

in this factory for the production of 50,000 pairs of shoes. The same number of labor hours must accordingly be restored to it. And what holds for the single enterprise holds also for the whole of society, which of course is only the sum total of all enterprises. The total social product is the product of tools of production, plus raw materials, plus labor power of all enterprises. Assuming the sum total of all the fixed means of production to amount to 100 million labor hours, the corresponding raw materials to 600 million, and the labor time consumed to be equal to 600 million, we have the total product of 1,300 million labor hours. Under conditions of simple reproduction, 600 million labor hours can be turned over to the consumers in the form of consumption goods.

As in capitalism the accumulation of capital is to a large extent left to individual capitalists, so also the reproduction of labor power is left to the class-determined individuals. The worker continually produces, with insignificant exceptions, only new workers. The middle class fills, over and over again, the higher occupations. Under communism, however, both the reproduction of labor power and that of the material apparatus of production are social functions. No longer is the class position of the individual determining, but the "reproduction" of labor functions is consciously regulated by society. And as corollary, the antagonistic nature of distribution is discarded; it is foreign to a communist society.

The application of the social average labor hour as the computing unit presupposes the existence of workers' councils organizations. Each enterprise comes forward as an independent unit and is at the same time connected with all the other enterprises. As a result of the division of labor, each factory has certain end products. With the aid of the mentioned formula, each enterprise can compute the labor time contained in its end products. The end product of an enterprise, in so far as it is not destined for individual consumption, goes to another enterprise either in the form of means of production or raw materials, and this one in turn computes its end product in labor hours. The same thing holds for all places of production, without regard to the magnitude or kind of their products.

When the individual enterprises have determined the average labor time contained in their products, it still remains to find the social average. All enterprises turning out the same products, must compare production figures. From the individual enterprises of an industry in a given territory, the total average of all the individual plant averages for these enterprises must be secured. If 100 shoe factories, for example, average three hours and 100 others average two, then the general average for a pair of shoes is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours. The varying averages result from the varying productivities of the individual plants. Though this is a condition inherited from capitalism, and the differences in productivity will slowly disappear, the deficit of one enterprise must meanwhile be made up through the surplus of the other. For society, however, there is only the social average productivity. The determination of the social average labor time calls for the cartellization of the enterprises. The contradiction between the factory average and the social average labor time ends in the production cartel.

The social average labor time decreases with the development of the productivity of labor. If the product thus "cheapened" is for individual con-

sumption, it goes into consumption with this reduced average. If it is an end product used by other enterprises as means of production, then the consumption of means of production and raw materials for these enterprises falls, the production "costs" decline and hence the average labor time for these products is reduced. Compensating for the variations caused in this way is a purely technical problem which presents no special difficulties.

If the working hour serves as a measure of production, it must likewise be applicable to distribution. A very clear statement of this unit is given by Marx in his *Critique* (p. 29): "What the producer has given to society is his individual amount of labor. For example, the social working day consists of the sum of the individuals' hours of work. The individual working time of the individual producer is that part of the social working-day contributed by him, his part thereof. He receives from society a voucher (labor time money) that he has contributed such and such a quantity of work (after deductions from his work for the common fund) and draws through this voucher on the social storehouse as much of the means of consumption as the same quantity of work costs. The same amount of work which he has given to society in one form, he receives back in another." The workers cannot, however, receive the full output of their labor. The labor time is not the direct measure for the part of the social product destined for individual consumption. As Marx goes on to explain in his *Critique* (p. 27) "The co-operative proceeds of labor is the total social product. But from this must be deducted; firstly, reimbursement for the replacement of the means of production used up; secondly, an additional portion for the extension of production; and thirdly, reserve or insurance funds to provide against misadventures, disturbances through natural events and so on. There must again be taken from the remainder: "Firstly, the general costs of administration not appertaining to production. Secondly, what is destined for the satisfaction of communal needs. Thirdly, funds for those unable to work."

Those institutions which produce no tangible goods (cultural and social establishments) and yet participate in the social consumption may be reckoned as enterprises. Their services go over into society without delay; production and distribution here are one. We call these institutions for sake of illustration "public enterprises". Everything which the public enterprises consume must be drawn from the stores of the productive enterprises. It is necessary to know the total consumption of these public enterprises. With the growth of communism, this type of enterprise receives an ever increasing extension, means of consumption, dwelling, passenger transport, etc. The more society grows in this direction and the more enterprises are transformed in public enterprises, the less will individual labor be the measure for individual consumption. *This tendency serves to illustrate the general development of communist society.* Of the social product a part is to be employed for the further expansion of the productive apparatus. If this expanded reproduction is to be a conscious action, it is necessary to know the social labor time required for simple reproduction. The formula for simple reproduction is: tools of production, plus raw materials, plus labor power. If the material apparatus of production is to be expanded by ten per cent, a mass of products of this amount must be withdrawn from individual consumption. Going back to our formula for society as whole: 100 million tools of production, plus 600 million raw materials, plus 600 million labor power, means that



700 million working hours have to be reproduced. There remain 600 million working hours. The public enterprises take from these 600 million their means of production and raw materials. Ten per cent is deducted for the expansion of production, the remainder can be equally distributed among the workers engaged in production and in the public enterprises. If we assume that 50 million working hours are necessary for the public enterprises and 70 million for expansion we have to deduct from the total consumption fund 120 million working hours. There remain 480 million working hours for the fund for individual consumption.

Distribution, like production itself, is a social question. The 'expenses' of distribution are included in the general budget for the public enterprises. The bringing together of the consumers into associations with a direct connection to the organism of production allows full mobility to the satisfaction of needs and to their changes therein. In the relations between the individual enterprises, labor time "money" is superfluous. When an enterprise delivers its end products, it has linked tools of production, plus raw materials, plus labor power, working hours to the great chain of partial social labors. These must be restored to the various enterprises in the same magnitude in the form of other end products. The labor money is valid only for individual consumption. As more and more enterprises are brought into public enterprises, distribution by means of labor money grows less and less important and hastens its own abolition. Fixing the factor of individual consumption is the task of social bookkeeping.

