



NEW AGE

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THE NEW AGE

A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF MARX'S CAPITAL

By J. Alpari

[This article is the 3rd of the series of Alpari's articles on the study of Marx's Capital. The first two, appeared in March and June issues respectively.—Ed.]

ANALYSIS OF SOCIETY BASED ON COMMODITY PRODUCTION, AND NOT ONLY OF THIS SOCIETY

With the money-form Marx concludes his elaboration of the form of value. He adds, however, a section on the Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret thereof. The contents of this section form the actual crowning of the work.

Marx deals here, once again, with the form of value. This time, however, he proceeds not from the cell form of society, the commodity, but from the society itself. There is no doubt that, with a developed division of labour, men do in some way work for each other. The labour therefore possesses a social form. What, however, is the nature of this form? Commodity production is an indirect socialised form of labour. A society of commodity producers does not determine beforehand who shall work, what work shall be done and how much. (We are speaking here of society, of the total requirements of society and not of the workshop). Division of labour is regulated afterwards, so to speak, actually by the market. Every product of labour must here prove to be a constituent part of

the total social labour. Only as a constituent part of the total social labour does it possess any value, and only as much value as the socially necessary labour contained in it. The products of human labour appear here to become independent things. Commodities confront commodities. In reality, however, it is men who, both in production and on the market, come into contact with one another. Value is a relation between two persons—a relation hidden behind physical objects.

Where, on the other hand, there is directly associated labour, as in the example given in the first of these articles among the Servian Zadrougas, where labour is divided before-hand, where each member of this production community knows what and how much he must produce, and the products of labour are simply distributed, there the products of labour do not assume the form of commodities, do not confront each other independently. The relation of the producers to their products is immediate and not concealed by a physical wrap-



ping. Here the social character of labour does not acquire an objective appearance.

In commodity production the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour, appears as a social relation of objects existing outside of them.

"The existence of things *qua* commodities, and the value relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. There is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, as soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities."

Marx calls this Fetishism also mystification, which reaches its highest point in interest-bearing capital. Money simply yields interest, with which the possessor can obtain the most varied products without his having to move a finger.

"As interest-bearing capital," writes Marx in the third volume of *Capital*, "what is in its immediate form as interest-bearing money capital, capital acquires its pure fetish form. In this form as money-capital, it appears just as much a

property of capital to produce interest as it is for trees to grow."

The section on the Fetishism of Commodities, as we have already said, constitutes the actual crowning of the brilliant presentation of the form of value. In addition, however, it throws a flood of new light on the connections of human society, its relation to labour in general, to religion, on the relation of religion to the various economic forms, and also on historical materialism; provides a brief but trenchant criticism of classical economy; smashes vulgar economy together with Proudhonism. The vulgarisers have never known what to make of this magnificent achievement. These arguments have caused them the greatest embarrassment. Kautsky stammers out a few confused words on them, while Borchart's vulgarisation of *Capital*—to use a mild expression—contains not a single word about them. In Borchart's work one can seek in vain for any mention of the words fetishism of commodities, or fetishism of capital. The understanding of this section is a test. He who understands this section need not fear that the study of *Capital* will offer him any serious difficulties.

The section dealing with the fetishism of commodities concludes the first chapter of *Capital*, which demands the greatest diligence and perseverance on the part of the student.

As we wished to give only a guide to the study of *Capital*, we could very well break off here. Indeed, in what follows we intend to refrain from giving a systematic elaboration of the contents and confine ourselves to a few references.

* * *

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The general presentation of the process of exchange, which forms the content of the Second Chapter, deals mainly with the transformation of commodities into money, within the framework of a further analysis of a society of commodity producers, which in the course of its development must arrive at the money form. In money the social relation of producers to one another appears stripped more bare than in commodities.

The Third Chapter is devoted to the circulation of commodities, to the metamorphosis of commodity into money and of money into commodity. We become acquainted with the formula C-M-C. Here Marx reveals in particular his art of exposition, already referred to in terms of praise by his first Russian critic: "The presentation of the subject invests the direct economic questions with a certain peculiar charm."

Marx deals with one of the most prosaic occurrences in business: sale and purchase. Nevertheless, he speaks not unrightly of "*dramatis personae*" as the acting persons in sale and purchase. Everything is alive, everything is in motion here. "The complete metamorphosis of a commodity, in its simplest form, implies four extremes, and three *dramatis personae*." In what antagonistic transactions these simple processes take place, until the circuit is complete: Commodity form, stripping off of the commodity form, return to the commodity form—this, one must read in *Capital*. Meanwhile, we will quote here the brilliant passage which shows the dialectical antagonisms in the simple formula of C—M—C. Marx writes:

"Circulation bursts through all restrictions as to time, place and individuals,

imposed by direct barter, and this it effects by splitting up, into the antithesis of a sale and purchase, the direct identity that in barter does exist between the alienation of one's own and the acquisition of some other man's product. To say that these two independent and antithetical acts have an intrinsic unity, are essentially one, is the same as to say this intrinsic oneness expresses itself in an external antithesis. If the interval in time between the two complementary phases of the complete metamorphosis of a commodity becomes too great, if the split between the sale and the purchase becomes too pronounced, the intimate connection between them, their oneness, asserts itself by producing—a crisis."

Truly, we have here a splendid example of the identity of opposites.

How simply the same line of thought is expressed in the French edition.

"The circulation of goods leaps the barriers by which time, space and relations between individuals restrict the exchange of products. But how? In barter nobody can dispose of his product without at the same time another person disposing of his product. The immediate identity of these two acts is split by circulation, in that it introduces the antithesis of sale and purchase. After having sold a commodity I am not bound to purchase something either in the same place or at the same time, nor from the same person to whom I have sold it. It is true, that purchase is the necessary complement of sale, but it is no less true that their unity is the unity of contradictions. If the separation of the one from the other of the two complementary phases of the metamorphosis of commodities is prolonged, if

the division between the sale and purchase is accentuated, then their intimate connection is affirmed—by a crisis."

Marx deals again with the chief functions which money performs in the process of circulation, and then proceeds to the main subject of his work: the metamorphosis of money into capital.

From this point the study of *Capital* no longer offers any difficulties. One partakes of the richest and most enjoyable instruction without really strenuous work.

* * *

Capital contains a complete presentation of capitalist society, the exploitation of labour power by the production of surplus value, accumulation of capital etc. etc. It shows, as Lenin said, the development (growth and also movement) of these contradictions and of this society, in the sum of its fundamental constituent parts, from its beginning to its end. The broad framework in which this presentation is given, and the way in which Marx carries it out, makes this work a real encyclopædia.

Equipped with the last word in the knowledge of his day, endowed with unsurpassed acumen, Marx does not pass over any of the questions of the time, but deals with each of them—Political economy, economic history. Early history, antiquity, philosophy, and, as already mentioned, dialectical and historical materialism, technology, agronomy, chemistry—all this is dealt with either in detail or in a few brief remarks, which, however, shed more light than many thick volumes might do.

There pass before us the masters of thought from all times: Heraclitus, Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, the great masters of poetic art, Homer,

Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Heine, but above all, however, the founders of political economy, the physicists, and classic writers, Quesnay, Turgot, William Petty, Smith, Ricardo, but also their disciples and vulgarisers, who here receive their *coup de grace*. *Capital* also brings before us the great Utopians: Fourier, Saint-Dimon, Owen, as well as the petty bourgeois Utopian Proudhon. The chief scenes of *Capital* are laid in England, the country which at that time dominated the world market. But its actual scene is the whole world: The United States, Canada, South America, Germany, Russia, Turkey, the Balkans, Egypt, India, and China. Small countries are also dealt with in detail, as for instance, Ireland, which shows what importance Marx attached to national oppression.

Thus *Capital* is not only the standard work on political economy, but is at the same time a work embracing all knowledge.

Capital is above all a sharp weapon in the fight of the workers for better conditions, for their emancipation, but it is free from all one sided exaggeration. One remembers Paul Lafargue's book "My Right to be Lazy" In his endeavour to castigate exploitation in the sharpest possible manner, he denounced work in general and condemned it as did the early Christian (curse of work) and the ancients (unworthy of a free man). Marx, however, was not misled by the temporary enslavement of labour. He makes a sharp distinction between the labour-process and the process of realisation, and offers a wonderful characterisation of labour apart from its definite social form. Marx writes:

"Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature

participate, and in which, man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway."

In this connection Marx elaborates a thought of Hegel's, namely, that thought distinguishes man from the animal. The passage in Hegel reads:

"It cannot be called to mind too often in our days, that that which distinguishes man from the animal is thought.....If one, however, opposes Nature in general as the physical, to the spiritual, then one must say that the logical is rather, the supernatural which permeates all the natural behaviour of man, his feelings, views, desires, requirements, urge, and thereby transforms itself in general into something human, even if only formally, to conceptions and purposes." (Hegel, "The Science of Logic").

It is very fascinating to observe how Marx translates this thought in connection with labour into the, so to speak, purely materialistic. Following on his definition of labour which we have quoted above, Marx says:—

"We are not now dealing with those instinctive forms of labour that remind us of the mere animal. An immeasurable interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his

labour-power to the market for sale as a commodity, from that state in which human labour was still in its first instinctive stage. We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble that of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best bee is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his *modus operandi*, and to which he must subordinate his will. And this subordination is no mere momentary act. Besides the exertion of the bodily organs, the process demands that, during the whole operation, the workman's will be steadily in consonance with his purpose. This means close attention. The less he is attracted by the nature of the work, and the mode in which it is carried on and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as something which gives play to his bodily and mental powers, the more close his attention is forced to be."

We have here also the wonderful explanation of labour as a "play of the mental and physical powers of man."—as it is already beginning to be realised in the Soviet Union.

It should be remarked here that this is at the same time a passage which makes clear how *Capital* is a book of living importance extending far beyond Capitalism.

Marx chiefly investigates a special form of social production of commodities, namely capitalism. He shows its rise and decline. At the same time, however, he gives us an insight into the laws of production in general without regard to their particular social form. Humanity will therefore for a long time derive teaching from *Capital*, even when all traces of capitalist society have long since disappeared.

* * *

The annotations, the foot-notes in *Capital* are wonderful. Here Marx accords justice to everybody who was the first to express, if only by way of suggestion and unaware of its enormous importance, a thought which Marx develops in detail and in all its connections. The notes thus form a pantheon of the thinkers of all time.

At the same time there is accorded in them a place of honour for the champions of the proletariat and also for the factory inspectors who refused to be bribed by the manufacturers and ruthlessly exposed their shameful deeds. Marx places on a special pedestal the English scholar Leonard Horner, who as government factory inspector, became a self-sacrificing defender of the interests of the workers.

The notes also provide an almost complete criticism of the whole of political economy and a thorough refutation of the vulgar economists, the professional twaddlers of the bourgeoisie.

Here Marx settles accounts with Proudhon and his exchange bank, who imagined that he had created a system which could free the independent commodity owner from dependence upon the market, from its sometimes fatal effects. In actual fact the one condi-

tions the other, just as the positivity of the magnetic pole determines its negativity. How excellent is the following remark by Marx about Proudhon:

"Proudhon begins by taking his *ideal of justice*, of '*justice éternelle*' from the juridical relations that correspond to the production of commodities; thereby, it may be noted, he proves, to the consolation of all good citizens, that the production of commodities is a form of production as everlasting as justice. Then he turns round and seeks to reform the actual production of Commodities, and the actual legal system corresponding thereto, in accordance with this ideal. What opinion should we have of a chemist, who instead of studying the actual laws of the molecular changes in the composition and decomposition of matter, and on that foundation solving definite problems, claimed to regulate the composition and decomposition of matter by means of the 'eternal ideas', of 'Naturalite' and 'affinite'?"

