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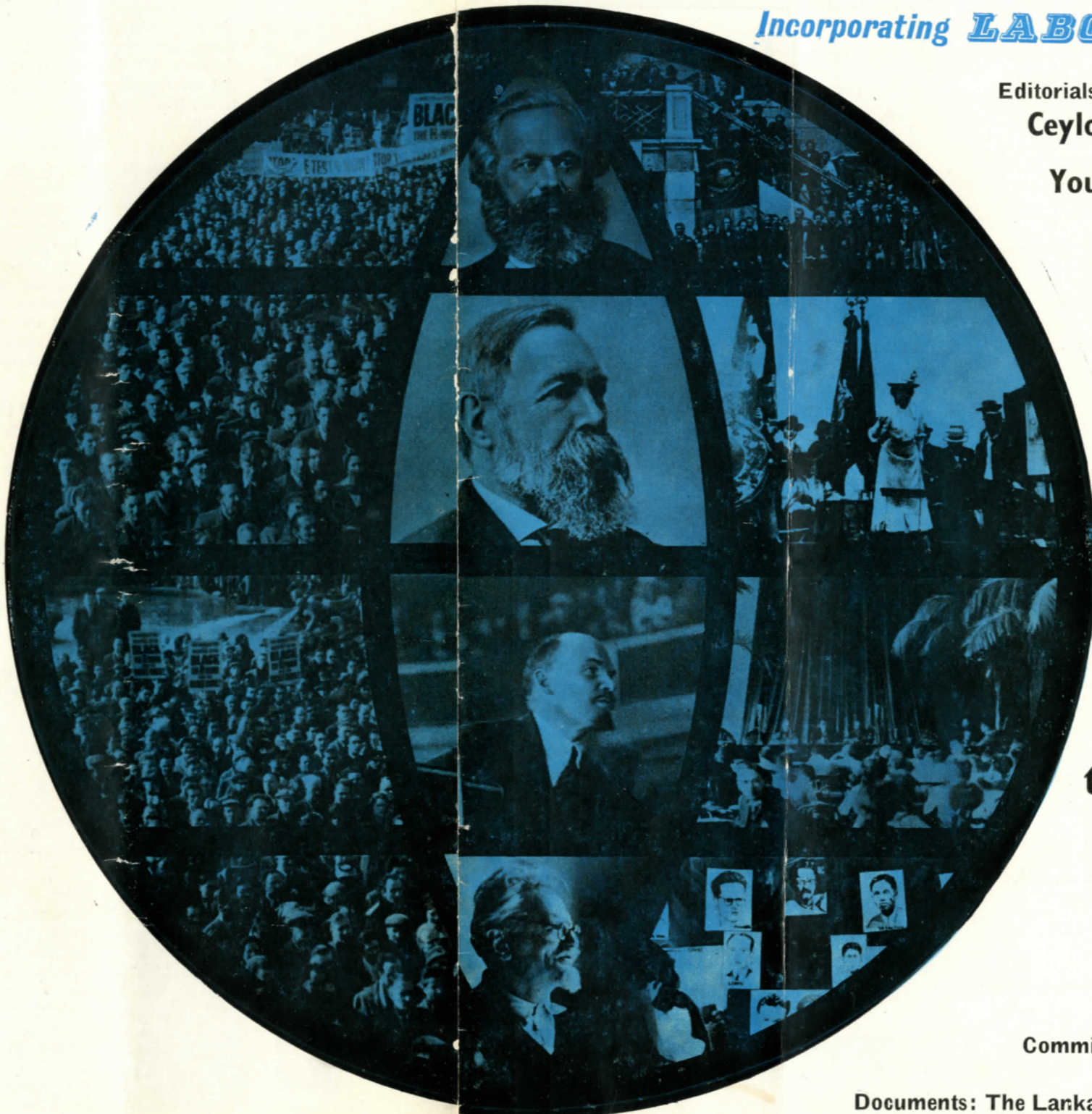
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# Fourth International

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL MARXISM PUBLISHED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Incorporating **LABOUR REVIEW**



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**Ceylon and the International**

**Youth and the bureaucracy**

**The crisis of post-war capitalism**

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**Leon Trotsky  
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stage are we  
passing?**

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Documents: The Larka Sama Samaja Party Conference

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**A Journal of International Marxism**

*Published by the International Committee  
of the Fourth International*

*Editors: TOM KEMP, CLIFF SLAUGHTER*

**186A Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4**

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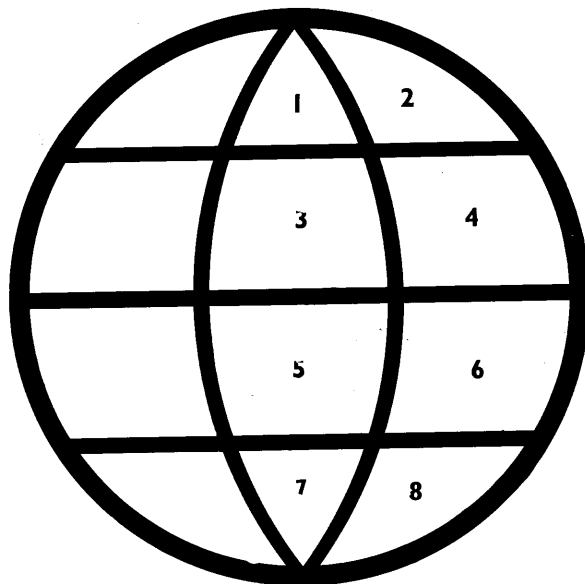
SUMMER 1964

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## Ceylon and the Fourth International

THE DECISION OF prominent leaders of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon to join the capitalist coalition government of Mrs. Bandaranaike marks a qualitative change in the struggle against revisionism in the Fourth International. It would not have been possible for this act of gross betrayal to have taken place had it not been for the political cover which the renegades concerned enjoyed from the Pabloite Paris centre.

Since 1953 the international movement founded by Trotsky in 1938 has been completely rent asunder by the conflict between those who have defended Trotsky's policies and the Pablo revisionists who have sought to adapt these policies towards support for Social-Democratic and Stalinist bureaucracies. What has happened in Ceylon shows that these revisionists are now the open agents of imperialism. In Algeria, Pablo, as an official attached to the government of Ben Bella, in effect carries out policies which benefit French imperialism. In Britain revisionists such as Jock Haston, one-time national secretary of the Revolutionary Communist Party, British Section of the Fourth International, is now one of the big right-wing union chiefs organising the witch-hunt against militants in the Electrical Trades Union.

The Socialist Workers Party of the United States provided full support for the Paris centre which in turn by its policies encouraged the capitulation in Ceylon. Imperialism is today using these renegade Trotskyists against the real Trotskyists who fight to defend and explain the policies outlined by Trotsky at the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938.

The organisation founded by Trotsky at that time has in fact degenerated and can no longer be considered a Trotskyist movement, whose aim is the building of revolutionary parties to overthrow capitalism. That is the lesson of Ceylon. Only the International Committee of the Fourth International continues Trotsky's work.

James P. Cannon, one of the closest collaborators of Trotsky, is just as guilty for what happened in Ceylon as Pablo. He adamantly refused to discuss with the Socialist Labour League and the organisations of the Committee of the Fourth International

the major political differences which have now been revealed through the agency of Mrs. Bandaranaike's coalition government. Cannon has betrayed everything that Trotsky fought for. His shameful silence is the silence of an opportunist coward who in the final years of his life rallies to the assistance of a clique of renegades who have destroyed a large portion of Trotsky's Fourth International.

He remained silent about events in the United States, when, after the assassination of Kennedy, Farrell Dobbs, the National Secretary of the SWP, sent a telegram of condolence to Kennedy's widow.

The Ceylon coalition marks the end of an era and the opening of a new stage in the struggle of Trotskyists to reconstruct the Fourth International on the basis of Trotsky's teachings. This can only be done provided a complete break is made from Pablo revisionism. No excuses can any longer be made which will justify the betrayal in Ceylon. All those leaders associated with this betrayal are, we repeat, the tools of imperialism.

The reconstruction of Trotsky's Fourth International will be facilitated if it is undertaken as an essential task constantly related to the building of revolutionary parties. The building of the Fourth International is not something that can be separated from the struggle to relate Marxist theory to practice.

The training of international leaders is inseparable from the construction of revolutionary parties. The Trotskyists who today fight for the Fourth International must follow closely the developments in all countries of the world so that in the day-to-day experiences of building revolutionary parties they can assimilate the essential knowledge necessary for the building of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution.

All those members who have remained in the Pabloite ranks and believe it is possible to reform these ranks should consider this new situation without delay. The revisionists have in Ceylon used the name of Trotskyism to betray the working class. This is what must guide them in their decision. If they wish to break from the shame of Ceylon then they must prepare forthwith to break from Pabloism in all its forms. (See 'Documents' pps. 88-92)

## Youth and the labour bureaucracy

SINCE ITS BRIGHTON CONFERENCE at the end of March where the Young Socialists carried a policy completely opposed to that of the right-wing leadership of the Labour Party, a ferocious witch-hunt has been launched against them. On four occasions leading officials of the Labour Party, acting on the flimsiest pretext, have called in the police with instructions which in at least one case has led to a man-handling of Young Socialists. Indeed the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party have publicly proclaimed their open hostility against young people who in any way might disagree with them.

At the Durham Miners Gala a story was skilfully knitted together by right-wing officials to the effect that Young Socialists intended to come in force to the Gala and attack Messrs. Brown and Wilson. Absolutely no evidence was brought forward to justify these allegations. It was all part of the unscrupulous campaign to discredit the Young Socialists. Naturally expulsions are the order of the day and a growing number of Young Socialist branches are being closed down even before the election.

The right wing are, however, in a dilemma. They want to persecute and hound left-wing youth out of the Labour Party but they are postponing an all-out attack until after the general election. This situation is very favourable for Young Socialists.

Having defeated Wilson and Co. on policy they must under no circumstances hesitate to fight for these policies inside the Party and the trade unions. But it cannot be done if they allow themselves to be kicked from pillar to post by right-wing Labour agents without fighting back. The only way to answer the witch-hunt is to show clearly where the policies of the Young Socialists conflict with those of the right wing.

All allegations about Young Socialists adopting thuggery and violence by people such as A. L. Williams, Secretary of the Labour Party are red herrings designed to cover up the wide divergence on policies. The youth have now the responsibility to explain these policies to the adult movement. They must not allow themselves to be driven out of the movement by the attacks from the right. A national

campaign for recruits to the Young Socialists around the policies of the Brighton Conference is on the order of the day. This, we are confident will be most successful because the left wing have undoubtedly the overwhelming majority of the Young Socialists behind them. They are the recognised leadership of the Labour youth in Britain today.

The way to defeat the right wing is to bring fresh forces into the fight. Young Socialists should do everything possible to recruit youth, especially young school-leavers without jobs, as well as young people in blind-alley occupations.

They must turn outwards towards youth and avoid the temptation to turn inwards in the struggle against the bureaucracy. The issue is one of policy and it is only when it is presented in the course of a struggle to influence youth will it impress the adult movement.

The youth have much to learn from struggle such as the postmen's strike. The sluggish political life of the adult constituency parties does not represent the working class. Large sections of workers, such as postmen, are prepared, given leadership, to fight to a finish to obtain improvements in their wages and working conditions. This is the heart of the labour movement and not the cliques of right-wingers and centrists who hang around many of the Constituency Parties waiting for something to turn up. The struggle against bureaucracy consists of learning how to combine participation in the class struggle with the fight inside the trade unions and Labour Party.

The Young Socialists will have to pay great attention to the trade unions and encourage all the recruits that they make to become members of their unions and to fight within their unions for socialist policies.

The developments within the Young Socialist movement in Britain is of enormous importance to the international labour movement.

Young people with little experience to begin with, have forged a leadership that has defeated the most experienced social democratic leadership in the world. No matter what explanations are offered for the isolation of the right wing in the youth, one thing stands out clearly, the policies of the Labour Party

leadership have nothing to offer youth, and have been decisively rejected in Britain. Youth are turning to Trotskyism all over the world, and Britain is but one example.

All those adult workers engaged in struggles must rally behind the Young Socialists. They are waging

the fight today that will be the fight of the entire labour movement tomorrow. Every effort must be taken to see to it that they are not smashed by the right-wing leaders who are now preparing to betray the working class if Labour wins the general election.

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# The crisis of post-war capitalism

by Peter Jeffries

IT IS NOW quite clear that the post-war boom is slowing down in Western Europe and North America. It is therefore an opportune moment to make a preliminary analysis of developments in imperialism over the last 20 years. The fact that capitalism has made modest progress in this period has led to the 'rejection' and 'refutation' of Marxism by many bourgeois social scientists who view capitalism in a-historical and partial terms. The Marxist movement, as part of its general fight against revisionism, needs to analyse this longish period of boom and relative prosperity and, more important, to expose the contradictions which have lain beneath the surface during this phase. It is the aim of this article to make some investigation of these matters.<sup>1</sup>

Before looking at concrete developments since 1940 it will be necessary to say a few words about the Marxist method of political economy. Marxists are concerned with the general 'law of motion' of capitalist society; i.e., the forces which impel capitalist development and the contradictions which inevitably arise during this development. It was on the basis of scientific analysis of the development of capitalism that Marx constructed certain abstract 'laws'; these are, in essence, a model of the way in which a 'pure' capitalism operates. Opponents who attempt to refute Marxism on a point-by-point, empirical basis, fail to grasp the essence of its method: to show, for example, that the rate of profit had risen during a particular period of capitalist development is not to refute the Marxist law of the

tendency of the rate of profit to fall over time. For Marxism, laws are only an expression of the *tendencies* at work within the system; in the real world other forces, based on the struggle between classes, arise which can overcome the operation of these laws or even reverse them under certain conditions.

In *Capital* Marx works out the basis of a theory of capitalist accumulation. The motive force behind accumulation is the rate of profit. Production for profit dominates production for use. Commodities are produced not because they satisfy a human need but because they yield a profit for their producer. Marx was mainly concerned to expose the contradictions which arise during the course of this accumulation. He was able to show that the process of accumulation may lead to a diminution of the 'reserve army of labour' (the unemployed) leading to a rise in the value of labour power and hence a reduction in the rate of profit, the regulator of accumulation. Secondly, by his introduction of the concept of constant capital, Marx pointed to another important way in which the very process of accumulation can lead to a break in accumulation. The process of capital accumulation tends to raise the ratio of the value of constant to variable capital (the organic composition of capital) and therefore to depress the rate of profit over time. Finally, because the process of accumulation under capitalism is an unplanned one, determined by the rate of profit, development and growth in a capitalist economy tend to be uneven and disproportionate.

These, briefly, were the basic contradictions which Marx unearthed as a result of his investigations of the accumulation process. But Marx's analysis, even

1. T. Kemp, 'The Course of Capitalist Development', in *Labour Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2.

in Volume III of *Capital*, remains a highly abstract model of the functioning of a capitalist system.<sup>2</sup> To do justice to Marx's work it is necessary to concretise the analysis, taking into account the big developments and changes in capitalism over the last century and the work of later Marxists such as Lenin, Plekhanov, Trotsky, Hilferding and others. It is the intention of this article to make some estimation of the process of accumulation in the imperialist world over the last 25 years in the light of Marx's analysis of the inherent contradictions within this development.

Since the epoch of imperialism began it is impossible to consider or to analyse the world economy as a series of isolated parts, each with its own independent course of development and change: it is necessary to start from the total world economy, capitalist states and workers' states, and relate each separate part to this whole. To say that the world economy is an integrated whole bound together by the international division of labour, trade and the market does not mean, however, that each part has an equal 'specific weight' in determining the momentum of the whole. Clearly, the real weight of economic, political and military power lies in the 'advanced' countries of Europe and North America. Political and economic changes taking place in this area of the world have a disproportionate impact upon the rest of the capitalist system as well as the countries of Eastern Europe and China. In this article we shall, therefore, concern ourselves mainly with developments in Europe, North America and Japan. The stagnation in the colonial and ex-colonial world and the sheer inability of the capitalist system to provide an all-round, balanced development of these areas has repercussions for the metropolitan states and these should not be ignored.

2. In its general construction *Capital* moves from a higher to a lower level of abstraction throughout the three volumes. For example, in outlining his general model of the accumulation process under capitalism in Vol. I, Marx makes certain assumptions about the rate of turnover of capital: in Vol. II he considers the question of turnover and its effect upon the process. In the same way Marx, in Vol. III, deals in some detail with the 'counteracting tendencies' which tend to check or reverse the fall in the rate of profit over time. These modifications and concretisations which are introduced into the analysis are not to be seen as discrete factors which Marx simply 'tacked on' to his analysis to make it more realistic: for example, the counteracting tendencies which arose in the real world (against the tendency towards working-class immiseration, for example) were integrally related to the objective processes taking place within capitalism and were a reflection of the complexities and contradictory nature of the accumulation process.

But they will not be our central concern at this stage.<sup>3</sup>

As we have suggested, at the heart of the accumulation process under capitalism stands the rate of profit, acting as the regulator and pace-setter for the expansion and reproduction of capital. Marx's analysis demonstrated that, with the rise in the organic composition of capital, and given a constant intensity of exploitation of labour, there was a tendency for the rate of profit upon invested capital to fall. The key to an initial analysis of the rate of profit is therefore an estimation of the changing organic composition of capital (o.c.c.) in the post-war period. For Marxists, a calculation of the o.c.c. is extremely difficult in the sense that orthodox calculations and techniques of accounting do not correspond to the categories of Marxist political economy. As a long-term historical tendency there can be no doubt, however, that the o.c.c. has risen in most of the advanced capitalist countries during the last century. One writer, for example, has estimated that the average British worker of 1939 operated with roughly twice the value of tools and equipment as in 1870. In countries such as America the increase has undoubtedly been even greater. We should not however look upon this tendency for the o.c.c. to rise over time as an even, uninterrupted development: it tends to take 'jumps' and 'leaps' during periods of rapid technological innovation and change, periods which themselves tend to follow years of stagnation or decline.<sup>4</sup> The period since 1940 has been such a period. Centred around the needs of war, rapid technical advances were made in many sectors of the capitalist states with the emergence or rapid development of 'new' industries such as electronics, aircraft, motors, chemicals, synthetic fibres, oil, nuclear energy, etc. Even in Britain, where there has been relative stagnation, surprising changes have occurred in this old, comparatively backward sector of imperialism. Steel output has risen by nearly 25 per cent in the post-war years; over £1,000m. has been invested in oil refining and atomic energy; since the outbreak of war the production of motor vehicles has roughly trebled, and the output of the electronics industry has multiplied tenfold over the same 25 years.<sup>5</sup> In recent years the so-called 'growth

3. Peter Jeffries, 'New Trends in Imperialism', in *Labour Review*, Vol. 7, No. 3.

4. M. H. Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, deals with this aspect of technical change and innovation under capitalism.

