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Trotsky on The Stalin Interview

WHAT DOES THE EXPERIENCE WITH MONGOLIA TEACH?

IN STALIN's interview with Roy Howard, the most important thing from a practical standpoint is the warning that the military intervention of the U.S.S.R. is inevitable in the event of an attack by Japan on the Mongolian People's Republic. Is this warning correct in the main? In our opinion, yes. It is correct not only because in question here is the defense of a weak state against a predatory imperialist beast—for if this alone were the guiding consideration, the U.S.S.R. would be constantly at war with all the imperialist countries of the world. The Soviet Union is too weak for such a task, and in this weakness, we might immediately add, lies the only justification for the "pacifism" of its Government.

But the question of Mongolia is a question of the most immediate strategic position of Japan in the war against the U.S.S.R. In this domain the limits of retreat must be resolutely fixed.

A few years ago the Soviet Union surrendered to Japan the Chinese Eastern railway, a position also of extreme strategic importance. At the time this action was acclaimed by the Communist International as a voluntary expression of pacifism. As a matter of fact, it was an act of compulsion due to weakness. The Comintern had ruined the Chinese revolution of 1925-1927 by its policy of the "National Front." This untied the hands of the imperialists. By surrendering an extremely important strategic line, the Soviet Government thereby facilitated for Japan her seizures in Northern China and her present assaults against Mongolia. It should now be clear even to the blind that abstract pacifism was not involved in the surrender of the railway (if that were really the case, it would have been merely an act of stupidity and betrayal); an unfavorable relation of forces: the Chinese revolution had been annihilated, while the Red Army and the Red Fleet were not ready for the struggle.

Now, the situation has so obviously improved, in a military sense, that the Soviet Government considers it possible to resort to a categorical veto on the question of Mongolia. We can only welcome the strengthening of the position of the U.S.S.R. in the Far East, as well as the more critical attitude on the part of the Soviet Government toward the ability of Japan, torn by contradictions, to wage a major, protracted war. It should be pointed out that the Soviet bureaucracy while it is very bold toward its own toilers, easily falls into a panic when faced with imperialist opponents: the petty-bourgeois is unceremonious when dealing with the proletariat, but stands ever in awe of the big bourgeoisie.

The official formula of the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R., widely advertised by the Comintern, reads as follows: "We do not seek an inch of foreign soil, neither will we surrender an inch of our own." Yet, in the question of Mongolia, the defense of "our own soil" is not involved at all: Mongolia is an independent state. The defense of the revolution, as this small example shows, is not reducible to the defense of the frontiers. The true method of defense consists in

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NORMAN MINI

Class War Prisoner No. 57606

"Our standing here is no accident. Our conviction is the result of the inner logic of the class struggle. But the same class struggle that results in our conviction will some day generate an irresistible wave that will sweep away forever what this court and state represents. With this knowledge we can face our sentences confidently; we know that the future belongs to us."

In the Sacramento courtroom a year ago Norman Mini stood erect and uttered these bold and memorable words to the judge who was about to sentence him on the charge of "criminal syndicalism." He and his fellow prisoners were, in reality, being punished for their activities in the strikes of the California agricultural workers of 1933-1934. All eight were given indeterminate sentences of from one to fourteen years.

The Sacramento defendants have been behind the bars now for a full year. Mini has borne the ordeal of imprisonment, of degrading routine, and of back-breaking toil in the jute mill with the same resoluteness and cheerfulness that has animated all his actions in the class struggle.

This week the victims of the Sacramento conspiracy are to come before the State Parole Board for a definite determination of their sentences. The fate hangs in the balance of California class justice.

The National Sacramento Appeal Committee, which has worked tirelessly on Mini's case since it was organized on the initiative of the Non-Partisan Labor Defense last August, has been conducting a national campaign to enlist labor and liberal support behind its efforts to exert pressure upon the Board to set the sentences at the minimum. It has succeeded in mobilizing broad sections of organized labor behind the case perhaps the most powerful and representative support in any labor defense case of recent years.

Over a dozen international unions of the A. F. of L., among them the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the I. L. G. W. U., the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, the United Textile Workers; half a hundred Central Labor Councils throughout the country; numerous local unions and worker's organizations, and a host of prominent labor, intellectual, and liberal leaders have signed resolutions endorsing the work of the Committee and petitions calling for a reversal of the verdicts and a setting of the minimum sentence for the defendants.

The voice of organized labor and of liberal sentiment has spoken out in behalf of the Sacramento prisoners. Their demands have been brought to the attention of the Parole Board. It remains to be seen whether it will heed these demands when it meets this week-end.