This remark is one of that group of brilliant, brief statements in *Capital*, which place historical materialism in a new light. It will be remembered that the Marxists of the Second International, with few exceptions, always complained that Marx left behind no special work on historical materialism. All he said on this subject, they declare, are the few lines in the preface to the "Critique of Political Economy." They were unable to see the wood for the trees. Let us take for instance, the following remark:

"Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with Nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relation even, that fails to take account of this material

basis, is uncritical. It is, in reality much easier to discover by analysis the earthly core of the misty creations of religion, than, conversely it is, to develop from the actual relations of life the corresponding celestial forms of those relations. The latter method is the only materialistic, and therefore the only scientific one."

Is it possible even to conceive a more concise and sharper formulation of historical materialism?

We have already in the presentation of the fetishism of commodities, quoted a profound passage from Marx on religion. As a supplement thereto, there may be quoted from the same section his discerning exposition of the persistency of religious prejudices. It reads:

"The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then finally vanish, when the practical relations of everyday life offer to men none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellowmen and to Nature."

"The life-process of society, which is based on the process of material production by freely associated men, and is consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan. This, however, demands for society a certain, material groundwork or set of conditions of existence which in their turn are the spontaneous product of a long and painful process of development."

The following part of a long foot-note in the same section conveys as much as would a whole treatise on historical materialism.

"I seize this opportunity of shortly answering an objection taken by a German paper in America, to my work, 'Critique of Political Economy', 1859. In

the estimation of that paper, my view that each special mode of production and the social relations corresponding to it, in short, that the economic structure of society, is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised, and to which definite social forms of thought correspond; that the mode of production determines the character of the social, political and intellectual life generally, all this is very true for our own times, in which material interests preponderate, but not for the middle ages, in which Catholicism, nor for Athens and Rome, where politics, reigned supreme. In the first place it strikes one as an odd thing for anyone to suppose that these well worn phrases about the middle ages and the ancient world are unknown to anyone else. This much, however, is clear, that the middle ages could not live on Catholicism nor the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the mode in which they gained a livelihood that explains why here politics, and there Catholicism, played the chief part. For the rest, it requires but a slight acquaintance with the history of the Roman Republic, for example, to be aware that its secret history is the history of its landed property. On the other hand, Don Quixote long paid the penalty for wrongly imagining that knight errantry was compatible with all economic form of society."

These passages possess for us not only a great theoretical, but also a quite extraordinary practical importance, if fascism to-day pushes down whole peoples to the intellectual level of the old Mongolian Empire of Jengiz Khan, proclaims war and robbery as the life task of humanity, at a time when, in contrast to the Asiatic desert empire of

the 13th century, humanity has at its disposal means of production which, with an appropriate social organisation of society, could guarantee the whole population an abundance of everything it needs then; from the standpoint of the general development of society, this is a far greater anachronism than the mode of life of the knight of the doleful countenance.

It is true, it is precisely Marx who in *Capital*, reveals to us the cruelties of rising capitalism. Marx shows how capitalism oozes blood and filth from every pore.

It is obvious that as was its birth, so also is its end. But the bloody orgies of dying capitalism are more terrible than were those of rising capitalism. Nevertheless, they are the bloody orgies of dying capitalism.

We wish, finally, to quote at length the classic passage on the dialectic contradictions in the whole development of capitalism which leads to the "expropriation of the expropriators."

At the end of the celebrated chapter on primitive accumulation, Marx describes in compact sentences the transformation of the property of the immediate producers (peasants, artisans) into capitalist property, and then continues:

"The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless Vandalism, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. *Self-earned private property*, that is based so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others, i.e. on wage-labour.

"As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the labourers are turned into proletarians, their means of labour into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialisation of labour and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers.

"This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the imminent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop on an ever extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this the international character of the capitalist regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and

disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at least reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst as under. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

"The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labour of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation.

This does not re-establish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era, i.e. on co-operation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production.

There is no passage in Marxist Literature where the dialectical presentation of the great historical process is handled in such a masterly manner.

That in the tremendous historical development, we are experiencing the negation of negation, the third stage of the dialectical formula, has already become world-historical reality, for this mankind has, in the first place, to thank Comrades Lenin and Stalin, the two most gifted disciples of Marx and Engels, the only ones who further developed Marxist theory and enriched it by new experience, under the new conditions of the class struggle of the proletariat.

SPANISH REPUBLIC GOES DOWN FIGHTING THE LAST DAYS OF MADRID

By Art Shields

[A. Shields, an American Correspondent of Inter-Continent News Agency, who escaped in a British ship, "Burlington Combe," from the counter revolutionary Casado troops in Madrid and Valencia, from Franco pirate ships on the Mediterranean, and from the fascist authorities in Italy, outlines the story of the betrayal and the last heroic stand of the Spanish Patriots in Madrid.—Ed.]

"Madrid—the heroic capital of Spain, which has become the symbol of the courageous struggle of the Spanish people for their independence and freedom—fell, not as the result of a lost battle, but as the victim of treachery, of a foul stab in the back.

"The working people of the whole world, all of advanced mankind, are with indignation and hatred, with a feeling of the deepest contempt, branding the monstrous traitors and their accomplices.

"Madrid has been surrendered to the

interventionists, to the enemies of the Spanish people. But the blood shed by the true sons and daughters of the heroic Spanish people throbs and will continue to throb in the heart of every toiler, in the heart of every person who hates the oppression of the fascist barbarians." Thus wrote *Pravda* on the surrender of Madrid.

The Treacherous Betrayal

In the week, March 5th to 12th, I saw seven days of proletarian heroism comparable to the Paris Commune.

Colonel *Casado* and Colonel *Mira*, traitor commanders and Franco agents, finally butchered the defenders of Madrid. They massacred the proletarian prisoners with the help of the leaders of the anarchists, Trotskyites, right-wing Socialists, and a section of the middle-class defeatists, who worked with them.

I barely escaped that massacre. Taken prisoner with four other anti-fascist correspondents at Communist headquarters, I escaped from two dull-witted police-men.

"You wouldn't have been shot officially," said an American diplomat, "you would have simply been shot along with hundreds of others."

Casado shot more than 600 when he recaptured the general headquarters. He shot many hundreds of other prisoners at the end of the week.

From my blood-stained cell in the basement of Madrid police headquarters, I saw the soldiers of Negrin led out in batches.

The comrades who occupied the cell before us five, comrades who left bloody rags and "Viva Negrin" inscriptions on the wall, are gone.

Colonel *Barcello*, the Peoples' Commander during the week's street fighting has been executed. Many others too, but many are still alive in hiding, and awaiting new struggles for the liberty to come.

Colonel *Casado*, like Tukhachevsky in the Soviet Union, was a top-flight commander. He was the chief of the Central Army of the Republic, yet he struck the heart of his nation.

Lessons In Blood

History wrote its lessons in blood that week. It taught the workers anew that the fascists use fake revolutionary phrases. Militarists, Trotskyists, and renegade anarchists can talk of "peace" as a sacred word. They talk of peace when they mean death—for Communists, death for all militant democratic forces. They talked of "peace with independence." They meant unconditional surrender to Franco, Mussolini and Hitler, which followed early enough.

The workers learned technical military lessons too. They learned, for instance, that big buildings are natural forces which can be held as long as food, and ammunition continues.

The workers learnt the importance of radio. When *Casado* lost most of the strongholds, he still had the radio stations, telephone and telegraph. The air was filled every minute with his poison. His radio reached and confused millions while the Government's leaflets sent out by couriers reached but tens of thousands.

The Casado-Franco Conspiracy

The Trotskyists have strong stomachs. They showed that on Monday, March 6th, after Colonel *Casado's coup d'etat* when Madrid's dictator, whom they

were supporting, freed 700 fascist prisoners, every fascist, whom the Popular Front had previously arrested was freed and the prisons filled with patriots!

But Monday night Casado's sun seemed setting when his Seventieth Brigade joined the Government forces in the Ministry Building. Monday night and Tuesday, Loyalists from the rear guard, swelled by many ex-Casadoists, swept down the most important Castellano and Alcala streets, which cut a northern triangle in Madrid from the apex, Independence Square. The highways entering Madrid were in the hands of the Government, the Casadoists were isolated within the city except for the possession of three radio stations which gave them the ear of Spain.

The Government seizure of the key, *Jaca* barracks headquarters, enroute to Guadalajara seemed to be sounding the death knell to the revolt.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party was keeping closely in contact with the situation all the time.

On Tuesday, walking three kilometers down Castellano Avenue, I saw government tanks, armoured cars and hundreds of soldiers from the rear guard, not from the front where the patriots were fighting Franco. Firing, which was heavy all night was fading, but bodies were still lying in blood between the Argentine Embassy and the Ministry Buildings, a kilometer apart.

I found the radio studio, off Castellano Street, in the hands of the government, but unfortunately not the stations further away. However, shortly afterwards the most important Union Radio, the largest station, was silenced apparently by loyal forces within. The

station was silenced immediately after its announcement that anyone on the streets was liable to be shot. Other stations continued their poisonous propaganda however.

Returning to Independence Square on Tuesday I saw a strange sight. General Miaja had just deserted the Negrin Government and joined the conspirators as dummy "President" of the Casado Junta. Miaja was gloomily standing between two machine-gun guards while pedestrians passed, neither saluting nor speaking to him. He looked miserable and futile. He fled Madrid that night.

Five Junker tri-motors bombed the Government troops near the Ministry Buildings before I left the avenue. And when I returned, Casado's radio was announcing that the population shouldn't worry, the Republican planes were merely saluting the people of Madrid. This confused many who saw the planes but did not see the bombing.

Meanwhile, Franco's troops made a furious attack on the Government trenches in the Casa del Campo sector of Madrid. The Government forces repelled the assault, captured 40 prisoners and even advanced their positions a short distance into Franco territory. But Franco, accomplished his purpose none-the-less. The strongest concentration of Communist soldiers were in this sector. The attack was designed to keep the patriots at the front, to prevent their sending reinforcements against Casado.

The prisoners frankly stated the purpose of this attack. One high regimental Franco commander whose identification dare not be given voluntarily, came to the Government side with written military plans

showing that Casado and Franco were working together.

Colonel Barcello, Loyalist commander of street fighting issued a communique that night exposing Casado's ties with Franco.

All this while, the Popular Front had not taken troops from the front. They used only assault guards, carbineros and other rear guard forces, as well as armed civilians. While Casado and Mera, on the other hand, stripped every sector front they controlled, of many thousands of troops, regardless of the danger of fascists breaking through.

"Salud! Brave Women of Spain"

I saw spectacles of heroism in street fighting—a lone Loyalist soldier holding deadly positions against traitors; and most heroic of all, girl couriers slipping through the enemy lines with manifestos for the workers and soldiers, and food for the Popular Front forces in the beleaguered buildings. I saw girls carrying food to the Communist Party Building on Serrano Street past pointed machine guns. One girl who guided us, was later imprisoned, and probably shot. She, with a Spanish Communist journalist was with me on Monday night when I was arrested on the streets.