5. J. H. Dunning and C. J. Thomas, *British Industry: Change and Development in the Twentieth Century*, 1961. Figures for motors in Aubrey Silberston 'The Motor Industry', in D. L. Burn (ed.) *The Structure of*



industries' of British capitalism have been centred around oil, motors, and especially chemicals. In the latter case growth has been nearly three times that of industrial production as a whole, with certain sections—notably plastics—expanding at five times the rate of the economy as a whole. In the last half of the 50s similar trends were easy to see in the major European capitalist countries: production of passenger cars in Western Germany, for example, almost doubled, the output of crude steel rose by about one-fifth, and the chemical industry increased its output by 50 per cent in these 5 years. In France, often considered a backward, inefficient capitalist state, changes in the structure of the economy have been equally rapid.<sup>6</sup>

The other side of the coin has been the decline of certain older sectors of the economies of Western Europe and America. Traditional industries such as coal, railways and textiles have all experienced sharp declines in the countries of Western Europe, the United States and Japan. In Britain, for example, on a long-term basis, whereas cotton accounted for one-quarter of total exports in 1914 this share has now fallen to something over 2 per cent. But this decline was not confined to the pre-war years: since 1939 employment in cotton has fallen by over one-third, and the coal mining, shipbuilding and railway industries have continued to decline, if not at so fast a rate.<sup>7</sup>

These basic structural changes in the metropolitan countries have undoubtedly brought about a sharp rise in the general o.c.c.<sup>8</sup> There has been an overall

*British Industry*, Vol. 2. For electronics, Thomas Wilson, 'The Electronics Industry' in the same volume.  
6. *Planning*, Vol. XXVI, No. 445. October 1960.

7. 'Industrial Production: A guide to Growth' in *Westminster Bank Review*, May 1962, and Dunning and Thomas, *op. cit.*

8. Joseph M. Gillman, *The Falling Rate of Profit*, makes some estimates for the United States economy. On the whole, however, his work is marred by a mechanistic, non-dialectical approach to the analysis of accumulation under capitalism. Thus he finds statistical evidence to show that for long periods of the twentieth century the rate of profit on invested capital in America showed no definite tendency to fall and did in fact show some tendency to rise. This leads him to reformulate Marx's law by changing the categories 's' (surplus value), 'v' (variable capital, or the wages bill) and 'c' (constant capital). But to treat one of the basic 'laws of motion of capitalist society' merely as a mathematical relationship is to strip it of its content as an expression of forces operating in the real world. Thus, besides an analysis of modern technical development, a treatment of profit movements under capitalism must include, as

movement of resources from the technologically backward sectors to those with heavy concentrations of capital and high organic compositions. But as we suggested above, a rising composition of capital does not inevitably produce, in the short run, a decline in the rate of profit. Before we can say anything about movements in profit rates we must analyse changes in the rate of exploitation. In other words we need information about the productivity of labour and the price of labour power. The increased use of machinery invariably means a rise in the productivity of labour: this is the driving force behind technical change and innovation in a capitalist economy. In the years 1954-62 in the electrical and engineering industry, while output in Britain rose by 40 per cent, manpower rose by only 11 per cent; in the same period vehicle production rose by 30 per cent but manpower by only 12 per cent; in the case of chemicals manpower increased by 10 per cent but output by 50 per cent.<sup>9</sup> Even the 'declining' industries have shown considerable increase in output per head in recent years: this is particularly true in the case of coal, where mechanisation and technical change have advanced rapidly in recent years. In the case of the United States, it has been estimated that the output of the electronics industry was nearly 280 times higher in 1952 than in 1947, but the labour force had only been increased by 40 per cent. In the early 50s productivity in American oil refining was rising at about 5 per cent per annum, not untypical of the expanding sectors of the economy.<sup>10</sup>

This sharp increase in productivity experienced in the post-war years will undoubtedly continue. For Britain, where change and innovation are occurring with less rapidity than in other metropolitan countries, the National Economic Development Council, in reviewing future manpower needs of the various sectors of the economy, has given some indication of the speed at which productivity is likely to increase in the next period.<sup>11</sup>

In the case of chemicals the Council estimates that output will rise by over one-third in the years 1961-66 with only 5 per cent addition to the labour force. Total increase in the productivity of this industry in the period 1958-66 is expected to be around 50 per

an essential feature, an examination of the development of the working class in the period, its state of organisation and above all the level of its consciousness and leadership. Gillman's analysis pays little or no attention to these vital factors.

9. Sir Robert Hall, 'Changes in the Industrial Structure of Great Britain', *Lloyds Bank Review*, Jan. 1963.

10. S. Lilley, *Automation and Social Progress*, p. 117.

11. *Growth in the United Kingdom Economy to 1966*. H.M.S.O., 1963.

cent. 'The industry has steadily modernised its processes, built new plants and incorporated labour-saving methods of instrumentation and control so that increased output has been achieved with only a small increase in the labour force.' In the case of steel, the Council anticipates that productivity will rise by 36 per cent in the years 1961-66: this is because the rate of output of the new plant is much higher than that of the old; the faster this old plant is retired, the sharper will be the rise in output per worker. These examples are by no means exceptional: similar increases are anticipated in all major sectors of the economy.

In the capitalist countries showing the fastest rises in labour productivity—Western Germany and Japan—the working class was unable to take advantage of the rapid expansion and accumulation of capital. In both these countries the existence of a large reserve army of labour for much of the period meant that the share of wages and the level of consumption could be held down by the capitalists. It was out of the restricted consumption and low wages that re-equipment and modernisation of these two capitalist countries occurred. In Japan in the second half of the 50s, for example, industrial productivity rose by 55 per cent but real wages rose by only 25 per cent. Gross investment in this period amounted to 30 per cent of Gross National Product, the highest in the capitalist world.<sup>12</sup> The Western German 'economic miracle' can be explained in similar terms: the existence of high unemployment until the early 60s forced down wages and left a wide 'margin' for accumulation: in some years fixed investment took up nearly one-quarter of total national income, wages taking under one-half of national income (the corresponding figure for Britain being 58 per cent).<sup>13</sup>

12. Japan is an interesting case for many of the ideas discussed in this article. In the post-war period, the Japanese rate of development has been second only to that of Western Germany in the capitalist world. Progress and growth has been particularly rapid in the newer, highly capitalised industries: by the late 50s Japan had replaced Great Britain as the second highest producer of synthetic fibres; a large petro-chemical industry, based upon imported oil, has been established and steel production has grown at a rapid rate since 1939. As in Western Germany, one of the key factors involved in the relatively fast growth of Japanese capitalism was the existence of high unemployment for much of the period and the destruction of working-class organisations in the pre-war period.

13. R. G. Opie, 'Western Germany's Economic Miracle', in *Three Banks Review*, March 1962. The ratio of gross fixed investment to G.N.P. in 1960 ranged from 16% (U.K.) to 24% (Western Germany) with France (17%) and Italy (23%) in the middle range. *Economic Survey of Europe*, 1961. United Nations, Geneva 1962.

In the other major capitalist countries, such as Britain, France and the United States, where the labour movement remained intact, strong and undefeated, the working class was able to win a bigger share of rising labour productivity. This was possible because of the general expansion of the world market after 1945 following the acute shortages suffered during the war and the need to make good capital equipment either destroyed during the war or run-down during the stagnation of the 1920s and 30s. During the years after 1960, however, the situation began to change: the introduction of newer techniques of production, combined with a slowing down in the rate of expansion in the world market, brought significant increases in unemployment in countries such as Britain and the United States and with it a sharp rise in the tempo of the class struggle.

In other words, we are suggesting that while the tendency for the rate of profit to fall has been operating throughout the period it is only during the last year or two that it has asserted itself as a major factor holding up the development of the productive forces. Clearly the o.c.c. has risen throughout the period but because of the weak position of labour in certain countries and the general failure of leadership within the international working-class movement the capitalist class has been able to offset a downward pressure upon the real rate of profit by an increase in the rate of exploitation of labour. In the present period however the renewed activity and confidence of previously passive sections of the international working class, as in Spain and Germany, and the determination of the working class in such countries as Britain, France, Italy and the United States to retain the gains made in the years of full employment mean that if the capitalist class is to retain its power big battles must be prepared against the working class.

Lying behind all the technical changes, the growth of new industries, the emergence of new techniques of management and production, lies the continuing concentration and centralisation of capital in the metropolitan countries. Throughout the 50s concentration of production occurred in many important sectors of the British capitalism, including metals, vehicles, engineering and electrical, textiles, and paper and printing: this was paralleled in the other major capitalist countries. The speed-up of concentration of production in Europe and America coincided in the late 50s with the appearance of surplus capacity in many key industries, including motors, steel, and chemicals. It is interesting that the last major 'wave' of concentration and rationalisation occurred in the 1920s and 30s when capitalism was faced with severe problems of over-production and surplus plant. Not only has concentration gone on apace, but centrali-

sation of capital has also occurred in nearly all advanced countries: i.e., not only have individual firms increased in size as a result of accumulation from their own internal funds, but many smaller firms have been expropriated by the larger monopolists. An indication of the stage which the move towards centralisation has now reached was the ruthless if unsuccessful battle which ICI waged for the control of Courtaulds, itself one of the giants of European capitalism. In these developments the banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions have played a key role: the development of finance-capital oligarchy on an international scale, to which Lenin pointed as one of the outstanding features of imperialism, has certainly continued in the post-war period.<sup>14</sup>

Closely connected with this dominant tendency towards concentration and centralisation of capital has been the role of the state. The state has openly entered the scene as one of the major economic and political agents in the streamlining and rationalisation of the monopolists. In countries such as Britain the state assumed responsibility for certain areas of the economy: coal and the railways were nationalized to provide a sound 'infrastructure' for the rest of the system. In other cases the State intervened less directly, attempting to maintain stability and growth through the application of Keynesian-type monetary and fiscal policies. In the recent period the state has attempted to draw the trade union bureaucracies into some form of wage 'planning' designed to hold down the share of wages and allow an adequate surplus so that accumulation can carry on at the necessary pace: this has been important in such countries as France and Great Britain and also in Sweden where the unions have moved extremely

14. By concentration of capital, Marxists mean the tendency for individual capitals to increase in size: by centralisation they refer to the tendency for individual capitals to lose their identity and be brought under the centralised control of their (bigger) rivals. This distinction in most non-Marxist studies is never explicitly made. Other writers claiming to use the Marxist method are often guilty of similar errors. Thus William Mennell, writing recently in the theoretical journal of the Communist Party of Great Britain, *Marxism Today* (March and April 1962), discusses the growth of monopoly in Britain capitalism over the last decade in terms of the various spheres, and concentration and centralisation is examined *within* each area. But such a formal method ignores the central question of *finance capital* which Lenin pointed to as one of the fundamental features of imperialism. Thus the study of monopolisation under modern conditions must start from an analysis of the relationships between the banks, insurance companies, etc., and industrial capital.

close to the state apparatus. The State has, in general, been especially important in the fields of defence and research, providing an assured market for firms engaged in the aircraft, missile, electronics and other industries. To some extent the moves towards intervention and away from 'laissez-faire' conceptions of the role of the state were a result of working-class pressure for higher wages, better social services and assured employment after the crisis of the 1930s. But more important they were an indication of the inability of the traditional capitalist forms of organisation to meet up to the economic, political and military problems of the post-war world, not least of all the continual threat which the existence of the Soviet Union presented. It is noteworthy that the state first began to assume responsibility for the functioning of the imperialist economies precisely at a time when international rivalries and tensions were increasing and finally burst out into open warfare: i.e., in the period 1890-1914.

Now we must turn to the problems of uneven growth and development in the world economy over the last 20 years. As we noted above, because capitalist accumulation is driven along and governed by profit it is, by its very nature, an unplanned, contradictory, anarchic process. Uneven development does, of course, take place within each capitalist country, with 'declining' and 'expanding' industries existing side by side: here, however, we are more concerned with the question of uneven development between capitalist states themselves.

Perhaps the outstanding features of post-war development in this respect has been the rapid growth rates of the Western German and Japanese economies, and the stagnation of British capitalism, with the United States, while retaining overwhelming importance for the future of international capitalism, showing only modest progress. Whereas the German economy expanded at over 7 per cent per annum in the 50s British capitalism managed a growth rate of only 2 per cent and America one of 3.5 per cent. These differences in performance are to be explained in terms of historical factors and not centrally in terms of the various economic and financial policies carried out by the rulers of these states.

Most important from our point of view is the position of the United States, the dominant sector of world capitalism. Although American imperialism came out of the war in a strengthened position compared to some of her rivals, notably Britain, she also had had to shoulder the main responsibility for the future of imperialism, both in the metropolitan countries of Europe and also in the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This

was seen clearly in the vast sums donated to European capitalism under such schemes as the Marshall Plan and the vast 'aid' poured into the rich oil-bearing countries of the Middle East and South America: in the case of Europe these expenditures were made necessary by the strength of the working class and its desire for socialism, reflected in the large Communist Parties of France, and Italy and the election of a Labour Government in Britain; the large volume of foreign aid and investment in certain areas of the world which flowed from the United States was again a symptom of the unrest in these areas and the need to preserve valuable markets and supplies of raw materials. The responsibilities of United States imperialism can be seen in the large balance of payments deficits which the authorities ran in almost every year throughout the 50s. This was not a serious problem while gold reserves remained high and the dollar remained strong. But by the late 50s and early 60s the United States, for the first time in the post-war world, had to face up

to the problem of a basic structural imbalance in her economic and financial relationships with the rest of the world market. There was serious talk of a devaluation of the dollar and great pressure was put upon the German government for an upward revaluation of the Mark. At the same time, with the continuing advance of technical change and automation inside American capitalism, unemployment at a high level emerged as a semi-permanent feature of the economy. Because of the specific form taken by technical changes, unemployment is largely concentrated amongst the unskilled youth and especially the Negroes. But because of the basically weakened position of the economy externally Kennedy and later Johnson found that they were largely powerless to act against the unemployment problem with the old Keynesian measures which had had some limited success in the past. To attempt domestic inflation through easier credit and a larger budget deficit would have been to risk an even more serious external crisis.<sup>15</sup>

15. In this respect much of the Marxist critique of Keynesian economics has been extremely formal: i.e., it has been over-concerned with the internal, logical, structure of Keynes' analysis and not so much with a critique of the possibilities of State intervention at a specific stage in the development of capitalism. Thus for much of the post-war period it was possible in the United States to maintain a fairly high level of employment via monetary and fiscal measures, public work programmes, etc. But at a later stage this was not so: the external weakness of American capitalism no longer allows domestic re-inflation as a cure for rising unemployment. Apart from further weakening the balance of payments and the position of the \$, this would tend to push up wage costs in the United States and make exports less competitive. In Britain, however, the application of Keynesian techniques has been persistently hampered by a weak external position.

In addition, the intervention of the State at one stage of development may only heighten the contradictions when they reappear at a later stage. Thus in Great Britain, the nationalization of coal and the railways released large sums of capital for more profitable private reinvestment in other sectors of the economy and as such was a factor in post-war expansion. But the long-term effect of this was to accelerate the rise in the organic composition of capital and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall.

Many Marxists, in bending to the climate of Keynesian orthodoxy, have tended to twist the discussion of crises into one about the nature of underconsumption under capitalism. (For example, Paul Sweezy in his influential *The Theory of Capitalist Development* distinguishes between two main types of crisis: those connected with the tendency for the rate of profit to fall and those associated with a tendency to underconsumption.) The basic contradiction in this

view stems from the limitless expansion of production in relation to restricted consumption. The fallacy of such views stems from a tendency to analyse capitalism in partial and static terms. Thus the period since the war has been one of a rapid growth in the production of investment goods (Marx's Department I) and a relatively slower expansion of consumer goods (Marx's Department II). Although these two Departments are related: i.e., investment in means of production must eventually produce more consumption goods in Department II which have to be realised upon the market at a profit, the relationship is only a relative one. That is to say, expansion can occur in I which is, to a limited extent, independent of the rate of expansion of II. This is so because the demand, on the part of capitalists, for machinery, tools, building, etc., itself constitutes a part of total social consumption—what Lenin called 'productive consumption'. As Lenin pointed out in his polemics against the Narodniks—who were basically underconsumptionists—it is, in fact, the historical task of capitalism to develop the means of production at a faster rate than the means of consumption: this is only equivalent to saying that, on a social scale, there is a tendency for the o.c.c. to rise with the development of capitalism (see especially V. I. Lenin *On the So-Called Market Question: Collected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 75-129). But we have to study contradictions in their development, not at any one point in time: in the last resort there is, of course, a close interdependence between the two Departments and at certain stages the contradictions inherent within capitalism may reveal themselves in the form of a crisis of realisation. The rapid growth of production in such industries as steel, oil, chemicals and motors which has been an important feature of the expansion of the system since the war is currently leading to such a crisis in these industries.

A contributory factor to the post-war boom and its prolongation into the 50s was the large volume of resources devoted to armaments expenditures. This was, of course, principally so in the United States, especially with the outbreak of the Korean war and the years up to 1955. Armaments production allows capital accumulation to proceed without the attendant problem of realisation. But in this case we should not take a one-sided view of the role of state armaments expenditures. It is obvious that the vast programme of military expenditure carried out by the United States is now a burden upon the whole economy and is responsible in part for the slow rate of growth of the economy and the high level of taxation which hinders recovery and the attempt to reduce the level of unemployment. In other words, what at one time acted as a stimulant to the economic expansion of American capitalism has now turned into its opposite. Hence the desire, on the part of certain sections of the American ruling class, for limited disarmament agreements with the Soviet Union. This does not mean that the monopolists are now 'peace-loving' and can come to a permanent agreement with the Communist leaders: the political conflict with a rival social system cannot be separated out from these economic considerations: nor can the effect which a cut-back in arms would have upon the world market. Rather, certain of the American monopolists desire to devote less resources to the war programme and more to investment in the domestic economy, in order to speed up the rate of growth of American capitalism, and meet the growing demands for a solution to unemployment and other social problems.

