

true content of the original Marxian theory as a theoretical form of an independent proletarian and strictly socialist movement was, in fact, no longer represented by either side. This is certainly true with regard to the so-called "legal Marxists" who in their "scientific" exposition of the objective aspect of the Marxist doctrine boasted of a particularly unadulterated "purity", but abundantly made up for that doctrinal righteousness by utterly abandoning all practical consequences of the Marxist principles which might possibly pass beyond the restricted bourgeois goals. Nor was the whole of the revolutionary Marxian theory represented by other currents which during that period sought to combine in one form or another a recognition of the transitory necessity of capitalist development in Russia with an anticipated ultimate struggle against the future conditions of society which were to be created by that very development. Here belongs the above-mentioned learned populist writer Nikolai-on, the Russian translator of *Das Kapital*, who in the early 90's, under the direct influence of the Marxian doctrine, made the transition from the orthodox populist belief in the absolute *impossibility of capitalism in Russia to the Marxistically revised populist theory of the impossibility of a normal and organic development of capitalism in Russia.* Here belongs too, the lusty materialistic opponent of populist "idealism", the orthodox Marxist Lenin, and his followers who in the later period, after their break with the Western-minded "Mensheviks" claimed to be in their theory as well as in their practice the only true inheritors of the entire revolutionary contents of Marx's theory as revived and restituted in the doctrine of *Bolshevist Marxism.*

When from our present vantage point reached by historical experience we look back at the heated theoretical disputes of that earlier phase there seems to be a quite obvious relationship between the populist theory of the "impossibility of a normal and organic development of capitalism in Russia" (as represented by the Marxian Narodnik Nikolai-on and combated at the time by the Marxists of all shades, the "legal" as well as the "revolutionary", the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks) on one side, and the two mutually opposed theories which in a recent phase of the development of Russian Marxism faced each other in the form of a ruling "*Stalinism*" and an oppositional "*Trotskyism.*" Paradoxically enough, both the prevailing "national-socialist" theory of Stalin as to the possibility of building up socialism in one country, and the apparently diametrically opposed "internationalist" thesis, set up by Trotsky, of the inevitability, of a "permanent" revolution—that is, of a revolution passing beyond the bourgeois revolutionary goals simultaneously on the Russian and on the European (or the world-wide) scale—rest on the common ideological basis of a neo-Narodnik belief in the absence or impossibility of a "normal and organic" development of capitalism in Russia.

Both Trotsky and Stalin base their versions of the Marxist ideology on the authority of Lenin. Indeed, even the most orthodox of the orthodox Marxists who had fought a bitter struggle both against the Narodnikism of Nikolai-on and against the Parvus-Trotskyist theory of the "permanent revolution" before October 1917 and who, in the same way, had most consistently opposed after October the then prevailing tendency to glorify the meager achievements of the later so-called "War-Communism" of 1918-1920, concluded that life-long fight for critical-revolutionary realism by upholding at a decisive moment the neo-populist concept of a home-made Russian socialism against the actually prevailing conditions. Within a few weeks those who had opposed the socialistic idealization of the first years and who at the first announcement of the NEP of 1921 had still quite soberly declared this "new economic policy of a worker's and peasant's State" to be a necessary step backward from the further going attempts of War-Communism, discovered the socialistic nature of State capitalism and a cooperatively tinged yet essentially bourgeois economy. Thus, it was not the Leninist epigone Stalin but the orthodox Marxist Lenin who, at that historical turning-point of the revolutionary development when the hitherto undecided practical tendencies of the Russian Revolution were "seriously and for a long time" directed to the restoration of a non-socialistic economy, at the same time added what he then deemed to be an indispensable ideological supplement to that final restriction of its practical aims. It was the orthodox Marxist Lenin who in opposition to all his earlier declarations first set up the new Marxist myth of the inherently socialist character of the Soviet State and of the thereby basically guaranteed possibility of a complete realization of socialist society in an isolated Soviet Russia.

This degeneration of the Marxian doctrine to a mere ideological justification of what in its actual tendency is a capitalist State and thus, inevitably, a State based on the suppression of the progressive revolutionary movement of the proletarian class, closes the first phase of the history of the Marxist ideology in Russia. This is at the same time the only phase during which the development of Marxism in Russia seems to show an independent character. Yet it should be pointed out that from a more comprehensive view-point, in spite of appearances and of many real differences caused by the specific conditions prevailing at different times in different countries, the historical development of *Russian Marxism* (inclusive of its last Leninist and Stalinist stages) is essentially the same as that of so-called *Western (or Social Democratic) Marxism* of which it really was and still is an integrating, though at present outwardly detached component. Just as *Russia* never was the unique and holy country as dreamed by the Pan Slavists, and *Bolshevism* never was that crude and backward form of a pseudo-Marxist theory corresponding to the primitive conditions