Whatever the decision, on this first anniversary of their prison terms, the Worker's Party sends fraternal greetings to the Sacramento defendants and renews its pledge of solidarity with comrade Norman Mini. It calls upon all its members to continue their support of the National Sacramento Appeal Committee, which will not cease until Mini is released from San Quentin, cleared of the criminal syndicalist charge, and allowed to rejoin the ranks of the revolutionaries for whom his heroic conduct has been so inspiring an example.

War on S.U. Behind New Border Clash

Nippon Gov't Driving Toward Open Outbreak In Mongolia

A three-day pitched battle between Mongolian and Manchukuo-Japanese forces in the Lake Bor region on the Outer Mongolian border brought the ever-latent Soviet-Japanese tension boiling once more to the surface this week.

Despatches from Ulan Bator, the Mongol capital, to Moscow, described a battle in which tanks, planes, armored cars and machine guns were brought into play. Several hundred men were engaged on both sides in the fight, which ended with the expulsion of the invading Manchukuo-Japanese troops. Moscow reports following the battle stated that additional Japanese reinforcements were being rushed to the battle area.

As has become customary during this lengthening and sharpening series of border clashes, Japanese sources have given a directly opposite version of events, invariably charging Mongol invasions of Manchukuo territory.

Japan Provokes Incidents

In fact the Japanese-Manchukuo forces have provoked these border skirmishes by claiming for themselves territory which has always been recognized as being well within the Mongolian frontier. Marceling into what they claim is their own territory, the invaders naturally meet with the Mongol guards who have in almost every case forced the invaders to retire.

Again, as usual, Tokyo disclaims knowledge of the activities of the Imperial Kwantung Army (Japan's mainland force), a convenient formula which enables the military to proceed with carefully planned provocative attacks at the border designed to test the Soviet defenses.

Last winter the Kwantung Army wanted to know whether the Soviet Union would assume responsibility for the defense of Outer Mongolia. It staged a whole series of attacks in the Lake Bor area to find out. The result was a flat declaration of warning from Moscow that it considered the defense of Outer Mongolia indispensable to its own defense. Diplomatic negotiations then ensued and the border provocations abruptly ceased.

In the interval occurred the bloody Tokyo events of Feb. 26. Through what appeared to be a retreat of the military elements, the army in fact emerged from the confused days of the attempted coup d'etat with its hand enormously strengthened, its financial and political demands entirely accepted by the new premier, Koki Hirota.

Hirota's Policies

The policies announced by Hirota, the new effort to arrive at some kind of "understanding" with Great Britain and the United States with reference to spheres of influence in the Far East (there were reports that actual negotiations to this end have already been initiated) represent another step on the steady path Japan is treading toward inevitable drive against the Soviet Union.

The advent of Hirota meant a strengthening and extension of Japan's military forces and an effort to bring an end to Japan's diplomatic isolation.

Hitler's march into the Rhine and the complete success of his maneuver showed Japanese imperialism that it need not slacken its pace but hasten it. Britain's support of Hitler and the consequent disruption of France's carefully-laid chain of alliances, in which the Soviet Union had become a link created a situation in Europe extremely dangerous, even critical, for the Soviet Union. Japanese imperialism proceeds on that basis to new provocations on the U.S.S.R.'s eastern borders, growing louder and more boldly the threat of war.

New Support For Newsmen

MILWAUKEE, Wis. Mar. 31—Heartened by fresh evidence of widespread support, the Milwaukee Newspaper Guild Tuesday pressed forward with increased determination in its strike against the Hearst-owned Wisconsin News for recognition of the guild as a collective bargaining agent for the underpaid News strikers. The strike is now in its seventh week.

The Midwest District Guild, meeting over the week-end at Chicago, adopted a resolution heartily endorsing the strike and promising

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Jobless to Unite in Nationwide Army at Great Washington D. C. Congress Meeting on April 7-10

French Gov't Jails Zeller, Youth Leader

Zeller is 2nd Arrested As Capitalists Prepare For War

A foretaste of how democratic France will be in a war with Fascist Germany is to be had in the arrest of the editor of Revolution (Fred Zeller), who according to press reports has been indicted for urging fraternization of French and German soldiers on the Rhine and thereby "inciting to disobedience and anarchy."

With war hovering closer than ever, the French bourgeoisie made the utmost use of Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland to blur class lines at home, to quell all discontent among the working class under the chimeric of "national unity" against the foreign "aggressor" Sarraut, the "Radical," at the helm of the government has been able to play this game successfully only because of the willing cooperation of the Front Populaire. Like overpriced actors, the leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties leap to the stage in response to any noise that sounds like their cue and declaim their social-patriotic roles.

"Union of the French Nation" So shameless have the Stalinists become that they vie with the reactionaries and the Fascists in applause for the jingo speeches of Sarraut in the Chamber of Deputies on the Rhineland crisis. In l'Humanite they echo his cry: "Union of the French nation for peace." This, of course, is not the peace of the victorious socialist proletariat. It is the robber peace of Versailles which they declare approvingly, was safeguarded when the French government strengthened its line of fortifications in the East.

