than in the rest of  
 Spain. Nevertheless, the workers' parties in Catalonia, instead of carrying through that  
 process to its culmination in the actual transfer of state power, likewise, under the in-  
 spiration of the ideas of the Peoples' Front, entered the Catalan coalition government.  
 Even the P.O.U.M., though it had abstractly maintained against the other parties that the  
 issue in Spain was "Socialism vs. Capitalism" and not "Democracy vs. Fascism", followed  
 along into the government. And just as in Spain proper, the consequences of this step  
 became at once apparent. The workers were turned aside from the revolutionary path. The  
 government strove to gather into its own hands the organs of power that had slipped away  
 to the proletarians: control over the army, the police, the factories. The autonomous  
 committee of the workers became "no longer necessary" -- as even the P.O.U.M. explained  
 -- because, of course, the government itself was a "workers' government". In this way,  
 the bourgeoisie, acting through the coalition government, was preparing the re-consolidation  
 of capitalism in the event that Franco should be defeated on the military front.

With startling suddenness, in November and December, the true character of the Cat-  
 alonian government became obvious to the world. It was disclosed that representatives of  
 the left republican parties in the government were secretly negotiating in Paris for a  
 "separate peace". A conspiracy was unearthed through which a group from the left repub-  
 lican parties was aiming to assassinate the leaders of the workers' parties. A campaign  
 against the P.O.U.M. was started by the republican parties in collaboration with the  
 Stalinists (including the British Communist Party, Labour-Congress), on the grounds that  
 the P.O.U.M. was a disruptive and counter-revolutionary force through its insistence on  
 its slogan of socialism vs. capitalism. The campaign culminated in the P.O.U.M.'s being

driven out of the government, under the threat of the withdrawal of Soviet material aid if this were not carried through. Impelled thus by necessity rather than by its own clear will, the P.O.U.M. has again turned toward the revolutionary path, and now calls for a break with the policies of the Peoples' Front, the transformation of the war into a revolutionary war, and the building of workers' power.

The reply of the Peoples' Fronters to the new turn of the P.O.U.M. toward a revolutionary course has not been long in coming. Busily re-constituting the Loyalist Army under a unified command on a bourgeois basis, the leaders of the Peoples' Front declare that the insistence of the P.O.U.M. on a revolutionary war proves it the military as well as political ally of Franco. The Madrid radio station of the P.O.U.M. is raided and shut down; its journals are suppressed; a "Peoples' Tribunal" consisting of four judges, one from the Stalinists, one Socialist, and two from the "left republican" parties, is appointed to try the P.O.U.M. leaders for treason and "counter-revolution". The campaign for the physical annihilation of the P.O.U.M., under the whip of the Stalinists, continually mounts, and is checked only by the resistance it meets from the rank and file of the militia and the workers' mass organisations. There should be no surprise. Such also was the reply of the reformists in Germany to Luxemburg and Liebknecht. The policy of class collaboration, of the Peoples' Front, can no more endure the proletarian revolution than the counter-revolution of fascism.

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### Chapter VIII

#### THE PEOPLES' FRONT IN THE UNITED STATES

##### 1.

The Peoples' Front has not, of course, advanced as far in the United States as in France or Spain. In the formal sense, there is not yet in the United States an established "Peoples' Front". The United States is not faced with a developing revolutionary crisis, as is France, nor is it in the midst of a Civil War, as is Spain. Though the historical issue for the United States, as is the case for every nation at the present time, is socialism vs. capitalism, though only the workers' revolution and socialism can solve even a single one of the major problems facing United States economy; nevertheless the issue is not yet posed in terms of the immediate struggle for state power. The American proletariat is still faced primarily with the more elementary immediate demands: the struggle for the right to organise, for industrial unionism, for the exercise of democratic rights generally, for a powerful trade union and unemployed movement, for relief and union conditions, for a conscious mass revolutionary party of struggle.

But just as the issue of state power can be settled in favour of the proletariat only by the independent revolutionary class struggle of the workers, and is lost for the proletariat through the reformist strategy of the Peoples' Front; in the same way, at the more elementary stages, the interests of the proletariat can be served only by the appropriate methods of class struggle, and are fatally undermined by the class collaborationist methods of the Peoples' Front. The Peoples' Front in this country, seeping into the labour movement under the sponsorship of the Communist Party, has made considerable headway; and already its disastrous effects are becoming apparent in a dozen fields.