of the tsarist regime as it was represented by the would-be refined Marxists of England, France, and Germany, so the *bourgeois degeneration of Marxism in Russian today* is in no way essentially different from the outcome of the series of ideological transformations which during the war and post-war periods and, even more visibly, after the ultimate annihilation of all former Marxist strongholds by the unopposed advent of Fascism and Nazism, befell the various currents of so-called Western Marxism. Just as the "national socialism" of Herr Hitler and the "corporative state" of Mussolini vie with the "Marxism" of Stalin in an attempt to invade, by the use of a pseudo-socialist ideology, the very brains and souls of their workers as well as their physical and social existence, so does the "democratic" regime of a People's Front government presided by the "Marxist" Leon Blum or, for that matter, by Mr. Chautemps himself, differ from the present-day Soviet state not in substance, but only by a less efficient exploitation of the Marxist ideology. Less than at any previous time, does Marxism today serve as a theoretical weapon in an independent struggle of the proletariat, for the proletariat and by the proletariat. A l so-called "Marxist" parties, both theoretically and in their actual practice, appear deeply engaged in contributing, as minor partners of the leading bourgeois protagonists, their modest share to the solution of the problem which the American "Marxist", L. B. Boudin, quite recently called "the greatest problem in Marxism, — our relation to the internal struggles of capitalist society."

I. h.

THE SIMPLE AND THE COMPLEX

Simple concepts are necessary at first to make a scientific reflection possible. When analyzing complex, coherent conditions one must, at the outset, avoid everything that may unnecessarily complicate the situation. Science is inconceivable without abstraction. Or, we can say with Liebermann: to understand is to omit. In other words, to comprehend the essential, it is necessary to exclude the unessential. How does natural science proceed in this respect? An example from physics may elucidate the subject. The law of the pendulum says that the period of oscillation of a so-called "mathematical pendulum" is dependent only upon its length and the acceleration due to gravity at the respective geographical location, provided that the angle of displacement of the pendulum does not exceed 5 degrees.

An abundance of abstractions! In reality, such a thing as "mathematical pendulum" does not exist; it is nothing but a scientific construction — namely, a point mass suspended by a weightless thread. There exists no point mass that is limitless in expansive force, neither is there a "weightless" thread. The "mathematical pendulum" is a mere theoretical structure, a fiction. We must ask then, if the law of the pendulum is based upon fictitious assumptions, of what value could it possibly be? The answer is, it all depends on the right application. Every real (physical) pendulum — requiring, besides, consideration of the air-resistance — could be conceived of numerous

mathematical pendulae, and the period of oscillation could be figured out mathematically, based upon the said simple law of the pendulum.

The same scientific principle is applied in Marxism: starting with simplified assumptions, factors more and more complex enter into consideration which were at the beginning arbitrarily eliminated. Marxism starts, so to speak, with a mathematical pendulum, which means that it regards capitalist economy as an isolated process: without the existence of non-capitalist regions, without modification through foreign trade, without capital export, etc. It is viewing reality "as if", comparatively speaking, it sought to arrive at the law of the pendulum. We know, of course, that present-day economy does not solely consist of capitalists and workers; that commodities do not sell at their value — the value based upon the socially necessary labor time — and that the value of money must not be taken as constant. And thus it is obvious for every scientific thinker that with these fictitious assumptions one is going away from empirical reality. However, every simplified supposition will have to be subsequently corrected, taking into consideration the at first neglected real factors. This procedure will bring investigations step by step nearer to and in conformity with the complex concrete reality (see Henryk Grossmann "Das Akkumulations — und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems", Leipzig 1929, Verlag C. L. Hirschfeld).

Now we can understand why Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I — which may be considered the first stage of abstractions — was followed by a second and third volume. To analyze more clearly and arrive gradually at a thorough understanding of the various forces underlying our complex social system was the purpose of these additions. The apparent discovery of contradictions between the various volumes of *Capital* by many Marx critics can be explained only by their unscientific attitude. These apparent "discoveries" remind very much of the apparent contradictions between a mathematical and a physical pendulum. It is obvious that such "contradictions" are inherent in every scientific system; they imply various stages of abstractions, nothing else. But, exactly for this reason, it was to be expected that the academicians should have had a full understanding of the Marxian theories, had they not been afraid of the political consequences incumbent in Marxism.

H.

LIVING MARXISM

announces among other articles in issues to follow:

GERMANY AND THE COMING WAR — RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY — MARXIAN IDEOLOGY IN WESTERN EUROPE — SCIENCE AND PROLETARIAT — THE MASSES AND THE "VANGUARD" — NEW ASPECTS OF IMPERIALISM — COMMUNIST PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION — THE SOUTH: TOWARDS A NEW CIVIL WAR — ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNEMPLOYED — THE MEANING OF STATE CAPITALISM — ECONOMICS AFTER MARX — COLLECTIVIZATION IN SPAIN — THE UNIONS AND THE WORKERS — THE FARMERS IN PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY — THE QUESTIONS OF THE PACIFIC.