Though a furious debate rages in the press between the right and the "left" as to who serves best the cause of national unity, they are all united on one thing: the danger of having revolutionists at liberty, free to point out the real cause and nature of capitalist wars, to expose the predatory designs of the capitalist class and to arouse the working class against it as the real enemy which must be defeated by revolutionary struggle.

The Sarraut government, supported by the votes—or at the worst the abstentions—of the Stalinists and Socialists in parliament, cracked down upon Revolution, organ of the Fourth Internationalists, because it broke the common front of treachery in their appeal to the workers, peasants and soldiers of France. (Printed in the last issue of the NEW MILITANT.)

The arrest and indictment of Zeller presages the fury of the repression once war actually begins and indicates that its most vehement sponsors will be found in Stalinist circles. But to the Bolshevik-Leninists and the revolutionary Socialist Youth it will come neither as a surprise nor as a first experience; they have felt the heavy hand of the capitalist terror in their struggle against Fascism.

The Case of Levaque Levaque, a member of the Central Committee of the J.S.R. has been behind prison bars for more than two months, without indictment and denied release on bail, for his courageous activity against the Fascist and royalist bands. His case will serve to illustrate how the People's Front paralyzes the resistance of the workers to Fascism by signing reconciliation pacts with the Croix de Feu on the one hand and persecuting revolutionists who battle against it, on the other.

Levaque's arrest grew out of incidents surrounding the assault of the royalist, Maurras, of the Action Francaise, on Leon Blum, leader of the S.F.I.O. This attack aroused great indignation among the Parisian workers and on the same night in many parts of the city they proceeded to punish the fascists and royalists without waiting for the inevitable "don't-be-provoked" orders of the People's Front.

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Militants Sweep N. Y. Socialist Primaries

Full details of the results of the New York primaries are not yet known to us as we go to press. But the contest which has aroused the greatest interest in labor ranks—the dispute between the candidates of the Old Guard and those of the Left wing Militants—is already obviously decided in what amounts to a sweeping victory throughout the state for the latter group. It elected the overwhelming majority of its candidates, not only in New York City but also "up state."

The victory of the Left wing cannot but meet with gratification on the part of every progressive worker who has followed the intensely important internal struggle in the Socialist party.

The Old Guard had at its disposal, in the present contest, not only a crew of experienced old line politicians, but the support of the powerful institutions of the conservatives. In addition, its slate was vigorously advocated by the only daily "Socialist" paper in the East, the reactionary Jewish Daily Forward, with a large circulation, as well as by the English-language organ of the conservatives, the New Leader.

For a press, the Militants had only their weekly Socialist Call. In addition, the Left wing had far inferior financial resources. All this was, however, offset by the enthusiastic support given the Militants by the rank and file of the Party and the Young People's Socialist League, who made up for the handicaps by their loyal activity.

The results of the primary elections furnish ample evidence of the healthiness of the break between the Militants and the discredited Old Guard. It is now quite clear that the Socialist workers, including the enrolled voters, are ready to support a Left wing movement, particularly when the "prominent" and "respectable" fossils of conservatism have broken from the party.

The Old Guard built its whole campaign around a Red scare against the Left wing. The letter was labelled "communist," "Trotskyist" and "insurrectionist." But the barrage of the Right wing was of no avail. In point of fact, its campaign was actually a boomerang against it.

The vote showed that the radical and Socialist workers want a vigorous, militant, revolutionary party, and have only contempt for "Red scares." They are relieved at the sight of the decrepit Old Guard separating from the party and thus taking a millstone off its neck.

Finally, the primary elections reveal once more the truth of the good old principle: the way to meet the onslaughts of conservatives and reactionaries is not to be apologetic in defense of one's militant or revolutionary position, not to be on the defensive, not to try to cover it up with "respectable" phrases—but rather to put it forth more boldly, more clearly and consistently.

The extent of the victory of the Left wing in these primaries may be accounted for, basically, by the extent to which it maintained such a course. Its continued advance in a progressive direction depends essentially upon grasping this lesson and carrying it uncompromisingly into action.

Croppers Aid Move Trial Group Forms From Tampa

A united front Defense Committee has been formed to undertake the defense of members of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union who have been jailed for offenses ranging from "obstructing the sidewalk" to "assault with intent to kill" as a result of their effort to hold meetings or for merely being present at such meetings.

Jim Ball, negro leader of the St. Peters local of the union, has been convicted of the charge of assault with attempt to kill and sentenced to seven years on a prison farm which is the Arkansas equivalent of a Georgia chain gang. He was present at a meeting which was raided by deputy sheriffs who shot two workers in the back as they were going away from the meeting.

