
100

Questions

to the

Communists

By STEPHEN NAFT



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By Stephen Naft

THE following questions, addressed to sympathizers, fellow-travelers and members of the Communist Party, are put with the sincere intention not to antagonize, but rather to evoke answers in their own thoughts on the basis of their own independent sincere reasoning.

These questions are not addressed to those who will be satisfied in their own minds with evasive or polemical justifications of every act of "my party, right or wrong." The blind thoughtless acceptance and parroting of official, machine-made arguments passed on to the rank and file by the party authorities or mendacious denials of facts unanimously reported by hundreds of correspondents, observers and workers who went to the Soviet Union with enthusiasm or sympathy and stayed there for any length of time, is in direct contradiction to the spirit and ideal of all sincere movements for the betterment of mankind.

Lying and fraudulent arguments can only help fraudulent causes. These are the methods of fascism.

Therefore we hope that every honest sympathizer and supporter of Communist and Socialist aspirations, who consequently must cherish the ideals of personal and economic security, of freedom, of justice, social equality and brotherly solidarity will not only understand and appreciate our motives but will welcome these questions as an opportunity for self-criticism and self-evaluation of his attitude towards the principles dear to him.

ASYLUM OF THE OPPRESSED

1. Why does Russia refuse asylum to political as well as racial refugees from Germany and Czecho-Slovakia, and even to International Brigade men who fought in Spain?

2. How can the Communists reconcile their just demands for asylum for their persecuted comrades, with their insistence that Denmark, Norway and Mexico refuse asylum, and then demand that the U. S. Labor Department deport political refugees, who oppose Stalin? * Didn't even conservative bourgeois governments grant asylum and refuse extradition to confessed terrorists who escaped from Tsarist Russia?

BOYCOTT OF FASCIST COUNTRIES

3. How do the Communists reconcile their demand that the democracies impose sanctions against Italy, Germany and Japan with their approval of the Soviet-Nazi trade pact, of the sale to Italy of oil,** which was used for airplanes which bombed Spanish workers, women and children and for the conquest of Abyssinia?

* Referring to Krivitsky's revelations of Stalin's secret negotiations with Hitler, published several months before the actual open conclusion of the Soviet-Nazi pacts, the New Masses, wrote on August 29, 1939: "His entry into this country . . . give progressives good reason vehemently to protest his activities and urge the U. S. Labor Department to prosecute further its case against him as subject for deportation."

** The oil and airplanes delivered to Italy were supplied on credit and have not, as yet, been paid for, while the war materials so generously given to Republican Spain was paid for in advance with gold deposited in Russia.

4. What explanation is there for the fact that Russia, at the League of Nations session in Geneva, was the most insistent in urging sanctions against Italy because of Abyssinia, yet Russia exported oil to Italy in February 1935 amounting to \$4,475,000* which was increased to \$5,398,000 during the most critical period of the sanctions in February, 1936, though all other nations, including Roumania, considerably reduced their exports to Italy?

5. How do the Communists reconcile their demand for a boycott of fascist, Nazi and Japanese goods with the fact that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union did not organize any boycott of Nazi goods within the USSR and that in August, 1939, Russia concluded a trade treaty with Nazi Germany, stipulating the purchase of goods for 200,000,000 marks and the sale to Hitler of goods greatly needed by Germany for the successful pursuit of war, to the amount of 180,000,000 marks?*

6. Why do the Communists pass in silence the fact that the USSR, which has a virtual monopoly of manganese, a metal indispensable for war materials, continues supplying this material to all fascist countries willing to buy it? Did not Soviet Russia export to Hitler's Germany 226,000 tons of manganese in 1935 alone—52 percent of Germany's total imports of this indispensable basic war material?

7. Why did the Communist newspapers suppress the information reported by important news agencies that in January, 1939, the Soviet Union and Italy negotiated the resumption of trade relations, according to which Italy

* Figures published by the Committee on Sanctions of the League in May, 1936, and supplied by the Russian Government.

** In which connection it should be pointed out that Stalin must deliver Soviet goods to Hitler for the stated amount within two years, while the Nazis have seven years in which to supply Russia with the purchases for which they opened credit. In other words, long after Stalin has delivered all the materials he engaged himself to supply, the Nazis may still owe Russia the largest part of their (Germany's) bargain, and keep their promise as they have kept all their other promises, or as Japan, which has never paid for the East Siberian Railway.

expects commercial exchange to reach \$50,000,000 a year as against \$21,000,000 under the old agreement of 1936?

8. Why did the "Daily Worker", which reports everything of interest concerning the Soviet Union, fail to report that, according to the survey of the League of Nations (to which Russia belongs), Soviet Russia in 1937 bought 17.5 percent of all its imports from Germany, only 15.15 percent from the United States and only 3 percent from France?