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WHAT CAN THE UNEMPLOYED DO?

THE previous issue of this magazine expressed the view that the return of what the satisfied in society call "normal unemployment" can no longer be expected, that large-scale unemployment and its accompanying misery is here to stay despite temporary reductions of the unemployed figures through public work measures and war. We rejected the popular slogans demanding work for the unemployed, since we cannot conceive of their fulfillment in ways other than through greater miseries as were previously experienced by the workers. Under the present conditions of a deepening depression, the misery of the unemployed will take on once more the appearance and proportions already witnessed at the low point of the years 1931-33. To keep from starving, unemployed were then pressed into all forms of action. If the trend is not excluded by an early outbreak of the coming war, which would change all perspectives made on the assumption that "peace" will endure somewhat longer, it is to be expected that once more will the unemployed be forced into action of their own to safeguard their miserable existence.

Only once in American history before 1929 has the "interest" in unemployment been comparable to that existing since then; namely, in the depression period at the beginning of the world war. However, this "interest", caused by the unrest and action of the unemployed was again forgotten in the long period of "prosperity" nourished by the World War. Before 1929 the unemployed had no possibility of altering the prevailing attitude in society, which, in the words of President Hoover, saw in the unemployment problem "a sporadic and irregular phenomenon which merited only a sporadic and irregular control". Their minority situation reduced them to an object of christian charity. Under the pressure of the ever increasing scope of that phenomenon, that is, under the pressure of the unemployed, however, it soon became impossible to take the matter so lightly, and recourse was necessary to more than temporary relief measures. The economic stabilization which came about after the crisis had reached a certain level enabled and facilitated a "better regulation" of the social measures bound up with unemployment, and this process was still further promoted by the accelerated rate of advance in the centralization of economic power urged by political pressure.

Though because of this process situations have changed as regards the unemployment problem, it is to be expected that the force of tradition will induce the unemployed workers, despite the experiences of the past, to repeat their previous activities.

And though this repetition of already familiar methods may have today an entirely different effect because of the changed conditions, the question remains open whether this effect will be more fruitful now than before, or be of even less significance. It must be asked further if those traditional measures are possible at all, and if not, what will or must be applied instead of them? In short, the questions of what the unemployed may do and what they can do have to be reinvestigated in recognition of the changed conditions.

Such an investigation is limited in many respects. However logical and correct our analysis may sound, still it cannot be regarded as more than a general outline, unable to serve for specific purposes at particular moments in the unemployed struggle within the different territories of the United States. Specific plans must unfortunately always be left to the moment of action and to the needs of the changing situations in the course of struggle. No one is able to know in advance all the possible occurrences within the struggle. Since no one can conceive the whole of society in which the struggle takes place, he cannot foresee all the details of which it consists. International, national and local implications, conscious and spontaneous actions of this, the other, or all groups, here, there, and everywhere, may change within the daily struggle any situation, although all this may alter nothing of the "long run" factors of history. But the unemployed struggle, a life and death question of today and tomorrow, cannot be based solely on "long run" factors in history. Decisions have to be changed at particular moments, and this calls for self-initiative, spontaneous shifts, and careful modifications of tactics and propaganda. However, though we recognize all this, still it remains true that the more realistic the conceivable general outline is, and the better the history of previous struggles is known, and the more eventualities of the near future are foreseen, however roughly, the better and more effective will be the activity in each particular situation that calls for spontaneous satisfaction of the momentary needs.

To answer the question as to what the unemployed can do, we therefore have to deal with the past, the present, and the future conditions related to this question. Such an answer cannot be given in one issue of this magazine. We are forced to break this article into sections appearing in different issues. Although each section has a certain independence, the inner connection of the series should not be overlooked.

Unemployment and the Labor Movement In American History

Unemployment has accompanied the entire American industrial development, and to only a somewhat lesser degree in the days of pioneer activity. It is true that the scourge was

frequently somewhat mitigated by the westward procession, but the participants in that movement came mostly from the farms; in spite of poor living conditions, it was only in rare cases that the industrial workers accepted Horace Greely's advice. In old chronicles and forgotten literature, there are frequent references to urban unemployment. Thus for example *Niles' Register* of August 1819 writes: "There are 20,000 persons daily seeking work in Philadelphia, in New York 10,000 able-bodied men are wandering the streets, in Baltimore there may be about 10,000 persons in unsteady employment, etc." The improvement of the situation after the depression year of 1819 was soon followed by new waves of distress. The labor market waxed and waned with the business cycles. "Thousands of industrious mechanics who never before solicited alms", wrote the *New York Times* in 1829, "were brought to the humiliating conditions of applying for assistance, and with tears on their manly cheeks confessed their inability to provide food or clothing for their families". Similar reports, often accompanied by unemployed figures which range in the hundreds of thousands, are found in innumerable accounts of the various years of depression in American economic history. The deeper and the more persistent the depression, the greater the prominence of the unemployment problem.