We were released that time on account of the confusion in Casado's new organization of a heterogeneous mass of fascists, Anarchists, etc. We talked our way out that time. My arrest three days later was of a different kind.

I saw these brave girls making bandages in buildings near Independence Square on Tuesday night when a terrific burst of tank and machine-gun fire was heard immediately outside. But how

they laughed when we heard shouts of "Viva Negrin!" outside.

The encouraging thing is that many of these bold, clever girls, as well as many key men and women leaders escaped the massacres at the end of the week and to-day are still working for free Spain which will rise again.

Youth To The Fore

While traitors' bullets splashed blood on Madrid's pavements the week of March 5th to 12th, I saw the distribution by girls and boys of the leaflet of the unified Socialist Youth Movement of Spain. The leaflet, signed by Galiego, National Secretary, and Meson, Provincial Secretary, called for unity against Franco and against the traitors within.

Now Galiego is a martyr of the youth of Spain. His bullet-riddled body was thrown into an unknown grave by the Casado executioners.

Communists Fight to the Last

It was inspiring to see *El Mundo Obrero*, the Communist Party organ and the only pro-Government paper appearing during the Crisis, distributed by armed workers. Armed newsboys in trucks rode past the fusillading Casadoists handing out thousands of copies on the streets. I am bringing one precious torn copy back to America.

The Communist Party was most active during the crisis. The leaders shifted their headquarters constantly. I am happy to say that the most indispensable men escaped the massacres and are directing underground party work today.

On Wednesday the Popular Front forces were still gaining. Passing the enormous stone Bank of Spain, Casado's only fortress on Independence Square, I saw the enemy snipers hiding in the

windows, while the street below was covered with broken masonry from government fire.

I saw thousands of Government troops surrounding other enemy buildings off the broad Castellano Street which bisects the square.

The Loyalists were exultant at the expected victory. The telephone buildings and radio stations were almost captured.

In fact the guards at the Del Norte radio station were negotiating with a group of five commissars promising to yield the station to superior force if tanks and armored cars appeared. But a minimum of such equipment was in the hands of Colonel Barcelo, the Loyalist commander.

Patriotic forces continued concentrating everything possible on the Casa del campo front against the Franco attacks.

Traitor General and False Propaganda

But the traitors within, turned to Franco. With Franco's help they accomplished in Madrid what the Poumist putschists were unable to do in Barcelona in 1937.

While masses of Communists and other pro-Government forces were holding the trenches on Thursday, I saw thousands of enemy reinforcements entering the city from the Guadalajara Army, commanded by Mera, the Anarchist Colonel, and from Estramadura.

Thursday's observation walks on the streets were the most dangerous so far. I picked my way past bodies lying on Alcala and Castellano Streets and on the side streets. Rifle, machine-gun and artillery fire was crackling around as small groups fired from doors at other

groups and larger forces were battling in the major boulevards in the vicinity.

What amazed me as I manoeuvred a corner was the indifference of children to danger. When the Franco air-raid, timed to aid Casado, came amidst my walk I saw children terrifying their mothers by dancing laughingly in the middle of the streets.

Casado's forces meanwhile were gradually cutting through Madrid. On Friday the Loyalist forces were split in two parts. To the right, the Government had a section from Ciberales to the Jaca headquarters outside of the city, and leftward an area from Ciudad lineal to Chaumartin (including the Ministry Buildings).

The Madrid food situation, meanwhile, was most serious. Food organization which the Government had recently taken from the hands of the bureaucratic and bourgeois elements and made efficient was now completely disorganized. Bread was hard to get and the traitor radio propagandists were unscrupulously blaming everything on the "Communists," confusing the civilians.

With the shrinkage of the government areas, the information contacts for myself and the four anti-fascist Aima Agency correspondents shrank likewise. But Friday noon we found a circuitous route open to the National Communist headquarters at 6 Serrano Street.

Our arrest and my escape followed.

The Escape

Awaiting a boat at Valencia I saw how difficult it was for an anti-fascist to escape. Returning from Madrid I found many members of the Communist Party and hundreds of other militants imprisoned.

Refugees arriving on ships from the French camps to fight Franco were arrested on the docks by the Casado police.

I found only three Communists among the 90 passengers in the hold when I boarded the British tramp steamship, *Burlington Combe*, on Saturday, March 18th. I obtained passage at the request of the United States Consul, Wallner.

The voyage was lucky at first. The *midget*, 182 ton, ex-coastwise vessel slipped at night past the guns of the fascist cruiser *Canarias* outside the harbour. Incidentally, Casado's shore batteries did not attempt to score easy hits on the *Canarias* which was in plain sight for days.

We were luckier than Dunbar, correspondent of the London Daily Worker and Schmidt and Muller, American announcers of the "*Voice of Madrid*" radio, whose ship escaped ramming by a cruiser by only three yards the following week.

On Sunday the worst Mediterranean storm in the experience of Captain Elliot rose. The ship riding with high ballast was blown from continent to continent for four days. Water was pouring over the women and children in the hold as the ship was blown from Africa back to Barcelona. It was impossible to keep the ship in course, and the Captain hove to with engines at half-speed to save the dwindling fuel.

Fearing the ship would capsize, the Captain considered entering Barcelona, but the knowledge that some passengers would be shot prompted a bolder course.

The ship lay on its starboard beam much of the time as it was blown westward. Captain Christian Frederick, a Danish ship-master and a representative

of the Non-Intervention Committee aboard, hardly expected the ship to survive.

Meanwhile the galley was awash. The crew and passengers were chewing bully beef biscuits.

The crew gave their bunks to sick children and women. I elung at night to a nine-inch plank high in the engine room, chatting to the anti-fascist engineers, firemen and seamen.

Finally, with only eight shovels of coal in the bunkers the wind eased and the ship anchored off an unknown shore.

In Mussolini's Native Soil!

"Italy!" ejaculated the Captain, as gold-braided policemen came alongside in a skiff manned by three bare-footed oarsmen.

A bare-footed pilot, with only two teeth in his head, guided us to the port, Imperia, alongside the coal wharf.

For six days coal was always coming "tomorrow."

For six days the sailors and I were busy counting the many types of police uniforms: black-shirts, gold sashes, bespangles, eagles, swords of different cut, etc.

We contrasted the resplendent uniforms and the chubby faces of the police with the ragged thin fishermen and other workers.

We were actual prisoners. The police seized our passports and interrogated us repeatedly. "Are you sure you are not a Mason?" they asked me. They snorted, "Possibly you are a Communist," at the sight of my press cards.

They shouted, "Away with the Jew!" at Major Max Solomon, hero of Spain, scarred with 104 wounds.

While the Captain was lured below they kidnapped three women and one child and took them ashore. They have not been heard of since.

There was much bullying of the passengers, but I saw two policemen retreat before a tongue lashing from Placeros Castellanos, Galician writer, whose nine-year old boy and husband, Victor Fraiz, Communist and Secretary of the Galician Labor Federation, were executed.

The Fascist 'Gifts'

Each noon the black-shirts ladled out bowls of macaroni to the passengers. "The fascists' gift to the Spaniards" said the newspaper *Giornale DiGenova*, but Captain Elliott paid heavily for it.

For six days we watched an old worker sorting out lumps of coal from the dust on the wharf. The lumps were hauled away and the dust stowed in the ship. The Captain paid 15 shillings more than the French rate for highgrade coal, for this dust. The mild second engineer, H. Gurka, used strong language trying to make steam later.

We arrived at Sete France on the 12th day of the voyage in time to see Franco's flag raised on the interned Spanish freighters. I saw Major Solomon and other refugees awaiting their trans-

fer to concentration camps, possibly for return to Spain and execution."

The world must not let this happen.

Despite the pledges of the Minister of Interior, Albert Sarraut, the French authorities in certain districts of France are striving to force the Spanish refugees into Franco Spain against their will.

This is established by the publication this morning of a letter from the Chief of Police of the Flisieux region to the Mayor of Villerssurmer, where there are many refugees. The letter said, "In cases where the refugees say they do not want to return to Spain, it will be necessary to convince them that as soon as an order for their departure arrives it must be executed."

"The fate of many thousands of men, women and children is in your hands", they tell President Lebrun.

Parallel action by American democrats, it is thought here, might exercise a decisive influence even at this time.

In one month I saw Spain betrayed. I saw Franco's flag rise, but I also saw the courage and intelligence of the Spanish people, the splendid quality of the leadership of the Communist Party and other democratic forces. **I am confident Spain will rise again, free and independent.**

REAL SITUATION IN JAPAN

By W. Leitner

Growing economic decline, hundreds of thousands of artisans and small business men without the possibility of existence, unemployment in all branches of industry which are not engaged in war work, rising prices and growing in-

debtedness of the peasants characterise the situation of the Japanese people after eighteen months of war in China.

The utilisation of the productive forces for the purposes of destruction and the boycott movement throughout the

world, have led to a decline of foreign trade, which in turn is leading to an increasingly perceptible shortage of raw materials—except, of course, for the conduct of the war. The following episodes, taken from the Japanese Press, illustrate better than any statistics the life of the Japanese people.

Already at the beginning of the winter the heating of dwellings with oil stoves was forbidden by the police. The reason? Shortage of paraffin. Attempts to use coal as domestic fuel encounter difficulties, as there is also coal shortage. A serious epidemic of influenza raged in Tokyo during the past few weeks, and in the middle of January claimed over 40 victims a day. This figure was given by the official Domei Agency itself. The chief of the department for combating epidemics at the Tokyo Police Prefecture, has issued the following comforting words to the sufferers: So long as winter lasts, little can be done. For the epidemic is most serious in the poor districts of Tokyo, the inhabitants of which are unable to heat their dwellings. In the same breath this gentleman advises the poor of Tokyo, to hang mosquito nets over their beds. This, he says, will at least help to keep the draught off somewhat. Owing to the severe frost there were hundreds of water pipe bursts every day in Tokyo. It was next to impossible to get the pipes repaired as there was a lack of the necessary piping, and in order to obtain it one had first to send in a long and detailed request to the authorities. The moloch of war is swallowing up all the metal.

The shortage of petrol is having a crippling effect on private transport. Only 15 per cent. of the former quantity of petrol is now available for the small

proprietor or firm owning one car, and even this quantity is to be still further reduced. The chronic shortage of petrol provides splendid opportunities for swindlers. In the middle of January, the *Domei Agency* published a report of an affair for which it would be hard to find a parallel. A swindler, who some years ago claimed to be able to convert straw into cotton, in the presence of high officers of the Japanese navy, performed, experiments, the purpose of which he alleged was to convert water into petrol. The officers were present at three experiments. It was only on the third occasion—when it was discovered by a minor official that the “inventor”, whose “experiments” consisted in meddling about in water with some mysterious tubes, attempted, by a conjuring trick, to substitute a tube filled with petrol for one filled with water—that the Japanese naval officers became finally convinced that, unfortunately, it is not such an easy matter to transform water into petrol.

