

## Trotsky's Point of View

By LEON TROTSKY

The Russian working class will have to do constructive work for its own benefit and for its own plan.

This historic plan, though still extremely imperfect and muddled, will connect all parts and particles of the work, all its ins and outs, by the unity of a vast creative conception.

All our separate and mighty problems—Soviet retail trade included—are part of the general plan which will enable the ruling working class to overcome its economic weakness and lack of culture.

In dealing with the vast problems rising every day our economically inexperienced working-class will have to hold a plastic point of view, here standing on the principles of Socialism, there fighting its battles, occasionally retreating in order to recoup, on certain occasions even temporarily yielding one or two; always keeping in mind that the ultimate goal can only be reached through a series of forward marches, being prepared to fall back for strategic reasons.

### Lenin's Program

This is the meaning of the now famous new economic policy introduced by Lenin during the latter part of his administration.

Amid all the ups and downs, amid all the errors and retreats, amid all the intricacies of the new economic policy, the Soviet republic will carry its plan educating the young generation of Russia in the spirit of it, teaching everyone to co-ordinate their private aims with the one problem of all, which may one day call on them to sew on a Soviet button and the next—meet death fearlessly under the banner of Communism.

I have been called a heretic because I demanded serious and thorough training for our young people to save them from the great defect of the present generalities, constantly repeating the old songs which we had to sing before the resolution instead of searching after knowledge and skill, in order to serve a common purpose that would be grasped by everyone—work and create.

Now, what were these views which brought about my withdrawal from active participation in the affairs of Russia?

It was not on the Soviet aims that we disagreed. It was on question of methods. What were these methods?

In the pre-revolutionary days, and even during the early days of the government, it was necessary to harp on politics and political propaganda. Politics then was a means to an end. Party literature and party propaganda were all conducted through politics, for politics ruled everything.

But there came a time in the life of the successful Soviet republic when it was necessary to fulfill some of the aspirations so widely talked about before the revolution. We had power, we had the mighty machinery of organization, and we had the government.

Government is only a machinery for an end. The politics advocated for the seizing of that machinery must be plastic after the victory.

An army attacking a beleaguered city uses a certain method of attack, but once the city is captured, if the same method is still employed it becomes plunder.

My colleagues were too dogmatic. I believed that our political policy should be flexible, for changed times bring changed tunes.

So I intimated that, now that the revolution had won the victory, we must change our party tactics, for we could not live by politics alone.

I maintained that, in its practical realization, the revolution had drifted to all sorts of problems.

There was the problem of finances; the problem of repairing bridges; the problem of teaching people how to read and write; of lowering the cost of boots in Soviet factories; fighting against filth; catching thieves; installing electric power in country districts; how to sew on Soviet buttons, and instructing people on the necessity of taking weekly baths.

In other words, I advocated that we talk a little less and do a little more work, because now that the revolution was a reality its security lay in hard work and acquisition of culture.

### THE RACE MYTH CRUMBLES

(Continued from page 3)

ern Africa and Spain. The contrary view has become popular solely because of the grotesquely misleading nature of our conventional textbooks on medieval history, which concentrate their attention, almost without exception, upon the Christian culture of Northwestern Europe during the medieval period. The Moslem culture was, of course, entirely non-Nordic, and there was but a small Nordic minority among the peoples that maintained the Byzantine culture to the final conquest by the Turks in the middle of the fifteenth century. Even the civilization and institutions of medieval Europe in the West, as Jullian, Fustel, and others have proved during the last generation, took their departure, not from the crude and primitive Teutonic institutions of the Goths or Franks, but rather from the Nordic appropriation and assimilation of the Gallo-Romanic culture of Italy and Roman Gaul. Even in a political and military sense no strong case can be made for Nordic supremacy during the medieval period. The strongest national monarchies of the Middle Ages were those of France and England, while the Holy Roman Empire remained throughout the medieval era a loose and weak organization. We now know that medieval France was predominantly non-Nordic, and that the non-Nordic element was certainly as large as the Nordic in medieval England, which was not "swept clean" of the Celts during the Germanic invasions.