Unemployment was immense in the years from 1857 to 1863, and it was precisely because of its magnitude that the conditions of economic crisis around 1884 impressed upon the class struggles of that time the pronounced character which found its culmination in the Haymarket Riot. Ten years later the growing importance of the unemployment question was brought home to the workers and capitalists alike by the great unemployed demonstrations, which took place in many parts of the country, and by the dramatic march of "Coxey's army" upon Washington.

The belated and, for that reason more rapid, development of American capitalism, together with its peculiarities — such as pioneer activity, the great variety of means of livelihood, and other structural differences — distinguished the development of the American labor movement to a large extent from that of Europe. A consciously organized labor movement with a socialistic ideology, as was known in pre-fascist Europe, existed in America always and even today only in embryonic form. Nevertheless, at times labor organizations occasionally took on important proportions; movements developed spontaneously only to disappear again as fast as they had risen. But up to the middle of the nineteenth century, because American industry was still backward in comparison with that of Europe, the labor movement in America was of a guild character, operating on a local basis, and combining their craft interests with the interests and aspirations of the farmers. After the Civil War trade union development accompanied that of capitalism. After 1870 this trade union movement grew more rapidly with the growth and

the changing character of the class struggles. The big strike waves following the crisis of 1873 and reaching their greatest strength in 1877 radicalized the workers to a large extent. The "Knights of Labor", the most important labor organization, could count in 1885 on 100,000 members, which by way of a few successful strikes in the boom period could be raised to 750,000. But with the end of the boom the Knights of Labor declined as fast as they had grown up. During all this time, the political movement of the workers, existing in various socialist language groups, was almost without significance. The American Federation of Labor, developing out of the ruins of the Knights of Labor, grew as an expression of the growing importance of skills and crafts in the capitalist industrialization process, and fostered by immigration and job control, led to a division of the workers into the so-called aristocracy and the great masses of un-workers into the so-called aristocracy and the great masses of un-organized. Attempts on the part of the I. W. W. to break this situation by industrial organizations had only temporary successes; the development of labor groups with specific interests within the proletariat hampered the development of socialist ideologies and, with this, the growth of socialist movements. Attempts on the part of the unions to safeguard their jobs against the newcomers supported the isolation and atomizing tendencies among the working class that were already fostered by capitalism in opposition to the actual unification and socialization of labor and the laborers through the development of large industry. The absence of important socialist movements and the attitude of the trade unions led to an almost complete neglect of the unemployment problems and excluded support of their struggles through workers' solidarity. Only in times of utter despair spontaneous unemployment movements arose, unrecognized in their significance by the existing labor organizations, and unable to assert themselves with more than a mere demonstration of their misery, and disappearing without result again into the night.

With the twentieth century, America presents a full-fledged capitalism. All other classes are subordinated to the interests of the big capitalist concerns. The proletariat is the largest class in society. The "special characteristics" of American capitalism disappeared; they now play a part only in phraseology. But the rapid rate of capital accumulation occurring now in America for reasons which we cannot go into here, prevented to a larger extent than ever the growth of socialist ideas. The "American Dream" clothed itself in dollars and cents costumes, in bonds and stocks, in get-rich-quick schemes, in fairy tales of the newsboy and the millionaire. The capitalization of the labor movement proceeded even faster than the general capitalization of ideologies and social activities. The prosperity period before 1929 was accompanied by such an organizational and ideological

decline of the labor movement that it was hardly possible to speak of such a movement at all. Although the "prosperity" was only a reality for the labor-aristocracy in comparison with European labor conditions and wages, and remained a dream for the large majority of the American workers, just the same the "spirit" created by the prosperity nourished the hope that sooner or later all would participate in eating from the especially well-filled flesh pots of American capitalism, in which lay the formula for eternal happiness.

When the period of prosperity was over, the idea prevailed that the depression was only an accident and would be soon and forever overcome. "The jobless, the near-jobless, the countless victims of the market and bank failures", wrote A. R. Wylie in the *New York Times* (4/26/31), "are bearing their personal change of fortune with a gallantry and good humor." But soon after that the situation changed. Hope was replaced by despair in the unending crisis. The rapidity of the decline once more radicalized the American working class in a previously inconceivable way. The "gallantry" and the "good humor" of the first depression years made room for a general unrest and a special activity of the unemployed.

Welfare and the Unemployed

As long as unemployment could still be regarded as a local and temporary affair, the general tendency was to leave the resulting distress to the care of the local and private welfare agencies. "The recipients of unemployment relief", wrote the *Chicago Tribune* (11/9/32), "are objects of charity. Money has been given them not because the victims have a right to it, but because the community has a heart." The American poor laws, an adaptation of the English ones dating from the 16th century, contrasted with these latter in being of local, not national, origin.