CIVIL LIBERTIES

9. If a free press, free speech, free assembly, freedom for the opposition to function are basic conditions of democracy, why are these basic rights refused in the "most democratic country in the world"? Why is it that under the Tsarist constitution of 1905, an opposition press was permitted but not under Stalin?

10. Why do the Communists wax so indignant against the persecution of Thomas Mann, Ossietzky and German and Italian scientists who suffered for racial and political reasons, when so many Russian scientists and writers were "liquidated" for purely political differences? What happened to the great Marxist historian Riazanov, the poets Vladimir Piast, Nicolas Klinov, to Ivanov-Razumnik, author of the "History of Contemporary Russian Thought", to the psychologist Bekhurev, the physicist Lazarev, the geneticist Berg, the zoologist Myshitsky, whom they made "confess" that he fed carpet tacks to ostriches, etc.?^{*}

^{*} How about the liquidation of authors, such as Kirshon, Auerbach, Ermilov, Libedinsky, Koltsov, Tarasov, Rodionov, Erman, Krotki, Ivan Katajev, Selivanovsky, Makarov and Lapinsky? What happen to the sixty-eight year old Israel Zinberg, author of a ten-volume history of Jewish Culture, who mysteriously disappeared and about whom neither the Associated Press nor his American friends could get any information at his address or from the authorities? What happened to the historians, Nevsky, Stieklov, Volguin, Friedland, Zeldei, Anishev, Pointkovsky, the journalist Romm, Garri, Gronskey, Lukianov, the actress Nathalie Satz and many others?

11. Why is censorship anti-democratic in all other countries but justified in the USSR?

12. What moral right have the Communists to ask for liberty of association and organization in democratic countries, if in the country in which they rule even the "Society of Former Political Prisoners of the Tsar" and the "Society of the Old Bolsheviks" have been dissolved and most of their members arrested?

ABOLISHMENT OF CLASSES

13. What sort of socialism is it which allows increasingly luxurious living of a privileged minority on the one hand, in contrast with want and crowding of a majority of the workers on the other? What sort of socialism is it, when privileged members of the bureaucracy, functionaries, and favored writers, journalists and appointees of Stalin's have luxurious city apartments, country villas, cars, chauffeurs and personal servants? Can we call a society "communist" or even "socialist" if it has admittedly rich citizens and poor workers?

14. How does the ownership of Soviet government bonds paying 8 percent and guaranteed by the present and future labor of the workers differ from coupon clipping in other countries? What justification can a Marxist give to the fact that it is possible for a capitalist outside of the USSR to live solely on the guaranteed interest of Soviet gold bonds? Is this not capitalist exploitation of Russian labor?

15. What is the difference between "absentee-ownership" of factories under capitalism and the ownership of hundred thousands of rubles in interest-bearing Soviet bonds by such rich citizens of Russia as Pilniak and Alexis Tolstoy, who earned four or five million rubles for his *Peter I*; Professor A. V. Shostakov, who got 75,000 rubles for writing a new history text book, in which Trotsky is described as a German tool; and many other Stalin favorites?

16. Do not the wide differences in income, standards of living, dress, spheres of interest and cultural opportunities lead to social stratification and formation of groups which do not intermingle socially? Basically, what difference is there between the ruling caste in Russia and similar classes in other countries? These class differences were strikingly illustrated by the recent formation of the "Society of Officers' Wives for the Improvement of the Poor". How does this organization differ from the pastime of American society ladies, the "New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor"?*

17. Why condemn the inequality of income elsewhere while justifying the inequality in Russia?

18. What kind of socialism is that of the Soviet Union where an over-supply of champagne is produced for its higher income citizens, the higher bureaucrats, engineers, officers and Stakhanovists, who are urged to drink champagne (see New York Times, May 20, 1939), while not enough shoes and clothes are produced to sell to workers at reasonable prices?

COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE III INTERNATIONAL

19. Why did Earl Browder say before the McNaboe Committee that "orders from Moscow would be thrown into the wastebasket" when he himself in 1928 was appointed secretary of the Communist Party of the United States by Soviet orders, after the American party members had voted overwhelmingly in favor of reelecting Jay Lovestone, just as in 1924 by orders from Moscow, Foster was superseded by Lovestone? Is not Browder's denial that he obeys orders from Moscow strikingly similar to, and just as credible as, the American Nazi Fuehrer Kuhn's

* See Walter Duranty in the New York Times, December 22, 1935: "This very differentiation of wages by consequences of rewards for service must lead to a new class differentiation in what claims to be a classless society, a new class of bureaucrats and directors of state enterprises, a new class of high paid upper workers all of whom together will form, or are forming a new bourgeoisie."

declaration before the Dies Committee (August 16, 1939) that the German Nazi Bund in America have absolutely nothing to do with the German government and "do not care anything about that government?"

