

judged from the statement in Marx's preface to the first edition of *Capital*: "As in the eighteenth century the American War of Independence sounded the tocsin for the European middle class, so in the nineteenth century the American Civil War sounded it for the European working class." Four years later these words were vindicated in the Paris Commune.)

Mr. Boyd points to Luther and Galileo as having "refused to follow the 'party line' of their time," and he issues the warning: "Russian Marxism will have to face innumerable Luthers and Galileos."

Again Mr. Boyd's analogy is not distinguished for its felicity. Luther and Galileo were rebels against the reaction of their time—just as are the Marxists today. Luther threw overboard the "party line" of the Catholic Church and substituted the "party line" of his theses. It does make a difference, Mr. Boyd, which "party line" one is for: George III's or Jefferson's, Hitler's or Stalin's.

And finally Mr. Boyd manages to get around to paying his respects to Soviet Russia.

There is no reason why Communism as interpreted in Russia should apply to conditions in other countries, especially in view of the fact that a semi-Asiatic, almost wholly illiterate country, two centuries behind Western Europe, can hardly be conceived of as competent to instruct a French or a Scottish Communist as to how the Marxian Theory of Value can be made comprehensible to his own countrymen.

There is no more reason for that, Mr. Boyd, than for the fact that the law of gravitation as interpreted by Newton in England should apply to other parts of the world. The laws of Marx are not Russian or German, but universal, though in each

country they apply in accordance with specific conditions.

As for Russia, Mr. Boyd does not seem to have caught up with it yet. That country happens to be at the present writing not "almost wholly illiterate," but some 90 or 95 percent literate; instead of being "two centuries behind Western Europe," it is first in Europe in industrial production (being second only to the United States on a world scale), first in trade union organization, and its literature, theater, music, cinema, art and educational system compare not unfavorably with those of any country—including our own. And certainly it appears to be some two centuries ahead of Western Europe—and for that matter of the U.S.A.—in the simple matter of providing jobs for all and the opportunity of a career not of making money, but of making life for each individual and for the nation as a whole deeper, fuller, more creative and beautiful.

All of which could, I have no doubt, be done a great deal better by us Americans since we would not be under the terrific handicap of starting from the bottom up. All we need is to get rid of capitalism.

COMMUNISTS are not supermen; but operating with the tools of science (Marx and Engels, Lenin said, "substituted science for dreaming"), they have a certain advantage over those who depend on eclectic impressionism to tell them where they and the world are going. It was a scientist, not a soothsayer, a Marxist named Joseph Stalin, who on May 6, 1929, at a time when there was a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage, was able to say:

Many now think that the general crisis of capitalism will not affect America. That, of course, is not true. . . . The crisis of world capi-

talism is developing with increasing rapidity and cannot but affect American capitalism. The three million now unemployed in America are the first swallows indicating the ripening of the economic crisis in America.

Five months later came the crash.

And it was a scientist, a Marxist named Earl Browder, who in November, 1929, shortly after the Wall Street earthquake, at a time when all the star-gazers of capitalism had decided that it was only a minor tremor and prosperity would be here in sixty days, wrote:

The Wall Street crash, wiping out 43 percent of all stock "values" of American corporations, was caused by a shaking in the economic foundations. In its turn it has deepened the cracks in the foundation and brought the entire capitalist system face to face with crisis, developing at a speed hitherto never witnessed. It is the first outstanding evidence of the beginning of a cyclical crisis of capitalism which, in the conditions of the present period, will become one of the most momentous economic cataclysms in the history of capitalism.

The great seminal ideas of Marx are creating a new world where all other ideas are dismally incapable of saving an old one. For all Mr. Boyd's frenetic archery, the Marxian Gulliver stands unscathed.

One gathers that Mr. Boyd is opposed to fascism. One gathers it tangentially, so to speak, since the whole weight of his argument is directed against Communism. Though he finds that *The Daily Worker* and *THE NEW MASSES* "devote their time to the defamation of every individual and every cause which has not been blessed by Stalin," the Communists really have no desire to compete with him in billingsgate. What we do passionately desire is to create the united front of all sincere opponents of fascism—including even so confused and anguished an obstructionist as Ernest Boyd.

The American Students Unite

CELESTE STRACK

COLUMBUS, O.

ON THE fourth floor of the Y.W.C.A., the National Student League convention ended. Five minutes later, the delegates from the Student League for Industrial Democracy rushed up from the third. Scores of students who had been milling impatiently in the halls and lounges for two days began to surge into the great hall. The steering committee consulted hurriedly. In ten minutes, the gavel descended. The first American Student Union convention had begun.