American poor relief since the 17th century has assumed various forms. The most general one consisted in the establishment of poorhouses and workhouses. Wherever possible, able-bodied children and adults were let out to farmers and industrial employers, who in exchange for the duty of supporting them received the right to their unlimited exploitation. A further form of "poor relief" was public auctions of the helpless to the highest bidder; and, finally, though only in rare cases, those whose wretched situation could be regarded as transitory were the recipients of "out-door relief" in the form of food doles.

This poor relief, organized and administered according to cities and counties, always had as one of its aims to impress upon the needy the stigma of disgrace. The Pennsylvania General Settlement Act, for instance, enumerates strict requirements for legal settlement based on continued residence and occupation,

specifying rates of assessment for relief of the poor, and making provisions for discouraging applications for relief. To this end the statute required all persons receiving aid, even children, to wear on the right sleeve a large letter "P", signifying pauper, with the first letter of the district's name worn underneath. The still existing pauper oath for the relief recipients and the general treatment of relief applicants by welfare institutions and their agents are still based on the principle of stigmatizing and scaring away the relief seeker. This attitude is in line with the exploitative needs of the existing society. If it was more pronounced at the beginning of the capitalist development and if its changes form at the end of this development, that is owing to the fact that the thirst for profits is relatively greater and the appeasement of that thirst relatively smaller in these periods than in the heyday of capitalism. The miserable conditions of the working class make it necessary to resort to barbarous treatment of the non-working and poverty stricken elements of the population in order to spur the former to greater exertions.

In the course of the capitalist development the practice of poor relief underwent a gradual modification in which it became adapted to the ever-changing conditions, though the poor laws, which were almost medieval in their origin, were not thereby affected in principle. The poorhouses and workhouses, as the most important institutions of poor relief, lost some of their importance and in many states were converted into homes for the aged or into prisons. More attention was devoted to the distinction of types among the needy, and there was an increasing tendency to concentrate upon out-door relief. In the various states of the union the poor laws were revised at longer or shorter intervals. In the execution of the laws there was developed a certain uniformity in the industrial states and another uniformity in the farming states. Welfare work came more and more to be taken out of the hands of justices of the peace and directors of the poor and turned over to trained social workers. With the setting in of the crisis in 1929, the inefficiency of the local relief services was exposed everywhere.

The relief measures in the first years of the depression were insufficient and chaotic. After three years of economic crisis not a single serious attempt had been made to adapt the relief institutions to the demands of the great amount of unemployment. The jobless masses were thrown exclusively upon the mercies of the inadequate local and private welfare institutions. All that happened at first was that the already existing institutions were expanded, coordinated, and frequently completely merged with each other. The constantly mounting financial requirements were met, in so far as possible, by way of increased collections and larger bequests, private and public loans and higher local and state taxes. For a long time this extension of welfare

activity was looked upon as transitory measures, to be abandoned in the expected upturn in business.

The united or cooperating welfare institutions of the counties and cities restricted their activity mainly to the doling out of food to needy families. In the early depression years it was only in rare cases that the unmarried man out of a job managed to obtain relief. Almost all relief was conducted on a non-cash basis. Rentals were paid only in rare cases and in many cities not at all. Evictions of unemployed have accompanied the distress during all the years of depression since 1929. Even light, gas and water were also long refused in many communities. The relief recipient had to be literally without resources and without the means of obtaining them. A gauntlet of investigations had to be run, and the unemployed had to fight incessantly against cuts and procrastination. All kinds of difficulties were systematically promoted. In many cities and counties the pressure of "public opinion" was invoked as justification for compelling the unemployed, in return for the miserable relief accorded, to labor on public works.

In some localities the system of cash relief was adopted at a quite early date, in others not until the end of 1935.* But this policy was also not a consistent one. The idea of paying out cash relief was not taken up by a number of states until it became possible in this way to bridge over difficulties which arose from sharp cuts in the relief rates. The *Chicago Daily News* (5/11/35) reported that Mrs. Page, in a conference of state relief officials said: "that the reaction of clients to the relief cut at St. Louis was much calmer than had been expected, due to the fact that clients were gratified at having money in their own hands." After such successful operations, there followed in many cases a return to the old methods: foodstuffs or tickets with which to draw them were again handed out.

The relief given amounted in money terms on the average to about \$21 per month for each family or about \$4.60 per month for each person. This was at the rate of fifteen cents a day per person. On the basis of the Chicago relief budget, for example, the monthly relief figure during the year 1932-33 for a family of five amounted to \$28.79, while the necessary minimum for existence for the same family at the same time, without including rent, was computed by the Chicago Council of Social Agencies to be \$105.00. The difference between the two figures illustrates the inadequacy of the relief rates, an inadequacy rendered still more glaring when it is borne in mind that the Chicago rates were among the highest in the whole country.

*The change in the relief situation, initiated in 1933 by the Roosevelt Relief Program, will be dealt with in another chapter in the next issue.