This bookkeeping is merely bookkeeping and nothing else. It is the central point of the economics process, but has no power over the producers or the individual enterprises. The social bookkeeping is itself only an enterprise. Its functions are: the registration of the stream of products, the fixing of the individual consumption fund, the outlay of labor time "money", the control over production and distribution. The control of the labor process is a purely technical one, which is handled by each enterprise itself. The control exercised by the social bookkeeping extends only to accounting for all receipts and deliveries of the individual enterprises and watching over their productivity.

The different industrial enterprises turn their production budgets over to the enterprise which conducts the social bookkeeping. From all the production budgets results the social inventory. Products in one form flow to the enterprise, new ones in another form are given out by them. To state the process in simple terms: Each conveyance of good is recorded in the general social bookkeeping by an endorsement, so that the debit and credit of any particular enterprise at any time can be seen. Everything which an enterprise consumes in the way of tools of production, raw material or labor "money" appear on the debit side of the enterprise; what it has turned over to society in the form of products appears as a credit. These two items must cover each other continuously, revealing in this way whether and to what extent the productive process is flowing smoothly. Shortage and excess on the part of the enterprises become visible and can be corrected. The reproductive process becomes the regulator of production.\*

\*For a more extensive study of this problem see: "Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung."  
Gruppe Internationaler Kommunisten (Holland) Herausgegeben von der Allgemeinen Arbeiter Union Deutschland. Berlin 1930.

## MARXISM AND THE PRESENT TASK OF THE PROLETARIAN CLASS STRUGGLE

Let the dead bury their dead. The proletarian revolution must at last arrive at its own content.  
(Marx)

Of Karl Marx may be said what Geoffroy St. Hilaire said of Darwin, that it was his fate and his glory to have had only forerunners before him and only disciples after him. Of course, there stood at his side a congenial life-long friend and collaborator, Friedrich Engels. There were in the next generation the theoretical standard-bearers of the "revisionist" and the "orthodox" wings of the German Marxist party, Bernstein and Kautsky and, beside these pseudo-savants, such real scholars of Marxism as Antonio Labriola the Italian, Georges Sorel in France, and the Russian philosopher Plekhanov. There came at a later stage an apparently full restoration of the long forgotten revolutionary elements of the Marxian thought by Rosa Luxemburg in Germany and by Lenin in Russia.

During the same period Marxism was embraced by millions of workers throughout the world as a guide for their practical action. There was an imposing succession of organizations, from the secret Communist League of 1848 and the Working Men's International Association of 1864 to the rise of powerful social democratic parties on a national scale in all important European countries and to an ultimate coordination of their scanty international activities in the so-called Second International of the pre-war period which after its collapse found its eventual resurrection in the shape of a militant Communist Party on a world-wide scale.

Yet there was, during all this time, no corresponding internal growth of the Marxian theory itself beyond those powerful ideas which had been contained within the first scheme of the new revolutionary science as devised by Marx.

Very few Marxists up to the end of the 19th century did so much as find anything wrong with this state of affairs. Even when the first at-

tacks of the so-called "Revisionists" brought about what a radical bourgeois sociologist, the later first president of the Czecho-Slovak republic, Th. G. Mazaryk, then called a philosophical and scientific "crisis of Marxism", the Marxists regarded the condition existing within their own camp as a mere struggle between an "orthodox" Marxist faith and a deplorable "heresy". The ideological character of this wholesale identification of an established doctrine with the revolutionary struggle of the working class is further enhanced by the fact that the leading representatives of the Marxian orthodoxy of the time, including Kautsky in Germany and Lenin in Russia, persistently denied the very possibility that a true revolutionary consciousness could ever originate with the workers themselves. The revolutionary political aims, according to them, had to be introduced into the economic class struggle of the workers "from without", i. e., by the theoretical endeavors of radical bourgeois thinkers "equipped with all the culture of the age", such as Lassalle, Marx, and Engels. Thus, the identity of a bourgeois-bred doctrine with all present and future truly revolutionary struggles of the proletarian class assumed the character of a veritable miracle. Even those most radical Marxists who came nearest to the recognition of a spontaneous development of the proletarian class struggle beyond the restricted aim pursued by the leading bureaucracies of the existing social democratic parties and trade-unions, never dreamt of denying this pre-established harmony between the Marxist doctrine and the actual proletarian movement. As Rosa Luxemburg said in 1903, and the Bolshevik Rjazanov repeated in 1928, "every new and higher stage of the proletarian class struggle can borrow from the inexhaustible arsenal of the Marxist theory ever new weapons



as needed by that new stage of the emancipatory fight of the working class."

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the more general aspects of this peculiar theory of the Marxists concerning the origin and development of their own revolutionary doctrine, a theory which in the last analysis amounts to a denial of the possibility of an independent proletarian class culture. We refer to it in our present context only as one of the many contradictions to be swallowed by those who in striking contrast to the critical and materialistic principle of Marx dealt with "Marxism" as an essentially completed, and now unchangeable, doctrine.

A further difficulty of this quasi-religious attitude towards Marxism arises from the fact that the Marxian theory was never adopted as a whole by any socialist group or party. "Orthodox" Marxism was at no time more than a formal attitude by which the leading group of the German social democratic party in the pre-war period concealed from themselves the ever continuing deterioration of their own formerly revolutionary practice. It was only this difference of procedure which separated that disguised "orthodox" form from an openly revisionistic form of adapting the traditional Marxist doctrine to the new "needs" of the workers' movement arising from the changed conditions of the new historical period.

When amidst the storm and stress of the revolutionary struggle of 1917, in view of a "clearly maturing international proletarian revolution", Lenin, set himself the task to restate the **Marxian Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution**, he no longer contented himself with a mere ideological defence of an assumedly existing orthodox interpretation of the true Marxist theory. He started from the premise that revolutionary Marxism had been totally destroyed and abandoned both by the opportunist minority and by the outspoken social-chauvinist majority of all "Marxist" parties and trade-unions of the late second International. He openly an-

nounced that **Marxism was dead** and proclaimed an integral "restoration" of revolutionary Marxism.