The facts of history constitute more of an indictment of the political ability of the Nordics than a demonstration of their unusual capacity in this field. The most striking political organizations of early modern Europe were the despotisms of Spain and Bourbon France, while the Central European and Scandinavian countries remained politically backward and loosely organized. The Germanic states continued as the "weak sister" in the political family of Europe down to the period of Bismarck's statesmanship following 1860. If one were to accept for a minute the thesis of the racial determination in politics, European history since the fall of the Roman Empire would constitute about as effective a case as one could hope to erect for the relative political incapacity of these very Nordics, whose unique political force and subtlety has been argued by the whole school of writers from Droysen and the Maurers to Stubbs, Freeman, Fiske, Herbert Baxter Adams, and Burgess. Of course, the sane historian will disregard the racial interpretation of political history as a whole, and understand that, in all probability, the political backwardness of Germany was caused by certain specific historical situations and accidents of an ecclesiastical, geographic, and economic type.

In the case of England and our own country the race myth has been that variant of the Nordic obsession known as the "Anglo-Saxon Myth." It was based essentially upon the contention that most of the unique political virtue of the Nordics migrated from Germany with the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Danes, and took up its abode among the Nordic immigrants to the British Isles, who were supposed to have cleared this area of the fickle and decadent Celts. The American version of the Anglo-Saxon

myth contended that the best in the Anglo-Saxon political genius likewise left the British Isles during the period of the colonization of America. It came to fruition in the township government of New England and, on a larger scale, in the Federal Republic established in 1787. The researches of physical anthropologists and cultural historians have demonstrated both the racial and institutional fallacies in this theory. England, after the Germanic conquests, remained certainly as much non-Nordic as Nordic. The United States has been from the colonial period a most mixed population. Finally, most of the institutions which are looked upon as primarily "Anglo-Saxon" were in few cases derived from Germany at all, but have been the result of the interaction of various historic forces and situations more or less uniquely English or American.

It is scarcely necessary to call attention to the manner in which the demonstrable racial mixture in the historic nations of Europe rules out as utterly impossible the thesis of the racial determination of European history. Even if we were to grant, for example, that the culture of Germany or the culture of France is unique and the product of a definite racial basis, shall we assign this culture, in the case of France to the Nordics of the Northeast, the Alpines of the Central portion, or the Mediterraneans of the South; or, in the case of Germany, is her culture primarily the product of the Nordics in the North or the Alpines in the South? That there is no basis whatever for the assumption of Jewish racial unity or purity to give aid and comfort to either Zionists or anti-Semites was admirably shown by Professor Roland B. Dixon in the article which he contributed a couple of years back to *The Nation's* series on the Jewish problem. Even if we could feel sure which we certainly cannot, that there is any important relationship between race and culture, the hopeless mixture of European races since the Neolithic period would, then, most assuredly brand as nonsense any attempt at a racial interpretation of the history of the various European states. This fact can probably best be driven home by a concrete illustration. There is no better one than the following summary by Karl Pearson of the racial heredity of Charles Darwin, long pointed to as physically and mentally a typical Englishman:

He is descended in four different lines from Irish kinglets; he is descended in as many lines from Scottish and Pictish kings. He has Manx blood. He claims descent in at least three lines from Alfred the Great, and so links up with Anglo-Saxon blood, but he links up also in several lines with Charlemagne and the Carolingians. He sprang also from the Saxon emperors of Germany, as well as from Barbarossa and the Hohenstaufens. He had Norwegian blood and much Norman blood. He had descent from the dukes of Bavaria, of Saxony, of Flanders, the princes of Savoy, and the kings of Italy. He had the blood in his veins of Franks, Alamans, Merovingians, Burgundians, and Longobards. He sprang in direct descent from the Hun rulers of Hungary and the Greek emperors of Constantinople. If I recollect rightly, Ivan the Terrible provides a Russian link. There is probably not one of the races of Europe concerned in folk-wanderings which has not had a share in the ancestry of Charles Darwin. If it has been possible in the case of one Englishman of this kind to show in a considerable number of lines how impure is his race, can we venture to assert that if the like knowledge were possible of attainment, we could expect greater purity of blood in any of his countrymen?

—The Nation, (N. Y.)

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