"Self-Help" --- the American Way

Out of the economic and psychologic situation preceding the depression, including the described status of the American labor movement, and the status of the welfare institutions, the course taken by the unemployed's reaction to their new situation is understandable. The first response to the depression and their own condition was expressed in the spontaneous self-help movement of the years 1932-33. The absence of militant labor organizations of any significance, the disinterestedness of the trade unions towards the unemployed, and the general ideological backwardness of the masses burdened with a set of romantic traditions dating to the times of the frontiers, saw in these self-help organizations the practical American answer to the unemployment problem. At first these new organizations were conceived only as temporary institutions to help overcome extraordinary situations. Most of these organizations were nationalistic and petty-bourgeois in their outlook. Although they were spontaneously created by the unemployed themselves, they soon found the approval and the help of all kinds of reformist groups and humanitarian institutions, such as churches and business associations. They also secured endorsement by many trade unions and by the Socialist Party. Many city administrations supported those new expressions of a true "Americanism", and later the Federal Emergency Relief Administration saw fit to support the more promising units of self-help organizations. Upton Sinclair, who never lets a chance pass by, also incorporated this new idea into his utopian EPIC scheme.

Self-help organizations sprang up as early as 1930, and were in vogue during 1932. Some of them kept themselves independent, others united with kindred organizations. Unsuccessful attempts were made to coordinate them into nationwide Federations. All were engaged in two principal types of activities: organized begging, and the barter of labor and commodities. The exchange regulations were manifold. Some organizations developed bureaucratic apparatus, membership dues, due bills, goods certificates, credit transfers, vouchers, exchange checks, and what not. Most of them were engaged in agricultural pursuits, since most of them functioned in agricultural states. Land and implements for production were solicited, offered, rented, lent by individuals, authorities and societies. The strong religious sectarianism, one of the American peculiarities, lent impetus to such organizations. Most of the organizations abstained from competing with private enterprises; most of them also excluded all money-dealings. Even where such possibilities were open, only occasionally was advantage taken thereof. But as soon as the principle "Not for Profit" was broken, the sharpest protest arose from the small business men's organizations and from the trade unions. Many socialists en-

tering these self-help organizations developed an enthusiasm expressed in the wildest hopes of the socialistic future of such enterprises, which seemed non-capitalist islands in the ocean of capitalism. P. R. Haffner wrote, for instance, in the *American Guardian* of Nov. 25, 1932:

"Never before was there such a possibility to build up co-operatives. The small enterprises can no longer compete, the larger ones will not dare to fight against us. Hunger is like dynamite, no one likes to play with it. Experiences show that self-help is possible; in Tacoma alone we have already gattered means of production to the tune of 45,000 dollars, we built houses, employed workers, we have started an industrious community in which there will be no unemployment and no exploitation."

However, this optimism fell to pieces when reality did not conform to it. At the end of 1933 most of the self-help organizations had again disappeared. They collapsed because of the deepening of the crisis, as they did later because of the improvement of business conditions. In the field of begging, competition with the Salvation Army led also to diminishing returns. Corruption destroyed the organizations from the inside; the pressure of the growing misery from the outside. The proud "I Will" spirit could not withstand the complete devaluation of labor power. Labor power, which heretofore was only an undesired commodity, would not now be accepted even as a gift. The central idea of the self-help movement as celebrated, for example, by the "Conference for Progressive Labor Action", an organization which later merged with the Trotskyites into the American Workers Party, which again merged, etc., etc, the idea of "production for use", which this party believed was absolutely realizable because the idea would find the hearty support of the taxpayers, as it would lighten their lot—this central idea turned out to be a central illusion of both the self-help organizations and its supporters in the labor movement. Soon this organization, together with similar bodies and the trade unions found itself forced to protest against a self-help movement which went too far. The exchange of foodstuffs for work was now recognized as only one form of scabbing, of bringing pressure upon the wage rates. The self-helpers advertised themselves in newspapers, offering their labor for literally a piece of buttered bread. Unwilling to attack the self-helpers, for no one could tell how they might be used, the politicians made a compromise solution by insisting that barter should be practiced only among the unemployed themselves. But as long as the unemployed had nothing else to exchange with each other but their misery, this "compromise" was only a phrase to bridge the shift from self-help to relief demands.

The self-help movement, based on a primitive barter system and barbarous self-sufficiency, was unable to live up to its principles. It was supported by the government since it saved it some relief money. With the financial aid of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration some of them could continue to

exist to this day, although the majority of them had passed out by 1934. But those extant have ceased to be regarded as an expression of the self-help movement as it sprang into existence during the years 1930-33. They belong to the series of governmental experimentations in "long-range planning" to allow sufficient exercise to the many administrators who have to prove somehow that they are busy with the task of saving society. Or they have to be regarded as belonging to the many half-utopian agricultural colonies existing in America, as objects of a curiosity, just as the American Indians are to high school boys spending their vacations studiously.