When already some months ago, the supply of raw materials for the Japanese industry, especially the textile industry, was held up, it was ordered that only fabrics made of artificial fibre or with a considerable admixture of artificial fibre, would be permitted for consumption within the country. Fabrics made of artificial fibre are naturally dearer and wear out more quickly. The consequence was, a sudden flourishing of illicit trading in cotton and woolen cloth. The Japanese Press tried to console the population regarding the shortage of clothing material, by declaring that it is not so dangerous and the chief thing is that supplies of food are assured in any case. But recently even the Japanese Press has been unable to hide its anxiety

on account of the situation in agriculture. The calling up of hundreds of thousands of young peasants into the army and the compulsory requisitioning of horses are already having a serious effect, especially as Japanese agriculture is based almost entirely on human and animal labour. Added to this, there is the growing shortage of artificial fertilisers. This is the reason why the government authorities are endeavouring by every possible means to restrict the consumption of food. With this object in view, there has been set up an Institute for Dietetics, which is carrying out large-scale experiments which remind one very much of similar experiments in Germany during the war and under the Nazi dictatorship. The Japanese Institute for Dietetics set out to invent its own "Calory index," shall have the advantage over American apparatuses of a similar kind, in that it enables one to arrive at the desired result. With the aid of this instrument, the professors of the institute have already established that the consumption of food can be reduced by one-fourth. Instead of 2,400 calories 1,800 and less suffice, in the worst case, say the professors, 1,000 calories per head per day suffice.

The bureaucracy is striving its utmost by means of official propaganda to stifle the longing for peace existing among the masses of the population. It is rather unfortunate, therefore, when those who are conducting this propaganda prove to be common swindlers and defrauders. The chairman of a voluntary propaganda organisation in Tokyo had to be arrested because he had set up fraudulent gambling machines in sixty cafes, which brought him a handsome profit. The bureaucracy was so horrified by this case that

they did not venture to publish the name of this prominent citizen in the press.

The regime is also making every effort to banish "dangerous thoughts" once and for all. When dozens of college professors, students and workers were arrested last year the police triumphed over the alleged extermination of ideas of peace among the population. But the effect did not last long, for, by the middle of January the Japanese Press reported that in all prefectures the organisation for combating "dangerous thoughts" was to be further developed and extended. The authorities are to be kept informed, by a comprehensive network of spies, regarding all movements among the masses of the people, while at the same time the police are taking an active part in war propaganda. *Baron Araki*, Minister for Education, revealed by his actions that dangerous thoughts have been anything but exterminated in the imperial universities. He had a meeting with six presidents of the imperial universities, the purpose of which was to have removed from the high school curriculum any subject or theme which might in any way become dangerous to the existing regime. Above all, these obscurantists complained that far too much time was taken up in the universities with studying the culture and institutions of other countries. Araki wishes to counter-balance instructions on the modern world by laying still stronger emphasis on the old "traditions" of the Samurai.

The police also fear the strolling players, wandering minstrels, artists, story-tellers, who come in contact with the broad masses of the people. They

assume that the people of these professions are particularly to be feared as conveyors of dangerous thoughts. A new police order has therefore been issued which renders it incumbent on these wandering artists to obtain an official passport. Of course, these passes will only be issued to such persons as the police deem to be perfectly safe.

A significant case is that of the well-known professor *Kawai*. Some years ago he wrote a number of books with a social-liberal tendency. The police instituted proceedings against this professor because his books are not in harmony with the doctrines of the military clique. The professor was threatened with imprisonment; he had already

been removed from the university. What particularly incensed the police was that he showed no inclination to conceal his views. Moreover, colleges of the Tokyo University supported him by maintaining that the books in question are really not dangerous. Professor *Kawai* is in fact an anti-Marxist sociologist who boasts of having worked actively against the penetration of Communism among the students. It speaks volumes when the military and police regime forage in books which have appeared years ago in order to discover bearers of dangerous thoughts.

All the above cited facts express the growing uneasiness and uncertainty existing among the ruling circles of Japan.

TRIPURI—A CLASS APPROACH

By N. Dutta Mazumdar

[We print below a thesis by Niharendra Dutta Mazumdar and his group. It has been decisively rejected by the Indian Communists as embodying not merely deviations but repudiation of the fundamentals of Communism. The answer to this thesis by the Communist leaders of India is also published in this issue.—*Ed.*]

Tripuri has set the Left Thinking

Various attempts have been made to assess the swift-moving events of Tripuri. Some have seen in it a victory, others a set-back of the forces against the Federal Plan. Some are dissatisfied with the suspension of democracy within the Congress, *others are satisfied* with the resolutions. There are so many opinions as there are groups of Lefts.

Classes in the National Struggle

The Three decisive leading factors in Indian politics are (1) Imperialism (2)

Indian capitalism (3) the Working class. The character of the national struggle depends on the relative strength of these three classes.

Many Socialists have begun to think that this type of analysis, since it is based on class forces in Indian politics, is sectarian. To them there are only two groups in India—(1) Imperialists and (2) anti-Imperialists. There are others who would object to the mention of the working class apart from the bourgeoisie, on the plea that it would go

counter to the idea of United Front. It is only necessary to mention, in reply to these objections, that the conception of United anti-Imperialist Front, while it paves the way for a United struggle of rival classes against a common enemy, does not do away with the conception of class society. Classes in society—even in Indian society—remain, and their alignment still determines the course of event.

Shifting balance of Classes

It is wrong to conceive the relative strength and the degree of antagonism between classes as something fixed and unalterable. A glance at China shows this. The Chinese Revolution found the whole people united against feudalism, backed by foreign imperialist interests. In 1927, the relationship of classes was so altered that Chiang Kai-Shek, the head of China's republic, representing the Chinese bourgeois interests, ranged himself against the working class, against the poor peasantry. The Chinese bourgeoisie was growing in power, the danger of aggression from imperialists was remote, so Chiang concentrated on stamping out the Reds, the internal obstacle to the unhindered growth of Chinese capitalism.

The economic crisis, which began earlier in Japan than elsewhere, forced Japanese imperialism to prepare for aggression. While the Chinese bourgeoisie weakened the Chinese people by internecine warfare, Japan grew in might. The first act of aggression occurred in 1931. Manchuria, Jehol and North China were seized bit by bit, while Chiang still carried on his anti-Red drive. By 1937, however, the position of the classes was radically altered from what it was a decade ago. Japanese

imperialism was out to seize the whole of China, and the only factor which provided effective resistance was the Red Army, the arm of the Chinese working class. The Chinese bourgeoisie was faced with the only alternative to extinction—in acquiescing to the urgent demands of the United Front put forward by the Reds. In course of a few weeks, all China fought Japanese imperialism as one man.

Balance of Classes in India

The class relationship are not so transparent in India, because up till now the working class has not asserted itself as an independent class force in the national politics. The political struggle of the working class is being waged by the radical petty bourgeoisie led by declassed Socialist intellectuals. Nevertheless, the ideology of struggle developed by this class unmistakably shows that while it lacks the direct imprint of the Indian working class, yet it owes its right to the ideology of the international working class.

The big upheaval of 1857 was India's first war of independence. Even as early as that, there were classes in the struggle, the dying old feudalism and a ruined peasantry, between whom war continued to be waged. The year 1905-09 saw the next big nationalist wave. Its clear bourgeois character did not prevent the whole people from supporting it nor did the bourgeoisie think of alienating any particular class from this struggle. The year 1919 again found the bourgeoisie at the helm. The years of bourgeois co-operation with imperialism in the war not only did not produce any transfer of power to the hands of the bourgeoisie but actually brought forth some worthless reforms, which would leave the

bourgeoisie again at the mercy of imperialist interests. The dream of imperialism, "industrialising" India, was only a dream, or at any rate a temporary war measure.

Class alignments changed, war time co-operation was replaced by discontent. The general post-war crisis found the country ready to be led into struggle. The withdrawal of war-time favours by imperialism was rightly regarded by the Indian bourgeoisie as an act of imperialist aggression. A struggle continued until 1924.

Again the relationship of classes changed. Hostilities on the mass front changed into a slow gathering of strength, until 1928 signalled the opening of another era of struggles.

From a study of these events, as well as from a knowledge of the class aims of the Indian social elements, it is possible to deduce certain general conclusions. We see that the relative strength of the classes is highly unstable and the equilibrium continually shifts in favour of one or the other.

Classes and their behaviour

1. When imperialism is powerful and aggressive, the bourgeoisie weak, and working class struggles grow in might, a favourable situation exists for the united popular imperialist aggression.

2. When the bourgeoisie is powerful and relatively immune from an immediate attack from imperialism, the consolidation of its class power and leadership becomes urgent and this aim hinders the growth of a united front.

3. When the danger exists of an overthrow of bourgeois power, the colonial bourgeoisie, like any other bourgeoisie, seeks the help of even its rival

to crush down the growth of working class power.

How swiftly these different equilibrium can be disturbed is seen from the study of India in recent years.

The surrender of 1930-32 struggle found the bourgeoisie at the lowest ebb of power. If there was any force ascendant in Indian politics at the period, it was the force of Socialism. The working class had kept aloof from the struggle of 1930-32, partly due to the situation created by the bourgeoisie, and partly due to the failure of the workers' leadership to overcome these difficulties. When at the end of the 1930-32 struggle, the bourgeoisie was busy rebuilding its shattered economic strength and imperialism its slave constitution, the only live force in the country was the working class with whom the socialist leadership was seeking to establish a more organised contact. The peasantry too was developing under a socialist leadership. The year 1933-34 saw the growth of the Labour Party, in Bengal; 1934 saw the textile strike in Bombay, and the Dock strike in Bengal. The radical intellectuals saw the need of forming a left party, styled the Congress Socialist Party.

The Bourgeoisie in a Corner

The year 1935 saw the passing of the Government of India Act. The Indian bourgeoisie felt itself wedged between the impending imperialist attack and a rising temper of the working class, peasant and national revolutionary movement. It thus adopted the only course open to itself to regain its strength—namely the tactic of united front. This was achieved by Jawaharlal, the erstwhile left President in the Lucknow Congress of 1936.

Within a year Congress became so powerful that the limited franchise, with which Imperialism wished to keep the Indian people in subjection, itself, brought seven Congress Ministries to power.

Meanwhile, the Italo-Abyssinian War generated a conflict between two sections of the British bourgeoisie; the Spanish conflict and the general weakening of reaction in Europe temporarily diverted British attention from India. The imminence of a British offensive on India was averted. In this breathing space the Indian bourgeoisie began to consolidate its class position, this time by the use of the home ministry of seven provinces.

Bourgeoisie Influence Leapt up in India

By the beginning of 1939, imperialism too, retrieved its lost position in Europe by the economic enslavement of France and rearmament and in India by the use of communal strategy, which threatens to disturb "bourgeois law and order" from a sinister reactionary angle.

Shortlived Stalemate position

We are faced with an alarmingly delicate and unstable equilibrium in India to-day. One step to the left, and the bourgeoisie might ignite the powder heap of agrarian revolution, in the wake of which might come other revolutions. One demand too many and the bourgeoisie might face the combined forces of imperialist repression and communal thuggery.

In this situation, the bourgeoisie is not willing to press for such demands as may not be fulfilled without a mass struggle. Gandhiji has suggested that a mass struggle might depart from the

principles of truth and non-violence. The acceptance of Federation is a *certainty*, because that is the one tactic, by which, in reward for putting the country to the war chariot of imperialism, the bourgeoisie can use and obtain the home ministry of India to consolidate its power further. The bourgeoisie stands to-day at the peak of power, at the point most suitable for a good bargain. To-morrow this class relationship may be shifted that the terms will be dictated by imperialism. So the class instinct of the bourgeoisie is prompting it to accept the offer at the best price.