20. If Lenin declared that the "first duty of a Communist is to oppose his own government in any imperialist war," why then didn't the Communist International denounce Browder for stating before the McNaboe Investigating Committee in 1938 that he would "bear arms in support of the U. S. government in **any** war in which it might be engaged"?

21. How can the American Communist Party claim to be the only working class party when its social composition is predominantly middle class and white collar workers?

22. Why is there such a tremendous turn-over in the membership of the Communist Party in America (except in the party bureaucracy), in some years up to 90%?

23. When will the Communist Party of the U.S.A. give an accounting of the funds raised for the "defense" of Sacco and Vanzetti, Mooney, Loyalist Spain, and what percentage was kept by the Communist Party of the U.S.A. for salaries of its job-holders?

24. Why is it that in practically every trade-union in America in which Communists have been able to get power and the treasury, factional warfare has resulted, generally leading to exhaustion of union funds and finally to the expulsion of the Communists from the leadership of the Union?

25. Why do the Communists object to being called Stalinists when they themselves speak of the "Stalinist Constitution"; "Stalinist Youth", and even "Leninism-Stalinism"?

26. How could the American Communist Party advocate a united front with "Father" Divine, who lets him-

self be called "God", denounces Communism, the New Deal and spreads religious superstition, diverting the black workers from the class struggle? How is it that Communists called Norman Thomas a "social-fascist sky pilot"—and "Father" Divine the "religious leader of his people"?

27. Why did the Communist Party, after a massacre-pogrom of Jews by Arabs in Palestine, uphold the Arabs against the Jews? (See *Freiheit*, November 10, 1929). Wasn't this done to win for Soviet Russia the support of the Arabs for war alliances in the Near East?

28. Why did the Communist Party, after the recognition of the Soviet Government by America, drop its agitation and slogan for "self-determination for the Negroes in the Black Belt"? Wasn't this a condition of recognition?

29. Why did the Communist International attack the Austrian socialists in their struggle against Dollfuss in 1934 for "waging a defensive struggle against fascism instead of fighting for social revolution", yet slander as "Franco's agents" the anarcho-syndicalists and POUM men, who did not consider the defensive struggle against fascism sufficient, but maintained the necessity of collectivization and the social revolution in Spain?

SOVIET CONSTITUTION AND THE BALLOT

30. Why is the Soviet voting system called a "secret ballot" when only one party—the party in power—can run candidates for office? Isn't the term "secret ballot" an absurdity when the primaries are held by an open show of hands for the approval of the candidate proposed by the party in power?

31. Why do the Communists say that all Hitler and Mussolini plebiscites are fake, while they call the Stalin plebiscite "the most democratic election in the world"?

32. Where is the difference, when in neither case opposition candidates were allowed, and voting against the official candidates was dangerous?

33. Why is the one party system in any other country condemned as totalitarian tyranny while justified in Russia?

34. What is the difference between a frank dictatorship of nonremovable heads in fascist countries and the same thing in the USSR, where the uncontested dictatorship of one man is called "dictatorship of the proletariat"—though the proletariat has no more chance of selecting or outvoting the leaders or candidates for leadership than in any of the totalitarian states? Is not the rule of the proletariat by a dominant single party, which includes only a small percentage of the whole people, and the rule of that party by its leaders a "dictatorship over the proletariat"?

35. Why do the Communists say that they demand the "dictatorship of the proletariat" if, at the same time, they admit that they demand full power for the Communist Party, which means a dictatorship of the Communist Party over the proletariat?

36. Are the 1,100 Deputies to the Supreme Soviet, the Russian Parliament of the new Soviet Constitution, who first are selected by the Communist leadership and then voted without opposition (as no opposition candidates are allowed) the true representatives of the 160,000,000 workers and peasants, who are not members of the Communist Party and cannot nominate their own candidates?

37. Do the instructions given to these Deputies (who receive a monthly salary of 1,000 rubles, in addition to their income as officers, directors, Stakhanovists or journalists) "to tell Stalin that all his counsel and all his advice we deem to be the law" (United Press dispatch from Moscow, January 14, 1939) make that "Parliament" and these Deputies, anything but rubber-stamps for the unopposed will of one man?

38. What is the difference between these Deputies, bound and paid to approve all "advice" of Stalin **before they even know it**, and the Deputies of Hitler's or Mussolini's "Parliaments", whose only mission is to listen to the speeches of these two dictators, to applaud and approve their decisions and to cash salaries?

COLLECTIVIZATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

39. If, as the Communists say, the first and second five year plans were successful then why have almost all the directors of the two plans been shot for "sabotage"?