(To be continued in the next issue)

BOOK REVIEWS

Spy Overhead, the Story of Industrial Espionage. By Clinch Calkins. Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1937. (363 pp.; \$2.50).

The Labor Spy Racket. By Leo Huberman. Modern Age Books. New York, 1937. (195 pp.; \$.35).

Both these books are based on the investigations of the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee. They contain similar material, the book by Calkins, however, offering more information. The investigations show in what ways capitalists, large and small, use the diverse detective agencies to break strikes, frustrate them and to interfere in trade union activity. The different situations in the class struggle between capital and labor necessitate the use of different methods by professional labor spies and strike-breakers. Activities from working within unions in an attempt to destroy them, to open terror and murder, cover the scale of their services. This business often assumes proportions expressible in hundred thousands of dollars. Small as it is in comparison with the total social activity, its existence nevertheless characterizes, more than anything else, the real relationship in present-day society. The labor spy exists because his activity represents one way of making a living, and he is used because the capitalist desires to save money. In Miss Calkins' opinion, this primitive method cannot disappear except to be replaced by less crude but more efficient methods. Huberman, with the superficiality of all social reformers, expects from the La Follette investigation enough indignation of "fair-minded" Americans to end this "shameful" business. But where he assumes it will be possible to convince the capitalists that collective bargaining and trade unions are also serving the best interests of the entrepreneurs, a recognition which is supposed to induce them to fire the labor spy, Miss Calkins disagrees with him. She sees rather the possible replacement of the labor spy by the more effective "public relations man", who will take over the function of the former. Besides this change of appearance in the labor spy, there will be more frequent recurrence of vigilance committees, to handle strike matters according to the ethics of the "fair-minded" Americans. And in the growth of this vigilance activity, according to Miss Calkins, is also manifested the formation of fascist forces, calculated to deal with labor questions in a manner which may be called up to date. Miss Calkins' book makes Huberman's superfluous. We must direct the readers' attention especially to Miss Calkins' introduction, for it summarizes with rare truth and clarity the actual situation of the American worker. It is this

clarity and this unusual approximation of the truth that makes it a pleasure to recommend "Spy Overhead".

Japan over Asia. By W. H. Chamberlin. Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1937. (395 pp.; \$3.50)

Chamberlin's book is without doubt one of the best, if not the best, of the recently published more popular books dealing with Japan, and not only because it is so readable and objective, but because it presents so many facts of such great interest that anyone, regardless of what he may think of Chamberlin's attitude here and in general, cannot help but profit by reading it. This work, though written by a non-Marxist, will assist the Marxist very well to a better understanding of the facts involved in the Asiatic problems.

The first half of the book deals with the imperialist policies of Japan, the second supplies a valuable description of the Japanese scene. The grasp Chamberlin has of Japan's present position may be judged by the fact that he wrote in September 1937, and in the face of a general optimism of China's chances, that a Japanese defeat is most unlikely to occur. Japan's aggression is here recognized as being no different from imperialism in general. Chamberlin understands that Japan's particular economic weaknesses hastened its action to safeguard itself in a growing imperialist world. The contradictions between Japan's necessities and the imperialist aims of other nations are stressed, and the author displays great knowledge of all facts involved, even if he does not trace those contradictions back to the fundamental contradictions of capitalist economy. Also, he has no illusions as regards the character of the Chinese anti-Japanese struggle, or the help it may receive from Russia. He sees that the issue of socialism is not involved in either question. Very interesting are Chamberlin's expositions of the Japanese class relations, and, most interesting for the workers, his descriptions of the economic struggle of the Japanese workers within a semi-fascist country without labor organizations. The book does little more than present relevant facts as they came to the author's attention. For this reason it contains little that may be challenged.

Forty Years of American-Japanese Relations. By Foster Rhea Dulles. D. Appleton-Century Co., New York, 1937, (281 pp.; \$3.00).

Recently, the possibility of war between America and Japan was widely discussed, especially when the Panay was sunk. In the last issue of Council Correspondence we pointed out that the outbreak of such a war is at this moment not to be expected. Dulles' book shows that similar frictions between America and Japan recurred at intervals during the last forty years of American-Japanese relations. From time to time America has raised the threat of war as a reaction to Japanese advances in Asia, but only to withdraw again. This policy appears to Dulles unclear and inconsistent. However, the struggle for the control of the Pacific involves more than the rivalry between Japan and America. Other nations such as England and Russia are also in the field. Vacillations by America are not the result of a weak foreign policy, but are based on the realities of imperialist world forces. It was not in the power of America to demand more than the Open Door in China, and its reluctance to start a war to defend the Open Door policy against Japan's imperialism is explainable by the fact that the Open Door was not of such value to American capitalism as to warrant a war — a war, which of necessity would become a world war. Dulles sees that it is not the actual, but the potential business which explains the great interest of America in China; but the potential business, the question of the future, involves much more than can be solved by greater consistency or clarity of American foreign policy. And this future will not, as Dulles seems to think, be a mere repetition of the past. The question of domination of the Pacific

is raised again, but if it leads to open struggle, America will not have to fight simply Japan, but as an ally of one group of imperialist powers, will oppose another group. To reduce the question of Japanese-American relations to one concerning these two nations alone leads to misinterpretations and causes Dulles to believe that the reason America has not championed her interests against Japanese imperialism is that America lacks the necessary determination. In spite of such conclusions, however, this book will help the reader to an understanding of the Japanese-American situation.