Tripuri

We are now in a position to solve the Tripuri tangle.

The central figure of the Tripuri Congress is Subhas. Whom does he represent?

Nothing has been consistent in the career of Subhas Chandra Bose as his stubborn resistance to the Federal Plan. Without the precision of Marxist, but with the instinct of a national revolutionary, he realised that the line must be drawn somewhere beyond which the present leadership should not be allowed to drift. He drew the line at the Federal Plan.

Until Subhas' victory nobody quite realised how matters stood. The tactic of Congress leadership so far has been to point to some vague revolutionary objective, win the support of the people and turn the struggle to its own class advantage. Thus wrecking the Constitution became using the constitution. The promise of an economic programme for the masses was out flanked by dodges into a stubborn opposition to the class organisations of workers and peasants. But Subhas' definite plan,

that the imposition of the Federation would be the signal for a struggle, became as embarrassing to the bourgeoisie as it was to imperialism. It was something definite, incapable of being turned and twisted to its very opposite.

Thus unconsciously Subhas gave the lead which corresponded to the interests of masses, who would gain nothing but poverty and loss of civil liberty through the introduction of the Federal Plan and War. Instinctively Subhas mentioned the struggles where his plan would not meet, with surest support, the workers' and peasants' struggles.

The Right wing had no alternative lead to offer. They neither wanted to tell the Congress ranks to shoulder arms against Federation nor had they the courage to tell them not to fight. They wanted flexibility of action, so that no struggle was precipitated, and at the same time no opportunities were lost for bargaining at the right movement. Therefore the struggle that raged at Tripuri was not Subhas' lead versus some other lead, but Subhas' pledge to definite action versus Gandhian flexibility, as to method, aim and time of action. The latter course is the political content of Pant's resolution described by Dutta Mazumdar as the "sting in the tail".

Masses versus Bourgeoisie

The urgent need of the bourgeoisie to get the Congress to adopt this latter course gave Tripuri's struggle a sharp and outspoken character. To the dullest it was apparent that the struggle was between the outspoken aim of the millions of the Indian people and the secret aim of the Indian bourgeoisie, between the fighting genuine democracy of the masses and the dictatorship of diplomatic bourgeoisie.

An illusion of the Left

There are many amongst us who still harbour the illusion that the bourgeoisie is going to play a revolutionary role in the struggle immediately ahead of us. We should ask them to examine the divergent methods of Subhas and the Gandhites. Subhas wants to bind the Congress to pledge and take the people into confidence. These are dictated by the need of a fight, an open mass struggle. For a mass struggle, the leadership must be democratic and aims must be specified. If the bourgeoisie had fighting in mind, it would have taken the masses into confidence if only to do the fighting for the bourgeois cause. But it does not do so. It is clear that the methods and forms of "struggle" which the bourgeoisie has in mind do not involve a mass effort. The whole bargaining and negotiation would be conducted through the diplomatic channel.

This was the essence of Tripuri. It was not a question of personal attacks and counter-attacks. It was bourgeois leadership by dictatorial means *vs.* democratic leadership for open struggle with specified aims.

It is a pity of pities that while the one class-aim of the bourgeoisie kept the whole Gandhist wing united and determined, the only force which could form the hard, leading core of the Left—the working class—was yet undeveloped. The varied interests of the classes represented in the Left created a dangerous political indecision. In the absence of a leader, the Left unity broke down. Divorced from organic contact with the working class, many of the socialists and communist leaders fell into the trap of Gandhian propaganda and totally misled

the class significance of Tripuri. They saw in the struggles of Tripuri an uncouth scramble between the Right and the Left. Congress, they urged, was on the forge of a split. Heal the split! Unite the Congress leadership!

The questions were quite wrongly posed. The problem was not congress unity, but the saving of Congress democracy. Because the question of democracy was relegated to the background the false issue of mechanical unity dictated their actions. Communists pandered to C.S.P. weaknesses, C.S.P. pandered to Jawaharlal's befogged understanding. The Right confused the real issue by surrendering to the blackmail of a split which would never have taken place, not even if Pant resolution was thrown out. In the absence of real leadership, the Left howled and abused everybody.

Prospects

Tripuri is an advance from the point of view of bourgeois strategy but a step backward from the point of view of national struggle. The Rashtrapathi's victory opened a great possibility for Left consolidation but owing to lack of far sighted leadership that possibility is to a great loss. A period of renewed suppression of civil liberties is ahead, Congress Ministry now strengthened by Pant resolution would act with deter-

mination in putting down workers' and peasants' struggles. The possibility of an all national offensive succeeding is unlikely, because such an offensive will surely meet with stubborn resistance from the bourgeoisie ministries. What then are we to do?

To consolidate our power we must throw all our forces on the mass front, and to defend each mass struggle however small and local in character with our initiative. Our efforts, to bring Congress into the struggle must be exercised to the utmost. But *we must Jealously guard the initiative*. Separate struggles should be co-ordinated. Cadres thrown up in the struggles must be recruited to the left parties and trained to become leaders.

Congress recruitment should be vigorously continued, but recruiting propaganda should be intelligent and politically correct. All illusions as to the role of the Indian bourgeoisie in the coming struggle must be strictly withheld from circulation. United front must not be talked of as something already achieved, but something which can be achieved when the bourgeoisie is compelled to accept it, that is to say when the working class and its allies can and the bourgeoisie cannot resist imperialist aggression.

LENINISM REPUDIATED

[A REPLY TO N. D. MAZUMDAR]

"This meeting notes with deep concern the thoroughly un-Marxist line of the "National Front" as advocated in its recent issues and expresses its horror and condemnation against such line that has brought Marxists to shame and caused in-

calculable damage to the cause of Marxism by doing what our Comrades did at Tripuri."

This astounding statement occurs in a resolution proposed by Dutta Mazumdar, who is the General Secretary of the

Bengal Labour Party. It is a serious and a significant statement which announces the break between that Party and the Communists. The comrades who originally started the Bengal Labour Party in 1932 had, in the beginning, serious political differences with the Communists. These differences expressed themselves in the Trade Union field, in the field of building up a Working Class Party and its function and form and in the sphere of the National Struggle. Through joint discussions and work these differences were narrowed down and unity achieved in 1936. Closer organisational bonds, it was hoped, would cement political unity. These expectations have been belied. The same old differences have come to a head in a new form. Dutta Mazumdar and his associates over-confident of the correctness of the "Marxist class-approach" began defying organisational discipline. They have thus placed themselves outside the pale of organisational unity. The *Bengal Labour Party* has once again gone back to its old line, which, in the present critical period, spells disruption. Communists who had joined this Party had to resign and sever all connection with it.

It has become now imperative to make a thorough analysis of the present political deviations of the Labour Party Comrades and to show how these deviations arise out of their original errors and how they are leading them now to play the role of disruptors of socialist as well as national unity. In this article we shall devote ourselves to their stand at Tripuri and after. We are separately printing the documents in which they work out a "theoretical and fundamental" justification for their line. Those documents especially the essay, *Tripuri—a class approach*, make our task easy.

They enable us to see how deviations in practice arise directly from *their rejection of the fundamentals of the line of the International Communist movement*, from their rejection of Lenin issue itself.

What is the "Marxist-class" line of Dutta Mazumdar as against the alleged "un-marxist" line of the *National Front*? Let us put estimations against estimations on each important issue during the last six months.

The Presidential Election and After

On the victory of Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose at the presidential election Dutta Mazumdar wrote :

"Here is the real issue—that is to drive the compromisers out of the leadership of the Congress. Who are compromisers? The seven signatories to the statement against Bose..."

He then goes on "to recommend to the re-elected President not to extend this courtesy. of "nominating a majority of well known Right Wingers to the working Committee" (*Hindustan Standard* of 30-1-39).

The *National Front* interpreted the victory of Bose as a rank and file vote for struggle and called for unity within the Congress as the supreme condition of making this struggle possible in the immediate future.

"Subhas gave the call for maintaining the unity of the Congress, for launching a decisive offensive against imperialism.....The victory of Subhas—it is a vote for forward move, for struggle against the Federation, for the unity of the Congress" (*National Front*, 5-2-39).

At Tripuri

In his speeches on the Pant resolution Dutta Mazumdar, instead of stressing the issue of unity, came out with

provocative attack on the Right wing comparing them with the counter-revolutionary generals who rebelled against Republican Spain. These speeches have been criticised in the *National Front*. (19-3-39)

After Tripuri

Dutta Mazumdar takes advantage of the "Neutrality" decision by the C.S.P. on the Pant resolution and launched disruptive attack on the C. S. P. as a whole. (His statement in the *Hindustan-Standard* of 17-3-39). The *National Front*, on the other hand, while criticising the neutrality stand of the C.S.P., launched a positive campaign against those who were attempting to use this as a handle to disrupt the C.S.P. Thus while the *National Front* is for saving the C.S.P. and building Socialist unity Dutta Mazumdar is for disrupting the same.

At Calcutta A. I. C. C.

At the Calcutta Session of the A. I. C. C. Dutta Mazumdar played the same disruptive role. He wanted Subhas Babu to withdraw the resignation, not on the basis of joint Working Committee as suggested by Pandit Nehru, but, he wanted Bose to proceed on the assumption that the Pant resolution was out of the way, as it could not be implemented, and thus form a Working Committee of his own choice. "This interpretation meant complete repudiation of the stand the communists had decided to take." (*National Front*, 14-5-39).

The Labour Party and The Forward Block

Finally we have the Labour Party's statement on the Forward Bloc.

In the statement nowhere the positive tasks of Left unity, its

political basis, are formulated. That the Left has to unite in order to maintain the unity of the Congress is not stated. In view of the fact that some of the foremost leaders of the Forward Bloc, including Sjt. Bose, have been talking of the "need" for split, such omission in the Labour Party's statement is all the more serious. When one remembers Dutta Mazumdar's demand made on the eve of the Presidential election that the "disruptors" should be thrown out of the Working Committee, when one reads his "class" analysis of Tripuri, one is irresistibly driven to the conclusion that this omission is not accidental but *deliberate*.

An Alternative Line

These deviations of Dutta Mazumdar and his comrades in the Bengal Labour Party are not *occasional lapses*. They arise from an *alternative line*, a line which is a repudiation of the United National Front. This line has been presented to us by Dutta Mazumdar himself as "the only Marxist and class line" in his article "Tripuri—A class approach", which is printed elsewhere. It is quite clear from the formulations made in this article that our differences with Dutta Mazumdar are not merely one of political estimation of the situation which has developed *after Tripuri*. The differences relate to *basic conception* of Marxism-Leninism itself. That is why Dutta Mazumdar attacks our Marxism and proceeds to give us some elementary lessons in classes and class-struggle before he expounds his solution of the Tripuri Tangle.

The first elementary lesson which Dutta Mazumdar gives us is this: "Classes in society—even in Indian society—remain, and their alignment still determines

the course of events." Very good. As an application of this he drives home another lesson: "Do not over-simplify the Indian problem by imagining that there are only two groups in India (1) Imperialists and (2) Anti-Imperialists." Herein we have the real key to the understanding of the "theoretical" frame-work Dutta Mazumdar creates for unravelling the Tripuri problem.