##### 2.

Up to the present, the best known and most conspicuous result of the Peoples' Front strategy emerged during the 1936 election campaign. From the point of view both of the social composition of his support and likewise of the political content of his programme, Roosevelt was in effect a Peoples' Front candidate. No one could doubt that he was a staunch and outstanding defender of capitalist democracy, nor that the bulk of the proletariat, the farmers, and the lower strata of the rest of the middle classes, were solidly behind him. Thus the upholders of the Peoples' Front ideology found themselves, willingly or unwillingly, driven into the Roosevelt camp: either openly, as was the case with many, or, like the Communist Party itself, through a back-handed and ambiguous formula.

The Communist Party was compelled to define the issue of the campaign as "Progress vs. Reaction", "Democracy vs. Fascism". It had to discover the forces of fascism in the "Landon-Hearst-Liberty League" combination. It was then required to raise as the central slogan, "Defeat Landon at all costs"! And the only realistic interpretation of this slogan -- the interpretation which the majority of even its own sympathisers made -- was to vote for Roosevelt. Browder admits quite openly that this was the central direction of the Stalinist campaign. In his post-election analysis of the elections, delivered to the



Central Committee of the party, he boasts as follows: "The first objective was the defeat of Landon. This was accomplished to a degree far surpassing all expectations..... this aim we shared with the largest number of people..... Without exaggerating our role in bringing about this result, we can safely say that the weight of each individual Communist in the struggle was far higher, many fold, than that of the members of any other political group in America". He apologises at length for the nominally independent Communist Party ticket that was in the field. If only "a national Farmer-Labour party....." had "decided to place Roosevelt at the head of the ticket nationally..... Would we have refrained from putting forward our own independent tickets and supported the Farmer-Labour party ticket even with Roosevelt at the head? I venture to say that under such circumstances we would almost surely have done so".

In point of fact, this was done in many localities either by the Communist Party officially, or by individual party members. In Minnesota, Washington, California, the Stalinists supported Farmer-Labour and "progressive" coalitions with no criticism of the fact that Roosevelt headed their tickets. In New York, the Stalinists gave full support to the American Labour Party, which entered the election campaign -- as its leaders openly declared -- only to gather labour votes for Roosevelt. Individual Communist Party members joined the American Labour Party, and spoke from its platforms in support of Roosevelt.

The Peoples' Front policy dictates a wholly anti-Marxist analysis of Roosevelt. He can no longer be treated as the chief executive for the dominant class. Criticism of him can only suggest that he is not responsive enough in carrying out the "peoples' mandate", that he cannot be relied on to take progressive steps unless a certain amount of pressure against him is generated. Even when, after the elections were safely under his belt, Roosevelt, at the bidding of his masters, ruthlessly cut the WPA rolls, even in the light of Roosevelt's attitude toward the auto strikes, the Stalinist criticism must remain mild and "loyal". The Communist Party, having abandoned the revolutionary aim of the overthrow of capitalist society, becomes the "party of Twentieth Century Americanism"; its purpose as defined by the Peoples' Front, is to function within the framework of democratic capitalism, as a reformist "pressure group". It must strive to become "respectable", to ingratiate itself with the class enemy: to show that in return for vague promises of friendship for the Soviet Union and polite words against fascism, it is willing to do its part in smothering the class struggle and guaranteeing the protection of bourgeois democracy against the threat of proletarian revolution.

3.

A reformist political line cannot be isolated into any supra-mundane sphere of "pure politics". It must show its effects on every arena of the class struggle. We thus find during the past two years a cumulative development of the Peoples' Front strategy as applied to Communist Party activities in the trade unions and unemployed organisations. We may be sure that during the coming months this development will be carried unprecedented steps further. The basis of the Peoples' Front is class collaboration; and we know from past experience of reformism what this means on the trade union field.

Are the reactionary trade union bureaucrats agents of the class enemy within the working class? Do their policies act as the major brake to militant class consciousness within the unions? This is what Marxism has always taught, but no one could possibly learn this from the most detailed study of recent Stalinist literature. Nowhere is there any explanation of, or even reference to, the social function of the trade union bureaucracy. At the most, there is occasional personal criticism of some action too gross to ignore; but even this is kept to a minimum, in the interests of currying favour with the maximum number of the bureaucrats.