There is no doubt that "revolutionary Marxism", as restored by Lenin, has led the proletarian class to its first historical victory. This fact must be emphasized not only against the pseudo-Marxist detractors of the "barbarous" communism of the Bolsheviks — as against the "refined" and "cultured" socialism of the West. It must be emphasized also against the present beneficiaries of the revolutionary victory of the Russian workers, who have gradually passed from the revolutionary Marxism of the early years to a no longer communist but merely "socialist" and democratic creed called **Stalinism**. In the same way, on an international scale, a mere "antifascist" coalition of the United Fronts, People's Fronts, and National Fronts was gradually substituted for the revolutionary class struggle waged by the proletariat against the whole economic and political regime of the bourgeoisie in the "democratic" as well as in the fascist, the "pro-Russian" as well as the anti-Russian States.

In the face of these later developments of Lenin's work, it is no longer possible to stick to the idea that the restored old revolutionary principles of Marxism which during the War and the immediate post-war period had been advocated by Lenin and Trotsky, resulted in a genuine revival of the revolutionary proletarian movement which in the past had been associated with the name of Marx. For a limited period it seemed, indeed, that the true spirit of revolutionary Marxism had gone East. The striking contradictions soon appearing within the policy of the ruling revolutionary party in Soviet Russia, both on the economic and on the political fields, were considered as a mere outcome of the sad fact that the "international proletarian revolution" firmly expected by Lenin and Trotsky did not mature. Yet in the light of later facts there is no doubt that ultimately, Soviet Marxism as a revolutionary proletarian theory and practice has shared the fate of that "orthodox" Marxism of the West from which it had sprung and from

which it had split only under the extraordinary conditions of the War and the ensuing revolutionary outbreak in Russia. When finally in 1933, by the unopposed victory of the counter-revolutionary "National Socialism", in the traditional center of revolutionary international socialism, it became manifest that "Marxism did not deliver the goods" that judgement applied to the Eastern Communist as well as to the Western social democratic church of the Marxist faith, and the separate fractions were at last united in a common defeat.

In order to make intelligible the true significance and the far reaching further implications of this most important lesson of the recent history of Marxism, we must trace back the duplex character of the "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletarian class" which has become widely conspicuous by recent events both within present day Stalinist Russia and on an international scale, to an original duplicity appearing in the different aspects of Marx's own achievements as a proletarian theorist and as a political leader in the revolutionary movement of his time. On the one hand, as early as 1843, he was in close contact with the most advanced manifestations of French socialism and communism. With Engels he founded the **Deutsche Arbeiterbildungsverein** in Brussels in 1847 and set about to found an international organization of proletarian correspondence committees. Soon afterwards, they both joined the first international organization of the militant proletariat, the **Bund der Kommunisten**, at whose request they wrote the famous "Manifesto" proclaiming the proletariat as "the only revolutionary class."

On the other hand, Marx as an editor of the **Neue Rheinische Zeitung** during the actual revolutionary outbreak of 1848 expressed mainly the most radical demands of the bourgeois democracy. He strove to maintain a united front between the bourgeois revolutionary movement in Germany and the more advanced forms in which a struggle for direct socialist aims was at that time already waged in the more developed industrial countries of the West. He

wrote his most brilliant and powerful article in defence of the Paris proletariat after its crushing defeat in June 1848. But he did not bring forward in his paper the specific claims of the German proletariat until a few weeks before its final suppression by the victorious counter-revolution of 1849. Even then, he stated the workers case in a somewhat abstract manner by reproducing in the columns of the **Neue Rheinische Zeitung** the economic lectures dealing with **Wage-Labor and Capital** which he had given two years before in the **Arbeiterbildungsverein** at Brussels. Similarly, by his contributions in the 1850's and 60's to **Horace Greeley's New York Tribune**, to the **New American Cyclopaedia** edited by George Ripley and Charles Dana, to Chartist publications in England, and to German and Austrian Newspapers, Marx revealed himself chiefly as a spokesman of the radical democratic policies which, he hoped, would ultimately lead to a war of the democratic West against reactionary tsarist Russia.

An explanation of this apparent dualism is to be found in the **Jacobinic pattern** of the revolutionary doctrine which Marx and Engels had adopted before the February revolution of 1848 and to which they remained faithful, on the whole, even after the outcome of that revolution had finally wrecked their former enthusiastic hopes. Although they realized the necessity of adjusting tactics to changed historical conditions, their own theory of revolution, even in its latest and most advanced materialistic form, kept the peculiar character of the transitory period during which the proletarian class was still bound to proceed towards its own social emancipation by passing through the intermediate stage of a preponderantly political revolution.

It is true that the revolutionary political effects of the economic warfare of the Trade Unions and of the other forms of championing immediate and specific labor interests became increasingly important for Marx during his later years, as attested by his leading role in the organization and direction of the **International Working Men's Association** in



the 60's and by his contributions to the programs and tactics of the various national parties in the 70's. But it is also true, and is clearly shown by the internecine battles waged, within the International, by the Marxists against the followers of Proudhon and Bakunin that Marx and Engels never really abandoned their earlier views on the decisive importance of politics as the only conscious and fully developed form of revolutionary class action. There is only a difference of language between the cautious enrollment of "political action" as a subordinate means to the ultimate goal of the "economic emancipation of the working class" as contained in the Rules of the IWMA of 1864, and the open proclamation, in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, that "every class struggle is a political struggle" and that the "organization of the proletarians into a class" presupposes their "organization into a political party". Thus Marx, from the first to the last, defined his concept of class in ultimately political terms and, in fact though not in words, subordinated the multiple activities exerted by the masses in their daily class struggle to the activities exerted on their behalf by their political leaders.