40. Why were the periodic famines in Tsarist Russia, due as they were to the blind forces of capitalist-feudal chaos, backwardness and ignorance, more blameworthy than the starvation of three or four million peasants of the Ukraine in 1932, as reported by all foreign correspondents, including such Soviet sympathizers as Walter Duranty and Maurice Hindus—and later generally admitted? Was it not deliberate starvation, if seed was refused to peasants when or because they resisted forced collectivization?

41. What is the difference between Stakhanovism and the ordinary piecework speed-up system in capitalist countries?

42. If in the USSR workers can be dismissed by the factory directors, for lateness, drunkenness, political heresy, or for other causes, if the wages or rate of piece work can be reduced without consultation or consent of the workers, and the workers have not the right to strike or make concerted demands for higher wages or a greater share of the goods produced by them, then aren't they slaves of the factory, rather than the "owners"?

LABOR UNIONS

43. Why do the Communists favor participation in trade-union activities, strikes and wage struggles in other

countries, and denounce fascist countries for prohibiting strikes, while they approve the prohibition of strikes in Soviet Russia?* (In 1930 striking miners in the Donet coal basin were shot down by the Communist Militia.) Isn't the expression of "One cannot strike against oneself" an absurd smoke screen of empty words which hides the fact that they cannot answer this question?

44. Why do the Communists insist upon elected officials of trade union in other countries, while approving the appointment of trade union officials from above in the USSR?**

45. How is it that Communists outside of Russia are ordered to join and be active in trade-unions, while in Soviet Russia Alexandra Artukhina, veteran woman Bolshevik, was removed from leadership of the Cotton Textile workers union, and workers are arrested for "trying to inject principles of trade unionism (as practised outside Russia) and to dull political activity of labor union workers?***

46. If the USSR trade unions are compulsory, yet workers are arrested for "trying to inject principles of trade unionism",—and the purpose of the unions shall **not** be to bargain for economic advantages, but, according to the Soviet official definition shall serve as "schools of communism, as support of the dictatorship of the working class and as first assistants of the State"—what difference is there between the Russian unions and company unions

* The Okulov law of August 15, 1933, makes it a crime for any worker to leave his job, no matter how irksome it may be. The penalty is six months and confiscation of his property. On the other hand, he can be dismissed for any reason whatsoever. In May 11, 1934, the "Trud" (Labor) of Moscow reported: "In the factories of the Machine Trust, the employees usually work from 14 to 16 hours a day . . . without being paid for overtime".

** The "Trud" reported on March 26, 1937: "In all unions, from the central boards to the craft committees, the undemocratic appointive system is in use. General meetings are practically nonexistent. For years there have been no elections to the Central Unions".

*** A.P. Dispatch to New York Times, May 23, 1938, quoted from Trud, organ of Soviet Labor Unions.

in capitalist countries or compulsory "labor fronts" controlled by the state in fascist countries?

47. Why is the resistance to the 1938 decree on labor discipline (tardiness) regarded as "treason" while in capitalist countries trade unions do not permit firing of workers for tardiness?

48. If the workers in the "Socialist Fatherland" are forbidden to change jobs at will which they can do in capitalist countries, is this not an extension of the former serfdom of the peasants to the workers in the mines and factories?

JUSTICE IN THE SOVIET UNION

49. Why, though maintaining that in all other countries, the only justification for legal conviction should be proven overt acts exclusively, and not merely belief in ideas, do the Communists find the persecution of workers for Socialist, Menshevist, "Trotskyist" or any dissensions perfectly justifiable in the Socialist Soviet Republic?

50. How do the Communists justify their demands for a fair trial with a jury and self-chosen attorneys in all other countries, while granting none of these in Russia?

51. Why do they object so strenuously to what they term "class or party justice" in fascist and capitalist countries, while in Russia only Communists may be judges and lawyers, thus establishing Party "justice"?

52. How do the Communists justify shooting opponents without trial by a simple decision of the G.P.U. in Russia, while considering this a crime in all other countries?

53. Why do the Communists insist on *habeas corpus*, immunity of persons and private dwellings from search

without warrant and the right of bail in other countries, while denying these rights in Russia?

54. Why is it a crime to leave Russia without permission and why are those who attempt to escape heavily punished? Why is the passport fee for leaving Russia the highest in the world (\$300 to \$600) which must be paid in foreign "valuta", in other words by relatives or friends abroad? Isn't this equivalent to release only by payment of ransom for those who want to leave Russia? Why do such rules exist only in fascist countries?

55. How is it that Russia alone legalizes the hostage system, by which parents can be condemned to jail for the escape of their sons or any other member of the family, and vice versa? What country in the world other than the Soviet Union has a law holding children responsible for the escape of their parents across the border?

56. In what country other than the Soviet Union is there a law similar to that enacted there in April 7, 1935, under which 12 year old children can be condemned to death?

57. How can the Communists continue to point with horror* to the exile of political opponents to Siberia under the Tsar, while they are sending their own political opponents in even greater numbers to Siberia and the Arctic?