In many ways the post-war problems of British capitalism have taken a similar form to those in the United States. In the case of Britain the slow growth and recurrent crises which have been a dominant feature of the last 20 years have deeper historical roots. In effect the structural and organisational weaknesses which first became apparent before 1914 have continued since 1940, though their full outward manifestation was hidden by the general expansion of the world market, which occurred after the end of the war and continued until quite recently. In the case of British capitalism, its decline can be most easily seen in the semi-permanent balance of payments crisis which has gripped the authorities since 1945 with attendant devaluation (in 1949) and general instability of sterling as an international currency. Before the war the British ruling class relied upon income from foreign investment and 'invisible' exports (such as shipping, insurance and banking services). This source of income was largely lost during the years of the war and after

that a rapid expansion of physical exports with a stabilisation of imports was imperative if British capitalism was to regain its place as a leading imperialist power. The strength of the working class has prevented the employers from carrying through the necessary plans of modernisation and change. As a result Britain's share of world trade has continued to decline and even in its 'own' markets— notably the Sterling Area—ground was lost.<sup>16</sup> Any attempt to speed up growth at home has invariably led to an external crisis: increased production at home tends to raise the import bill and reduce the incentive to export. In any case, over-expansion domestically means there is a tendency for the price of labour power to rise and hence a reduction in profit rates. In sharp contrast to the developments in the United States and Britain stands the rapid expansion since 1945 of German capitalism, the fastest-growing sector of the imperialist economy. Not only did production grow at a rapid pace at home but Germany increased her importance in world trade and exports. In 1950 her share of world trade stood at 7 per cent: by 1960 this had risen to 20 per cent, about the same as the United States and higher than that of Britain.<sup>17</sup> The basis of the expansion, as we have suggested above, was the tremendous destruction of capital which occurred during the war, the high level of unemployment, and the weakness of the labour movement, stripped of its leaders during the fascist dictatorship. The low level of wage costs enabled her to expand exports rapidly and because consumption was held down (in turn a reflection of low wages) imports remained low throughout the period of the 50s. This enabled German capitalism to build up huge balance of payments surpluses, in contrast to the position of America and Britain. As a result the German authorities acquired large holdings of gold and dollars in the 50s. The fact that the necessary currency to finance an adequate level of international trade was concentrated in the hands of one state brought growing problems of imbalance in the imperialist economy: unless the United States is

<sup>16</sup>. This was obviously one of the main factors in producing a basic change in the economic and political strategy of British imperialism: i.e., a move away from the Commonwealth and towards Europe. At least of equal importance, however, was the pressure exerted by American imperialism; in the post-war period the flow of capital into Britain from the United States has greatly accelerated. Britain's exclusion from the EEC meant (and still means!) that this capital has to force its way into the rich European market on unfavourable terms.

<sup>17</sup>. N.I.E.R. No. 21, Feb. 1962.

prepared to run a large enough balance of payments deficit there will be inadequate currency to finance world trade, with a consequent 'liquidity crisis'.<sup>18</sup> But America, despite her great strength and resources, can only run a deficit up to certain limits, determined by the volume of her gold reserves and the strength and stability of her domestic economy. Hence the pressures already referred to for a 5 per cent appreciation of the German Mark (which is equivalent to a 5 per cent rise in the price of German exports) and the serious consideration, on the part of the American government, of substantial borrowing from the International Monetary Fund.

These financial instabilities are but a sign of the uneven, unplanned growth of the world economy over the last 20 years. They reflect the over-riding power of American capitalism and the stagnation in other leading areas, notably Britain and France. Because of this uneven growth and the consequent strain upon the external position of the United States, there is little prospect of a permanent and decisive upswing in the American economy. But without such an upswing there can be no rapid expansion of trade between the metropolitan countries; their future increasingly depends upon the position inside the United States, where unemployment remains high and a large proportion of the population live in abject poverty. The comparatively rapid expansion of productive capacity in such industries as chemicals, oil, motors, steel and engineering means that unless the world market *does* grow at an adequate pace there will be serious problems of surplus capacity with a consequent sharpening of price competition, the elimination of the smaller firms (some of whom are themselves giants by former standards) and further concentration and centralisation of capital in Europe and America.

This outline analysis of the trends in imperialism over the last two decades can provide the basis for a more thorough refutation of the Fabian conception of post-war capitalism.<sup>19</sup> It is clear that the basic

18. The rapid spread of the crisis from the United States in the inter-war period was partly caused by the fact that the trade of most countries with America was financed by American short-term loans. Once the money was recalled to the States during the crash of 1929-31 an international 'liquidity crisis' developed. In this respect the position in the 50s and 60s bears certain similarities with that of 30 years ago.

19. The essence of these reformist theories was the view that, in its post-war phase, capitalism represents a new and reformed *stage*, differing fundamentally from the capitalism of the nineteenth century: some writers

contradictions of capitalism have continued to operate throughout this period: in the next few years they threaten to erupt with extreme violence and to provide the base for bitter class struggle in Europe and North America, the heart of capitalism.

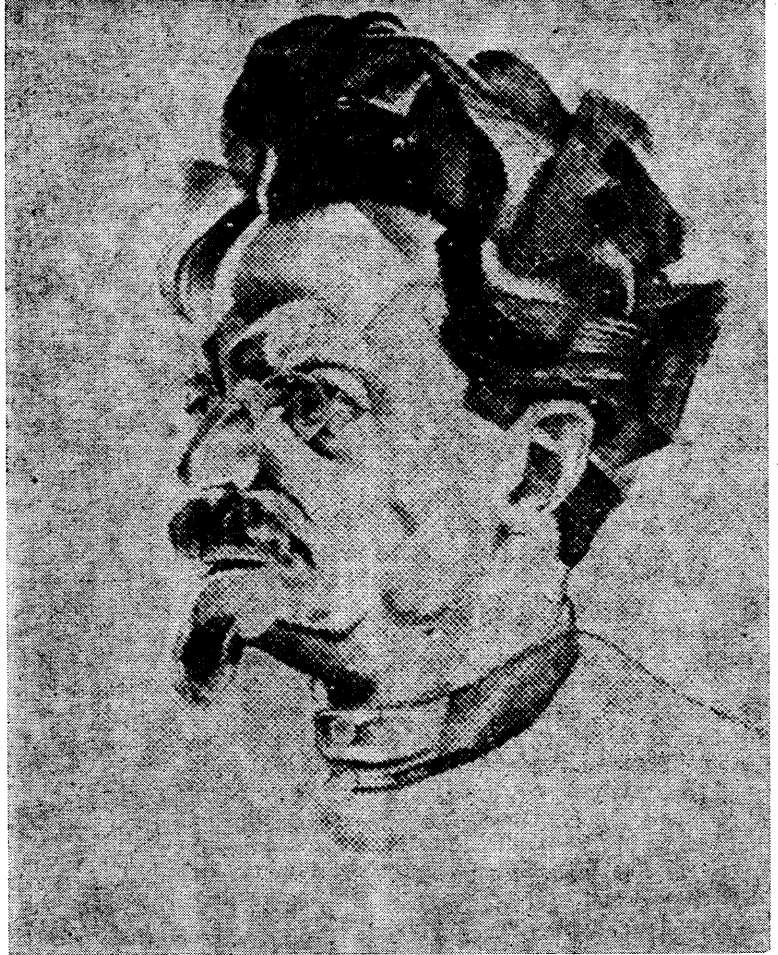
In this respect, we need to work out in more detail a model of the main features of the modest phase of expansion enjoyed by the system since 1940, a model which takes into account, in an all-round way, the role of technical innovation, the position of the State, the importance of arms expenditure and the relationships between the backward and advanced areas of the world economy and finally the economic relationships between imperialism and the Soviet Union and China. These factors must be considered in such a model in terms of changes in the rate of exploitation and the strength of the opposing classes; without this, all consideration of rates of growth and accumulation is inadequate. This article has attempted to begin an investigation of some of these matters and has stressed the importance of a correct methodological approach to the study of capitalist development.

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(such as Mr. Crosland in Britain) suggested that in this period the Western economic system ceased to be capitalist and is now evolving into a new type of society. Various reasons are adduced by the reformists to justify this view but basically they rely upon (1) the belief that income has been radically redistributed away from the rich in the post-war years—the so-called 'income revolution'; (2) the so-called 'Managerial Revolution'; and (3) the greatly changed rôle of the State since the war. We have already touched upon this last point: the State, far from being a neutral force, suspended above the class struggle, has been the main instrument in organising the rationalisation and centralisation of capital in the metropolitan countries. Of the 'income revolution' we need say little: studies in Britain (by Professor Titmuss) and the USA (by Gabriel Kolko) show conclusively that there has been no income redistribution towards the working class. (Even Mr. Strachey in his *Contemporary Capitalism* is forced to concede this point.) Indeed in the USA statistical evidence shows that there has been a shift of income *away* from the poorer sections of the community. Of the 'Managerial Revolution', investigation in the USA and Britain (by Professor Florence) shows that there is no fundamental division between ownership and control, on which the case of Burnham and his followers rests. As a strata, the top managers remain closely tied to the interests of capitalism and the capitalist class. But the important point in this respect is that Marxists are not interested in individual capitalists as such but only in *capital* as a social force which stands over men and dominates their activities.

**L. D. TROTSKY**

**Through  
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stage  
are**



**we passing?**

**Speech at the 5th All-Union Congress of  
Medical and Veterinary Workers  
June 21, 1924**

*Translated by Brian Pearce from the Collection  
Zapad i Vostok (the West and the East),  
Moscow 1924*

*(Translation London, 1960)*

**FOURTH INTERNATIONAL SUMMER 1964**

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## 1. THE STRENGTH OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE LEVEL OF CULTURE IN A COUNTRY

WHEN I SPOKE recently at Sokolniki, at the jubilee gathering of educational workers,\* I was asked a question of great importance in relation to principles, a question closely connected both with the international situation, in the widest sense of the word, and with the Fifth Congress of the Communist International which is now taking place. And instead of making a hundred-and-first or thousand-and-first attempt to describe comprehensively the so-called 'international situation', I am going to give, even though only in broad outline, an answer to that question of principle which was put to me at Sokolniki and which I will now tell you about. The note I received is in my pocket—here it is: 'Comrade Trotsky, please explain why the most advanced capitalist countries have the weakest Communist parties (USA, Britain) and are farthest from the social revolution. This problem worries me very much and I request you to explain it.' That is the question. The answer to it is the key to the international question, broadly understood, that is, both from the standpoint of the relations between the various states and the relations between the capitalist states and the Soviet Republic and from the standpoint of the development of the revolution throughout the world. In the last analysis these are, after all, two aspects of one and the same problem. We all know quite well, of course, that our diplomatic work is juridically independent of the Comintern, and the Comintern independent of our diplomacy. But it is at the same time no secret that the successes of the Comintern are directly and indirectly reflected in the successes of Soviet diplomacy, and the successes of our diplomacy are reflected in the course of the world revolutionary movement. This is not at all to be understood, however, in the sense that the growth of Commun-

ism, always and everywhere, directly and immediately, improves our international position. No, the example of Germany freshly before us testifies to the fact that the growth of the Communist danger at a certain stage *worsens* relations between the capitalist state concerned and ourselves, even regardless of our state policy.\* But in this case, too, the connection between the progress of the revolution and our international position is clear, and this is no 'fault' of ours, for what determines this connection is not any 'propaganda' but the whole course of historical development. In the last analysis, of course, only the victory of communism will consolidate us fully and finally.

How then can it be explained that the most advanced and cultured countries have weak Communist parties, while, on the contrary, our country, which cannot, unfortunately, be called the most cultured in Europe, has a very strong Communist party, which rules the state? The writer of the note says that this problem worries him. And that is quite understandable. We know that international Menshevism, starting with our own Russian Mensheviks, builds upon this contradiction its chief 'accusation' against international communism and against the Soviet Republic. You see, if this contradiction be taken in a simple way, so to speak logically, mechanically, then you are not far from the conclusion that Communism is an expression of . . . backwardness and barbarism. The more backward a country is, you deduce from your first glance at the problem, the stronger is Communism in that country, whereas super-civilised countries like Britain and America have very weak Communist parties, in proportion, as it were, to the small

\* Probably a reference to the repercussions of the so-called 'Bozenhardt incident', when a German Communist pursued by the police took refuge in a Soviet institution in Berlin.—Tr.

\* 'Ourselves and the East', June 10, 1924.—Tr.

amount of survivals of barbarism in those countries. On this idea is built up the entire philosophy of international Menshevism. Allow me to deal, even though only in very general terms, with this question, which is of the highest importance.

At the congress of the Communist International one of the weakest of the European parties is certainly the British Communist Party. The American party is even weaker, true, but we are talking for the moment only about Europe. The strongest party is our party. Then comes the German party, and then the French. What in reality explains the fact that in such a powerful, cultured, educated, civilized, etc., country as Britain, the Communist party still exists as a mere propagandist society, not yet possessing the power to play an active part in politics? In order to answer in a radical way the explanation—at first glance so simple and fitting—that Communism is directly proportionate to backwardness and barbarism, an explanation which expresses the whole wisdom of Menshevism, I will recall a few other phenomena and institutions in the life of Great Britain. In Britain, there is—and I ask you not to forget it—a monarchy, whereas there is none here or in France or in Germany. Now a monarchy cannot be depicted from any point of view as an expression of the highest culture, as one of the highest attainments of mankind—even MacDonalld doesn't do that, he keeps quiet about it, politely and diplomatically holds his tongue, and doesn't say that a sign of the high cultural level of Britain is that there, in contrast to barbarous Russia, they have a monarchy. In Britain there is still to this day an aristocracy enjoying distinctions of rank. There is a House of Lords. In Britain, finally, the church, or rather the churches, wield tremendous influence in all spheres of life. There is no country in Europe where church influence in political, social and family life is so great as in Great Britain. Over there, for a man to say that he does not belong to a church, does not go to church, and even more, that he does not believe in God, requires quite exceptional personal courage. So it is difficult there, in each separate case, to break through the old, dense web of hypocrisy and clerical prejudices and the worldly customs which are based on this hypocrisy and these prejudices. None of you will say, I hope, that the influence of the church or of the churches on social consciousness is an expression of human progress. Thus it turns out that in Britain, alongside of the fact that the Communist party is exceptionally weak, there are to be found such other facts, not matters of indifference for us, as the existence of a monarchy, an aristocracy, a House of Lords and a tremendous

influence of religion in politics, in social life, and in everyday affairs. And if you approach Britain one-sidedly from this aspect, that is, from the aspect of the monarchy, the House of Lords, the aristocracy, landlordism and church influence, then you would doubtless say that the most barbarous and backward country in Europe is Britain. That would be as true as the statement of the Mensheviks that Communism is a product of backwardness; that is to say, it would be as untrue, as one-sided, as false. Can one really agree that Britain is the most backward country in Europe? No, this idea cannot at all be fitted into the framework of our general picture of Britain. In Britain technique is at a very high level, and technique is decisive in human life. America, true, has outstripped Britain in the field of technique: the daughter of British culture has raced ahead of her mother along the line of technique. Before the war Germany was rivalling Britain more and more sharply, threatening to outstrip and in certain branches of industry actually outstripping Britain. But today, after the defeat of Germany, Britain leads Europe economically. British science, literature and art have played and are playing a role of the first order in the development of human thought and human creative achievement. How can one find one's way out of this contradiction? For a contradiction stares us in the face: on the one hand, high technique, science, etc.; on the other, monarchy, aristocracy, House of Lords, power of religious prejudices over people's minds. What conclusion can be drawn? This conclusion, that there is no single yardstick with which one can measure the development of a country in every sphere, and on the basis of that measurement make a uniform evaluation covering all aspects of social life. Development is contradictory. In certain spheres a country achieves tremendous successes, but it happens quite often that by these very successes that country holds back its own development in other spheres. Let me speak concretely about this matter. Britain was the first country to take the road of capitalist development and won, thanks to that fact, the hegemony of the world market in the nineteenth century. The British bourgeoisie became, again thanks to this fact, the richest, strongest and most enlightened of the bourgeoisies. These conditions enabled it, as we know, to create a privileged position for the upper strata of the British working class and thereby to blunt class antagonisms. The British working class is becoming conscious of itself as an independent class hostile to the bourgeoisie much more slowly than the working class of other countries with less powerful bourgeoisies. Thus it turns out that the

growth of the British bourgeoisie, the most advanced bourgeoisie in Europe, having taken place in exceptionally favourable conditions, has for a long time held back the development of the British proletariat. The slow and 'organic' growth of technique in England, and the fact that the Reformation and the bourgeois revolution happened close together in time, held back the work of critical thought in relation to the church. The British bourgeoisie developed under the protection of ancient institutions, on the one hand adapting itself to them and on the other subjecting them to itself, gradually, organically, 'in an evolutionary way'. The revolutionary up-

heavals of the 17th century were profoundly forgotten. In this consists what is called the British tradition. Its basic feature is conservatism. More than anything else the British bourgeoisie is proud that it has not destroyed old buildings and old beliefs, but has gradually adapted the old royal and noble castle to the requirements of the business firm. In this castle, in the corners of it, there were its ikons, its symbols, its fetishes, and the bourgeoisie did not remove them. It made use of them to consecrate its own rule. And it laid down from above upon its proletariat the heavy lid of cultural conservatism.

## 2. THE BRITISH PROLETARIAT AND OUR PROLETARIAT

The British working class has developed quite differently from ours. Our young proletariat was formed in a period of some 50 years, mainly from peasants and handicraftsmen who had lived in the countryside, along with their fathers and grandfathers, in ancient surroundings, in economic backwardness, amid ignorance and religious prejudices. Capital ruthlessly seized the peasant lad or youth by the scruff of the neck and at once flung him into the cauldron of factory life. The change in his conditions took place catastrophically. When the young peasant felt the blast of the factory's steam he at once began to think about who he was and where he was. At that stage the revolutionary party caught up with him and began to explain to him what and where he was. It gained ascendancy over him all the more easily because he had no conservative ideas: the old village notions did not fit at all; he needed a complete and radical change in his whole outlook on the world.