This appears even more distinctly in those rare and extraordinary situations in which Marx and Engels during their later years again were called to deal with actual attempts at a European revolution. Witness Marx's reaction to the revolutionary Commune of the Paris workers in 1871. Witness further Marx's and Engels' apparently inconsistent positive attitude toward the entirely idealistic attempts of the revolutionary Narodnaja Volja to enforce by terroristic action the outbreak of "a political and thus also a social revolution" under the backward conditions prevailing in the 70's and 80's in tsarist Russia. As shown in detail in an earlier article (*Living Marxism*, March 1938), Marx and Engels were not only prepared to regard the approaching revolutionary outbreak in Russia as a signal for a general European revolution of the Jacobine type in which (as Engels told Vera Sassulitch in 1883) "if the year 1789 once comes, the year 1793 will

follow". They actually hailed the Russian and all-European revolution as a workers' revolution and the starting point of a communistic development.

There is then no point in the objection raised by the Mensheviks and other schools of the traditional Western type of Marxist orthodoxy that the *Marxism of Lenin* was in fact only the return to an earlier form of the *Marxism of Marx* which later had been replaced by a *more mature and more materialistic form*. It is quite true that the very similarity between the historical situation arising in Russia in the beginning of the 20th century and the conditions prevailing in Germany, Austria etc., at the eve of the European revolution of 1848 explains the otherwise unexplainable fact that the latest phase of the revolutionary movement of our time could have been represented at all under the paradoxical form of an ideological return to the past. Nevertheless, as shown above, revolutionary Marxism as "restored" by Lenin did conform, in its purely theoretical contents, much more with the true spirit of all historical phases of the Marxian doctrine than that social democratic Marxism of the preceding period which after all, in spite of its loudly professed "orthodoxy", had never been more than a mutilated and travestied form of the Marxian theory, vulgarizing its real contents, and blunting its revolutionary edge. It is for this very reason that Lenin's experiment in the "restoration" of revolutionary Marxism confirmed most convincingly the utter futility of any attempt to draw the theory of the revolutionary action of the working class not from its own contents but from any "myth". It has shown, above all, the ideological perversity of the idea to supplant the existing deficiencies of the present action by an imaginary return to a mythicized past. While such awakening of a dead revolutionary ideology may possibly help for a certain time, as the Russian revolution has shown, to conceal from the makers of the revolutionary "October" the historical limitations of their heroic efforts, it is bound to result ultimately not in finding once more the spirit of that earlier revolu-

tionary movement but only in making its ghost walk again. It has resulted, in our time, in a new and "revolutionary Marxist" form of the suppression and exploitation of the proletarian class in Soviet-Russia, and in an equally new and "revolutionary Marxist" form of crushing genuine revolutionary movements in Spain and all over the world.

All this shows clearly that Marxism today could only be "restored" in its original form by its transformation into a mere ideology serving an altogether different purpose and, indeed, a whole scale of changing political purposes. It serves at this very moment as an ideological screen for the debunking of the hitherto predominant role of the ruling party itself and for the further enhancement of the quasi-fascist personal leadership of Stalin and of his all-adaptable agencies. At the same time, on the international scene, the so-called "anti-fascist" policy of the "Marxist" Comintern has come to play in the present struggles between the various alliances of capitalist powers exactly the same role as its opposite, the "anti-communist" and "anti-Marxist" international policy of the regimes of Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese warlords.

It should be understood that the whole criticism raised above con-

cerns only the ideological endeavors of the last 50 years to "preserve" or to "restore", for immediate application, a thoroughly mythicized "revolutionary Marxist doctrine". Nothing in this article is directed against the scientific results reached by Marx and Engels and a few of their followers on various fields of social research which, in many ways hold good to this day. Above all, nothing in this article is directed against what may be called, in a very comprehensive sense, the *Marxist*, that is, the *independent revolutionary movement of the international working class*. There seems to be good reason, in the search for what is living or may be recalled to life in the present deathly standstill of the revolutionary workers' movement, to "return" to that practical and not merely ideological broadmindedness by which the first Marxist (at the same time Proudhonist, Blanquist, Bakunist, trade-unionist, etc.) International Working Men's Association welcomed into its ranks all workers who subscribed to the principle of an independent proletarian class struggle. As enunciated in the first of its rules, drawn up by Marx,

"the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves".

l. h.

## SOUTHERN NEGROES\*

The Civil War freed four million Negro slaves. The thirteenth and fourteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States established their rights as citizens. From a state of being sold as a commodity, they advanced to a position of sellers of their own commodity: labor power. However, their transformation from real slaves into wage slaves was a

\*In the course of preparing a series of articles on the labor conditions in the South, the editors of *Living Marxism*, have asked a number of workers residing in the South to state their thoughts and experiences in relation to questions concerning working and living conditions of the exploited classes. Save for the introductory remarks and the book-notes accompanying them, the above article is part of a letter we received from a worker living in the South. With the publication of this letter we open the discussion, hoping to receive more material from our readers, so that the problems and possibilities of Southern workers at the present stage of development may be stated realistically.



painful process. At the end of the Civil War wages for Negro labor were as low as \$7 a month for men and \$5 a month for women. Freedom began with hunger. Already "during the War of Secession, the entire experience of Southern Negroes was discouraging and disillusioning.. Whether release from slavery came early or late, it was always accompanied by unexpected hardship... It must have been apparent to Southern Negroes when the triumph of the North in 1865 assured the final end of slavery that the fight for real freedom had just begun."\*\*

Then came the days of the Carpetbaggers, who offered Negroes new illusions in exchange for their votes. The white Southerners, however, never ceased the struggle to regain the political control of the South. The Ku Klux Klan, and other terror organizations scared the Negroes away from the polls. What the night-riders began was completed by legislative tricks, such

\*Bell Irvin Wiley, *Southern Negroes 1861-1865*. Yale University Press, 1938. (366 pp. \$3.00; quotation p. 344)