TRIALS AND PURGES

58. How can the fact be explained that in the entire history of revolutionary movements, no socialist, anar-

* The number of persons executed in Russia during the last three years without trial, or after a secret "trial" (outside of the three Moscow show trials) is estimated by foreign correspondents in Russia to be between 40,000 and 100,000. W. G. Krivitsky, the former chief of Stalin's secret service abroad estimates the number of officers executed at 35,000. This includes the great majority of the generals and chiefs of the army, navy and aviation services. Walter Duranty, the outspoken pro-Soviet correspondent of the Times, writes (Look, August 15, 1939): "I think perhaps 10,000 persons were executed; hundreds of thousands were dismissed from their jobs, exiled or imprisoned, unjustly in too many cases".

chist or communist outside of the USSR ever "confessed voluntarily"—particularly when there were no evident, manifest proofs? Why did no revolutionist, except in Russia under the Stalin regime, ever accuse himself and his comrades, of "counter-revolutionary plots", giving as motive his own "wickedness and depravity" — things which were approximated only during the Spanish Inquisition—while in the USSR, those who were the closest collaborators of Lenin in preparing and making the Russian Revolution, and prominent in the Soviet Government from 1917 to 1936, have confessed to the most heinous and fantastic crimes?

If, as we are told, they confessed "voluntarily"—"because it was the truth", is it probable that men, capable of committing all these abominable crimes and betrayals of which they were accused, have confessed only because they "could not tell a lie"?

59. If Yagoda, former head of the G.P.U. who was liquidated in a purge of the purgers in 1938 was an "agent of Hitler" all along and in his trial admitted that he had forced many "confessions" by threats against the families of the prisoners, why doesn't the Soviet Government release all those jailed by and convicted with the help of Yagoda and restore the good name of all those executed under his regime "for being enemies of the people?" Why has Yagoda's successor Yezhov been removed?

60. If, as was published in official Soviet reports, during the Third Moscow Trial of 1938, a famous physician "confessed" that he hastened Gorky's death, because he was forced to by Yagoda saying that "he threatened to destroy my family"—one of the evidences upon which Yagoda was convicted—is not the conclusion inevitable that in all previous trials prepared by Yagoda, confessions were obtained by similar methods?

If the man who was the Soviet Union's chief of the political police for fifteen years, was capable of forcing a distinguished physician by threats to his family, to commit murder, of what value are all the "confessions" and convictions which he obtained during these fifteen years? Why have not the men convicted through his "investigation" been rehabilitated or retried?

61. How can the Communists still maintain that the execution of thousands in Russia was justified, if so many "purgers" were later "liquidated" under the accusation of having "purged" innocent people; if A. A. Zhdanoff, the Leningrad Communist Party Secretary reported at the Party Congress in March, 1939, that "there were all too many cases where one man was expelled from the party—perhaps without due reason—and all his friends and acquaintances and anyone he knew were also expelled".*

62. And why didn't the "Daily Worker" print the very interesting dispatch from Moscow (published in The Times of January 2, 1939) about the trial and conviction in Kiev of members of the political police who confessed to illegally arresting innocent persons and extracting confessions "in flagrant violation of the law in procuring evidence"? And that their conviction came about when a loyal party member, the director of a rural school, Sadolukoff, reported to the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party, that criminal methods had been applied by the investigators examining him, resulting in his false confession of membership in counter-revolutionary organizations?

Though the reports of this trial published in the *Sovietskaya Ukraina* did not reveal the methods used to extract these confessions, is this not sufficient to make one doubt whether all other confessions were really obtained "voluntarily" and without the use of some kind of torture?

63. Is it not strange that the former white-guardists Ulrich and the former opponent of the October Revolution Vyshinsky were selected as judge and prosecutor of Lenin's Central Committee members Kamenev, Zinoviev, Radek, Piatakov, etc?

64. Is it another coincidence that among Stalin's high officials who were former Tsarists, and were now instrumental in liquidating the collaborators of Lenin, there is

* Walter Duranty in N. Y. Times, March 21, 1939.

also Saslavsky—now editor of the official party organ Pravda, the same Saslavsky, who, as editor of the Kerenskyist daily Den called Lenin an agent of the German General Staff, spoke of the “Ludendorff-agent Lenin,” and until recently wrote daily about the “Gestapo-Agent” Trotsky?

65. Why were the leaders and presidents G. Petrovsky of the Ukrainian SSR; Cherviakov of White Russia, G. Mussabikov of Transcaucasia, F. Khodjajev of the Uzbek Republic, A. Rahkembayev of Tadjikistan—the so-called autonomous Soviet Republics—executed on charges of Ukrainian or Georgian “nationalism” or “separatism”, when the Soviet Constitution guarantees to each Union republic the right freely to secede from the USSR?