With the British worker things went quite differently. His father and his grandfather were workers, and his great-grandfathers and remoter ancestors were small artisans. The British worker has a family tree, he knows who his ancestors were, he has a family tradition. This is also a kind of 'culture', but it is expressed in the fact that in his consciousness he drags around with him many of the prejudices of his ancestors. For him, the British worker, there was not this sudden, sharp, catastrophic transition from the closed little world of the village to modern industry; he has developed organically from his remote ancestors into gradually changing conditions of factory life and urban culture. In his mind there still to this day sit old, mediaeval craft

ideas and prejudices, only modified in form and adapted to the conditions of capitalism. The life of the crafts and the craft festivals—celebration of the birth of a son, his entry into apprenticeship, graduation to the independent position of master-craftsman, and so on—were shot through and through with religiosity, and this religiosity passed over into trade unionism, which has a heavy conservative tail stretching back into the Middle Ages. . . .

British technique is a fundamentally capitalist technique. It was not brought in from outside, destroying national economic forms, but has developed on the basis of these national forms. The consciousness of the working class reflects this 'organic' growth of technique, while lagging very much behind it. It must not be forgotten that human consciousness, taken on the scale of society, is fearfully conservative and slow-moving. Only idealists imagine that the world is moved forward through the free initiative of human thought. In actual fact the thought of society or of a class does not take a single step forward except when there is extreme need to do so. Where it is at all possible, old familiar ideas are adapted to new facts. We speak frankly if we say that classes and peoples have hitherto not shown decisive initiative except when history has thrashed them with its heavy crop. Had things been different, would people have allowed the imperialist war to happen? After all, the war drew nearer under the eyes of everyone, like two trains hurtling towards each other along a single track. But the peoples remained silent, watched, waited and went on living their familiar, everyday, conservative lives. The fearful upheavals of the imperialist war were needed for certain changes to

be introduced into consciousness and into social life. The working people of Russia overthrew Romanov, drove out the bourgeoisie and took power. In Germany they got rid of Hohenzollern but stopped half-way. . . . The war was needed for these changes to take place, the war with its tens of millions of dead, wounded and maimed. . . . What a clear proof this is of how conservative and slow to move is human thought, how stubbornly it clings to the past, to everything that is known, familiar, ancestral—until the next blow of the scourge.

Such blows have occurred in Britain too, of course. Thus, after the rapid industrialization there developed in the second third of last century the stormy movement of the working class which is known as Chartism. But bourgeois society stood sufficiently firm and the Chartist movement came to nothing. The strength of the British bourgeoisie lay in its maturity, its wealth, its world power, crumbs from which it shared with the upper strata of the working class, thereby demoralizing also the weakened masses.

Think over this process to the extent necessary to understand the profound difference from our development, which was extremely delayed and therefore extremely contradictory. Take our metal-working and coal-mining South: boundless expanses of steppe, thinly populated, steppe settlements with deep mud around them in spring and autumn . . . and suddenly huge metal-working enterprises arise in these steppes. They did not, of course, develop out of our own economy but broke in upon us thanks to foreign capital. From the backward and scattered villages, European (and sometimes American) capital assembled fresh cadres of workers, tearing them from the conditions which Marx once called 'the idiocy of rural life'. And there you had these fresh proletarians of the Donets basin, of Krivoi Rog and so on, not bringing with them into the pits and the factories any hereditary traditions, any craft conservatism, any fixed and firm beliefs. On the contrary, it was in these new, unfamiliar and stern conditions that they only for the first time properly felt the need for firm beliefs, which would give them moral support. To their aid came Social-Democracy, which taught them to break with all their old prejudices and so gave a revolutionary consciousness to this class which had been born in a revolutionary way. This, in broad outline, is the answer to the question which was put to me and which I, in my turn, have set before you.

It is possible to put the matter like this: the richer, stronger, mightier, cleverer, firmer a bourgeoisie has proved to be, the more it has succeeded in holding back the ideological and consequently the revolution-

ary development of the proletariat. Here is another expression of the same idea. The British bourgeoisie has got used to the servility of the so-called workers' leaders whom it has educated. Let me interrupt myself to introduce a very interesting quotation from the British newspaper the *Sunday Times*. The newspaper complains 'because in Britain today, under the MacDonald Government, stormy strikes are taking place, and it says:

'We have in Great Britain the finest body of Labour leaders in the world, men of experience and patriotism, with a real sense of responsibility and a wide knowledge of economics. But they are rapidly being thrust aside by the avowed revolutionaries, whose influence is increased every time the Government capitulates to them.\* That's what it says, word for word. As to the statement that they are being 'thrust aside by the avowed revolutionaries', that, alas, is as yet an exaggeration. Of course, revolutionaries are increasing in number in Britain too, but unfortunately they have still far from sufficiently 'thrust aside' those leaders whom the *Sunday Times* calls wise politicians, filled to the brim with wisdom and patriotism.

How has this come about? In our country there have never been leaders who won such praise from the bourgeoisie, even if we bear in mind that at a certain period the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks played a considerable role, because our bourgeoisie—discounting the sharpest and most decisive moments, when things were at their most critical—was dissatisfied even with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. What is the cause of such satisfaction with the workers' leaders on the part of the bourgeoisie over there in Britain? It is due to the fact that the British bourgeoisie themselves have trained these leaders. How did they get the opportunity of training 'labour' leaders? This was due to the circumstance that they were powerful and cultured, being the ruling class of an advanced capitalist country. As fast as the working class advanced young leaders from its ranks, all sorts of political 'specialists' in the service of the British bourgeoisie at once settled on them, won them over, brought to bear on them all that could be imagined by a powerful bourgeois culture. Among us the average petty-bourgeois, the philistine, the member of the intelligentsia of liberal and even radical views, has considered from time immemorial that since Britain is a highly civilized country therefore everything which exists in Britain or which comes from Britain is superior, good, progressive and so on. In this we see expressed the petty-bourgeois incapacity for

\* From *Sunday Times* editorial, June 8, 1924.—Tr.

thinking dialectically, analysing phenomena, grasping a problem in its historical concreteness. There is something which is really good, British technique, and that we are trying to transfer to our country in exchange for grain, timber and other valuable commodities. The British monarchy, hypocritical British conservatism, religiosity, servility, sanctimoniousness—all this is old rags, rubbish, the refuse of centuries, which we have no need for whatsoever. (Applause)

If British culture has affected our average philistine in this way from afar off, by correspondence so to speak, evoking in him a blind infatuation, how much more strongly, directly and concretely does it affect the British petty-bourgeois and the semi-petty-bourgeois representative of the British working class. What the British bourgeoisie has been able to achieve is a sort of hypnotic fascination for its culture, its world-historical importance. By means of this skilfully-organised hypnosis it has influenced the workers' leaders, whom it has known how to keep always surrounded by its reporters, photographers, sportsmen, clergymen, lecturers and so forth, all cunningly turned on to each newcomer among the workers' leaders. The newcomer in this way finds himself in a bourgeois milieu. They praise him to the skies if he nibbles at the bait, and they give him a good brushing the wrong way if he takes the slightest step against the bourgeoisie. And this does not just happen once, but day by day, week by week, and year in and year out. And the young leader going out into society begins to feel ashamed because his Sunday suit is not sufficiently well-cut; he dreams of a top-hat to wear when he goes out on a Sunday, so as not to be any different from a real gentleman. These may seem trifles, but, after all, they make up a man's life. And in this hypnosis of a way of life lies the art of a ruling class, a powerful, cultured, hypocritical, base, greedy class—

an art which consists in exercising an everyday influence whereby to work upon and subject to itself everyone who comes forward from among the working class, everyone who stands a head taller than the others in every factory, in every ward and borough, in every town and throughout the country.

Probably a lot of you have seen the *Times*. It comes out every day in dozens of pages of splendid fine print, with a variety of illustrations and an endless range of sections, so that everything has its place in the paper, from questions of high politics to all kinds of sport, and including the affairs of the churches and of the world of fashion. And from what point of view is everything presented? Naturally, from the point of view of the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Other British bourgeois newspapers are not so solid as the *Times*, but they are built on the same model, so as to capture the reader's attention from every direction and lead him to genuflect before the British national tradition, that is, before the bourgeoisie. And the workers' press is very weak; besides which, with the exception of the Communist publications, it is permeated through and through with the same hypnosis of bourgeois culture. This hypnosis is supplemented by direct terrorism. To belong to a church is in Britain the same as covering your nakedness with clothes, or paying what you owe in a shop. May one walk down the street naked? May one not belong to a church? To declare that one does not belong to a church, and still more that one does not believe in God, requires in Britain the same sort of extraordinary courage as to go naked in public. The so-called Labour Government headed by MacDonald is also a product of the age-long education of the workers' leaders in this way. That is the reason, in the last analysis, why British Menshevism is so strong and Communism weak.

### 3. THERE IS NO ABSTRACT YARDSTICK FOR CIVILIZATION

Now let us repeat our question: is the weakness of Communism in Britain a symptom of the country's high level of civilization, or is it a symptom of backwardness? After our analysis we have no grounds for falling into the trap of such a mechanical presentation of the question. We say: it is at one and the same time a symptom of very early development and of great backwardness, because history operates not mechanically, but dialectically: it combines

during long periods advanced tendencies in one sphere with monstrous backwardness in another. If we compare, from the standpoint of world-historical development, the 'Labour' Government of MacDonald and the bourgeois-nationalist government of Turkey (about which I spoke in my speech at Tbilisi)\* the conclusion we draw is not in Mac-

\* Probably a reference to 'The Paths of the European Revolution' (April 11, 1924).—Tr.

Donald's favour. You recall that the 'great' Liberal leader Gladstone—in reality he was a liberal philistine, and Marx had a most highly concentrated hatred of him—the 'great' Gladstone once delivered a tremendous speech against the bloodstained Sultan, the representative of fanatical, barbarous Islam, and so on. If you take the average philistine and say to him: Britain and Turkey—well, of course, Britain means civilization and progress, Turkey means backwardness and barbarism. But see what is happening. There is now in Britain a government of Mensheviks and in Turkey a bourgeois-nationalist government. And this bourgeois-nationalist government of Turkey has found it necessary to abolish the Caliphate. The Caliphate is the central institution of Pan-Islamism, that is, one of the most reactionary trends in the entire world. But the Menshevik government of Britain has re-established the Caliphate in the Hejaz, in order to uphold the rule of the bourgeoisie over its Moslem slaves.\* History's conclusion is that the Menshevik government of Britain, in spite of British civilization, etc., is playing in this conjuncture of forces a reactionary role, whereas the bourgeois-nationalist government of backward Turkey, as of a nationally-oppressed country, is playing a progressive role. Such is the dialectic of history! Of course, from the standpoint of the development of technique, science and art, Britain is immeasurably superior to Turkey. The accumulated wealth of Britain is beyond comparison with what Turkey possesses in this respect. But we see that it turns out that, precisely in order to protect this wealth and its whole national 'civilization' in general, the British bourgeoisie has been obliged to follow an ultra-conservative policy, so that a Labour Government becomes in its hands an instrument for re-establishing the Caliphate. *There is no abstract yardstick applicable to all spheres of life.* It is necessary to take living facts in their living, historical inter-action. If we master this dialectical approach to the question, the latter becomes much clearer to us. Germany, for example, is placed not by accident, as regards this question of the relationship between the forces of the Communist Party and of Social-Democracy, between Russia and Britain. This is to be understood by the course of development of capitalism in Germany. It is necessary, of course, to investigate concretely the history of each separate country, in order to discover more exactly the causes of the delayed or hastened

\* The ruler of the Hejaz was then a British puppet, a member of the same Hashemite family whom the British installed as Kings in Jordan and Iraq. However, not long after this the Hejaz was conquered by Ibn Saud, who put an end to the 'revived' Caliphate.—Tr.

growth of the Communist Party. In a general way, however, we can draw the following conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat in countries which have entered the path of capitalism very late in the day, like our country, is easier than in countries with an extensive previous bourgeois history and a higher level of culture. But this is only one side of the matter. A second conclusion, no less important, declares: socialist construction after the conquest of power will be easier in countries with a higher capitalist civilization than in countries which are economically backward, like ours. This means that for the British working class to break through to real proletarian power, to dictatorship, will be incomparably harder than it was for us. But once having broken through to power, it will advance to socialism much quicker and much more easily than ourselves. And it is even uncertain, history has spoken with a double tongue on this question, who will build socialism earlier, we or the British. If the British working class takes power in the next ten years—I speak approximately, and give this figure not in order to prophesy but merely as an arithmetical example—it will then within another ten years have a real socialist economy, very highly developed, while we in 20 years' time will probably still have, not only somewhere in Yakutia but also nearer here, very many survivals of peasant backwardness. . . .

Decades will be needed to transform our North and our South into a centralized socialist economy, based on a high level of technique, with our great expanses of territory still only thinly populated. And I think that in 20 or 25 years' time the British worker, turning to us, will say: 'Don't be annoyed, but I've got a bit ahead of you.' Naturally, we shan't be annoyed—those of us, that is, who survive till then. Get ahead, comrades British workers, do us the favour of getting ahead, please, we beg you, we've been waiting a long time for this (laughter). Such is the dialectic of history. Politics has held the British worker back, has for a long time, so to speak, hobbled him, and he is advancing with such timid, pitiful, MacDonaldite little steps. But when he frees himself from his political trammels, the British racehorse will outstrip our peasant nag.

To generalize theoretically what I have said, in the Marxist terminology which is familiar to us, I should say that the question itself boils down to the inter-relation between the basis and the superstructure and to the inter-relation of bases and superstructures of different countries one with another. We know that superstructures—state, law, politics, parties and so on—arise on an economic basis, are nourished and determined by this basis. Consequently, basis and superstructure have to

correspond. And this happens in fact, only not simply but in a very complicated way. A powerful development of one superstructure (the bourgeois state, bourgeois parties, bourgeois culture) sometimes holds back for a long time the development of other superstructures (the revolutionary proletarian party), but in the last analysis—in the *last* analysis, not immediately—the basis reveals itself nevertheless as the decisive force. We have shown this by the example of Britain. If we approach the problem in a formal way, it may appear that the weakness of the British Communist Party *contradicts* the Marxist

law of the relationship between basis and superstructure. But this is certainly not the case. Dialectically, the basis, as we have seen, will, in spite of everything, secure its victory. In other words: a high level of technique, even through the barrier of ultra-conservative politics, nevertheless will manifest its preponderance and will lead to socialism sooner than in countries with a low level of technique.

That, comrades, is what I conceive the fundamental answer to be to the question which was put to me at Sokolniki.

#### 4. FASCISM AND REFORMISM\*

From general ideas about the historical causes of the strength and weakness of Communist Parties let us now pass to the world political situation in the more direct sense of the word, as it has taken shape at the time of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern. In recent years our press has often said that we have entered the epoch of Fascism. Some people have formed the view that it is Fascism that will lead directly to revolution, to the uprising of the workers in Europe. Lately, however, the very concept of Fascism has become extraordinarily muddled. On the most casual grounds it is sometimes said that Fascism is developing or that Fascism is advancing. If some strikers are arrested somewhere, this fact is interpreted quite often as the establishment of a Fascist regime, though the bourgeoisie arrested strikers before Fascism existed. We have to think this out, comrades: what is Fascism? How does it differ from a 'normal' regime of bourgeois violence? Expectations that Fascism, becoming steadily more and more intensified, will lead to the uprising of the proletariat, have not been justified by experience, and by no means all of us shared these expectations. We may refer to the fact that already in 1922 we said that if the German revolution did not bring the proletariat directly to victory, then we should have in the immediately-following years a Labour Government in Britain and a triumph of the Left Bloc in France. In 1923,† at the 4th Congress of the Comintern, we repeated this. An amendment to this effect was included in the

political resolution of the Congress. Certain comrades from Austria, Holland and other countries hotly disputed this idea at the time. How could this be: a Labour Government in Britain, a victory of the Left Bloc in France, why, that would mean a new epoch of reformism, it would mean that the prospect of revolution faded away into the cloudy distance, and so on. Some even hit on the notion of accusing me of propaganda . . . for reformist illusions. These comrades imagined that if you foresee something, in the sense of an objective development, then thereby you assume responsibility for the fact that it must happen; therefore it would be much better and safer not to foresee anything and to discuss all problems only after the event. . . . (applause). It must be said, though, that when we urged in those discussions the probability that there would be a Labour Government in Britain and a victory of the Left Bloc in France, we had in mind only the tendency of development. This did not mean that we were a hundred per cent convinced that things would happen exactly in that way: the tendency of development is one thing, and its living refraction in reality is another thing. The factors in history are many, they intersect and interweave, some act in one direction, others in another. But history has so behaved that the forecast has on this occasion been fully realised: in Britain we have a Labour Government and in France a victory of the Left Bloc. And that's not all. We said that if in Britain a Labour Government came in, and in France the Left Bloc, provided that the

\* It must be realised that the sort of totalitarian regime which was imposed on Germany immediately after the Nazis' accession to power in 1933 did not begin to take shape in Italy until 1926, two years after Trotsky gave this speech. In 1924 there was still a Parliament and a party system in Italy. The murder of Matteotti provoked a political crisis which shook fascism to its foundations, and only the ineptitude of the opposition

parties saved Mussolini from the downfall which was confidently predicted in many quarters during 1924-26. In a sense, the history of 'Fascist Italy' begins with the Exceptional Laws of 1926 rather than with the March on Rome in 1922.—Tr.

† Actually, the 4th Congress took place at the end of 1922.—Tr.

German revolution had not proved victorious by then, in those circumstances we should inevitably have a temporary strengthening of Social-Democracy in Germany. This compromised party, broken up during the past year into hostile sections and extremely weakened, is being revived once more as a result of the 'democratic' turn in France and Britain, and goes to the German people with the proposition: now it is possible to arrive at an agreement with Britain, since our mates MacDonald and Co. are in power there, and with France too, where the rulers now are the Radical-Socialists, who are practically first cousins of ours, and so we German Socialists offer the German people our services as mediators in order to secure an agreement with the Western democracies. In other words, things would work out in such a way that if the revolution did not triumph in Germany in the immediate future, then a regime of temporary conciliation would prevail in European politics—'conciliation', of course, in the post-war style, with teeth bared and a knife up one's sleeve.