Mr. Wiley's book is the first full-scale attempt to discover what happened to the Southern Negroes in their transition from slavery to freedom. It portrays the relations between the white people and the Negroes in regard to all important socio-economic and military questions, and shows quite clearly that both the North and the South, in waging the Civil War, were not at all concerned with the "human side" of the slave question. As Marx and Engels stated (*The Civil War in the United States*, p. 81), the struggle between the South and the North was "nothing but a struggle between two social systems, between the system of slavery and the system of free labor. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side." The dominant political role of the slave states within the Union and their economic interests, at that time bound up with exports rather than with the still backward home markets, hindered capital expansion in the North and compelled the Civil War. This War was "progressive" only for Northern capitalism, (The South was not industrialized by the North. In 1860 the South produced 15% of the total manufactured products of the U. S., and in 1917 still only 15%. In 1937 the South's share was raised to 17%), but it hardly justified the expectations of the laboring population. Only with a sigh can one read today the Address of the International Workingmen's Association to Abraham Lincoln, which Marx also signed, and which reads: "While the workingmen, the true political power of the North, allowed slavery to defile their own republic, while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned laborer to sell himself and choose his own master, they were unable to attain the true freedom of labor, or to support their European brethren in their struggle for emancipation; but this barrier to progress has been swept off by the red sea of civil war." (*The Civil War in the United States*, p. 281) But the 'true political power of the North', although helping to free the Negroes, maintained throughout the Civil War, and ever since, the deepest contempt for their black brothers. As before, also under 'progressive capitalism' "labor in the black skin is branded", and it becomes obvious, that, to reverse an oft quoted phrase of Marx, this situation will not change until labor in the white skin has freed itself. Comparing the sober writing of Mr. Wiley with the currently peddled Civil War and Negro Emancipation legends in which a so-called labor movement indulges most freely, one sees clearly that inspiring this empty chatter of the 'traditions' of the American people is the old trick of rendering the workers more susceptible to present capitalism's needs, as the sob-stories of slavery and the flag-waving of the Civil War were used to make the workers eager to sacrifice their lives for the sake of capitalism's needs. This situation gives Mr. Wiley's book much significance, and prompts us to recommend it to our readers.

as the famous "grandfather clause", which provided that for one to be eligible to vote, his grandfather must have been also eligible to vote. Later came the poll tax clause, but the "Negro had already lost his interest in government and voting... There were very few who would pay two dollars just for the privilege of voting for some white candidate. This condition grew into a situation where the politicians and monied interests that wanted to elect certain candidates would pay the Negroes' poll tax for votes, and then herd them to the polls to vote according to the politicians' dictates. In this way the Negro gradually voted himself out of politics in the South and, to be sure that he stays out, there was inaugurated the white primary, which put the Negro entirely out of politics."\*\*

For the most part the Negroes in the South maintained their agricultural occupations after the Civil War, and continued to be concentrated in cotton production. They worked as laborers or tenants. In the cities they continued to do the dirty work; to fill the less desired unskilled laboring positions, their wages remaining always below the already low wages of the white workers. Today their wages range from 75 cents to one dollar-and-a-quarter a day. Some Negroes succeeded, it is true, in entering the skilled trades and the professions.\*\* Others even became owners of farms and homes, but since 1880 their number has declined. Still others were able to establish banks, insurance companies, and other forms of economic and commercial enterprises, but these, for the most part, failed miserably. The great Negro masses, of which there are 8 millions in the South today, remained under the most wretched conditions.\*\*\*

The only leaders the ruling class allows the Negro to have are preachers, and they gladly contribute to their support. Even as far back as 1861 the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Church, in a plea for the support of slave missions, called attention to their enhanced value in "secur-

\*T. Le Roy Jefferson, *The Old Negro and the New Negro*. Meador Publishing Co., Boston, 1937. (118 pp. \$1.50; quotation p. 16)

Mr. Jefferson, a Negro himself, wrote this little book "to point out to my people some of the errors they are making that are holding the Negroes back as a race." The book is interesting insofar as it serves as an excellent illustration that the class relations are much stronger than the race relations. The author, belonging to the middle class, is concerned only with the problem of how to make better and more obedient servants out of the negro population. Being 'emancipated' himself, he teaches the blessings of humbleness to those who try in one way or another to make their miserable lives a little better. In other words, he does what any successful labor leader does.

\*\*For detailed information on Negro labor question see: Charles H. Wesley, *Negro Labor in the United States*. Vanguard Press, New York, 1927. The book contains an extensive bibliography indicating other studies on the same subject.

\*\*\*There was recently published by Modern Age Books, New York, Erskine Caldwell & Margaret Bourke-White's "You Have Seen Their Faces." The book, selling at a price workers can afford (75c) not only states in a highly impressive manner most of the prevailing problems of the South, but, together with the story-telling photographs by Miss Bourke-White, and many quotations of representatives of the different classes, may cause the reader enough indignation to start him on a more extended investigation of Southern conditions.



ing the quite and peaceful subordination of these people.”\* And in 1863 the *Religious Herald*, commenting on the value of the church work among the Richmond Negroes said: “May we not hope and pray that large numbers will be savingly converted to Christ, thus becoming better earthly servants while they wear with meekness the yoke of their masters in heaven.” Religion is the only thing which the ruling class voluntarily offers in large quantities. However, there is an organization or two in the South dedicated to the cause of securing the Negroes full political and civil rights. They advocate the right of franchise, but the ballot can no longer mean anything to the Negroes, as it has ceased to have any meaning for the white workers. The abolition of the poll tax is opposed since it would enable the Negro to vote. The fact that it disables thousands of white workers politically is overlooked. However, this is not of much importance, since the white worker in the South sells his vote anyhow. This is the only value it has for him, and in this he is quite sensible; the Negro would do the same. However, it is not impossible that the ruling class may grant the vote as a compromising concession, when a crisis is at hand, but it is much more likely that the average white Southerner would rather fight to the death than to share even illusory “political rights” with the Negro. As far as the latter are concerned, they have lived under a kind of “fascist rule” since the Civil War, and it would not be difficult to extend this rule over the white workers. But it could not be kept over both black and white without destroying the barriers dividing them, and thus eventually effecting their united action.