Three others were arrested for "rioting." Their "crime" consisted in going to Memphis to report the foregoing event at Union headquarters. Willie Hurst, chief defense witness, was murdered by a band of masked men who staged a fake hold-up after he had refused to sign an affidavit for the sheriff exonerating the real malefactors.

The planters have announced their determination to smash the union at all costs. Three union leaders, McKinney, Sweden and Moskap, are in town now in order to rally support for the union in its fight to free the men under charges and to help lay the basis for a broad defense movement to assist the union in its forthcoming struggles. Among the organizations participating in the defense are the League for Industrial Democracy, Socialist Party, Non-Partisan Labor Defense and the Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners.

NEW YORK, Apr. 1.—It was learned here today that a change of venue had been granted the three defendants who are being tried in Tampa for the murder of Joseph Shoemaker and the kidnaping of Sam Rogers and Eugene Pontot.

Trial has been postponed to April 13, when it will be resumed at Bartow, a town near Tampa. There have been at least twelve kidnappings of labor men in Tampa and its vicinity within the last six years without a single conviction, without even arousing a mild ripple of interest among the forces sworn to maintain "law and order." There is a local ordinance against shark fishing. Sharks have been fished out of the sea with undigested pieces of clothing in their bellies which were identified as belonging to labor men who had been listed officially as "missing." Many of the crimes committed in the course of Tampa's reign of terror will never be known.

The Ku Klux Klan has just ended its state-wide meeting at Jacksonville with a parade through the business district of the town under cover of night. Several hundred participated in full regalia with a fiery cross at the head of the parade.

Already two men have died under mysterious circumstances after having been questioned by the prosecuting attorney. They were called "suicides" by the police.

The spotlight must be kept on the case in order to prevent a recurrence of terror. Constant pressure must be exerted on Gov. Sholtz to bring the Tampa murderers to justice. Send contributions to Tampa Defense Committee, 112 E. 19th Street, New York City.

Mass Reply to New Gov't WPA Slash

Fighting Policy Is Prime Task of Jobless Gathering

Next week the unemployed movement in this country comes of age. After hard years of preliminary struggle, a great goal, held in mind by far-sighted leaders from the beginning, is to be realized. In a mighty Convention, to be held in Washington, D.C. April 7-10, every major unemployed organization in the country will be united in the Workers' Alliance of America.

From more than half the states of the Union, hard-fighting delegates of the National Unemployed Leagues, the present Workers' Alliance, the Unemployment Councils, the American Workers' Union, the Minnesota Workers' Alliance, and other independent organizations, will gather to forge in common a powerful instrument with which to enforce and advance the demands of the unemployed. Through the new united organization the unemployed of the United States will speak with a single voice loud enough to be heard in the remotest Committee-rooms of Congress and the darkest corners of Wall Street.

Plight of Unemployed

No time could be more fitting than the present in which to accomplish the unification of the unemployed. During the past two months the demagogic Roosevelt Administration has launched a new and vicious attack. The orders have gone out to reduce the WPA rolls by 700,000 by July. The C.C.C. is to be cut by 200,000. The State and City governments administering direct relief are attempting relentless and systematic reductions. Roosevelt, desperately anxious to get a good mark from the bankers, has reduced the proposed budget appropriations for unemployment relief to a pitifully inadequate figure. During the past year, in the face of upsurging profits, the total figure of unemployment has remained practically stationary, and is estimated by the American Federation of Labor at a minimum of 12,500,000.

The unemployed have learned from their own harsh experience that their answer to the united attack of reaction, of the industrialists, bankers, the police and courts and the government, must be itself a united answer. They have learned that division in their own ranks, squabbles and fighting among themselves, only weaken their own position, lay them open to new inroads of the enemy, and squander their energies uselessly.

Rich Years of Struggle

Into the new organization will go the rich fund of experiences gained by the unemployed since the crisis of 1929. There were many lessons to be learned. There was first the most elementary lesson of all: the need for organization, the realization that the bourgeoisie and its state would grant to the unemployed masses cast off from the industrial process only what the organized efforts of the unemployed themselves forced. There were then the long lessons in the methods of struggle, the experiences which taught that no polite committees, no social-service technique, no elaborate petitions would bring results for the unemployed. These, the unemployed discovered, received courteous replies, and accomplished nothing. Instead, the lessons taught, the unemployed must make their own the direct and militant methods of the class struggle—hunger marches, mass demonstrations, solid picket lines.

Then the unemployed began to understand more clearly that their unemployment was no temporary plague, but a permanent and insuperable condition of a rotting social order no longer able to handle the productive system which it had brought into being. From this understanding grew the realization that a longer-term view was needed, together with firmer and more lasting forms of organization. The New

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