The hall in Columbus, Ohio, was a colorful mosaic. Sleepless N.S.L.ers and S.L.I.D.ers, whose busses had been delayed twenty-four hours in the bitter cold, compared notes on their respective conventions. "Ninety-odd voted for unity," an S.L.I.D. delegate could be

heard whispering, "Only seven or eight abstained from voting and a similar number were against it."

Pioneers in the student movement, the N.S.L. and S.L.I.D. had as delegates students who helped to organize the first student strike in history—against news censorship at Columbia University. California students who stopped their fellows from scabbing during the West Coast strike were there. One could count a dozen delegates who had been suspended or expelled because of anti-war activities.

Five years had shifted and changed the forces in the student movement. Only three years ago two tiny conventions had signed the first joint-action pact between the N.S.L. and S.L.I.D., resulting in the peace strike of April, 1934. Soon after N.S.L. suggested amalgama-

tion. The proposal had been taken, first as a joke, then as a subject for debate and finally as a practicable possibility. This summer the two national executive committees approved it. Agreement between the two conventions formed the basis for a new organization.

There were new faces everywhere. Seminary students concerned themselves with finding an acceptable ethical basis for the American Student Union. Student-body presidents and student editors brought the temper of the campus to the convention. Liberals tried to reconcile their philosophy with student action. Awakening social consciousness among American students was no invention of "wishful militants." While the American Student Union was meeting, the National Student Federation of

America, a country-wide organization of student-body councils, was unanimously endorsing the American Youth Act, supporting the Nye-Kvale bill, declaring against Negro discrimination in education. The Student Volunteer Convention in Indianapolis, a meeting of three thousand exclusively Christian students, considered for the first time resolutions dealing with academic freedom and peace.

But among the A.S.U. students there were some peculiar faces. Grim, heavy-set men wearing American Legion buttons dotted the audience. A pasty-faced Hearst reporter flashed his observer's card and sidled in through the door. Pot-bellied, derbied plain-clothesmen tried to look inconspicuous. A frightened Y.W.C.A. board member assured us that there were G-men all over the building.

We had been honored with their attention long before the convention opened. Ten days before hundreds of delegates were due to arrive in Columbus, President Rightmire of Ohio State University took a look at the nationwide attack instituted by the Hearst newspapers, took a look at his board of trustees and then wrote the following letter:

The University is experiencing a serious coal shortage. . . . We cannot now see any coal fund after January 1st. . . . The only course open to the University is to close all but the absolutely essential buildings. Unfortunately this renders it impossible to provide accommodations for the meeting of the Student Leagues which had been scheduled for the University during the holidays.

Ohio State University, it is true, did face a budget cut. The convention arrangements committee offered to pay for the coal, but President Rightmire "had nothing to say about that." By a most strange coincidence, President Rightmire discovered the coal shortage on the very day of the Hearst anti-student blast.

The arrangements committee rented halls in the downtown Y.W.C.A. Hearst howled to the world that the Y.W.C.A. board was infected with Communism. The American Legion demanded that we be evicted. For a time the convention's fate was in doubt. A special Y.W.C.A. board meeting was called. We were prepared to move again or to meet in the street, if necessary. But the courageous stand of a Y.W.C.A. secretary kept the building open for our meeting. Nevertheless, there was the constant menace of Hearst reporters, self-elected snoopers, detectives and thieves. Three men dashed up to the registration table, seized the registration lists and plunged down the stairs. Several students raced after them. One was caught and arrested, but the police refused to hold him. Not ordinary thieves, these. Our registration lists could hardly be converted into greenbacks. To us, of course, they were invaluable.

Two years ago letters and papers were taken from the N.S.L. convention and spread over the front pages of the Hearst chain. Last year the S.L.I.D. convention was the subject of a full-page tirade. But this time the attacks reached a new high. Hearst and his agents

were frantic. They seemed to understand the implications of this meeting.

This was the first youth group in America to achieve organic unity between Socialists, Communists and liberals. The rapid coalition of progressive forces into a peoples' movement against war and fascism gained impetus. The presence of professors who spoke as members of the American Federation of Teachers, the talk by Leo Kryzcki, vice-president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, the endorsement of Francis Gorman, vice-president of the United Textile Workers of America, pointed to this.

Our preamble read:

Because American students want peace;
Because they, like their forefathers, are devoted to freedom and equality;
Because they seek educational and economic security;
And because present day society is increasingly denying them these elementary necessities, students in American high schools and colleges have formed a powerful alliance, an American Student Union.

The program elaborated these points and there was little disagreement. One problem only brought sharp debate—war and a program of action for peace. During this discussion the three major forces of the convention were visible: the National Student League, the Student League for Industrial Democracy and unaffiliated students or those representing other organizations. Argument centered around two points: the Oxford pledge (not to support any war conducted by the government of the United States) and the resolution introduced by Harold Draper of the S.L.I.D.