The Origins of American Intervention in North Russia (1918). By Leonid J. Strakhovsky. Princeton University Press, 1937; (134 pp.; \$2.00.)

The author attempts to show with this study that American Intervention in Russia, in 1918, benefited rather than damaged the interests of Soviet Russia. Besides this question, which concerns us very little, the book brings to light many aspects of the Bolshevik Revolution and contributes to an understanding of its character. The dependence of the revolution on the world war becomes obvious. Between the rivalries of the Central and Allied Powers the revolution could consolidate itself. The Bolsheviks played one imperialistic group against the other in order to remain in power. When it became impossible to continue this game, the Bolsheviks chose Germany instead of the Allies, who then attempted to destroy the revolution. They had previously offered to help, and actually did help, in the understanding that the Bolsheviks would continue to fight against Germany. Many similar incidents in the international policies of this period furnish the reader with a better understanding of not only the revolution itself, but also of its leaders. It is a valuable, even though a small, addition to other books of documentary value, as for instance, "The Bolshevik Revolution", edited by James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, and issued by Stanford University in 1934.

Economics for Everybody. By Mervyn Crobaugh. W. Morrow & Co., New York, 1937. (293 pp.; \$2.50:)

The first twelve chapters of the book, tracing the economic development from the builders of the pyramids down to the beginnings of capitalism, although very superficial, might nevertheless, not only because of an amusing readability but also for some good formulations, provide the reader unacquainted with economics with a pleasant introduction to the study of economic history. The description, however, that follows the modern economic theories and their development is not only superficial but sometimes outright stupid. As Marx once said, popularizations are easy once the scientific basis is laid. Crobaugh's insufficient understanding of recent economic problems largely counteracts his popularization. But, whoever wants to read economics in order to find sleep, this book serves as well as any detective story, and besides this service will transfer a few good ideas, so to speak, in the course of sleeping. Though often painfully crude, the author succeeds in showing the connection between economic thought and economic reality. The book may be capable of arousing some interest in economic matters, inducing the reader to proceed to more reliable studies. As the book is both, good and bad, we cannot condemn or recommend it but must leave the judgment to those who will read it.

A Real New Deal. By Charles E. Carpenter. University of Southern California, 1937; (137 pp.; \$1.50.)

Carpenter dedicates his booklet "to all persons whose income is insufficient for their reasonable needs." Though he is a professor of law, he deals here with economic questions because he does not like, besides other things, "the irresponsible conflict between capital and labor." In his opinion,

the problem of society consists in the existing unfair distribution; he wants a more "equitable distribution of income" without the abolition of the present economic system. He desires "a real new deal", as Roosevelt's New Deal failed to fulfill its promises. He proposes a division of profits and a change of the tax system, and Congress is supposed to inaugurate these measures. The impossibility of their realization, however, is obvious to any one acquainted with the fundamentals of present-day society. His book — one of many of the same character recently published — has significance only because it indicates the trend of the growing resentment of the middle class. The combined protest against further capital centralization and against socialism expresses the "politicizing" of the middle class mind. But this "politicizing", if it begins to appear in actual politics, will be able to fulfill only what capital began. Capitalist development, unable to remove the middle class, brings about a situation in which the middle class removes itself in the very attempt to save its life. The developments in the fascist countries bear witness to this.

Science in the Light of Marxism. (Die Wissenschaft im Lichte des Marxismus) Jean Christophe-Verlag, Zurich, 1937. By H. Wallon, M. Prenant, H. Mineur, J. Baby and others.

The first part of the book deals with science and technic. Here the views of the astronomer Henry Mineur of the Paris Observatory throw light upon the connection between science and the requirements of everyday life. The second part of the book deals with the dialectical method and primarily stresses the principle of interchange. Tribute is paid to men as a motive force in history. The authors show that the human mind is affected in its development by material factors. But, simultaneously it is shown that this human mind — especially the scientific mind — becomes a steadily growing important factor of human development. Historical development tends toward the mastering of matter through mind.

The book is written in simple language, it is the result of various lectures given by the authors in 1933 and 1934 for the scientific commission of the Society for a New Russia. It is not distinguishable from other similar publications since Bucharin's "Historical Materialism", serving to satisfy the ideological needs of Bolshevist Russia.

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