The Basic Mistake

Put briefly and bluntly, Dutta Mazumdar starts by **denying the fundamental principle of Lenin's theory of colonial revolutions, viz., that the basic class-relation which determines social and political developments in the colonies is the conflict between Foreign imperialism on the one hand and the colonial people on the other.** What is the main impediment in the colonies, to the development of the bourgeois democratic revolution? Of course, the economic and political domination of foreign monopoly capital—which obstructs industrialisation, which reduces the subject country to a nation of peasant slaves, which allies itself with the most reactionary feudal classes and strangulates all political liberty and suppresses democratic rights. Imperialism is the *main* enemy against which the interests of the overwhelming majority of the Colonial people are ranged. **The failure to see this as the main class conflict in the colonial society leads Dutta Mazumdar to pose the problem of the national struggle in India as mainly of a conflict between the Indian bourgeoisie and the proletariat.**

This fundamentally un-Leninistic approach is at the root of most of his deviations. He forgets that the *central*

task in India today is similar to that which faced the Russian Bolsheviks before the overthrow of Czarism. In this phase of the Revolution the main Leninist slogan was "against the main enemy—Czarist autocracy". The task of the proletariat was to unify the people against the Czar and isolate the compromising bourgeois influence from the peoples' revolution. Similarly in India uniting the entire people against the main enemy—i.e., Imperialism—becomes the *central* task of the proletariat till imperialism is overthrown. In other words our basic slogan of building the Anti-Imperialist Peoples' Front holds good for the whole epoch of the colonial revolution and is determined *not* by the struggle of the rival classes *within the national front* but by the basic cleavage between Imperialism and the colonial people.

"History" of Chinese Revolution

In the case of Datta Mazumdar, *wrong theory leads him on to wrong history and to wrong politics.* To prove his thesis he takes the example of China and asks: "Why did Chiang Kai-Shek, the representative of the Chinese bourgeoisie, fight bitterly against the Chinese working class and the peasantry in 1927?" He gives the patently wrong answer—"Because these classes were an internal obstacle to the unhindered growth of Chinese capitalism"! To assert that in 1927 the chief obstacle to the "growth of Chinese capitalism" was the proletariat and the peasantry, is anything but Marxism. Had foreign imperialism ceased to exist in China? Not in the least. On the other hand, threatened by the development of the peoples' anti-imperialist revolution, the imperialists were trying to save their monopoly in

China, by using the Chinese bourgeoisie as a tool to split the united front. *Chiang Kai-Shek did not crush the people's revolution in 1927 in the interest of the development of Chinese capitalism, but for saving the imperialist monopoly in China.* Chinese capitalism got the crumbs in the bargain. The break in the united front in China in 1927 was not inevitable, not dictated by the growing needs of Chinese capitalism. It came about, not because of the strength of the Chinese bourgeoisie but because of the weakness of the Chinese Communists—their inability to counteract the splitting tactics of Imperialism and the compromising bourgeoisie. This is how this period of the Chinese revolution is evaluated by the Communist International. Let Dutta Mazumdar re-read the portion on China in **Piatnisky's report World Communists in Action** (May 1930).

Then again look at his explanation of why united front became possible in 1937. After the great crisis and the rise of fascist Germany there was a new alignment of inter-imperial contradictions on the Pacific. This resulted in an unchecked Japanese aggression against China. True the Chinese bourgeoisie was faced with a far greater danger than in 1927. But is it not a fact that in the beginning Chiang Kai-Shek displayed capitulatory tendencies towards Japan? And who checked them? Was it not the victorious fight which the Chinese communists conducted for united struggle against Japan, in Kuomintang China itself, which turned the popular tide in favour of the communist proposals? It was *proletarian initiative for unity* which healed the breach and once again united China against fascist Japanese imperialism.

To Dutta Mazumdar united front in the colonies is a *manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie* which it adopts to suit its own needs. That is how he falsifies Chinese revolutionary history. That is how he vulgarises the landmarks and the development of the Indian struggle for freedom. This is how he works out his strange mechanical thumbs rule "when is united front possible and permissible?"

"Class Analysis" of Indian National Movement

We have stated that Dutta Mazumdar denies that the basic struggle in India, as in other colonies, is the struggle between imperialism and the people. He would, of course, say that that is not the case. But let us see how he "analyses" the events of the last few years and how he interprets the tactic of united front.

"The surrender of 1930-32 found the *bourgeoisie at the lowest ebb of power.*" If there was any force ascendant in Indian politics it was the force of socialism..."

"1935 saw the passing of the Government of India Act.....It (the Indian bourgeoisie) adopted the *only tactic open to itself to regain its strength—viz., the tactic of United Front.* This was achieved by Jawaharlal." (our italics).

As a result of the bourgeoisie adopting this tactic, "within a year the Congress became so powerful" that it was able to form Ministries in seven provinces. "*Bourgeois influence leapt up in India.*" (Italics in the article).

The most striking thing in this "analysis" is that there is no evaluation of the strength of the Anti-Imperialist movement during each period, not a word about the strength of the popular forces vis-a-vis imperialism in 1932, in 1936 and in 1939.

According to Dutta Mazumdar (1) the main feature of 1932 was that "the bourgeoisie was at the lowest ebb of power" and "forces of socialism were ascendant," (2) while the main feature of today is that "bourgeoisie influence has leapt up."

Is this reading correct? *It is entirely false.*

In 1932 *imperialism* was triumphant. The *people's movement* had been defeated. In as much as the movement was under bourgeois leadership, it is correct to say that the national bourgeoisie was in a weak position, but to say that and *that alone* is to falsify history. *The strong position of imperialism and the weak position of the popular forces was the main feature of this period.*

As a result of the growing disillusionment of the masses with reformist leadership, as a result of the increasing swing of the masses to the Left (what Dutta Mazumdar calls "ascendancy of socialism") and as a result of the intensified offensive of imperialism against the *entire* people, a situation was created in which the strategy of united front could be successfully applied *by the proletariat* to build the *broadest united front against imperialism.*

In the defeat of the Civil Disobedience movement of 1932, Dutta Mazumdar sees *only the weakening of the bourgeoisie.* In the growing influence of the Congress, in the resounding success of the Congress at the Elections, in the phenomenal increase of Congress membership from 600,000 to 5,000,000, Dutta Mazumdar sees *not primarily the growing strength of the people, the rising tide of mass militancy, the widespread awakening of even the backward masses but only "the consolidation" of bourgeois*

power and the "leaping up" of "bourgeois influence."

No wonder in comparison with the period (1932) when "bourgeoisie was at the lowest ebb of power" and "socialism was ascendant," Dutta Mazumdar considers the present period when bourgeois "influence has leapt up" as a *set back.* No wonder, he fails to see what tremendous *advance* the popular forces have registered. No wonder, he fails to evolve tactics which, *on the basis of this advance,* can further unify and strengthen the national movement and take it forward.

Do we, when making this criticism of Dutta Mazumdar's anti Leninist line, deny the role of classes *within* the national front? Do we say that it is unimportant as to what relative influence and strength the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have with the national front? Not in the least. Whether the increased strength of the national forces would be used for smashing imperialist rule by means of revolution, or whether this strength would be used for bargaining with imperialism, would be determined by the strength of the proletariat within the national front, by its capacity to mobilise the people under its hegemony and isolate the compromisers. Hence the importance of the strategy of united front, *both* as a means of strengthening the national movement as a whole and also for increasingly establishing the hegemony of the proletariat, within the national front.

United Front—"A Manoeuvre Of the Bourgeoisie"

In Dutta Mazumdar's "analysis" United Front has been described as the "tactic of the bourgeoisie" to "regain its strength." This is Dutta Mazumdar's reading of the Seventh Congress of the

Communist International. Pt. Nehru in advocating the tactic of united front acted *not as a national leader, who was reflecting within the national leadership the new urge of the masses that were moving to the left, towards struggle*, but as the "tactician" of the bourgeoisie that wanted "to regain strength"! This interpretation of the strategy of United Front is quite in line with Dutta Mazumdar's repudiation of the basic concept of colonial revolutionary movement.

What Dutta Mazumdar repudiates is therefore not merely the "un-marxist" line of the "National Front." He repudiates the line of the 7th Congress. He repudiates the line of the 6th Congress. He repudiates the basic teachings of Marx and Lenin.

United Front is not a manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie to serve its ends, but the strategy of the proletariat for unifying the entire people against the main enemy, imperialism. As long as imperialism is not overthrown this class strategy holds good. As long as the danger of the popular revolution has not become acute, immediate and menacing, the colonial bourgeoisie does not go over to the camp of imperialism. In the meanwhile, what the proletariat has to do is to cope with the vacillations of the bourgeoisie in the camp of the National Front. The specific nature of the united front depends upon the specific nature of these vacillations in the given period. In any case during this period the basic conflict is not between the colonial bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The issue is always how to isolate the compromising tendency of the bourgeoisie, how to neutralise it, how to win the majority of the people for the consistently revolutionary struggle against imperialism.

The political struggle in India appears to Dutta Mazumdar as a sort of dual between the bourgeoisie and the masses, played against the background of a changing international situation. He does not see the continuous growth of the ever unifying and broadening struggle of the people, against imperialism, as the essence. He does not see, that the working class and peasant mass upsurge of 1934-36 and the growth of radicalism arose directly out of the experience of the mass struggle of 1930-32. *It was not a question of Socialism asserting itself after the ignoble surrender of bourgeois nationalism. It was the continuation of the sectional democratic struggles under proletarian initiative. In fact it was this growth of proletarian and peasant struggles, it was the growing disillusionment with bourgeois reformism, which became the basis of the policy of the united national front in the period of the Assembly elections and after. The popularisation of the concept of United Front—the acceptance of workers' and peasants' demands in the Congress programme, the verbal recognition to Trade Unions and Kisan Sabhas—all these arise in 1937 not out of the need of the bourgeoisie, but because of the emergence of the new force, the proletariat coming into action politically and taking initiative for building united front against imperialism.*

Because Dutta Mazumdar misses this central point he arrives at a fundamentally wrong conclusion, when he comes to analyse recent events: The United Front in 1936-37, as signified by the election manifesto, by the Faizpur resolutions, and the Wardha programme (1937), and by the emergence of Pt. Nehru as a protagonist of the united front with

labour and kisan organisations—all this was a bourgeois manoeuvre. As soon as Ministries were won and the bourgeoisie had strengthened itself its need for united front was over. It has now launched an offensive against the workers and peasants and is preparing for a compromise with imperialism. Hence the conclusion that the period of united front is over. We have now to fight the bourgeoisie first. This stands absurd but this is exactly where Dutta Mazumdar's argument—united front, a bourgeois manoeuvre—leads him to.

How does Dutta Mazumdar estimate the political situation on the eve of Tripuri? "By the beginning of 1939 imperialism too, retrieved its lost position in Europe by the economic enslavement of France and rearmament and in India by the use of communal strategy which threatens to disturb 'bourgeois' law and order from a sinister angle." Is this a correct characterisation of the position of imperialism *vis-a-vis* the Indian people today? It is not. The reality is that British Imperialism caught in the contradictions of its pro-fascist policy is faced with the need for gigantic war preparations, the economic load of which it wants to shift on to the backs of its colonies. This means greater political and economic aggression against the Indian people, (the war amendment to Government of India Act, anti-recruitment propaganda bill, the Indo-British Pact, intervention in the states and so on.) But this is not all. There is a contradiction between the economic and political needs of British imperialism. While the economic conflict between imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie is increasing, the exigency of the war situation demands a political conciliation. It is equally clear, however, that

it will try to get this political conciliation at its price. That is why it is exerting political pressure on the bourgeoisie.