Almost every delegate was personally in favor of the Oxford pledge; disagreement was largely on the basis of tactics. For example, a delegate from New York University declared:

It would be impossible to gain acceptance of a program including this pledge. Already repression against students is heavy; to insist upon the Oxford oath is to add fuel to the fire. The student body would not accept it.

He was answered by a southern delegate, from a Negro university:

We are not attacked because of words we place or do not place in our platform. We are attacked because we work concretely for peace. If the Oxford Pledge draws fire from the reactionaries, it must be because they see in it a threat to their war plans. They must know it is more than an oath;—they must recognize it as a symbol that American students will fight against war before it breaks out and after. We can meet their opposition only by building so strong a peace movement around practical action that they cannot break us.

Delegates from several student councils opposed the oath on the grounds of expediency. One delegate from a women's school felt the girls there could not accept it yet. Although many of the independent delegates took the same position, agreement was finally reached on a three-point basis. (1) The inclusion of the Oxford pledge in the college platform; (2) its exclusion from or modification in the

high-school program (delegates felt that recognition of high-school chapters by administrations would be important and that the pledge would handicap this fight); (3) agreement that the essence of the pledge and of the whole anti-war movement consisted in concrete, practical steps against militarism, against immediate war danger.

The Draper resolution initiated a sharper clash. A majority of the S.L.I.D. supported it. Draper explained it as a "concretization of the Oxford pledge." It selected three hypothetical war situations which the United States might face in the future and tried to blueprint the action that should be taken in each case—a highly theoretical question at best. A motion to consider it in its three separate parts was made and passed.

The first section dealt with a so-called "defensive" war in case of "invasion" of the United States by Japan. Robert Brown, delegate from the student council at City College, New York, voiced the general attitude toward this section:

We have already pointed out in our program that we will not be fooled into accepting imperialist aggression by the United States under the guise of defense. However, although the section is repetitious, I don't object to it.

The second section took up a case in which the United States would attack Japan under the pretext of overthrowing her fascist government. Edward Alexander, Middle West N.S.L. organizer, explained:

Well, I've been all over the Middle West in the last few months. I've been all over Columbus. I've been all over this building. Everywhere I hear students discussing war. But nowhere have I found one student who advocated such a war as this. However, just in case sometime, somewhere, I find such a person, it might be convenient to have this resolution. We may as well pass this section in case of emergency.

On the third section, however, there was fundamental disagreement. This paragraph stated that we would oppose participation by the government in any war (a statement equivalent to the Oxford pledge) but added to this pledge: *even if the United States government is allied with progressive, democratic or even with non-imperialist nations.* The debate centered about these italicized words which to most delegates seem to be a disguised attack on the peace policies of the Soviet Union and a basic misunderstanding of them.

A substitute action was introduced. It also opposed support of any war undertaken by the government and opposed voting for war credits or other military steps. But it went on to make these things concrete by pointing out the chief dangers in the world today—Italian, Nazi and Japanese aggression and it indicated the powerful influence of the Soviet Union for peace.

The delegate who introduced it stated: "We agree that what is needed is a concretization of the Oxford pledge. We do not, however, feel that Harold Draper's resolution achieves this. It is purely theoretical and negative in character. It does not deal with the

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major existing war dangers and offers no practical means of coping with them. For this reason we introduce a substitute third section as a real concretization of the Oxford pledge. It indicates how American students may undertake a positive fight against war."

Nancy Bedford-Jones and Al Hamilton of the Young Peoples Socialist League argued for the Draper resolution and against the substitute motion. In each case they seemed to feel that there was danger of the student movement suddenly advocating that the United States government take up arms if any one of three or four hypothetical situations came to pass.

Meanwhile, Serril Gerber presented the point of view of the Communist delegates: "Not only does the Draper resolution fail to do what it professes—to provide a concretization of the Oxford pledge—but it does something else.

We feel that it is leveled not against the real war makers today—the Hearsts and du Ponts—

but against what Mr. Draper *thinks* is the position of the Communists. We Communist students have already made clear, however, that we support the Oxford Pledge and are willing to take practical steps to concretize it. But we want a resolution that will really achieve this—not the Draper resolution. In our opinion the Soviet Union stands as a great international safeguard to peace, and a resolution which attacks its peace policies, openly or indirectly, is an aid, not to peace, but to the war makers. What we have to fight against is not some highly speculative alliance with the Soviet Union, but the very real war alliances directed against the Soviet Union. The relations between the United States and the Soviet Union are not static. They must become either more hostile—as Hearst wants—or friendlier—as we want. The implications of the Draper resolution are such that they bring grist to the mill of those who oppose friendlier relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Debate closed and a vote was taken. The Draper resolution lost; the second resolution was passed. The S.L.I.D. steering committee met hurriedly. Delegates held their breath.