66. How can the Communists justify the execution of so many Soviet army commanders on the ground that they “secretly negotiated with the Nazis”, when the conclusion of the Soviet-Nazi Pact in August, 1939, revealed that such negotiations have been going on secretly for many months between Hitler and Stalin at the very time when hundreds were executed for what Stalin finally perpetrated?

WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

67. Why does the Soviet Constitution say “each shall be paid according to his work” when this is the classic claim of capitalism and the direct contradiction of Socialism? (Is the payment of 50,000 rubles for an “Ode to Stalin” and 1,000 rubles a year to a coal miner “pay according to his work”?)

68. Wherein lies the great superiority of the Soviet kind of “communism” over capitalism (where the “factories do not belong to the workers,”) when, according to Russian statistics of March, 1939, the average monthly income of the Russian worker is the equivalent of \$54.24, and the price of a cheap overcoat is the equivalent of

\$98.28, of a suit \$83.16, and a pair of felt boots, which only the poorest wear, \$23.62?*

69. Why is the cost of living in Russia not only relatively but absolutely higher than in other countries, so that while an American worker pays about one day's income for a pair of shoes and one week's income for a suit of clothes or overcoat, the Russian worker must pay at least the total income of two weeks for a pair of shoes, and for an overcoat or suit the income of two months?

70. Why did the "Daily Worker" omit to publish the Associated Press dispatch (May 26, 1939) that Finance Commissar Zvereff reported that, while revenues and expenditures of the Soviet Union are growing yearly, the purchasing power of the ruble has declined and that prices for various articles of clothing in Moscow shops have increased 20 to 161 percent as compared with the previous year?

71. Why do the Communists justify piece-work speed-up system, if called Stakhanovism, and unpaid overtime under the name of "subotnitsa" in Russia while justly condemning it in other countries?

72. Why was peonage and forced labor denounced in other countries while millions of "kulaks" and oppositionists were transported to build canals, to cut timber in the frozen north, for opposition to forced collectivization? Weren't entire populations of some districts deported and allowed to die from undernourishment, frost and overwork?

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

73. Why did the Soviet Union, once so highly praised as the only country in the world which gave women the right of abortion, recently make abortion illegal though,

* N. Y. Times, Moscow Dispatch, May 27, 1939.

according to Louis Fischer, this was against the will of the majority of the people? And why do the Communists now praise the Soviet Government for prohibition of abortion as much as they praised it formerly for its legalization? Is the Soviet government's present propaganda for large families (for the purpose of cannon fodder as in the fascist countries) in keeping with the much vaunted Soviet emancipation of women?

74. Does it not amount to a new privilege of the more prosperous citizens of the Soviet Union, when divorces were made more expensive and so, easy for the rich and almost impossible for the poor, exactly as in England and many other capitalist countries?

75. How is it that while in most capitalist countries laws protect working women, by prohibiting their work in mines or dangerous industries, there are no such restrictions in the USSR?

76. Does it look very "Socialist" — when in some mines, middle aged women do back-breaking work, while young soldiers with rifles watch them? Do similar conditions exist in any capitalist country?*

INFORMERS AND STOOL PIGEONS

77. Why is that while Communists are contemptuous of stool pigeons and informers in other countries, they incite the workers and peasants in Russia to be stool pigeons against each other and encourage children to spy on their parents; in short glorify stool pigeons and informers? How is the G.P.U., many of whose members are former Tsarist Okhrana operators, any different from the German Gestapo or Italian Ovra which are hated and despised by all freedom loving persons?

* From the report to his union by Kléber Legay, president of the Miners Federation of Northern France, after his return from Russia in 1936. ("Un Mineur Français chez les Russes", Paris, 1937, p. 84).

78. Why is there a more rigorous internal passport system in the Soviet Union than there was in Tsarist Russia, and now only fascist countries require internal passports?

SPAIN AND THE COMMUNISTS

79. Why did the Communists of Spain help to overthrow the left Socialist Caballero whom they used to call "The Lenin of Spain"—to support Negrin, Prieto, Companys, Azaña, etc., who pledged themselves to preserve "democratic capitalism"?

80. Why do the Communists support collectivization in Russia, and why did they continue the suppression of all remnants of private industry even during the Civil War of 1918 in the teeth of the invasion by 13 countries, when in 1938, they sent the Communist-controlled Lister Battalion into Catalonia to wipe out the collectives—thus destroying the economic basis for the enthusiasm of the people and their interest and will to resist the fascist onslaught?

81. What kind of a "United Front" with the fighting proletariat is it, when on December 17, 1936, the Moscow *Pravda* declared "As for Catalonia, the purging of the Trotskyists and the Anarcho-syndicalists has begun; it will be conducted with the same energy with which it was conducted in the USSR". As the Anarcho-syndicalists have formed the overwhelming majority of the organized Spanish proletariat since the beginning of the labor movement in that country, and the Communists were an insignificant minority, recently organized, how does such activity differ from the extermination of labor militants by Franco, Hitler and Mussolini?