"Acceptance of Federation—A Certainty"

What is the position of the bourgeois leadership in this situation? Its record during the past eighteen months has been one of continually yielding to the political pressure from imperialism and from the anti-national vested interests. Look at its record in the Congress ministries, their attitude towards Labour and Kisan legislations, their growing anti-democratic tendencies. Look at the capitulatory attitude of the National leadership on the issue of the States' Peoples' struggles. Look at the effort to narrow down the base of the Congress and drive out the Left under the guise of "purification." Look at their resistance to launching a nation-wide struggle. All this is true. But does this, therefore, warrant the following estimation on the eve of Tripuri. "*The acceptance of Federation is a certainty, because that is the only tactic by which in reward for tying the country to the war-chariot of imperialism the bourgeoisie can obtain and use the home ministry of India to consolidate its power further. The bourgeoisie stands to-day at the peak of power, at the point most suitable for good bargain. Tomorrow this class relationship may be so shifted that the terms will be dictated by imperialism, so the class instinct of the bourgeoisie is prompting it to accept the offer at the best price.*" (Our italics).

"Class Significance" of Tripuri

The bourgeoisie wanted to accept Federation. The masses wanted rejection of Federation. "The struggle was between genuine democracy of the

masses and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." Bourgeois leadership *vs.* democratic leadership" was the issue at Tripuri. This was the "class significance" of Tripuri.

"Unity" *vs.* "Democracy"

Is this not very similar to the good old theory of Roy—"alternative leadership?" The task before the left at Tripuri was to "throw out the protters and splitters and replace them by leaders from the fire of struggle." To Roy it was a question of replacing a set of reactionary petty bourgeois "Tacobins." For him the bourgeoisie is already in the camp of counter-revolution and the proletariat is not mature enough to be of any political significance. So the whole struggle for alternative leadership has to unfold itself within the organisational confines of the Congress. "Get Left Working Committee by an organisational *coup* and we march forward to struggle and victory." That is the Royist line. For Dutta Mazumdar the issue was between the counter-revolutionary bourgeois leadership *vs.* the revolutionary proletariat which was for the moment being represented by Subhas Bose—"the true representative of the National revolutionary intelligentsia." *But the line proposed was essentially the same.* "The problem at Tripuri was not unity but the saving of Congress democracy."

Was the slogan of fight for united leadership and united struggle capitulatory? On the contrary we maintain that to raise the slogan of an alternative leadership was just the way of playing into the hands of those who wanted to sabotage the struggle. The Right wing leaders knew that the majority of the rank and file had voted for struggle and that it indicated the measure of the

discontent against the policy of drift followed by them. But they also knew that this discontent was still vague and the basis of its leadership was not yet knocked out. That is why it decided to reverse the result of the Presidential election by making a straight bid for sole leadership. It was right wing which had first raised the bogey of "alternative leadership" and split in order to blackmail and browbeat the delegates who had supported Bose. They wanted to sidetrack the issue of struggle and unity by raising the issue of leadership in the form of "either we or they." This was the essence of the Pant resolution. The Point was to side-track the side-trackers not by playing their game but by exposing it. This could be done only by sharply posing the slogan of unity for struggle and of united leadership against the disruptive slogan of "homogeneous cabinet" i.e., exclusive leadership of the Gandhian wing. If the entire left including the elected President had stood by this slogan and concentrated the fire of attack on the slogan of exclusive leadership as a slogan of disunity and of the continuation of drift, the battle might have been won.

Dutta Mazumdar vehemently protests against his line being dubbed Royist. True, he did not plead directly for an alternative leadership in his speeches. But he compared the Right wing leaders to Franco and the counter revolutionary generals of Spain. He did not come out with a positive appeal for united leadership. On the other hand all his arguments were focussed on the democratic right of the elected President to chose his own Cabinet.

"The chief thing stressed in Dutta Mazumdar's stand was not ideology and organisational set-up but for fusion of

local struggles inside the Congress. Struggle was to be enthroned in the Working Committee, too. *Plotters and splitters were to be thrown out and their places were to be taken by leaders from the fire of struggles*—in the fields, factories and states, no matter whether they are Rights or Lefts. To confuse this with Royism is blindness.”—(A letter from an associate of Dutta Mazumdar.)

What does this mean? Dutta Mazumdar wanted “plotters and splitters” to be thrown out and their places in the Working Committee to be taken “by leaders from the fire of struggle.” The “Plotters and splitters” could only mean the “seven signatories” i.e., the Right wing leaders. This according to the version of his supporters was his stand at Tripuri.

Dutta Mazumdar's “Line”

On the eve of Bose's election, Dutta Mazumdar had advocated the expulsion of Right wingers from the Working Committee. (His statement quoted earlier). The Labour Party conference that met a month afterwards *unanimously* adopted a resolution on the tasks before Tripuri a resolution which *inter alia* states: “United struggle under united leadership is the surest guarantee of victory. All slogans and tactics therefore...that demand the ousting of Right wingers...from the Working Committee must be considered disruptive.”

By this resolution therefore the Bengal Labour Party without a single dissentient voice definitely repudiated the line advocated by Dutta Mazumdar on the eve of the Presidential Election. It lay down the line for Tripuri. Yet at Tripuri, Dutta Mazumdar (according to his own supporters) demanded the expulsion of “plotters and splitters” i.e.,

went back to his “old-line”—a line which the Labour Party conference had described as “disruptive.” Yet he has the hardihood to issue a statement subsequent to the resignation of the Communists from the Labour Party, in which he denied that he and his supporters were following a line contrary to that adopted by the Labour Party at its conference.

Left Working Committee

But, apart from that, what does the demand that the Working Committee should be formed with “leaders from struggle—fields, factories and States”—mean? Since not *one* of the existing members of the Working Committee was in “struggle”, this could only mean demand for the formation of a brand new Working Committee with leaders from the Trade Union Congress and Kisan Sabha. Or if exception was made in the case of Subhas and Nehru, only these two or three to be retained and the rest to be picked up “from the line of struggle” i.e., from Working Class and Peasant fronts. (No matter whether they are from Right or Left was meaningless since the Right wing leaders were *not* in struggle). **From a Left Working Committee establish an alternative leadership—this is the meaning of Dutta Mazumdar's slogan.**

“The Role of the Proletariat”

Undoubtedly Dutta Mazumdar's stand is not the same as Roy. “The proletariat stand at the core of my stand” says Dutta Mazumdar. Very good. But how does it act? Does it act as the unifier of the existing struggles and raise them to the political level? Does the proletariat and its party in Dutta Mazumdar's scheme of things take the *political* initiative for implementing the present

decisions and programme of the Congress, and thus create the atmosphere, in which the launching of an all-India struggle becomes inevitable? Does the proletariat take the initiative in taking the rank and file of the Congress with it, in rejuvenating and building its organisational strength? "The way in which the proletariat," says Dutta Mazumdar, "has to defend each mass struggle, however small and local in character it may be, is with our initiative... We must jealously guard the initiative. Cadres thrown up in struggles must be recruited to left parties—Congress recruitment should be vigorously continued but recruiting propaganda should be intelligent and politically correct—united front can be achieved when the bourgeoisie is compelled to accept it."

What do these slogans amount to? **Let the proletariat conduct partial struggles against the bourgeoisie. That is the way to bring it down. Then united front would be possible.** The central task of the proletariat—of uniting the people against imperialism, of acting as the Champion of the democratic movement, of supporting every struggle against imperialism, no matter by which class that struggle is initiated, of coming forward against the attack on imperialism, no matter against which class that attack is directed, of acting on *national political* issues, of raising partial struggles to the *political* plane—is not even formulated by Dutta Mazumdar. All that the proletariat has to do is to "jealously guard the initiative." Taken together with his formulation of the tasks of the proletariat (in which the most important thing that the proletariat has to do is to strengthen its partial struggles) this "guarding of initiative" can only mean isolating the

proletariat from the national struggle, from the Congress, from the people as a whole. This is *political emasculation* of the Working Class, isolating it from its allies and divorcing it from politics. The independence and militancy of working class visualised by Dutta Mazumdar is not even elementary politics. It is at best militant Trade Unionism, and in a sense sheer economism.

This militant economism of Dutta Mazumdar and the Bengal Labour Party arises directly from their wrong "class-analysis" of the problems of national struggle in India. If you repudiate the central Leninist thesis, that the main task in the present phase of the revolution in colonial countries is to unite all the anti-imperialist forces against the main enemy and to neutralise the vacillations of the bourgeoisie and to develop the revolutionary fight—you cannot but land in economism. You miss the central political task—the fight against foreign imperialism. It is therefore natural that the Bengal Labour Party misses the importance of the National Demand resolution, however imperfect, for developing the political struggle and tempo of the masses. This resolution is viewed only as a bourgeois manoeuvre and not as something which the leadership had to pass and which they are now quietly sabotaging. It is surprising that the Resolution of the Bengal Labour Party takes almost the same stand which Sjt. Sarat Bose took at Tripuri and which we condemned as opportunistic. "The National Demand Resolution as advocated by Jawaharlal and adopted by the Congress also aimed at opening the gate of compromise and preventing struggle. Camouflaged by clever language the resolution advocated compromise with

imperialism". This formulation is breathtaking, to say the least.

To sum up, all the main deviations of Dutta Mazumdar and the Bengal Labour Party, which we catalogued in the beginning of this article, arise out of his central error of viewing U. N. F. as a bourgeois manoeuvre and out of his repudiation of the central political task of the proletariat in the colonies viz., isolating the main enemy, imperialism. The result is that the Bengal Labour Party relapses back into its old economist rut. The result is two-

fold. On the one hand it results in the sectarian repudiation of Socialist unity and national unity; on the other hand it results in left nationalist glorification of the Forward Bloc. Dutta Mazumdar's line becomes a defence of disruption in the name of Marxism.

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NO PLAN AGAINST IMPERIALISM PLANNED OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE LEFT

"This is an age of national reconstruction in India. One power is departing; another is taking its place. The British have realised that they have to part with power in this country and they have made a beginning..."

**Sardar Patel, at Gujerat
Vidyapith, on June, 12th.**

"If Federation comes we shall go to the Federal Legislature and Capture power at the Centre. That would lead to the suspension of the Constitution..."

**Sjt. Satyamurthi, at a
meeting held in Bombay,
on May 5th.**

"The Crisis Deepens" was our comment on the Calcutta session of the A.I.C.C. We visualised intensification of the offensive against the Left, against Kisan and Trade Union movements, against every form of mass struggle; and, as the organisational counter-part of this offensive, intensification of the effort to reduce the A.I.C.C. into a packed body of Rightists, to reduce the Congress itself into an organisational subservient to the will of the "homogeneous" Working Committee. The drive against the Left, we characterised, as the inevitable result of the policy of drift pursued by our national leadership—a policy based on hopes of a "favourable" compromise with imperialism, based on illusions of "capture of power without struggle." This policy if pursued would lead to all-round disintegration and pre-

cipitate retreats on all fronts, would sharpen the conflict within the Congress and would defeat disruption. This was our reading.