The policy of class collaboration forces the Stalinists to abandon more and more the fighting struggle for economic demands, and through that struggle the raising of the level of class consciousness, for the attempt to come to agreements with the bureaucrats, to settle disputes through deals behind the scenes, to rely on governmental arbitration boards and mediators. The Stalinist work in the unions must be subordinated to the great aim of achieving in this country a mass, classless Peoples' Front. To secure the adherence of a union to a Negro Congress, or an American League Conference, or a Farmer-Labour-Progressive what-not, or a Social Security Assembly is far more important than to get it to prepare and win a militant strike.

The results are already widely present within the labour movement, though not yet so widely recognised. In the WPA sit-downs, the Stalinists and the supervisors together explain why the workers must be peaceful and go home. In Pennsylvania, the Stalinists declare that the new policy for the Workers' Alliance must abandon strikes as a method for "settling disputes". At the January unemployed demonstration in Washington, not a

single militant slogan or banner was permitted; the whole demonstration was directed toward the achievement of a friendly chat with the relief authorities. In the Federation of Teachers, the general fight against the Boards of Education is deprecated, dual organisations (such as the Teachers' Guild in New York) are met with conciliation, and the open struggle against the A.F.of L. Executive Council and for the C.I.O. principles is shunted aside. In the Cafeteria Workers, there is disclosed an ironbound alliance between the Stalinists and the older racketeers. The furriers, the wild men of the Third Period, turn respectable, and devote their energies against the progressives and revolutionaries in the union. Ben Gold, who as leader of the furriers roared for five years like an untamable lion, now speaks like the mildest lamb. In the United Textile Workers, the Stalinists at the Convention come to the rescue of the reactionary officials. On the Pacific Coast, among the Maritime Unions, the Stalinists last year first tried to put over the I.S.U. proposals on the Sailors, then attempted to head off the strike, then insisted that it be delayed until after the elections (so as not to injure Roosevelt); and in the end were forestalled only by the militant stand of the Sailors' Union.

This trend will continue and increase. The Communist Party, under the banner of the Peoples' Front, now functions in the unions more and more as a reactionary force, and the progressive movement in the unions will have to be built not along with but in large measure against it.

These conclusions are impressively supported by the Stalinist policy with respect to the A.F.of L. - C.I.O. struggle. At the present time, as Marxists have made clear, the progressive movement in the unions must proceed in accordance with the basic slogans: for industrial unionism; for organisation of the basic mass industries; for a class struggle policy; for trade union democracy. Every one of these slogans, taken individually or together, dictates repudiation of the policies and course of the A.F.of L. bureaucracy, and determined, though of course critical, support of the C.I.O. This follows not because the C.I.O. as at present constituted and with its present leadership is the sufficient answer to the needs of the workers (indeed, through its fundamental class collaborationism and its violation of intra-union democracy, it acts even now and will in the future increasingly act counter to the needs of the workers), but because in the light of the real and actual conditions of the present, the direction of the C.I.O. is the direction of advance for the labour movement, just as the direction of the A.F.of L. officialdom is the direction of decay and disintegration. As against the A.F.of L. bureaucracy, therefore, Marxists must, whole-heartedly and unambiguously, support the C.I.O. Only such an attitude is at present compatible with progressive trade unionism.

The Communist party policy for the next period, however, is formulated around the single slogan of "unity". "We shall", Browder says in the report already referred to, "redouble our efforts in the fight for trade union unity, for the unity of the American Federation of Labour.... We think that it would be harmful if any unions were divided, one section going to the C.I.O., the other to the A.F.of L..... under no conditions do we carry that fight on in such a way as to make a split in that union.... For example, in the probable organisation of some sections of heavy machinery, we will have the problem of whether these new unions shall go into the Machinists or into some of the other unions, whether it be the Amalgamated Association, or what not. Generally, we have been clear on this last question. We refused to use our forces to carry sections of newly organised workers away from the jurisdictional claims of the Machinists Union over into some of the industrial unions, where there was a fear that this would intensify rivalries and sharpen the split".

(To be continued)

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