82. In view of this declaration of the *Pravda*, can the Communists still deny the truth of countless reports from former fighters in the Spanish Republican armies that hundreds of leaders of non-communist labor groups and organizations, men like Andrés Nin, Camillo Berneri,

and many others were kidnapped and assassinated by Communist terror gangs operating as a Spanish GPU?

STATE AND DICTATORSHIP

83. How can the Communists reconcile the theory of the "dwindling and withering away of the State" under workers' rule, with the situation in Russia, where the State grows more powerful, more concentrated and centralized and interferes to an ever-increasing extent with the private lives of the individuals?

84. Why ridicule the glorification of Hitler and Mussolini while deifying Stalin to even more absurd limits, in contrast to the attitude of Marx, Lenin and other fore-runners, who repudiated and condemned personal glorification—particularly of living men? How can any "progressive" or radical believe in the infallibility of one man?

HISTORIC TRUTH

85. How can the champions of "historic truth" give Stalin the credit for the founding of the Red Army, when their own newspaper files fail to mention Stalin during the revolution of 1917 and all their newspapers from 1917 to 1922 couple Lenin and Trotsky as the heroes of the revolution, and give practically sole credit to Trotsky as the founder, organizer and commander of the Red Army during the entire Civil War?

86. How do the Communists account for the fact that all of the leaders of the revolution except two (Stalin and Kalinin)—all the founders of the new regime, half of all the Red Army officers and most of the Soviet Army Generals, who had risked their lives under the Tsar and in the civil wars,—that all these men became "traitors to their country"—a fact which has no parallel in history? And, if, according to recent Soviet theories, all these men were traitors and spies from the beginning, is it not a strange reflection on the Russian Revolution, that it was brought about by such criminal scoundrels?

87. How do the Communists explain the fact that in books written between 1917 and 1924 by Olgin, Foster, John Reed, and others on the Russian Revolution, the name of Stalin does not appear, while Lenin, Trotsky, Kamenev, Bukharin and others, now labeled by Olgin, Foster, et al as "fascist spies" were eulogized as the leaders of the Revolution? How did the heroes of 1923 under Lenin become "spies and traitors" in 1938 under Stalin?

88. Do you believe in a statement printed in A. V. Shostakov's Short History of the USSR, (1938), concerning the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of 1917, that Trotsky "obviously playing into the hands of the Germans and provoking them to start a fresh offensive against the unarmed lands of the Soviet, broke off the peace negotiations. The Germans took advantage of this, started a new offensive and occupied Soviet territory . . . These losses were due to the treachery of Trotsky and his helper, Bukharin"?

If you believe this, how is it that Lenin appointed Trotsky Commissar of War, after this "treachery" and he and Bukharin remained for many years after in the highest Party Committee—the Politbureau? Was Lenin so stupid that he knew nothing about their "treason"?

89. What difference in the degree of hypocrisy and lying is there between the Nazis in America who assert that they are the "only true American patriots", and Communist Party members who publicly deny that they are Communists, and call themselves "progressives", "liberals" or "true American Jeffersonian Democrats"—when those who demand the establishment of democratic policies in Soviet Russia are denounced as "deviationists" or "Trotskyist spies", and deprived of their jobs, exiled and more often than not—executed?

UNITED FRONT AGAINST FASCISM

90. Why, having attacked the Socialists in all other countries as "social-fascists" and having even voted with the Nazis in German parliaments against the Social Demo-

cratic regime, thus paving the road for Hitler, did the Communists preach "united front" with the Socialists to "prevent the fascists from coming into power"?

91. How do the Communists reconcile their advocacy of the "United Front" with the Socialists and liberals in the rest of the world with the fact that in the Soviet Union, all Mensheviks, Social-Revolutionists, Anarchists and liberals were or are being sent to Siberia or "liquidated" unless they renounce and repudiate their principles, and abase themselves by insulting their past?

92. How can the Communists reconcile their party ukase that "comrades who maintain political, social or personal relationships with Trotskyists or enemies of the Soviet Union are guilty of treason not only against the party but against the entire working class,"—with the demand for a "united front" with all leftists and Socialists, when they know that the latter are opposed to Stalin's dictatorship, and the Communists call all opponents of the Stalinist terror "Trotskyist Traitors"?

93. Do not the Hitler-Stalin pacts of trade and non-aggression contradict the "collective security" idea so fervently propagated by the Soviet Union and the Communists? Is it not a strange way to fight Nazism by agreeing to supply Hitler with oil and all the raw materials he needs for war—which he cannot get anywhere else,—and to buy from Germany those goods which Hitler said his country "must export or die"?