Has this forecast been confirmed? Absolutely. What is the 'Experts' Plan' for the solution of the reparations problem? It is an attempt to put through an international economic deal on a grand scale under the financial hegemony of America and Great Britain. The occupation of the Ruhr will continue 'in the meantime', but it will be covered up and mitigated by an agreement. The MacDonald Government is a government of political deals, of class conciliation. The Left-Bloc Government in France, again, is a petty-bourgeois government of class conciliation, with Menshevism in the traces. The same set-up exists in some other countries. That is the situation in Europe. And what has become of Fascism? There is nothing easier in politics than to master a catchword, a phrase, and repeat it over and over again. I have already said that consciousness is a very conservative factor and that a big whip is needed to make it go forward. What is Fascism? Can a Fascist regime exist for an indefinitely prolonged period? *Fascism is the fighting organisation of the bourgeoisie during and in case of civil war.* That's what Fascism is. It plays the same role for the bourgeoisie as the organisation

of armed uprising plays for the proletariat. The working class gets ready for the armed uprising, reorganises its organisation accordingly, creates shock groups, arms its fighters with dynamite and so on. Can such a situation continue for ever? Obviously not: either the working class conquers, and then it forms a regular army, or its assault is repulsed, and then the organisation of the armed uprising is at an end at least for the immediate future. There begins once more a period of political agitation, assembling of forces and so on, and only later, after the passage of several years (after 1905!) and sometimes even decades (after the Paris Commune) is a fresh armed uprising of the proletariat prepared. We have already said that Fascism is a direct shock army of the bourgeoisie when the latter no longer finds adequate the old state machine, trammelled with legality and democracy, when it needs a force to beat off the pressure of the proletariat, and so it creates a fighting squad, ready for anything, tramples on its own legality and its own democracy, in order to uphold its power. Can Fascism last a long time? No. If the bourgeoisie keeps hold of power, as happened in Italy in 1920, as happened in Germany last year, then, having made use of Fascism's bloody work, it strives to broaden its base, to lean upon the middle and petty bourgeoisie, and once again re-establishes legality. The bourgeoisie cannot exist for long in conditions of Fascism, as the proletariat cannot exist for years in a state of armed uprising. We see that in Italy Mussolini has in recent months been making convulsive efforts to adapt the Fascist power, i.e., its illegal fighting apparatus, to the legal mechanics of parliamentarism. He has had some success, but the opposition is growing faster than his successes. He has not so far managed to discipline his brisk boys, and we have had such an incident as the murder of the Social-Democrat Matteotti. Even the majority of the bourgeois classes of Italy are against him. A proletarian rising does not threaten them directly, and so the shattering of legality by the murdering of members of Parliament is not only unnecessary for the bourgeoisie but even dangerous to it. It is a superfluous luxury!

## 5. REFORMISM'S CHANCES

If we adopt this concrete, historical approach to Fascism, then it will be understandable why in Germany the bourgeoisie, which to its own enormous surprise has not been overthrown, is trying to lead victorious reaction as quickly as possible into the

channel of parliamentarism; why the Conservatives have been succeeded in Britain not by 'Fascists' but by the Labour Government of MacDonald; why in France the Left Bloc has come to power; why in Italy Fascism is undergoing an acute crisis, though



its leaders are striving to adapt it to parliamentarism. We understand also why it was possible to foresee and forecast two years ago that this would happen. This could be done because the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat develops not along a straight line but through successive sharp clashes, with, separating these, more or less prolonged periods of legalized 'peaceful' struggle. If this were not so, capitalist society could not exist at all. Such sharp civil war clashes occurred in Italy in September 1920, in Germany in 1918-1919, in March 1921 and last year. Germany became the first of the countries where revolution was expected, and we said: either a new clash with the bourgeoisie will conclude with the victory of the proletariat, and then Fascism will come very rapidly, or it will conclude with defeat, and then the revolution will be put off for a considerable time, the bourgeoisie will need to seek a broader base and will have to entrust the Mensheviks with licking the wounds which were dealt by Fascism in the civil war. Today the Mensheviks are carrying out this task all over Europe. After the period of the imperialist war, of colossal upheavals, unprecedented strikes, revolutionary collisions, uprisings—when all this proves insufficient for victory, and the proletariat temporarily withdraws from advanced positions—and this is what has happened—then the bourgeoisie seeks both economic and political stability and with this aim begins to base itself upon the intermediate classes, the petty and middle bourgeoisie. It summons not the Fascist but the Menshevik and says to him: 'Wipe away the bloodstains, apply the balm of consolation to the wounds, soothe, deceive, stretch the coloured veil of democracy over everything.' This replacement of the Fascist by the Menshevik is therefore not accidental, but in accordance with the laws of historical development, and therefore it could be foreseen long before it happened. Marxism was given us so that we may find our way in the course of historical development, and to some extent foresee what lies ahead: without such understanding and foresight one cannot fight and conquer.

Thus, the neo-reformist and neo-pacifist chapter of European, and to some extent also of world history, conforms entirely to the laws of historical development. But does this mean that it will be very prolonged? And, what is even more important, does it mean that the bourgeoisie is now on the road to the final restoration of the stability of the capitalist regime? No, there are no grounds at all for saying that. *The processes of the political superstructure, for all their conformity to historical laws, are very much more mobile and superficial*

*than processes in the economic basis.* And up to now it is quite impossible to observe any phenomena which would provide evidence for believing that the capitalist economy of Europe and the world is near to finding a new mobile equilibrium.

The great imperialist war was caused by the fact that the productive forces of capitalism had outgrown the limits of national statehood. Militarism's methods had to be used to extend the market for each of the belligerent groups at the expense of the other. But the war did not solve the problem. The productive forces are now still more cramped than before the war, in the state frontiers established by the Versailles peace and the new relationship of world forces. From this results a profound, protracted, chronic crisis of capitalism. At the 3rd Congress of the Comintern we argued about the question whether post-war Europe would see conjunctural fluctuations of the market (boom, depression, crisis, etc.). We said that such fluctuations were inevitable, so long as the capitalist basis of society continues. Many of you remember what heated arguments went on about this question both in the International and in our own Party. To some this question seemed semi-academic at that time. Today there can be no longer any doubt about the meaning and significance of those discussions which took place at the 3rd Congress about the question of the significance and prospects of the crisis of European capitalism. Those discussions were by no means of merely academic interest, they were of profoundly practical, revolutionary-political interest. The question under dispute boiled down to this: can and must we expect that the crisis will follow an unbroken downward line, or should we suppose that there will be peace, in conditions of the break-up of capitalism, for small cyclical fluctuations?

The very great significance of these partial fluctuations for the proletarian movement in the post-revolutionary period is now already quite beyond any doubt. And in the period immediately ahead the significance of these partial fluctuations of the conjuncture for the revolutionary movement will certainly not be any less.

At the same time, however, thanks to the correct theoretical position laid down at the 3rd Congress, temporary improvements in the conjuncture do not at all oblige us to recognise that the crisis of European capitalism is at an end. Thus, the undoubted fact of a high commercial and industrial boom last year in America, a certain reduction in unemployment in Britain, some growth of French industry, a certain stabilization of the German, Austrian and Polish currencies, and other facts, would have been bound to lead us, if we had had

an incorrect theoretical orientation, to false conclusions in the spirit of reformism. Thus, the fight against a mechanical conception of crisis was based not upon any urge to make some sort of concessions to reformism but, on the contrary, was based on a broad revolutionary prospect, and it theoretically guaranteed us against a false estimation of economic factors of a secondary character. We have no intention of joining Hilferding and Co. in their answer to the question whether capitalism's basic equilibrium has been restored, as a result of which bourgeois society has returned to normal—for such a view, as we had said, there are no grounds, and the mere idea is the fruit of pious wishes. Conjunctural commercial and industrial fluctuations do not eliminate the basic incompatibility between the productive forces and the state frontiers within which they are exploited. It was from this con-

tradition that the imperialist war directly arose. The impetus to war was given by the conjunctural crisis which broke out in 1913. It is necessary to distinguish strictly between the operation of the fundamental factors and tendencies of capitalist development, on the one hand, and cyclical conjunctural fluctuations on the other. The crisis of 1913 would not have led to war by itself if there had not been the intolerable basic contradiction mentioned above. But this contradiction was only deepened and sharpened after the war. It is already clear from this that the next small boom will not be able to eliminate this basic contradiction and, consequently, to restore the economic equilibrium of bourgeois society. Its basis of bases, its economics, threatens, for the future as well, tremendous military and social upheavals.

## 6. THE LESSON OF THE GERMAN REVOLUTION

The whole problem now is whether the Communist Party will prove able to utilise these upheavals so as to take power and solve thereafter all the contradictions of capitalist society. If it be asked, have we, as an International, become stronger in this period, then the answer must be that on the whole we have undoubtedly become stronger. Nearly all the sections have become bigger and more influential than they were. Does this mean that their strength is growing and will continue to grow continuously, in a single upward line? No, it does not mean that. This strength grows in zigzags, waves, convulsions—here also the dialectic of development prevails; the Comintern is not exempt from it. Thus, in the second half of last year, the Communist Party of Germany was, politically, incomparably stronger than it is today—at that time it was marching directly towards the conquest of power, and the upheaval in the entire social life of Germany was so great that not only the most backward masses of the workers but also broad strata of the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia were all confident that the Communists were soon about to come to power and reorganise society. Moods like this are in themselves among the most reliable symptoms of the maturity of a revolutionary situation. But it turned out that the Communists were not yet able to take power. Not because the objective situation rendered this impossible—no, one could not imagine conditions more mature, better prepared for the seizure of power. If these conditions were to be

exactly described, they could take their place as a classical example in the textbooks of proletarian revolution. But the party was not able to make use of them. We must stop and dwell upon this.

The first period in the history of the International ran from October 1917 to the revolutionary upheavals in Germany in March 1921. Everything was determined by the war and its immediate consequences. We expected an uprising of the European proletariat and its conquest of power in the near future. What mistake did we make? We underestimated the role of the party. After the Third Congress there began a new period. The slogan 'to the masses' meant in essence: 'build the party'. This policy was carried out more fully and successfully in Germany than anywhere else. But in Germany also it happened that it came into contradiction with the situation brought into being in 1923 as a result of the occupation of the Ruhr, which at one blow upset the fictitious equilibrium of Europe. At the end of 1923 we suffered in Germany a very great defeat, no less serious than our defeat in 1905. What, however, was the difference? In 1905 we lacked sufficient forces, as became apparent during the struggle. In other words, the cause of the defeat lay in the objective relation of forces. In 1923 in Germany we suffered defeat without matters ever getting to the stage of a clash of forces, without forces being mobilised and used. Thus, the immediate cause of the defeat was in this case to be found in the leadership of the

party. True, one may say that even if the party had followed a correct policy it still would not have been able to mobilize adequate forces and would have been beaten. This opinion is, however, to say the least, conjectural. As regards the objective situation, the relation of class forces, the self-confidence of the ruling classes and the masses of the people, that is, as regards all the pre-requisites for revolution, we had a most favourable situation, as you can picture for yourselves: a crisis of existence for the nation and the state, brought to a climax by the occupation; a crisis of the economy and especially of the country's finances; a crisis of parliamentarism; an utter collapse in the ruling class's confidence in itself; disintegration of Social-Democracy and the trade unions; a spontaneous increase in the influence of the Communist Party; a turn by petty-bourgeois elements towards Communism; a sharp decline in the morale of the Fascists. Such were the political pre-conditions. What was the position in the military sphere? A very small standing army, consisting of a hundred to two hundred thousand men, that is, a police force organised on army lines. The forces of the Fascists were monstrously exaggerated and to a considerable degree existed only on paper. In any case, after July-August the Fascists were severely demoralized.

Did the Communists have the majority of the working masses behind them? This is a question which cannot be answered with statistics. It is a question which is decided by the dynamic of revolution. The masses were moving steadily towards the Communists, and the opponents of the Communists were weakening equally steadily. The masses who remained with Social-Democracy showed no disposition actively to oppose the Communists, as they had done in March 1921. On the contrary, the majority of the Social-Democratic workers awaited revolution in a spirit of hope. This also is what is needed for revolution.

Were the masses in a fighting mood? The entire history of the year 1923 leaves no doubt at all on this account. True, towards the end of the year this mood had become more reserved, more concentrated, had lost its spontaneity, that is, its readiness for constant elemental outbreaks. But how could that be otherwise? By the second half of the year the masses had become a great deal more experienced, and felt or understood that matters were moving in full upsurge towards a decisive showdown. In such conditions the masses could go forward only if there was present a firm, self-confident leadership and confidence on the part of the masses in this leadership. Discussions about whether the masses were in a fighting mood or not are very

subjective in character and essentially express the lack of confidence among the leaders of the party itself. Assertions that no aggressive fighting mood was to be observed among the masses were made more than once here, too, on the eve of October. Lenin answered such assertions somewhat like this: 'Even if we were to admit that these assertions are true, that would only show that we have missed the most favourable moment. But that would not mean at all that conquest of power is impossible at the present moment. After all, nobody will dare to affirm that the majority or even a substantial minority of the mass of the workers will *oppose* revolution. The most that the moderates want to claim is that the majority will not take an active part in the revolution. But it is sufficient if an active minority takes part, with a benevolent, expectant, or even passive mood prevailing among the majority.' That was Lenin's argument. Subsequent events showed that the fighting minority drew behind it the overwhelming majority of the working people. There can be no doubt that events would have followed the same pattern in Germany.

Finally, from the international standpoint as well, the situation of the German revolution cannot be said to have been hopeless. True, imperialist France lay next door to revolutionary Germany. But, as against that, Soviet Russia also exists in the world, and Communism had become stronger in all countries, including France.

What was the fundamental cause of the defeat of the German Communist Party?

This, that it did not appreciate in good time the onset of revolutionary crisis from the moment of the occupation of the Ruhr, and especially from the moment of the termination of passive resistance (January-June 1923). It missed the crucial moment. . . . It is very difficult for a revolutionary party to make the transition from a period of agitation and propaganda, prolonged over many years, to the direct struggle for power through the organisation of armed insurrection. This turn inevitably gives rise to an inner-party crisis. Every responsible Communist must be prepared for this. One of the ways of being prepared is to make a thorough study of the entire factual history of the October revolution. Up to now extremely little has been done in this connection, and the experience of October was most inadequately utilised by the German party. . . . It continued even after the onset of the Ruhr crisis to carry on its agitational and propagandist work on the basis of the united front formula—at the same tempo and in the same forms as before the crisis. Meanwhile, this tactic had already become radically insufficient. A growth in the party's political influence was taking

place automatically. A sharp tactical turn was needed. It was necessary to show the masses, and above all the party itself, that this time it was a matter of immediate preparation for the seizure of power. It was necessary to consolidate the party's growing influence organisationally and to establish bases of support for a direct assault on the state. It was necessary to transfer the whole party organisation on to the basis of factory cells. It was necessary to form cells on the railways. It was necessary to raise sharply the question of work in the army. It was necessary, especially necessary, to adapt the united front tactic fully and completely to these tasks, to give it a more decided and firmer tempo and a more revolutionary character. On this basis work of a military-technical nature should have been carried on.

The question of appointing a date for the uprising can have significance only in this connection and with this prospect. Insurrection is an art. An art presumes a clear aim, a precise plan and, consequently, a schedule.

The most important thing, however, was this, to ensure *in good time* the decisive tactical turn towards the seizure of power. And this was not done. This was the chief and fatal omission. From this followed the basic contradiction. On the one hand, the party expected a revolution, while on the other hand, because it had burned its fingers in the March events, it avoided, until the last months of 1923, the very idea of organising a revolution, i.e., preparing an insurrection. The party's political activity was carried on at a peacetime tempo at a time when the denouement was approaching. The time for the uprising was fixed when, in essentials, the enemy had already made use of the time lost by the party and strengthened his position. The party's military-technical preparation, begun at feverish speed, was divorced from the party's political activity, which was carried on at the previous peacetime tempo. The masses did not understand the party and did not keep step with it. The party felt at once its severance from the masses, and proved to be paralyzed. From this resulted the sudden withdrawal from first-class positions without a fight—the hardest of all possible defeats.

It cannot be thought that history mechanically creates the conditions for revolution and presents them thereafter, at the party's request, at any moment, on a plate: here you are, sign the receipt please. That does not happen.

A class must, in the course of prolonged struggle, forge a vanguard which will be able to find its way in a situation, which will recognise revolution when it knocks at the door, which at the necessary

moment will be able to grasp the problem of insurrection as a problem of art, to work out a plan, distribute roles and deal a merciless blow at the bourgeoisie. Well, the German Communist Party did not find in itself at the decisive moment this ability, this skill, this tempering and this energy. In order the more clearly to understand what is involved, let us imagine for a moment that in October 1917 we had begun to vacillate, to take up a waiting position, that we had drawn aside and said: let us wait a bit, the situation is still not clear enough. At first sight it appears that the revolution is not a bear, it doesn't run off into the forest—if you haven't made it in October you can make it two or three months later. But such an idea is radically mistaken. It does not take into account the mobile relationship between all those factors which make up a revolution. The most immediate and intimate condition for revolution is the readiness of the masses to carry out a revolution. But this readiness cannot be preserved, it has to be used at that very moment when it reveals itself. Before October the workers, the soldiers and the peasants were marching behind the Bolsheviks. But this, of course, did not at all mean that they themselves were Bolsheviks, that is, that they were capable of following the party *in all conditions and circumstances*. They had suffered acute disappointment with the Mensheviks and S.R.s and that was why they were following the Bolshevik party. Their disappointment with the conciliationist parties aroused in them hope that the Bolsheviks would be tougher, that they would prove to be made of different stuff from the others and that there would be no gulf between their words and their deeds. If the Bolsheviks had in these circumstances displayed vacillation and taken up a waiting position, then they too would in a short time have been equated in the mind of the masses with the Mensheviks and the S.R.s: the masses would have turned away from us as rapidly as they had come towards us. In this very way a fundamental change would have taken place in the relation of forces.