Banning Struggle

The developments since Calcutta, that culminated in the Bombay session of the A.I.C.C., have fully borne out our analysis, have proved the correctness of our reading. That the formation of the homogeneous Working Committee was but the beginning of a concerted attack against the forces of struggle has been brought out so sharply, that none, who would not deliberately shut his eyes, can yet fail to read the real meaning of these developments. **Bombay has virtually banned participation of Congressmen in any mass struggle if that brings them, as it would inevitably do, in conflict with Provincial Governments. Bombay has banned open criticism of Congress Ministries by Provincial Congress Committees and has practically reduced the latter to a position of subordination to the former, thereby completely reversing the relation that ought to exist between peoples' organisation and its representatives in the Legislature and the Government. Bombay has attempted to raise barrier between the Congress and the new strata of masses that are awakening to political life under the impact of the growing Kisan and Labour movements. All these constitute fresh**

attacks on the mass movement, on the Left, that stands today at the head of the movement, on the internal democracy of the Congress, on its inherent power and right of control over its Ministries—in brief, on the Congress and the people.

Imperialist War Plans

Grave issues were before the nation while the A.I.C.C. met. Imperialist plan to convert India into Britain's war base for the entire East were being carried out with relentless thoroughness and speed. Talks had taken place between the heads of the Armies in Egypt and India for concerted action during War. For the co-ordination of Anglo-French strategy in the Far East a Conference was held at Singapore on June 22nd and this Conference was attended by several representatives of the British Armed forces in India including the Air Officer Commanding the R.A.F. Production at the Cordite Factory in Aruvankadu (Nilgiris) and at the Ishapore Rifle Factory were being speeded up. Two consignments of War planes had arrived in India since April and more were to arrive soon. *A mighty war machine was being established in India—a machine that would be used for crushing any attempt to resist imperialist plans to drag India into war, to crush any popular movement against Imperialism.*

What 'New Technique' Means ?

Other problems were there equally grave and serious, problems demanding immediate attention. Suspension of the States' Peoples' movement had been followed by ruthless terrorism. At the Conference held in Bombay, only two weeks before the A. I. C. C. session, the representatives of the princes had made it abundantly clear

that there would be no weakening of their offensive against the people, that they were not prepared to introduce anything except petty administrative "reforms" in their states, that they would accept no "dictation from outside." "Unabashed gangsterism", as the Working Committee statement called it, had been resorted to by the Princes. [Forces of disruption were being used to divide the ranks of the people, communal passion was being systematically fanned. Gandhiji's 'New Technique'—the technique of surrender and retreat—even had not softened the attitude of the Princes, but had, on the contrary, stiffened it. A movement that had attained phenomenal strength and was fast undermining the strongest pillar of imperialism, a movement that was bringing 80 million of our people in the political arena, thus opening up (for the first time in our history) the perspective of a nation-wide struggle against imperialism, was in the danger of being disrupted and crushed in isolation.

No Plan against Imperialism

It is symptomatic of the line of our national leadership that although the Working Committee held prolonged meetings on the eve of and during the A. I. C. C. session, on neither of these subjects—War and States—did it frame any resolution, did it give any lead. It did not adopt one resolution which takes us even a step towards struggle against imperialism. It did not have a word to say about the Congress Ministers who attended the Home Ministers' Conference at Simla where they had virtually agreed to form "Common Front" with non-Congress Governments for suppressing communal propaganda and also "*incitement to violence of any kind whatsoever.*" It did not think it necessary to pull up the

U. P. Ministry for issuing a Confidential Circular to the District authorities recommending action against communalist and also against communists under Sec. 144, 161 and 153 A. It did not condemn the lathi charges and arrests of 160 Kisans at Munagala in Madras Presidency, unheard of brutalities committed on the strikers of Behariji Mills in Patna and the arrest of 70 of them. It refused to consider the serious situation that had developed in the Frontier Province as a result of the forcible eviction of peasants from their land and had already resulted in the arrest of over 200. It did not warn the Textile Mill owners who have openly declared their intention of introducing wage cut in defiance of the recommendations made by Congress Government Enquiry Committee whose findings they had been forced to accept.

Planned offensive against the Left

Did then the working Committee do nothing? On the Contrary, it did a lot. It adopted a number of resolutions. It recommended changes in the Congress Constitution. *But the most significant thing is that on every important issue the lead given by the Working Committee was such as would facilitate the pursuance of the present line of retreat before imperialism and vested interests, as would intensify the offensive against the struggles of Workers and peasants and the people in general. And the organisational changes recommended were such, as would make the Congress itself a tame instrument for carrying out this policy. This, in a nutshell, was the meaning of the resolutions of the Working Committee. It was planned offensive against the Left.*

The basis

The entire line of the present Working Committee is based on hopes of compro-

mise with imperialism, hopes that, faced with international and other difficulties, imperialism would be forced to grant concessions. It has no plan against imperialism. It follows the line of drift as far as imperialism is concerned. But as the forces of struggle grow, the pursuance of this line becomes more and more difficult. Hence arises the need for-offensive against the Left. Constitutional drift and planned offensive against the left are counterparts of the same policy.

At Bombay this offensive against the Left was to be launched with full vigour. The A. I. C. C. was to be transformed into a packed body entirely controlled by the Right wing. Participation in Working Class and Peasant struggles and their organisations were to be banned. Congress Ministries were to become all-powerful bodies standing above the Congress and dominating it. No wonder the Bombay session became a session of conflict between the Right and the Left, no wonder the basic conflict, struggle against imperialism, was relegated to the background.

First Success of Left Unity.

The attempt to abolish proportional representation in the A. I. C. C. and to invest the Working Committee with dictatorial powers, to ban at its discretion the participation of members of the Congress Committees in "any other" organisation was given up at the eleventh hour. This did not, as subsequent resolutions show, indicate any change of attitude towards the Left, towards mass organisations of workers and peasants and their struggles. It was a purely tactical device to neutralise the opposition of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and to prevent the consolidation of the left, before the

Right wing has fully consolidated its forces. A frontal attack against the Left in the form recommended by the Constitutional Sub-Committee was thought *premature*, especially after the division on Sjt. Satyamurthi's resolution (seeking to make one year membership a precondition for Congress members to have the right to vote) in which even Jawaharlal voted against the Right, and the Left secured 42 % of the votes—perhaps the highest ever recorded in the A. I. C. C. But that offensive has only been stayed. It would be launched again in the near future. Consistently with its political line, the Right cannot give up attempts to squeeze out the Left and all supporters of struggle, from the Congress organisations.

Consolidation of the Right

Thus the united Left has already succeeded in defeating to a certain extent, the disruptive policy of the present leadership. That this unity, if consolidated and properly guided, can ultimately turn the scale and win the entire Congress for the policy of struggle can be doubted by only those who lack confidence in the masses, who do not realise the extent and depth of discontent with the existing policy. It is precisely because the present leadership does recognise it, it is precisely because it is conscious of its weakening position, that determined efforts were made at Bombay to consolidate the Right wing and win over the centrist element by playing on their loyalty to Gandhiji, by Ministerial pressure on lukewarm supporters. Regular meetings of the A. I. C. C. members who in the past supported the present leadership were held and every effort was made to constitute a solid bloc of its supporters in the A. I. C. C.

The fact that after the first day's session the votes polled by the Left fell appreciably was due, to a great extent, to this factor.

Defeat attempts of disruption

That should not discourage any genuine socialist and communist, any genuine supporter of a struggle. To think that it is because of Left consolidation that the Right wing has consolidated is to ignore realities. It is the *political* need of the Right that drives it towards consolidating its general influence, which is still immense into a solid organised bloc, and that need arises *because of the growing discontent against its policy*. The lesson of Bombay is not that unity of the left is disruptive as it divides the Congress but that such unity is essential in order to defeat the existing policy and *save the Congress from disruption*. It is more than ever necessary to realise this, particularly because already attempts are being made by the Right wing leadership to disrupt the growing unity of the Left—a unity in which it sees the most serious obstacle to its compromising line—by detaching a section of the Left from the Consolidation. That attempt must be defeated.

Consolidation of the Left

It was on the eve of the A. I. C. C. Session that the representatives of the Congress Socialists, the Forward Bloc, the Communists, the Royists and the Kisan Sabha leaders met and agreed to form a Consolidation Committee consisting of representatives of the parties and groups of the Left. Decisions would be arrived at by mutual agreement and the consolidation Committee would function as the United Executive of the entire Left. It was a step of tremendous importance and significance and what it

could achieve was seen even on the floor of the A. I. C. C. when the Left acted with greater Unity than in any other Session before.

Tasks before the United Left

But that is not enough. The fact that the Bombay Session was reduced to a Session of conflict between the Left and the Right must not cloud the vision of the Left and make it forget its real tasks. If Left Unity is viewed as a consolidation of elements that for same reason or other are opposed to the present leadership then the inevitable tendency would be towards opportunist alliances; the Left consolidation would confine its task to that of securing unity in the A. I. C. C. and Congress Sessions, enrolling Congress members in the same way as the Right Wing leaders do, moving 'Left' resolutions in the Congress Committees. The masses of Congressmen will not come in the picture. Struggle against the policy of drift would be fought verbally or would degenerate into factional fight against the Right.

The United Left has to move the masses of Congressmen, convince them of the dangers of the present policy of drift, win them over for the policy of struggle. If the United Left acts on a national political plane, organises *mass* actions, *mass* campaigns, *mass* opposition to every concrete manifestation of the policy of compromise e. g. the "New Technique" in States, the anti-struggle resolution of the Bombay A. I. C. C. draws the masses of Congressmen who are today mostly apathetic, into *political activity* through these campaigns and actions, then and then only will it be able to win the majority of Congressmen against the policy of compromise and for the policy struggle and thus move the

Congress forward. For carrying out these tasks the Consolidation Committee has to act as the unifier of the existing mass movement and raise them to national political plane. Left Unity in the A. I. C. C. alone would not take us far. In the Provinces, in the Districts in the Tehsils, Committees have to be formed of opponents of drift, of supporters of struggle—no matter what their political affiliations are. And these committees must function as broadest organs of struggle, coordinate the activities of the Left on all fronts in their respective localities and act under the political guidance of the All India Consolidation Committee towards a single objective—that of ending drift and launching nation-wide struggle. If unity of the supporters of struggle on this political basis, and on such a broad scale is achieved, millions of Congressmen who are today passive, would be drawn in and the pre-requisites created for nation-wide advance.

Achieve Socialist Unity

That is the type of Left Unity that the situation demands. Such unity, in order to be really effective must have a socialist core—a core that can be supplied only by a single **United Socialist Party**. Only the United Socialist Party shall be able to politically guide the United Left, prevent it from becoming a factional consolidation against the Right prevent the discontent with the existing policy of the Right from flowing into disruptive channels. Hence it is that for ending the policy of drift, for consolidating the Left, socialist unity acquires tremendous importance. Hence it is that the most urgent task before socialists and communists is to work towards the establishment of a single United

Party of Socialism—a party based on the principles of Marxism—Leninism, completely free from the ideological and political influence of the bourgeoisie—the united revolutionary Party of the Indian Proletariat. To this task the

Socialists and communists have to set themselves. In the formation and strengthening of such a Party lies the guarantee of unity and of advance against imperialist rule in the near future.

Book Review

“New Indian Literature”

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—C. S. S.

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