94. In view of the fact that the Nazi invasion of Poland began, as if by a signal, immediately after the unanimous Soviet ratification of the Hitler-Stalin pact, and was followed inevitably by the unleashing of the new World War, do you still believe that this pact, as the *Pravda* ("Truth"—in English) wrote "... will serve the cause of the universal strengthening of peace" and, as the *Daily Worker* wrote, (August 25, 1939) that it was the "Soviet Union's great stroke for world peace . . . and that the Soviet Union has made one of the most valuable contributions to the peace of the world"?

95. Is it not understandable that many believe that the leaders of the American Communist Party are only agents of the Stalin regime, if Browder openly admitted before the Dies Committee that party members opposing the Russo-German Pact would be expelled? As the membership of the party was not consulted about this pact, can the expulsion from an American workers party for disagreeing with the foreign policy of another country, dictated by its ruler without consulting the people, be considered as compatible with principles of "Americanism" and "democracy" so often proclaimed by the Communists in America?

96. If the Daily Worker explains that Soviet Russia invaded Poland only to liberate the "eleven million Ukrainians and White-Russians from the oppression of semi-fascist Poland," why does the Daily Worker praise the Soviet Union with the same enthusiasm for refusing to join the Western powers in the attack on Hitler-Germany, whose defeat would really mean the liberation of more than seven million Communist (their own comrades) and fifteen million Socialist voters in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, from Hitler's fully fascist slavery, torture and death?

97. What will the thousands of Communists, Socialists and trade unionists, rotting in the Nazi jails and tortured in Hitler's concentration camps, think of the Soviet government's declaration of "friendship between the two governments"? Have they not been hoping that one day the struggle of the anti-aggression powers (to which the USSR belonged) against the fascist regime would free them and the German people from torture and slavery? Do not these pacts strengthen Nazism at home as well as abroad and help to perpetuate the fascist regime of bestiality and oppression? Since not one word in the pacts between Russia and Germany mentions the fate of the imprisoned comrades, haven't those who suffered for the cause of the workers been forgotten, abandoned and betrayed by Stalin and his uncritical followers, the Communists and their fellow-travellers?

98. Can you explain the sudden change in the attitude of the Communist Party leaders towards fascist aggression after the Nazi-Soviet Pact as expressed in the following strangely contradictory statements. In a pamphlet published as late as June 1939, Wm. Z. Foster wrote:

War-making fascism is a world menace and must be halted upon a world basis. The United States cannot possibly isolate itself from the fascist threat . . . the unchecked advance of world fascism would soon result in strong military bases in Latin America, with the consequence that every city in the United States would be brought within the range of fascist airplanes. Isolationism is the surrender to fascism and the sure road to war. The American people, to preserve their own peace and freedom, must actively support other democratic nations in their efforts to checkmate the fascist barbarians.”*

But in September—less than three months later—when Nazi-Germany started the new World War, Foster signed the declaration of the National Committee of the Communist Party, USA., entitled “Keep America out of the Imperialist War”, which, attacking mainly the “British-French war mongers” (the exact words previously used by Hitler in his radio speech) declares “this is **not** a war against fascism” and demands that the American workers should “**allow no single measure to be taken for purpose of giving American help to either side of the imperialist conflict**” . . . and to “find the most effective means of keeping out of the war, without regard whether these means incidentally happen to confer some small advantage to one side or the other.”

Isn't this an incitement to sabotage the transport of American supplies to France? And tantamount to an open alignment with Hitler-fascism, since American supplies can only reach the Western powers and not Germany?

Why do Foster and the other Communist leaders now think that a nazi-fascist victory would no longer threaten America's “peace and freedom”? Do they mean that we should submit to Hitlerism because Stalin supports it?

* * *

* “Your Questions Answered” by Wm. Z. Foster, page 33.

99. Is it justifiable—because nobody is unemployed in Soviet Russia—to close one's eyes to the suppression of all human liberties and the terrors and executions without trial, the "purges" and expulsions following a simple denunciation, when in Hitler's Germany too, no one is out of work, and all Aryan-Germans have the security of food and shelter.

* * *

100. And this question is addressed to the rank-and-filers NOT to those hundreds whose membership in the Communist Party is a question of bread and butter, and who—"my party, right or wrong,"—will defend every action, turn and twist of their party, every move of present-day Russia, because otherwise they would lose their jobs.

It is addressed to you if you still believe, as you did when you joined the Communist Party, in your ideals of liberty, freedom of opinion and conscience, equality, security, truth and justice for all, in the abolition of the wage system, of exploitation and oppression; if you feel that an overbearing caste of privileged bureaucrats and police spies has no room in a socialist society; if you still believe in active solidarity with all oppressed and persecuted of the world—WHY ARE YOU STILL SUPPORTING AND DEFENDING THE COMMUNIST PARTY?

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