Capitalism offers the Negro nothing — except its protection against socialism. The easiest way for a Negro to make money in the South these days is to organize an imposing fraternity, society, or association whose “avowed object” and “sacred pledge” is to “protect the members of our race against insidious communism.” Many such organizations are springing up in the South at present. They are directed also against the “false friends” from the North, for, “The Southern white will give the Negro his heart but not his hand, while the Northern white will give the Negro his hand but not his heart. The Southern whites will open the door of opportunity for Negroes to make money and a living, although they restrict his opportunities of spending it, while the Northern whites shut the doors in many instances, of opportunities of making money, but on the other hand offer many opportunities of spending his money that are restricted in the South.”\*\* But this propaganda, lately well fostered, did not greatly help to change the attitudes of the whites towards the Negroes\*\*\*, nor was it able to counteract a visible tendency among the Negro workers to view their situation more realistically than before, and to look at their problem from the class standpoint as well as from that of caste.

There is an antagonism between the Negro workers and the white, and this antagonism has a solid basis. It is the same sort of antagonism that exists between workers everywhere competing for jobs, except that in the South

\*Southern Negroes 1861-1865, p. 99.

\*\*The Old and The New Negro, p. 18.

\*\*\*John Dollard's “Caste and Class in a Southern Town” (reviewed in Living Marxism No. 3) is, as far as we know, the best book illustrating the prevailing caste ideology.

the antagonism is accentuated by the Southern ideology of “white supremacy, “nigger inferiority,” the nigger must be kept in his place”, etc. — an ideology embellished and exaggerated into a cult, for the reason that it feeds the vanity and appeases the hurt pride of the poor white workers, and has its practical utility besides: white workers can monopolize certain trades and with a better conscience take jobs away from Negroes.\*

There is a factor of tradition in the attitude of the white masses toward the Negroes. When slave-holders were in power,\*\* the poor whites, unable to vent their grudges on the slaveholder directly, vented them on the slaves. On the other hand the Negroes put on airs and “threw their weight around” with contempt and arrogance, because they belonged to “sich and sich a family”; in short, they did not conceal the fact that they were proud to belong to the rich white folks and were better than “poor white trash.” The poor whites would never forgive such arrogance and insults, but because slaves were valuable property,\*\*\* they could not avenge themselves. After the Civil war, when “the uppity niggers” were no longer bourgeois property, the poor whites declared an open season on them, and they have been hanging them ever since at the slightest provocation, or none. The aristocrats helped them, and the Negroes became re-enslaved and re-possessed.

From a more comprehensive point of view, however, the antagonism between white and black has to be regarded as quite superficial,\*\*\*\* it disappears to a large extent in times of stress and strikes involving white and Negro workers. The worse the Negroes can say about the white employers, the better the white strikers like it. In ordinary times of peace a Negro is not allowed to denounce a white employer privately, much less publicly, but in times of struggle he enjoys the freedom of the white workers. Many in-

\*) “The depression greatly sharpened competition between white and black workers. Before the present unemployment made any job desirable, white men in the South left for Negroes certain kinds of menial labor or especially dirty and unpleasant work. The present crisis has tended to modify this attitude but at the expense of driving large sections of the Negro population out of economic life altogether, thus correspondingly increasing the likelihood of racial conflicts.” (Labor and the Government. Twentieth Century Fund, 1935. p. 301).

\*\*) Engels and Marx wrote in 1861: “The number of actual slaveholders in the South of the Union does not amount to more than three hundred thousand, a narrow oligarchy that is confronted with many millions of so-called poor whites, whose numbers constantly grew through concentration of landed property and whose condition is only to be compared with that of the Roman plebeians in the period of Rome's extreme decline. Only by acquisition and the prospect of acquisition of new territories, as well as by filibustering expeditions, is it possible to square the interest of these ‘poor whites’ with those of the slaveholders, to give their turbulent longings for deeds a harmless direction, and to tame them with the prospect of one day becoming slaveholders themselves.” (The Civil War in the United States, p. 69.

\*\*\*) The price for a young adult male slave around 1861 was about \$1000.

\*\*\*\*) Despite an increased antagonism between white and black tenants in certain Southern districts because of the policy of landowners to give preference to black tenants, as noted, for example, by Caldwell writing:



vestigations of strikes involving both races established the fact that no strike was lost through friction between whites and blacks. Considering Southern conditions the whites and blacks work together quite reasonably. For instance at every picket-post there are usually white and black workers together, for if a Negro striker put his hands on a white scab, he would be lynched, but of course both white and black pickets go for the Negro scabs. Lately white workers and Negroes have come to have more appreciation for one another: they have met at so many meetings together, have taken to the streets and paraded together, have been arrested, beaten, and locked up together, though in separate cells, and sometimes in separate buildings, and each side has observed that the workers of the other mean business and are in earnest. In a recent strike in a Southern town when the picket-line was demolished and 125 taken to jail, (teargas had been hurled freely and guns fired) about 30 Negroes were the last to leave the line, and they left it walking, not running.

Negroes and whites have struck together along all Gulf ports, in the Tennessee coal mines, and in the cotton fields of Arkansas. The ruling class has not been able to stir up strife between the two races during a single strike. Whenever it is necessary for white and black workers to cooperate they can and will do it. In demonstrations, white and blacks march down the street together, the whites always leading, that is, a small group of whites take the lead, and the rest of the marchers mingle, the rear and the flanks are always well-guarded with white workers in order to protect the Negroes from exposure to attack by police and by thugs. When white and black workers march together in a mixed body, they assume from necessity almost a military formation. It is very striking to observe how confident the Negroes are, even how proud they are, to march with the white workers; it indicates that the influence of the ruling class over the Negroes is cracking. Without in the least minimizing the depth of the white workers' prejudices against the black, the fact remains that workers of both races are exploited merciless, and that now and then in their struggles with the employing class, their united action becomes burned deeply into their consciousness. It is often amazing to discover how suddenly the racial prejudices of white