For what is this 'relation of forces', in fact? It is a very complex conception and is made up of many different elements. Among these there are some which are very stable, such as technique and economics, which determine class structure; in so far as the relation of forces is determined by the numbers of the proletariat, the peasantry and other classes, we have here to do with fairly stable factors. But with a given numerical size of a class, the strength of this class depends on the degree of organisation and activity of its party, the inter-relations between the party and the masses, the mood

of the masses, and so on. These factors are much less stable, especially in a revolutionary period, and it is about them, precisely, that we are talking. If the extreme revolutionary party, which the logic of events has placed in the centre of attention of the working masses, misses the crucial moment, then the relation of forces changes fundamentally, for the hopes of the masses, aroused by the party, are replaced by disappointment or passivity and deep despair, and the party retains around itself only those elements which it has lastingly and conclusively won, i.e., a minority. This is what happened last year in Germany. Everybody, including the Social-Democratic workers, expected of the Communist Party that it would lead the country out of the blind alley it was in; the party was unable to transform this universal expectation into decisive revolutionary actions and lead the proletariat to victory. That is why, after October-November, there began an ebbing of the revolutionary mood. That also provided the basis for the temporary strengthening of bourgeois reaction, for no other, deeper changes (in the class composition of society, in the economy) had been able, certainly, to bring this about down to that time.

In the last parliamentary elections, the Communist Party polled 3,700,000 votes.\* That, of course, is a very, very fine nucleus of the proletariat. But this figure has to be evaluated dynamically. There can be no doubt that in August-October of last year the Communist Party could, all other things being equal, have polled an incomparably larger number of votes. On the other hand, there is much to suggest that if the elections had taken place two or three months later, the Communist Party's vote would have been smaller. This means, in other words, that the party's influence is now on the decline. It would be absurd to shut one's eyes to this: revolutionary politics are not the politics of the ostrich. It is necessary, however, to have a clear understanding of the meaning of this fact. I have already said that Communist Parties are not exempt from the power of the laws of the dialectic, and that their development takes place in contradictions, through booms and crises. In a period of political flood-tide the party's influence on the masses grows rapidly, in a period of ebb it is weakened, and the

\* The Reichstag elections here meant took place on May 4, 1924.—Tr.

process of internal selection is intensified in the parties. All accidental and unreliable elements depart, the nucleus of the party is welded and tempered. Thereby it is prepared for a fresh revolutionary flood-tide. A correct estimate of the situation and a sound view of the future preserves one from mistakes and disappointments. We have already seen the truth of this in relation to the question of industrial booms and crises in the post-war period. We see this, again, in relation to the question of Europe's entry into a neo-reformist phase. Now we need to understand with all possible clarity the stage through which Germany is passing, otherwise we shall not know what the morrow will bring us.

After the defeat of 1905 we needed seven years before the movement, stimulated by the Lena events, began once again to turn upward, and we needed twelve years before the second revolution gave power to the proletariat. The German proletariat suffered last year a very big defeat. It will need a definite and considerable interval of time in order to digest this defeat, to master its lessons and to recover from it, once more to gather its strength; and the Communist Party will be able to ensure the victory of the proletariat only if it, too, fully and completely masters the lessons of last year's experience. How much time will be needed for these processes? Five years? Twelve years? No precise answer can be given to this question. One can only express this general idea that the rate of development, in the sense of radical changes in the political situation, has become much more rapid and feverish since the war than it was before the war. In economics we see that the productive forces grow very slowly, and at the same time worsening and improvement in the conjuncture succeed each other more frequently than pre-war. A similar phenomenon is observed in politics too: Fascism and Menshevism succeed one another very rapidly; yesterday's situation was profoundly revolutionary and today the bourgeoisie seems to be triumphing all along the line. In this consists also the profoundly revolutionary character of our epoch, and this character of the epoch compels us to draw the conclusion that the triumph of counter-revolution in Germany cannot be long-lasting. But at the present moment what we observe are phenomena of ebb-tide and not of flood-tide, and our tactics should, of course, conform to this situation.

## 7. EUROPE AND AMERICA

In Britain the conservative-reformist and pacifist illusions of the working class, seriously undermined by the war, are now booming again, and more

luxuriantly than before, under the sign of the Labour Government. The entire political past of the British working class, in so far as it is expressed in political

moderation, conciliation, reformism and complicity in the imperialist policy of the bourgeoisie, is now being subjected to its highest test, with the transfer of power to the Labour Party. The Labour Party itself is playing down the seriousness of this test by pointing to the fact that it has not an absolute majority in Parliament and therefore is not responsible for everything. But history has nevertheless mounted a full-scale experiment. The outcome of the MacDonald regime, however it may finish from the formal standpoint, will be a deepening of criticism and self-criticism in the ranks of the working class. And criticism and self-criticism mean a growth of the Left Wing. For Britain the period of the formation of the Communist Party is only now really opening.

The MacDonald government has not only deepened the temporary democratic-pacifist illusions of the British working class, it has also increased its self-awareness. One cannot say that the British working class now feels itself master in the house, for if it had that feeling then it would already have become master. But the average British worker says to himself: we do count for something, then, since the King has called our trade-unionists to power. And this awareness, whatever conservative limitations it may bear within itself as a result of the entire past, itself gives a big stimulus to future development. The workers have become more demanding, less patient, and as a result the number of strikes has sharply increased in Britain. And it is not for nothing that the *Sunday Times* is complaining that though they have splendid Labour leaders in Britain these are being rapidly thrust aside by revolutionaries. Rapidly or not, they are being thrust aside and they will be thrust aside—thrust aside and thrust out (applause).

In their entire economic and political situation the countries of Europe are placed, taken as a whole, between the positions of Germany and of Britain—with, perhaps, the exception, that Italy now seems to be coming forward again into the front rank of the revolution. The breakdown of Mussolini's regime may come quite quickly, and by the very character of the regime this may assume very radical forms and once more confront the proletariat with the problem of power. The task in Italy consists in having at this movement a party which is sufficiently strong and full of initiative. This is a big and difficult task, but it must be carried out.\*

\* In this connection we wrote on November 15, 1922, at the time of the Fourth Congress: 'It is quite evident that if the revolution does not take place sooner—and there are no data on this—then an era of democratic-pacifist illusions is imminent in Britain, and that in the very

As before, America occupies a special place. Even before the war, the rates of development of Europe and America were not identical, and since the war the difference between them has become still greater. When we speak of the international revolution, we quite often think of it too summarily, in too general terms. The world revolution will have its stages, separated one from another by considerable intervals of time. Everything points to the probability that the American revolution will take place considerably later than the European. Historically such a course of events is exceedingly likely, with the East throwing off the imperialist yoke, the proletariat taking power in Europe, and America remaining as before the citadel of capital.

In this sense the United States may become and is becoming a basic counter-revolutionary force in history. The philistines cannot understand this—for them the question is decided by pseudo-democratic forms, pacifist phrases and other trash. The fact that the war went on for four years, exhausting Europe, was possible only because of the special role played by America. After the war America helped the European bourgeoisie to defend its positions. Now America is organising, through the 'Experts' Plan', a complex system of enslavement of the European working masses. America opposes most stubbornly any recognition of the Soviet Republic. The United States is fantastically rich. The American bourgeoisie has at its disposal unprecedented resources with which to manoeuvre both in internal and external politics. All this taken together suggests that a victorious European proletariat would most likely have to reckon with American capital as with an uncompromising and powerful foe. Social-Democracy, and German Social-Democracy first and foremost, is doing everything it can to glorify the political role of 'transatlantic democracy'. Social-Democracy frightens the workers with the wrath of America in the event of their showing disrespect and, contrariwise, promises them great benefits to follow an agreement between the European democracies under the aegis of the American bourgeois. The entire policy of European Menshevism

near future. Even if the old Conservative-National-Liberal majority is successful in the elections now taking place, its rule will only be brief. A political shift to the left is inevitable. In France it is certain that the Left Bloc will come to power, and this in turn will arouse pacifist hopes and excitement in bourgeois and Social-Democratic Germany. *The possibility is not excluded, especially if the conditions mentioned above come about, that the Mussolini regime will exhaust itself before the Italian working class is able to take power; in that case an epoch of neo-Kerenskyism could open in Italy too.*

is built upon this. Being in general an agency of the bourgeoisie, European Social-Democracy is naturally and inevitably becoming an agency of the richest and mightiest bourgeoisie, that of America. Social Democracy is trying to paralyse the revolutionary energy of Europe's workers with the hypnosis of American capitalist power. We have seen this especially in Germany since 1918, when Kautskian Wilsonism was the most serious counter-revolutionary factor in the ranks of the working class itself. We may expect that in the forthcoming period, in accordance with the implementing of the 'Experts' Plan', Social-Democracy will only intensify its work of intimidating the proletariat with the bogy of all-powerful North America, at once beneficent and terrible. A struggle against this intimidation and this hypnosis is a necessary condition for successfully preparing the workers of Europe for revolution. They must realise that a united Europe is fully capable not only of existing independently in the

economic sense but also of defending itself in open struggle against American counter-revolution. When we speak of united Europe we have in mind a European Federal Soviet Republic, indissolubly linked with our present Union and through its mediation stretching out a hand to the East, to the peoples of Asia. We say to the European workers: if you take power, if you establish a Soviet United States including us as well, then at once you unite two mighty continents which possess splendid technical equipment, boundless spaces and natural resources, and the tremendous enthusiasm of a revolutionary class which has come to power. If you should have to clash face to face with armed world counter-revolution—and you will have to—you will build your own Red Army, and you will not have to begin from scratch, for we shall give you as leaven for it the Red Army of the Soviet Union, already experienced in war and encouraged by victory. (Stormy applause.)

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By LEON TROTSKY

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# GERMANY: 1921

## The March Action

by Pierre Broué

MARCH 1921. An atmosphere of civil war. Armed nationalist bands provoke workers suffering from crisis and unemployment. In Central Germany hard-fought strikes break out; the miners have bloody tussles with the police. On March 16, Horsing, the Social-Democratic security chief, announces that the police will occupy the mining district of Mansfeld. Objective: to restore calm, disarm the workers.

The police were welcomed with firing. *Rote Fahne*, organ of the German Communist Party, on the 18th appealed for resistance: 'Every worker should defy the law and take arms where he can find them.' On the 19th a thousand police occupied the district: the strike spread to all trades in the affected region. The workers barricaded themselves in their factories; on the 23rd there was fighting throughout the district. On the 24th the Central Committee of the German CP called for a general strike. It was not followed. Fights between workers broke out everywhere: the strikers, few in number, took on the 'blacklegs' who remained in the majority, the Social-Democrats and the trade unions indignantly denouncing the attempted 'rising' of the communists. . . .

Here and there Communist officials organised false attacks on themselves in order to provoke the indignation of the masses and bring them into the struggle. In the centre of the country the factories

were surrounded and bombarded and gave up one after another: the Leuna factory, the last to do so, surrendered on the 29th.

On the 31st the CP rescinded the strike order. Illegal once again, it was to experience an unprecedented crisis: a number of its leaders, including Paul Levi, denounced its adventurist policies and were expelled. Shortly afterwards the Third World Congress of the Communist International gave its verdict on the 'March action', in which it saw a 'forward step' at the same time as it condemned the theory of 'the offensive at all costs' which its supporters had put forward. The German party lost a hundred thousand members, including many trade union cadres, who had refused to follow it, condemned its actions or been overwhelmed by the publication in the bourgeois and socialist press of documents which incriminated its leaders.

It was some time before it was understood that the March action brought to a close the post-war revolutionary period, that it was the last of the armed actions of the proletariat which had begun with the struggles in Berlin in January 1919. The contribution which this affair made to the failure of the German Communists to build a revolutionary mass party, a Communist Party of the Bolshevik type, has yet to be measured.



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## The building of the Party

The Bolsheviks thought that their revolution could only be the forerunner: the problems posed in Russia could only be resolved on a world scale and, in the meantime, the decisive battlefield was Germany, where the bourgeoisie, after November 1918, owed its survival to the alliance between the officer corps and the Social-Democratic and trade union apparatus against the Workers' Councils. The murderers employed by the socialist Noske won the first round: by assassinating the revolutionary leaders Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, the outstanding founders of German communism, they decapitated the young party which was coming into being.

The vanguard, moreover, was deeply divided. Years of opportunism had fed a violent anti-centralising reaction in the German working class; the years of war pushed the young generations towards impatience and adventures. Against the leadership around Paul Levi a strong leftist minority called for the boycotting of elections, condemned work in the trade unions and wished to retain from the Russian experience only the lesson of the insurrection, which was possible at any time since the workers were armed and the bourgeoisie was provoking them. Lenin, who polemicised against them in *Left Wing Communism*, nevertheless wished to keep them in the party, but Levi took steps to expel the leftists.

Despite the difficulties, the new perspectives seemed to confirm his viewpoint. The Independent Social Democrats, born of the split from the Social-Democratic Party during the war, had recruited hundreds of thousands of instinctively revolutionary workers who Levi hoped to win for communism *en bloc*. Their leaders had collaborated in the crushing of the Councils in 1918, but the difficulties

## The conquest of a majority of the proletariat

The Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920 had set itself the task of the construction of such parties, with the perspective of an early conquest of power in several countries. Summing up its work, Zinoviev, president of the International, declared: 'I am profoundly convinced that the Second Congress of the Comintern is the prelude to another congress, the world congress of Soviet republics.' And Trotsky explained why the Communists wished to see a *split* in the working-class movement: 'There is no doubt that the proletariat would be in power in all countries if there had not been between the Communist Parties and the masses, between the revolutionary masses and the



*Second Congress of the Communist International, 1920. Left to right: Lenin, Bukharin, Zinoviev. Seated: Paul Levi.*

of the working class in post-war Germany, the prestige of the Russian Revolution, the tenacious action of the International, radicalised them and won them gradually towards communism. In September 1920, at their Congress at Halle, the majority of the Independents decided to ask for affiliation to the Communist International and to accept its 21 conditions. In December the Unified Communist Party was born: it had over half a million members, a solidly organised vanguard with strong fractions in the big unions, control over local unions in several industrial towns, 40 daily papers and several specialised reviews and periodicals, an underground military organisation and considerable financial resources. It was the instrument which had so far been lacking to bring the proletarian revolution in Germany to a successful conclusion, all the communists thought.

revolutionary vanguard, a powerful and complex machine, the parties of the Second International and the trade unions, which, in the epoch of the disintegration and death of the bourgeoisie, placed their machine at its service. From the time of this Congress, the split in the world working class must be accelerated tenfold.'

Zinoviev indicated the meaning of the split at Halle: 'We work for the split, not because we want only 18 instead of 21 Conditions, but because we do not agree on the question of the world revolution, on democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat.' For the Communists the split was not simply a state of affairs destined to last for some time, but an

immediate necessity in order to eliminate definitively from the workers' movement the reformist leaders who acted as 'agents of the bourgeoisie'. It was the preface to the reconstitution of unity on the basis of a revolutionary programme, a condition for victory in the struggle for power.

Once the split had been realised there was still the question of wresting from the reformist chiefs the millions of proletarians who made up their following. Lenin, more than anyone, sought to win support in the Communist Parties for the understanding of the necessity for a United Front policy; later, Zinoviev said of this policy that it was 'the expression of the consciousness that (i) we have not yet won a majority in the working class; (ii) the social-democracy is still very strong; (iii) we occupy defensive positions and the enemy is on the offensive; (iv) the decisive battles are not yet on the agenda'.

It was from analysis such as this that at the beginning of 1921 the leaders of the German CP addressed an 'open letter' to the trade unions and workers' parties proposing common action on an

immediate programme of defence of living standards. The letter, which Lenin described as a 'model political initiative', began with the recognition that more than ten million workers still followed the Social-Democratic leaders and the trade union officials and obeyed their orders. 'Communist strategy' wrote Radek, 'must be to convince these large masses of workers that the trade union bureaucracy and the Social-Democratic Party not only do not want to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, but also do not want to fight for the most fundamental day-to-day interests of the working class.'

However, the Second Congress fixed as a first objective the construction of parties capable of leading the struggle of the masses for power: for Zinoviev and a part of his group, in the headquarters of the International, the idea of the 'conquest of the masses' apart from the march to power was an opportunist conception. They saw the 'open letter' as an instrument of demobilisation.

## Destructive activism

Rallying to the Zinoviev line after having been one of the authors of the 'open letter', Karl Radek then wrote to the German CP that it was necessary to break with the wait-and-see attitude which it had followed while it was still a sect and become conscious that, now that it was a mass party, it had become a real factor in the class struggle. It was necessary, he wrote, 'to activate our policy in order to draw in new mass support'. For his part, Rakosi, emissary of the International at the Italian Socialist Party Congress at Livorno, adopted the same activist position and took pleasure in the perhaps inevitable but catastrophic split, which left the overwhelming majority of the revolutionary workers behind the centrist leaders of the Socialist Party and reduced the scarcely founded Italian CP to the status of a sect. Against Levi, who maintained that they had no right to split when the movement was in retreat, he vaunted before the Central Committee of the German CP the necessity and virtue of splits, developing the theme of a 'too large party' which 'would strengthen itself by purging itself'.

Another collaborator of Zinoviev, a compatriot

of Rakosi, Bela Kun, bore the responsibility, as emissary of the International, for having thrown the German CP into the 'March action'. Did he, as has been supposed, follow the suggestions of Zinoviev, who was frightened by Russian internal difficulties at the time of the Kronstadt revolt? Did he try to 'force' a revolutionary issue in Germany to prevent the Russian communists from having to make the retreat of the New Economic Policy? In the present state of documentation no certain answer is possible. What is certain is that Kun placed his prestige as Comintern delegate behind a theory of the offensive which was to be used to justify the position of the CP in March and was to end in disaster.

It is equally unquestionable that the centralised structure of the International, the doubtful practice, introduced by Zinoviev, of Comintern agents not responsible to the parties which they supervised, raised a problem of organisation which would be pointed out by Lenin at the Fourth Congress, but never really tackled.

## Lenin on the Party and the March Action

It is known today, on the other hand, that Lenin and Trotsky had to wage an energetic political struggle in the leadership of the Russian CP and

the CI against the partisans of the offensive, at the head of whom stood Zinoviev, before imposing their point of view at the Third World Congress. It was

upon Trotsky that the task devolved of showing that the international situation had been modified since 1919, that the taking of power was no longer on the agenda, but that the Communist Parties had to turn to the conquest of the masses: a condition for the struggle for power in the next phase of revolutionary advance.