Would the new Union stand solid? The steering committee returned. "The S.L.I.D. delegates will remain in the American Student Union!" Cheers, wild applause, showed how deep and strong were the bonds of unity. Unity on an immediate program of action did not involve disregard of basic principles by those uniting, yet it was nevertheless possible. Christian students, Socialists, Communists, free lance liberals, had successfully mapped out a program to defend their interests.

Certainly a new maturity marks the American Student Union. Delegates were conscious that major battles lie ahead. We are passing the stage of minor skirmishes over an expulsion here, the R.O.T.C. there, a budget cut somewhere else. The very control of our educational system, the whole sweep of militarism in the schools, the basic right to an educational system are the fronts on which we will act. We face the leadership of not a few thousand students, but of hundreds of thousands and millions.

Correspondence

Where Not To Eat

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The other day I received a sample copy of the French fascist magazine *Les Croix de Feu et Briscards* which is published in New York City. Its motto reads "Neither White nor Red," and it flaunts an emblem of a death skull and crossed swords. The organization makes a chauvinistic appeal to veterans and praises the terroristic French fascist leader, de la Rocque. Because readers of THE NEW MASSES might unwittingly be patronizing supporters of this reactionary, anti-democratic paper, I am listing for their information restaurants whose advertisements appear in *Les Croix de Feu*:

Janet of France	237 West 52nd St.
Larre's French Rest.	50 West 56th St.
Charles'	157 East 55th St.
La Chaumiere	163 East 50th St.
Bal Tabarin	225 West 46th St.
Maurice's	132 East 61st St.
L. H. Bonat	330 East 31st St.
New York City.	HENRI COURTNEIGE.

\$1.50 for an Eight-Hour Day

TO THE NEW MASSES:

On December 27, 1935, the Committee in Support of Southern Miners received the following letter from a striking coal miner in Kettle Island, Kentucky.

"To the Committee in Support of Southern Miners: Conditions which prevail at Kettle Island, Kentucky, are unbearable. Three hundred and fifty miners of the Pioneer Coal Company are striking for better conditions and increase in wages. These miners who belong to Local Number 3251 of the United Mine Workers of America have been on strike since last May. They receive from \$75 to \$100 every ten days from the U. M. W. A. This amount, when divided among so many hungry miners does not amount to much and leaves the miners in a very bad condition.

"About 75 of the striking miners have gone to work for the P. W. A. where coolie wages are paid. \$1.50 for eight hours of hard labor in the mud and snow. These union miners are tasting the fruits of

the New Deal with empty bellies and half frozen bodies, trying to eke out enough to save their half-starved families from dying from flux, flu and other diseases which always follow in the wake of starvation.

"These P. W. A. workers are trying to organize and demand better conditions and wages.

"Could you friends of the Committee, up North help us out in any way?"

We appeal to the readers of THE NEW MASSES, who are able to donate clothing or offer any other assistance to please communicate with Mrs. Agnes Moore, 39 East 10th St., New York City. Tel. STuyvesant 9-2193.

COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF SOUTHERN MINERS.

"Sorry, Mr. Hearst"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

This is a belated but hearty congratulations on the excellence of the anti-fascist number. I must say that "The German Girls! The German Girls!" by Archibald MacLeish is the most tragic—the most powerfully beautiful poem I have ever read, and the first that ever moved me to tears!

I would like to know if there is a possibility of Spivak's articles on Germany being published in pamphlet form? If so, I should certainly send some of them to many people not yet familiar with the characteristic odor of fascism in full bloom.

I must add that I believe you to be one publication faithful to the real welfare of the American people—and this comes from one (sorry, Mr. Hearst!) whose ancestors fought in all the wars from the Revolutionary War on down and whose great-grandparents were among the first to have the courage to cross the continent to the West in a covered wagon.

So I know my Constitution, including the part about our having the right to overthrow the government when it ceases to provide its people with "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Yours for a future with no boundaries and the uniting of all peoples for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" that does not know war.

New York City.

HELEN ROBINSON.

He Stole His Own Cotton

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Pierce White, a white sharecropper from Lafayette, Chambers County, Alabama, has been the victim of one of the most flagrant frame-ups under the Rural Rehabilitation Administration. Two and one-half months ago he was sentenced to six months in the penitentiary for selling 200 pounds of seed cotton that he raised. His crime was "stealing" his own cotton.

White had sold some of his seed cotton to get food for his family. Vernon Jennings, field foreman of the Rehabilitation Administration in Chambers County, had a grudge against White because

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Vice President United Textile Workers of America

NORMAN THOMAS

Executive Director of League for Industrial Democracy

ROBERT MINOR

Cartoonist and Journalist

FRANCIS A. HENSON

Executive Secretary, Committee in Aid of Refugees from Nazism

LEROY BOWMAN, Chairman

Director of United Parents Association

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