"The Delta and Black Belt land-owner has been systematically eliminating the white tenant from his plantations for a number of years... His place was filled by a black tenant. The landowner wants a man who can be subjected to his will by means of fear and intimidation;" despite the sharpening of competition for the diminishing possibilities to eke out an existence and its accompanying ideologies of hatred, for the real enemy can not as yet be met and so will not be recognized, it is still to be noticed, as observed by many contemporary writers on southern questions, that in other instances race antagonism tends to disappear. At the same time, however, that black tenants come to occupy white tenants' places, there is, due to a decrease in white proprietorship, and a consequent increase in white tenant farming, as shown in an excellent W. P. A. study (Landlord and Tenant on the Cotton Plantation, Washington, 1936) in relation to the question of what methods of reconstruction should be applied in the South first needed the recognition of the "inter-racial character of the population and the peculiar relationships between the races. This, however, is of decreasing importance as with the increase of white tenancy it becomes more and more a class rather than a race problem." (Quotation p. 181)

workers dissolve during a joint struggle of both races; as it is also amazing to discover how quickly the Negroes forgive the white workers for all the injuries they have suffered at their hands in the recent past. This situation strikes terror into the hearts of the ruling class; it is ominous to them, and augurs their destruction. The ruling class of the South today appreciates just as keenly as did the old slaveholder\* the fatal possibilities of a joint rebellion of white and black workers.

The Negro workers of the Southern cities, quite conscious of their wrongs, long for action and are quick to strike. However, they recognize that they cannot do anything by themselves; they know that "it is up to the white workers to lead the way." Without the white workers the Negroes are helpless. The white workers are not quite so bitterly oppressed and degraded as the blacks, which accounts somewhat for their lethargy. They are "white" and are "better off than the niggers", with whom they doubtless compare themselves, if only unconsciously. However, they will recognize in time that the only difference between them and the Negroes is only skin-deep. Just last Labor Day, when the Negro longshoremen of a Southern city paraded through the streets of the city, even a trade-union leader, otherwise quite reactionary, could be moved by this impressive parade to comment thoughtfully: "We could take those Negroes and turn this town upside down." Yet though the A. F. of L. is now in every State of the South; it has taken very little interest in the Negro worker. Still it must be admitted that even the average member of the A. F. of L. is more kindly disposed toward the Negro than the middle class whites are. By the latter and by the upper class whites, the Negro is still regarded as "property" and of course as their property, to be used as they see fit. And as far as they are considered property, the liberal bourgeoisie is even willing to appear as their defenders. The "best" attitude towards the Negroes is illustrated by a clipping from a Southern newspaper, an item so revealing that we cannot help but quote it in full.\*\*

"The legislature has done nothing with a definite view of improving the status of Mississippi's colored population. Our negroes constitute our labor supply. They make up a large majority of our farm laborers, our cooks, our practical nurses, our plasterers, our brickmasons, etc. Our success as white people depends very largely upon the energy and intelligence of our labor supply. The negroes of Mississippi are humble and modest. They seldom come to the legislature with a request. And this time they have asked for only two small measures. They have asked for some facilities with which to train their teachers and leaders. They have asked for a home or a farm for their delinquent boys and girls. In each of these requests, the proposals have been made to give to the state, without cost, land for the delinquent home, and school facilities for training teachers and leaders. But the legislature declines or neglects to grant even these small requests. Their only method of appeal to the white people of Mississippi is through their conscience. If the negroes cannot reach the white people through this method, they have no hope. The failure of the legislature

\*Before the Civil War some of the slaves were constantly plotting rebellion. In both, Virginia and Mississippi, poor whites participated in their outbreaks. Compare: Herbert Aptheker, American Negro Slave Revolts. Science and Society. Vol. 1, No. 4. pp. 512-538.

\*\*Jackson (Miss.) Daily News. April 1, 1938.



to grant these two small requests must undoubtedly be very discouraging to them. Also, it must be difficult for us white people, who practically own the negroes body and soul, to soothe our conscience. It is not yet too late to manifest common justice toward our negroes. At this writing it seems that final adjournment will be indefinitely delayed. Gentlemen, give the negroes a square deal. This is no time to say 'it doesn't matter', or use the subterfuges usually resorted to when the colored folks seek favor. As a matter of fact, they are not asking favor. They only want some semblance of a square deal and a fighting chance to improve the welfare of their race."

We have said that many landlords prefer Negro tenants. A Negro tenant is of course at the mercy of the landlord. Caldwell quotes\* a Southerner as saying: "If outsiders would stop sticking their noses into other people's business, we'd get along all right down here. We know how to run this part of the country, and we are going to see that it's run like we want it. Give a nigger an inch and he'll take a mile. I know them. That's why you have to keep them in their place, and the less you give them, the less they'll try to take from you." More difficult to handle are the white workers. Despite the caste feeling in the South, the white worker has the idea that he is "as good as anybody". That is partially traditional, a relic of pioneer days, but it is perhaps partially owing to the fact that he is constantly reminded that he is "a white man." It is a fact that the average Southern white worker claims a certain amount of respect and consideration, and there is trouble if he doesn't get it. Unfortunately their resentment finds only individual expressions. It is not an uncommon occurrence to hear of a tenant running a landlord off his own land, or beating hell out of him, and occasionally killing him. It is a common occurrence in the South for a worker to beat up a foreman who abuses him. Northern superintendents frequently have a great deal of trouble getting along with Southern workers, who for some reason are not quick to strike against exploitation but are, as individuals, ready to fight at the drop of the hat for some personal affront. It must be admitted, though, that in recent years the white worker has lost some of his old-time individual pride and independence.

Economically, politically, and ideologically, the South is far behind the North and East, and it is not at all impossible that in a period of National crisis there will arise strong forces in the South to advocate and attempt again to secede from the Union, as it is also not at all unlikely that a new civil war may be necessary to force such economic and political changes upon the South as to allow capitalism to create more order temporarily amidst the now chaotic and miserable conditions. All social-reformistic legislation in the Union is dismissed with contempt by the Southern interests. Any proposal there to benefit the white workers is opposed on the ground that "under our constitution" it would also benefit Negroes; and this attitude still finds the applause of many workers, who seem to be willing to make any sacrifice to keep the "niggers at their place."