To Lenin fell the task of denouncing, 'twisting the neck', of the theory of the offensive, holding up to ridicule the puerile arguments of its defenders—the 'kuneries', as he called them, of Kun, as well as the boasting of the Italian Terracini, who took advantage of the Bolshevik example in order to excuse the small size of his own party.

Lenin joined Levi in denouncing the March action. He was careful, in approving someone who had broken party discipline, not to anger those who, by discipline, and in good faith, had followed absurd slogans. He conveyed his inner thoughts to Clara Zetkin, who, very fortunately, later recounted them. Lenin thought that Levi's criticism was justified. Unfortunately, he made it in a 'unilateral, exaggerated and even malicious fashion', in a way which 'lacked a sense of solidarity with the party'. In short, 'he lost his head' and thus concealed the real problems from the party, which turned against him. For this he had to be condemned by the Congress and was. But Lenin added, 'We must not lose Levi, both for ourselves and for the cause. We cannot afford to lose talented men, we must do what is possible to keep those that we have'. Lenin declared himself ready, if Levi 'behaved himself' (for example, by working for the party under an assumed name), personally to ask for his re-admission after three or four months. 'The important thing,' he said, 'is to leave the road open back to us.'

Speaking to Clara Zetkin of two workers, supporters of Levi delegates at the World Congress, Melzahn and Neumann, who had been reproached by interruptors even for the posts which they held in the trade unions, while they replied by attacking 'hair-splitting intellectuals', Lenin said: 'They are wonderful . . . I do not know whether they will make shock troops, but there is one thing of which I am sure: it is people like these who make up the long columns with solid ranks of the revolutionary proletariat. It is on their unbreakable force that everything depends in the factories and the trade unions: these are the elements who must be assembled and led into action, it is through them that we are in contact with the masses.' He added, speaking of

the Independent leaders who had come to communism in 1920: 'With them also patience is necessary, and one mustn't think that the "purity of communism" is in danger if it sometimes happens that they do not succeed yet in finding a clear, precise expression of communist thought.'

Through these informal words of Lenin to the German militant can be seen the constant concern of the revolutionary leader for his party. Lenin saw that a leadership cannot be built in a few days by bureaucratic decisions, but develops and raises itself up in years of patient effort. It was vital not to 'close the doors' by purely negative attitudes to erring comrades but to aid them, develop a deep sense of the solidarity of the party and enable them to take their bearings. The party of the workers' vanguard had to bring together different generations, comrades with varied experience: the young, the impatient, the 'leftists' together with the older, more solid and prudent, often 'opportunist' members. The intellectuals had to be brought into harness with the practical men of the trade unions. The contacts of the party had to be enriched and its understanding, consciousness and means of action developed by the qualities brought into it by people from very different, yet close, backgrounds: syndicalists, socialists, anarchists—who sought a common goal by different roads, like the proletariat itself. All these men had to be brought into a common struggle by a constant effort to construct the party, raise the level of its consciousness and by fighting to raise the level of the consciousness of the masses. 'Learn, learn, learn! Agitate, agitate, agitate! Be prepared, prepared to the utmost in order to use the next revolutionary wave with all our conscious energy.'

These are the real lessons of the March action. Thus, as Lenin stressed in a letter of August 14, 1921, to German militants, revolutionaries must learn 'to determine correctly the times when the *masses* of the proletariat *cannot* rise with them'. Ten years later, in the face of the Nazi hordes, there would not be a revolutionary party in Germany, but a Stalinist Party and a Social-Democratic Party which equally shared the responsibility for the disaster of 1933. The responsibility of those who were unable to build the party which was necessary in Germany is no less crushing. After them, however, it is no longer possible to underestimate the difficulties of the enterprise, and to believe that it is enough to 'proclaim' ideas in order to win, without undertaking the hard labour of construction of the historic instrument for their victory.



Left to right: Bela Kun, Alfred Rosmer, Leon Trotsky, M. Frunze and S. I. Gussev.

ALFRED ROSMER died at Créteil hospital on May 6. The younger generation may not readily appreciate what this loss means. After Marguerite Thévenet, his companion, and after Natalia Trotsky, he was the last survivor of the heroic generation of the Bolsheviks, the last surviving companion of Lenin and the old guard, the loyal friend of Trotsky in his greatest days and in his darkest. He was a great militant, whose example can and will inspire those who come to know and consider the history of his life of struggles.

Alfred Rosmer—real name Griot—was born in 1877 of a Loire working-class family that had temporarily emigrated to the USA. He pursued his studies right up to his commission and tried his hand at various jobs, notably that of copy-clerk at his local town hall, before becoming a printers' proof reader. At the close of the last century, he formed part of that ardent body of youth, eager to discover and understand, and came into political life as a result of the Dreyfus case. This was how someone described him at that time: 'Tall, thin, with a pale face, high forehead, fine nose, thin lips, his eyes black and burning. His long thick hair fell around his neck. He wore an Inverness with the sides flapping about. In his look there was a little timidity but a lot of decision. He spoke only rarely, but never seemed to miss a word spoken by anyone else. One evening when a speaker was recalling how the Belgian monarchy had two or three years earlier granted universal suffrage to its people, he interrupted with a telling phrase that I can still hear now: "What a present!" So strong was the sarcasm in these words that the speaker seemed suddenly disconcerted and I conceived an unreserved admiration for the man in the black Inverness.'

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The cause which he took up was that of the revolutionary trade unionists of the Confédération Générale des Travailleurs inspired by the activity of Pelloutier, who he considered one of the masters of the workers' movement. He himself later summed up this activity:

'Struggle for the immediate demands of the working class in order to gather the largest possible number of workers around the organisation, and, at the same time, raising more distant perspectives for social revolution, which, through broadening the horizons of day-to-day struggles, prepares the formation of a grouping able to see the struggle in its entirety and consequently able to serve as a guide to the working class, in its fights of today and tomorrow. A solid base, for any revolutionary movement, that Lenin and the Bolsheviks, starting out from another point: the idea of a Party, were to unceasingly point out to their supporters.'

After August 1914, he had the opportunity to show what an indomitable man and militant he had become. Opportunism, cowardice and fear were uppermost in the working class organisations, parties and trade unions, whose leaders, plunging into class collaboration, preached sacred unity for 'national defence' and delivered the working classes of Europe bound hand and foot for mass slaughter. Along with Pierre Monatte, Marcel Martinet, Merrheim



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and a few others, Rosmer was one of the tiny nucleus of internationalists who refused to bend, who did not accept the break-up of the International, who overcame the temptations of discouragement and despair, and who around *Vie Ouvrière* kept the flag of revolution and proletarian internationalism flying. In his unfinished *History of the labour movement during the war* he recounts this struggle, playing down his personal role with customary modesty. Rosmer was the mainspring of the group, the indefatigable prime mover of all the attempts to rebuild the international working class revolutionary movement. Called up into the forces, he nevertheless continued his militant activity, but was unable to participate in the international conferences at Zimmerwald and Kienthal which, through his activity, he had helped to prepare.

In 1915 he joined up with Trotsky, who was publishing *Nashe Slovo* in Paris where he was in exile. Trotsky, he said, brought them 'the air of the open sea'. In those days there grew up a friendship between them that was never to be broken. It rested on the objective that both these men had fixed for themselves: the construction of a revolutionary International for the victory of socialism.

A member of the committee for the resumption of international relations, and member of the committee for the Third International in France, he was chosen to represent the group in Moscow, where he went in Spring 1920. He took part in the Second Congress of the Communist International, and was elected a member of the International's Executive, taking part in the foundation of the Red Trade Union International in which he untiringly fought against sectarian tendencies and defended the idea of work inside the reformist trade unions in order to win over the majority of the workers. A member of the small bureau of the International, he returned to France in 1921, was elected to the management committee, on which he was one of the representatives of the Left, and directed the social page of *Humanite*.

But in 1924, the defeat of the world revolution engendered the rise of a bureaucratic apparatus in the USSR. Stalin and his allies began their struggle against the Opposition led by Trotsky, which embodied the spirit of revolution, internationalism and fervent attachment to working-class democracy of the Party that had triumphed in October. In the bureaucratized International, Stalin and his kind could not tolerate men like Rosmer. He was deprived of all responsible positions from 1924 onwards. Two years later he was expelled from the party that he had helped to found. In those times of much apostasy, he continued along the path that had been his since 1910.

Divided from Trotsky over differences on the evaluation of men and of the means to be used to carry on the common struggle, he avoided any clash which might have worsened the disagreements and provoked splits. He was too well aware of the value of the links which united him to this great exile to

run the risk of damaging them over minor questions. He did not see Trotsky after his brief stay in France, but when the monstrous purge against the revolutionaries, the massacre of the old Bolsheviks and the witch-hunt against Trotsky began in Moscow, he was there once again. He took part in the work of the Commission of Enquiry into the Moscow Trials, demanded by Trotsky and chaired by John Dewey. He lived close to Trotsky in Coyoacan during the last months of the latter's life. It was he who was appointed Trotsky's testamentary executor.

More recently he prefaced the publications in French of *Terrorism and Communism* and *On Revolution*, which comprise some of Trotsky's fundamental works; 'an incomparable lesson in Marxist theory and action,' as he put it, calling upon militants to adapt it to the conditions of their epoch 'in order to make their own history'. He had written a summary on *The History of the Labour Movement during the war* and an admirable collection of reminiscences entitled *Moscow under Lenin*, which have the rare quality—the privilege of an intelligent man of scrupulous honesty—of bringing back to life what the communist movement was like in the twenties without distorting it *a posteriori* as a result of hindsight.

Those who have enjoyed the privilege of meeting Alfred Rosmer in his last years will never forget this smiling old man, firm and confident, talking about Lenin and Trotsky as if they were old friends who had only disappeared the day before and who still lived in his gestures and his voice, and smilingly scolding anyone silly enough to suggest that they could have been the victims of some 'illusion'.

In 1921, Amédée Dunois had to apologise for having to introduce to the French communists the man who represented them on the International. This is what he said about him:

'Here are intelligence, cultivated, well-nourished, subtle and fine, demanding and firm conscience, and an upright and pure heart. During my life, I have walked beside many men of worth, intellectual and moral. I have not met many to equal Rosmer. If he is not conspicuous in the first rank, this is because his modesty is without parallel and because he always prefers positions of devotion and work to posts of honour. Is not, moreover, his friendship with Trotsky who knows all about men the equivalent of an apology? French workers should learn the name Rosmer: it is the name of a man who, having left their class, loyally returned to it; it is the name of a man who, having absorbed a very large part of human knowledge, has placed at the service of his working class brothers all that he had in knowledge and experience; it is the name of a revolutionary by whom the revolution is deeply honoured, and, when all's said and done, the name of a real communist.'

It was 43 years ago that Dunois sketched this portrait of Rosmer. There is not a line to be added. Such was the man who has just died, the friend of Trotsky and the working class fighter whom French workers will honour one day as one of the greatest of those from their ranks who have devoted their lives to the development of revolutionary consciousness for the socialist revolution. **P.B.**

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

### A STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

IMPERIALISM can only retain its hold in Ceylon as in other colonial and semi-colonial countries through the medium of native 'national' leaders. In Ceylon the native capitalist parties are no longer able to govern alone; the economic and political crisis has raised the question of workers power, in alliance with the peasantry. Capitalist rule is being maintained only because the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, a workers' party, which has until now claimed membership of the Fourth International, has entered into a coalition with the capitalist Bandaranaike government, with the purpose of disciplining the working class.

The programme of the Fourth International and of Trotskyism has been completely abandoned by the majority of the LSSP. Its leaders have deserted to the side of imperialism. The International Committee condemns them as traitors and enemies of the working class. It welcomes the decision of a minority to form the new LSSP Revolutionary Section.

Since the split in the Fourth International, after which the International Committee was formed, the LSSP has adhered to the International Secretariat until recently led by M. Pablo. While the International Secretariat has acclaimed the LSSP as 'the only really mass Trotskyist party in the world, etc.' the opportunist and parliamentary degeneration of the LSSP went on behind its public adherence to the Fourth International.

Pabloism consists essentially of an abandonment of the perspective of constructing independent Marxist parties, relying instead on the inevitable 'left' development of the petty-bourgeois revisionists and of the Labour bureaucracies. This formed the 'theoretical' and political cover for the capitulation of N. M. Perera and the LSSP leaders.

After the LSSP entered the coalition, the Unified Secretariat of the Pabloite revisionists expelled the three ministers, Perera, Anil Moonesinghe and Cholmondely Goonewardene, and suspended the 504 delegates who voted for the coalition. These were the fruits in Ceylon of the 're-unification' of the Pabloites and others exactly one year ago. Pablo himself had been suspended from the Unified Secretariat along with his supporters on the Executive Committee only a few weeks earlier. In the European sections of the Pabloite Fourth International new splits are on the way; Frank and Germain who led the suspension of Pablo are openly going over to a programme of structural reforms which has developed in the 'left' social-democracy and the reformist Italian Communist Party.

Pablo and his immediate clique are openly capitulating to Khrushchev, whilst Frank and Germain tag along with centrist currents in Western European social democracy and the Stalinist Parties. There is no basic difference in revisionist method between the two groups. They both serve different wings of the corrupt bureaucracies of Stalinism and Social-Democracy.

When the Unified Secretariat, consisting of the Pabloite International Secretariat and some former members of the International Committee was formed in June 1963 with the support of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, the International Committee opposed this unification. We insisted that unification without political discussion and agreement was unprincipled and would, in fact, only prepare future splits weakening and not strengthening the Trotskyist movement.

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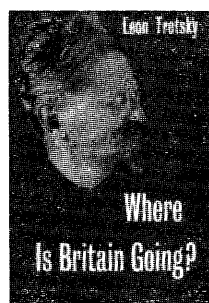
Marxism and the abandonment of the building of revolutionary parties. The betrayal in Ceylon only one year after the unification together with the suspension of Pablo has overwhelmingly confirmed our position. Discussion of differences was not permitted. Criticism of the LSSP or any other section was forbidden on the grounds that it would impede the unity of the Trotskyist movement. Pabloism thus consciously and directly prepared the betrayals of Perera and the LSSP majority. In the name of Trotskyism a defeat for the working class was organised.

In proposing a 'centre' resolution at the LSSP Conference based on the class collaborationist role of the CP and the MEP in the United Left Front the Unified Secretariat continued, in fact, to prepare for the defeat. Even now they do not expel the centre group of de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, even though they remain in the same party as the traitor Perera.

The LSSP Revolutionary Section has taken the first necessary step—a complete break from the opportunists. It must find a road to constructing the revolutionary party with roots in the struggles of the urban workers and the plantation workers, preparing not for parliamentary honours but for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist government.

The entry of the LSSP members into the Bandaranaike coalition marks the end of a whole epoch of the evolution of the Fourth International. It is in direct service to imperialism, in the preparation of a defeat for the working class that revisionism in the world Trotskyist movement has found its expression. The task of reconstructing the Fourth International must be undertaken from the firm basis of constructing revolutionary proletarian parties in every country in struggle against the bureaucratic and opportunist servants of imperialism and against their defenders the revisionists who usurp the name of Trotskyism and the Fourth International.

**The International Committee of the  
Fourth International, July 5, 1964**



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# Documents

*We reproduce below the resolutions submitted by the three tendencies représentées at the Congress of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon held in Colombo from June 6 and 7. Also printed is a confidential communication from the Pabloite International Executive Committee in Paris to members of the LSSP.*

## RESOLUTION OF THE RENEGADE MAJORITY

### POLITICAL RESOLUTION

The outstanding political event in 1963 was the formation of the ULF. Two factors helped to bring this about. On the one hand the steadily growing strength of the UNP became manifest by the victories of that party in very many local government elections throughout the country. There was also a noticeable tendency of the teenagers and others who had formally supported the SLFP to move towards the right. On the other hand, faced with the growing strength of the UNP, there was a manifest desire on the part of the progressives to get together to struggle against the growing menace of the consolidating reactionary right. This desire of the progressives was clearly brought out, when the three left parties began a campaign over the petrol issue.

The swing to the right in the country was a result of the failure of the government to solve the pressing problems that beset all sections of the people of the country. The deterioration of the general economic situation which led to the shortage of goods, and the extraordinary rise in prices were cleverly utilised by the UNP to its advantage. The attack on the SLFP government was linked with an attack on the left in general and the LSSP in particular which was held responsible for bringing the present government into being. In a way that most left parties did not anticipate all manner of small capitalists and traders became the most conscious propagandist for the UNP as the only way out of the growing economic instability and mounting inflation.

The ULF was formed after prolonged negotiations and in the midst of misgivings and opposition from some sections of the party. The tremendous enthusiasm with which the ULF was received, helped to dissipate doubts about the value and the usefulness of the ULF as an organisation to fight the menace of reaction. The ULF began to be projected as the only alternative force capable of forming a government opposed to the UNP. Members of the SLFP both inside and outside parliament began to consider the ULF as the coming force to stem the tide of reaction.

Unfortunately the ULF could not realise to the full the benefits of this mobilisation of all the progressives in the

country. Within our own ranks, attacks on the ULF in public had a retarding effect. The MEP and Mr. Philip Gunawardene, did not lend their full support to push the ULF forward organisationally. Although it is true the ULF continued to make a general impression in the country and also succeeded in enthusing the SLFP rank and filers, it was not so effective as it might have been. It did succeed in arresting the flow to the right that was visible prior to the formation of the ULF.

The major political crisis came to the surface on the 8th of March with the prorogation of parliament. The SLFP government was numerically too weak to face parliament. The economic and financial crisis had reached a stage where the ministers had not the capacity to tackle them. Their inefficiency and incompetence stood exposed. Manifestly the problems facing the country were beyond their capacity to solve. The end of the middle path had been reached. In this situation both to the SLFP rank and file and the SLFP government, the ULF and its clear-cut programme stood out as a powerful factor which could not be ignored.

The Prime Minister who obtained a breathing space at this juncture had three alternative courses of action available to her (a) a coalition with the right; (b) the dissolution of parliament, leading to possible dictatorial intentions; (c) a coalition with the left. After much consideration she rejected the coalition with the right as well as the dissolution of parliament. She decided unmistakably to move leftwards with the progressive forces and find a solution to the problems besetting the country, along left policies. This was made abundantly clear in the speech she made at N'eliya towards the end of March 1964.