Southern *Agrarianism*,\*\* together with the authors of "I'll Take My Stand" offer as a solution for the agricultural problems of the South a return

\*You Have Seen Their Faces, p. 17.

\*\*Compare: Troy J. Cauley, *Agrarianism*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1935.

to the past, to a condition which never existed except in their own minds. Self-sufficient farming will not solve the problem: land ownership is becoming more concentrated, agriculture more mechanized, and all this at a time that the cotton market is being lost. As things stand now there cannot be any radical overthrow of the landlords in the South without an overthrow of the capitalistic system throughout the United States. Agriculture is dominated, and is in feudal subservience to finance capital, which exploits and will continue to exploit it to the zero point. Nor can the problem be solved by the government's feeble attempts to enable share-croppers and tenants to purchase small farms, for the small farm and farmer as such are doomed beyond the power of a government to prevent their fate.

Feverish efforts are being exerted, as in the period of the Civil War, to industrialize the South. The Mississippi legislature passed a law several years ago permitting cities, counties and districts to float bonds for capital issues so that factories may be built and operated. However, the prospects of success are slight. Industries peculiarly suited to the South may arise and develop, and Northern industries may be moved to the South, but the results will be far from a complete industrialization of the South, able to help mitigate the class and caste problems. The stagnation of capital formation in the North, precludes the possibility of such development in the South, not to speak of the general, international situation. But the ambitious Southern bourgeoisie knows nothing of the limitations of capitalism. They are convinced that if they just enact the proper legislation, advertise enough, never let communism get a foothold, banish the sit-down strike as illegal, and foster the race hatred, industry will naturally flow into the South and prosper there. As the Don Quixotes of the United States, they waited until capitalism began to exhaust itself before they set out to build it in Dixieland.

## BOOK REVIEWS

"*Eagle Forgotten*". *The Life of John Peter Altgeld*. By Harry Barnard. The Bobbs-Merrill Company (496 pp. \$4)

This new biography of the former governor of Illinois makes it difficult to believe that much more can ever be said about Altgeld. In every respect Mr. Barnard has done a perfect and admirable job. It would not be in keeping with the book to shower it with praise, but the serious reader will experience a strong desire to express his thanks to the author.

This biography is, as it should be, a sociological study of great interest. At first Altgeld's life history is the ordinary "success story". After the usual amount of misery the "land of opportunity" grants to this son of German immigrants a chance "to make good." This story follows the regular pattern, like the lives of other great men who, as Lincoln and

Douglas in Illinois, progressed from a teaching position to law practice and then to politics. Dealings in real-estate add to the glory the necessary financial fundement. The Middle West was still in the "opening process"; with energy, shrewdness and the proper connections, it was possible for a few individuals to achieve riches and fame. It was also easy to lose both if one weren't lucky enough to die at the proper moment. One of the best things in Mr. Barnard's book is the sober rejection of many Altgeld legends which speak of his "broken heart" caused by his activities in the Haymarket affair and the viciousness of his adversaries. He won and lost his money in speculations in a quite ordinary



way. His "broken heart" did not hinder him later from becoming the "master-mind" of the Democratic party.

Altgeld was never more than a liberal politician who at times was convinced that it was the job of the decent and intelligent people to attain a capitalism without its worse sides. The labor problem was one of reforms. The "Anarchists" had been denied a square deal; justice on the basis of the law was his concern. He could never see that this law was there to preserve injustice, — if we may employ such concepts as all.

Despite his riches he remained to his death under the sway of a middle-class ideology, advocating reforms which were utopian, — utopian, for if introduced, they would have hampered the kind of capitalistic progress possible at that time. His battle was lost at the start; his policies constituted an expression of crisis conditions, and were at once lost with every new business spurt. However, during such conditions he fulfilled a quite valuable "social service." By helping to foster the illusion that the present economic system can be changed to benefit everybody if only the proper policies were adopted, he encouraged the policy of diverting the discontent of the masses into channels which disperse it to nothing. That his "utopian" ideas were bitterly fought by the reactionaries made them only more valuable.

It is said that Altgeld may be rated as the "father of modern social legislation" in America. Quite so, only that there were many such fathers in each recurring crisis. However, Altgeld's ideas often really sound as if they were taken from Roosevelt's fireside chats. Then as now, however, these social ideas did not hinder the strongest and primary determination to save the capitalist society. It was still "necessary"

then to preserve "order" by "extraordinary" means; Altgeld's militia was shooting and killing workers then, even as today workers are killed under the Roosevelt regime. Silly as it is today to expect anything else from the present Administration, it is even sillier to expect any other action from Altgeld. More liberal he could not be unless he stepped outside of bourgeois politics. The possibilities, functions, and limitations of liberalism come clearly to light in Mr. Barnard's book, and not because the author is very much concerned with this question, but because he is a serious student interested in examining events objectively.

People, like Altgeld, convinced as they are that "men in rags never yet destroyed a government" want to compromise class antagonism, and when there is the necessity and also the possibility for such compromise, they will take over leading positions. Essentially, problems Altgeld had to deal with are the same Roosevelt wants to solve today on a national scale; only the magnitude of the policy has changed. And due to the magnitude and the persistence of the problems, social ideas have to be realized and can no longer be successfully sabotaged by the atomized capitalistic interests. But with the realization of the "dreams of the past," another paradox arises. What was conceived by progressive liberalism as a solution of the social question and was so difficult to put into practice, serves now as an instrument for tendencies quite the opposite to the reformer's dreams. The social legislation conceived out of the misery and the class struggle of 40 years ago and celebrated as the last word in human progress tends now to prepare and adjust the workers to a social status far below that of the time when a bomb was thrown on Haymarket Square.

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