In keeping with this decision of hers, she commenced negotiations with ULF, which authorised Comrade N. M. Perera to negotiate with her on an informal basis. The discussions showed that there is a reasonable measure of agreement on a short-term programme of implementation for the remaining period of this parliament. In accordance with the mandate given to her by her own executive

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The ULF was formed after prolonged negotiations and in the midst of misgivings and opposition from some sections of the party. The tremendous enthusiasm with which the ULF was received, helped to dissipate doubts about the value and the usefulness of the ULF as an organisation to fight the menace of reaction. The ULF began to be projected as the only alternative force capable of forming a government opposed to the UNP. Members of the SLFP both inside and outside parliament began to consider the ULF as the coming force to stem the tide of reaction.

Unfortunately the ULF could not realise to the full the benefits of this mobilisation of all the progressives in the

country. Within our own ranks, attacks on the ULF in public had a retarding effect. The MEP and Mr. Philip Gunawardene, did not lend their full support to push the ULF forward organisationally. Although it is true the ULF continued to make a general impression in the country and also succeeded in enthusing the SLFP rank and filers, it was not so effective as it might have been. It did succeed in arresting the flow to the right that was visible prior to the formation of the ULF.

The major political crisis came to the surface on the 8th of March with the prorogation of parliament. The SLFP government was numerically too weak to face parliament. The economic and financial crisis had reached a stage where the ministers had not the capacity to tackle them. Their inefficiency and incompetence stood exposed. Manifestly the problems facing the country were beyond their capacity to solve. The end of the middle path had been reached. In this situation both to the SLFP rank and file and the SLFP government, the ULF and its clear-cut programme stood out as a powerful factor which could not be ignored.

The Prime Minister who obtained a breathing space at this juncture had three alternative courses of action available to her (a) a coalition with the right; (b) the dissolution of parliament, leading to possible dictatorial intentions; (c) a coalition with the left. After much consideration she rejected the coalition with the right as well as the dissolution of parliament. She decided unmistakably to move leftwards with the progressive forces and find a solution to the problems besetting the country, along left policies. This was made abundantly clear in the speech she made at N'Eliya towards the end of March 1964.

In keeping with this decision of hers, she commenced negotiations with ULF, which authorised Comrade N. M. Perera to negotiate with her on an informal basis. The discussions showed that there is a reasonable measure of agreement on a short-term programme of implementation for the remaining period of this parliament. In accordance with the mandate given to her by her own executive

committee, she has indicated that she is prepared to form a coalition government with ULF. Ministerial portfolios would be granted only to the LSSP in the first instance.

Does coalition with the SLFP in this setting mean class collaboration? Nobody would dispute that the UNP is a party of the capitalist class in Ceylon. The SLFP is a party based on the radical petty-bourgeoisie and the lower middle class. Admittedly the leadership has feudal connections, but from the policy that was followed since July 1960 it is clear that the main pressure on the government has been from the lower middle class and to some extent even from the working class. In fact the SLFP has shed some of the more reactionary elements that existed from 1956 to 1960, and being a centre party, it has vacillated, sometimes moving to the right, and sometimes moving to the left. But the overall drive has been a steady movement leftwards. If this characterisation is not correct, it will be difficult to explain the various measures for nationalization, the party has embarked upon since 1956. It has taken over the bus transport, the port, private schools, insurance. It has taken steps to abolish private practice in medical service. It has established the People's Bank and has taken over the Ceylon Bank. All these and above all petrol, which is a direct blow at both imperialist power and capitalist power it has undertaken. The cumulative effect of these measures must result in a serious inroad into the capitalist structure of the economy. The SLFP government and the MEP government before it, has carried forward a national struggle in this country, by removing the imperialist bases in this country. Voting rights have been conceded to those above 18 years. The reorganisation of the headman system has taken place. A substantial fillip has been given to national cultural activities. The power of the entrenched Catholic Church has been weakened and Buddhist tradition and culture have been given their due place. The ordinary man has been given a place in the political and social life of the country, which centuries of imperialist domination had deprived them. Workers have felt the benefits of a number of ameliorative measures including May Day as a paid public holiday.

When the cumulative effect of these changes are considered, it will be quite apparent that the SLFP is not a capitalist party. The fact that it is functioning within the capitalist framework, does not necessarily make it a party of the capitalist class. Its fundamental character as a centrist party, drawing its main support from the peasantry and the lower middle class elements of the country, remains unchanged. A coalition government between the working class party like the LSSP and the SLFP can still further change its class character. Such an association will increase the progressive content of the SLFP and make it more definitely a leftward moving government. This would become more emphasised in the programmatic association that is envisaged and give a further bias along socialist lines.

The progressive character of the internal policy of the government had been reflected in the external policy which it has followed. Beginning from 1956 the establishment of diplomatic connections with socialist countries notwithstanding the opposition of the imperialist bloc have been

carried forward. In defiance of the threat of no assistance from Western Germany, it has given consulate status to Eastern Germany. A number of economic and cultural agreements have been signed with countries of the socialist bloc. Following a strictly non-aligned policy like Yugoslavia it has not hesitated to reject assistance from the USA on conditions which are humiliating and derogatory to the independence of this country.

## IMMEDIATE PERSPECTIVES

Such a coalition government with the SLFP as envisaged above would make it possible to activate both the working class and the masses generally. Within the 12 months available to us it would be possible only to concentrate on certain lines of action. The party should concentrate on making an appreciable impression on the rising cost of living. An effective drive should be made to smash blackmarketeering and hoarding of essential goods and thereby reduce the prices of essential commodities. It is essential that all-out youth leagues and trade union organisations should be in the forefront in helping to build up peoples' committees in various parts of the island. These committees will be given legal status and have the assistance of the police in carrying out these tasks.

The party should equally concentrate on minimising corruption and sabotage activities in the various departments in the public sector. Herein our trade union organisations will have an important role to play. They should take the leadership in the workers and vigilance committees that is to be set up in all workplaces and government departments.

A serious effort will have to be made in building up peasants organisations for the effective implementation of the Paddy Lands Act. In this respect also our youth leagues will have an important role to play.

By concentrating on these three lines of action we would be able to bring into active participation in the process of government both the working class as well as the general masses. In a real sense these two mass forces, the workers and the peasants, will have positive and creative functions to perform. They will be in an organised manner ranged against their class enemy with the necessary authority and power of the state machinery to back them in their struggle. A new purpose and a new enthusiasm would be generated that would carry the whole movement forward. Sterile criticism will give place to positive action, and the whole left movement will find a new purpose. The end of this period of 12 months would see the firm foundation laid for moving forward along socialist lines to a new society.

Accordingly this party conference request the new Central Committee of the party to negotiate with the SLFP government with a view to the formation of a coalition government between the ULF and the SLFP. If such negotiations fail the Central Committee is authorised to enter into an agreement for the formation of a coalition government between the LSSP and the SLFP.

Such a coalition government should contain the following in respect of the LSSP.

1. A minimum programme which will at least contain the 10 items in the attached list.
2. Three ministers for the LSSP.
3. These three ministers should be:
  - (a) Minister of Finance and Planning.
  - (b) Minister of Internal and External Trade.
  - (c) Minister of Nationalized Services.

#### Measures for Implementation

1. All companies registered in Ceylon and all resident individuals should be required by law to maintain their accounts in the Bank of Ceylon and/or the People's Bank only. (N.B. the transfer of various categories of Accounts could be staggered.)
2. Legislation should be introduced to control the activities of Agency houses.
3. The export of capital, dividends and profits from Ceylon should be restricted still further.
4. New administrative regulations should be introduced to make it possible to retire compulsorily government officers who hamper work or are inefficient or are deliberately unco-operative in pushing forward government work.
5. (a) Workers' committees, elected by secret ballot, should be set up in every public corporation of utility. Such committees should be associated with the management at all levels. They should have legal powers to check waste, inefficiency and corruption and the right to make proposals to improve the work of these institutions.
  - (b) Vigilance committees should be set up by administrative regulations in all government departments and in the departments of semi-government institutions such as the local government service. Such committees should have powers to check inefficiency and sabotage and to make proposals to improve the work of the department concerned vis-a-vis the public.
  - (c) In every vigilance committee or local body Peoples' Committees should be established with legal powers to inspect the distributive trade, thereby helping to fight hoarding, the black market, and corruption.
6. (a) The state Trading Corporation should take over

all essential imports and gradually extend its activities to exports as well.

(b) The Co-operative Wholesale Establishment should have the monopoly of wholesale distribution. It should have a centre in every district through which textiles, building materials, motor spares and accessories, medicines and foodstuffs specifically will be distributed.

(c) Retail distribution should be through the co-operatives and private retailers. Where necessary, special state retail shops should be opened.

(d) The maximum wholesale and retail price should be fixed by law for every essential item.

7. The machinery for economic planning should be made more effective and proper ways and means devised to associate the trade unions and the people in general with the preparation and carrying out of economic plans.

8. Special courts should be established to deal expeditiously with cases of bribery, corruption, black marketeering, hoarding and other such anti-social offences. Imprisonment should be made obligatory for all found guilty of bribery or corruption and the legal punishment of profiteering and hoarding should be enhanced.

9. The monopoly of the daily press by the private capitalist concerns should be ended.

10. (a) The GPS should be cleaned up to ensure that the cultivator gets full value for his product.

(b) The services of the People's Bank should be extended to the rural areas either directly or by making certain co-operative societies their sub-agents. A scheme to relieve rural indebtedness should be prepared.

(c) The Paddy Lands Act should apply to all paddy lands including those in the colonisation scheme.

(d) Landlords should be removed from the cultivation committees. These committees should be given enhanced powers, including the power to put *ande goviya* back in possession of lands while litigation regarding tenancy rights is pending.

N. M. Perera, D. G. William, H. Siddhartha Thero (Rev.), D. W. Wijesooriya, J. Wanigatunga, Cyril Perera, Gilbert Pieris, Hector Fernando, B. A. U. Lewis, Alwis, G. P. Perera, Vivien Goonewardene, Jack Kotalawela, Nimal Horana, D. W. J. Perera, Chandra Gunasekera, Chalmundley Goonewardene, Wilfred Senanayake, Rajapaksa, Batuwandara Gunawardene, Anil Moonasinghe.

## RESOLUTION OF THE 'CENTRE' GROUP

(Resolution submitted to the Special Conference by 8 members of the Central Committee named below)

The present political, economic and financial crisis cannot be solved along progressive lines within the framework of capitalism. The processes necessary for a progressive solution of the crisis can be inaugurated by a coalition government between the ULF and the SLFP on the following conditions:

1. There should be agreement on a series of measures to be implemented within one year. These must include measures which are capable of enthusing the masses and of securing their active participation.

2. In the present political situation, to ensure the effective carrying through of these measures, the following are required.

(a) the coalition agreement should be between the SLFP and the ULF and

(b) there should be an arrangement with regard to Ministries ensuring the following Ministries for the LSSP, viz.

Ministry of Finance and Planning

Ministry of Nationalized Services

Ministry of Internal and External Trade.

This conference empowers the Central Committee to make arrangements for a coalition government with the SLFP on the lines indicated above.

Colvin R de Silva  
Leslie Goonawardene  
Doric de Souza  
A. Siridasa  
Bernard Soysa  
N. S. E. Perera  
Kamini  
R. R. Dharmaratnam

## RESOLUTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MINORITY

### The LSSP and Crisis of the SLFP government

(Resolution submitted to the Special Conference of the LSSP held on June 6 and 7, 1964, by the 14 members of the Central Committee named below.)

The Sirimavo Bandaranaike government is in a desperate state. It is approaching the final year of its constitutional term of office without any real prospect of retaining its position without the political collaboration of the Left and collaboration of the working class, in particular, with its regime. Hence the prorogation of Parliament and the efforts of the Prime Minister and some of her ministers to secure the participation of the LSSP in the government.

To agree to accept office in Mrs. Bandaranaike's government, either separately or in association with the other parties in the United Left Front would be to agree to join hands with the SLFP government in staving off the rising tide of working class and mass discontent against it, and to seek to provide working class collaboration with its policy of maintaining capitalism in Ceylon within the capitalist constitutional framework.

The entry of the LSSP leaders into the SLFP government will result in open class collaboration, disorientation of the masses, the division of the working class and the abandonment of the struggle-perspective, which will lead to the disruption of the working class movement and the elimination of the independent revolutionary axis of the Left. In the result, the

forces of capitalist reaction, far from being weakened or thwarted, will be ultimately strengthened.

Collaboration with the bourgeois SLFP government on the basis of coalition on a 'minimum programme' is thus a gross contravention of the Party's Revolutionary Programme and the acceptance of Portfolios by the LSSP would be treachery to the proletarian revolution.

This Special Conference, therefore, categorically rejects all proposals for coalition with the SLFP government, on any basis whatsoever, and calls upon the Party to rally to the defence of its Revolutionary Programme. The task of the Party today is to defeat the attempt to divide and subdue the working class and to seek to unify all sections of the working class and the toiling masses for the carrying forward of the class struggle against the capitalist class and the SLFP government.

R. S. Baghavan

Champa

W. D. Dharmasena

Meryl Fernando

V. Karalasingham

D. S. Mallowarachi

S. A. Martinus

Reginald Mendis

T. E. Pushparajan

Prins Rajasooriya

Edmund Samarakkody

Pelis Serasinghe

Bala Tampoe

Sydney Wanasinghe

# *Pabloite attitude to LSSP Congress*

*Below we reproduce a confidential letter sent by the Pabloite International Executive Committee in Paris, to members of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party on May 25, 1964, which reiterates their proposal, echoed at the LSSP Conference by their representative Pierre Frank, which calls for a United Left Front government. This line at the conference was defeated by 579 votes to 75.*

'The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International took up at its plenum meeting the key problems which you face at present and discussed them at some length. The discussion ended with unanimous endorsement of the letter sent to you by the United Secretariat April 23.

It is clear that throughout Asia, the equilibrium reached at the time of the Geneva agreement of 1954 has been broken and that in every country in this part of the world the class struggle is again sharpening. If the mass movement does not move boldly now, reaction will inevitably set in and the present opportunity will turn into its opposite.

In Ceylon, the SLFP govern-

ment, acting as the agency of the bourgeoisie, is seeking through its proposals to disintegrate the United Left Front and to associate the LSSP with its bankrupt policies and further decline. The LSSP has reached a crucial moment in its history.

Let the SLFP government appeal to you in vain!

The only real alternative is audacious action by the LSSP. It should serve as the central driving force in mobilizing the ULF, appealing to the masses to establish a United Left Front government on the basis of a genuinely socialist programme. This would prove highly attractive to elements that have been sucked into the SLFP because of its demagoguery in the past, help reorient them

and open up the possibility for a powerful bloc of the left organisation.

The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International sends you its warmest comradely greetings. It hopes that the LSSP as a whole will remain faithful to its long tradition of uncompromising struggle against imperialism and national bourgeoisie, and that it will successfully resist the manoeuvres of the bourgeois government in order to open the road for genuine representatives of the masses to come to power.

No coalition at the expense of socialist principles and the possibility of a socialist victory!

Forward with the masses in struggle for a government of the United Left Front.'

**The editors regret to state that it has not been possible to publish in this issue, the concluding instalment of 'Trends in Soviet Literature'**



**The New Course By Leon Trotsky**

A collection of articles written in 1923 during the lull before the great storm of persecution which was later to overwhelm Russian Bolshevism. Here Trotsky, analyses the incipient stages of the degeneration of the Communist Party, uncovers its causes and proposes measures for combating its further decline. He here analyses the party in a historical, that is dialectical way, the relationships between generations, social strata, groups, factional formations, tradition and the multitude of factors that go to make a revolutionary party. 111 pages, 3/6



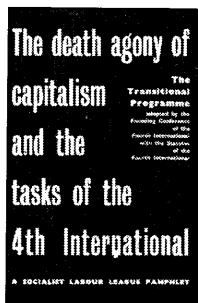
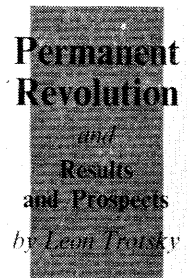
This document is a landmark in the development of 20th century Marxism. It sums up the experience of an entire period of struggle against the Soviet bureaucracy. This Platform also represents the highest point in the fortunes of the Joint Opposition (Trotskyist-Zinovievite) to Stalin. It is the programme of the last of the Bolshevik-Leninists who insisted that they remained communists despite all the persecution, jailings, violence and slander inflicted on them. But this document also represents a watershed—the end of one phase and the beginning of another—in the evolution of Trotskyist politics. 112 pages, 5/-

**The Draft Programme of the Communist International by Leon Trotsky**

This is part of the author's criticism of the draft programme submitted by the Executive Committee of the Third (Communist) International to the 6th Congress of the Comintern which was held in July 1928. The manuscript of that criticism was written by Trotsky during his exile in Alma-Ata (Central Asia). It was sent to the Congress in Moscow together with an appeal for reinstatement into the party from which he had been expelled a few months before by the Stalinist faction in 1927. Stalin and his supporters had invented the theory of 'Socialism in one country', which was made party policy in 1925 and converted into an article of faith to be defended by the world institutions of Stalinism. It is this theory which Trotsky criticises in these pages. 64 pages, 1/-

This is a polemic against Radek in 1928. Trotsky examines the arguments against his pre-war theory of the permanent revolution (as expounded in *Results and Prospects*) and takes up the history of his differences with Lenin before 1917, of which Stalin and his henchmen made so much. Trotsky shows that it was Lenin's criticisms of his attitude to the centralised Marxist party, which he afterwards understood and accepted, that kept them apart, and not their differences on the permanent revolution.

254 pages, 15/- soft cover, 25/- hard cover



This is the basic programmatic document of the world movement founded by Leon Trotsky and his comrades. By 1938 the revolutionary Marxists had found it necessary to lay the foundations of the *Fourth* International in order to restore working-class leadership after the defeats prepared by the Stalinist bureaucracy in control of the Third (Communist) International. The defeat of the German Revolution in 1923, of the British General Strike in 1926, and of the Chinese Revolution in 1927, followed by Hitler's victory over the German working class in 1933, finally ruled out the perspective of transforming the Communist International by internal opposition. 60 pages, 1/-

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