

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL is the theoretical journal of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL continues the work of LABOUR REVIEW which concluded its 12th year of publication with its last issue, the fifth number of volume 7.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL continues the work and traditions of Revolutionary Communism since the death of Lenin.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL represents the unbroken chain of theoretical journals in the Bolshevik tradition, whose continuators were the Left Opposition led and inspired by Leon Trotsky.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL follows in the traditions of that Opposition and in the traditions of the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL continues the decades of work by Trotskyists in the International Labour movement and here in Britain.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL is now the product of a continuous struggle of the Marxists in the International and British Labour movement against Stalinism and Reformism.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL represents the successful fusion of Marxist trends in the International and British Labour movement, from the Trotskyist to Communist, Social-Democratic and Trade Union movements.

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Statement of the LSSP (R) on the fall of the Ceylon Government



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(This issue of Fourth International is 68 pages—a double number. We are therefore adjusting the price from 2s. 6d. to 4s. a copy.)

Erratum:

Page 159: The first line of the text has been omitted and should read:

‘Com Raymond Molinier continues formally to be a member

THE COVER

- 1 KARL MARX (1818-1883)
- 2 Fourth Congress, Basle 1869, of the First International
- 3 FREDERICK ENGELS (1820-1895)
- 4 Rosa Luxemburg addressing mass meeting in hey day of Second International
- 5 VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN (1870-1924)
- 6 Second Congress of the Third International, 1920, Kremlin Throne Room, Zinoviev presiding
- 7 LEON TROTSKY (1879-1940)
- 8 Third Congress of the Fourth International, Paris, 1951

Fourth International

(Incorporating *LABOUR REVIEW*)

A Journal of International Marxism

Published by the International Committee of the Fourth International

Editors: TOM KEMP, CLIFF SLAUGHTER

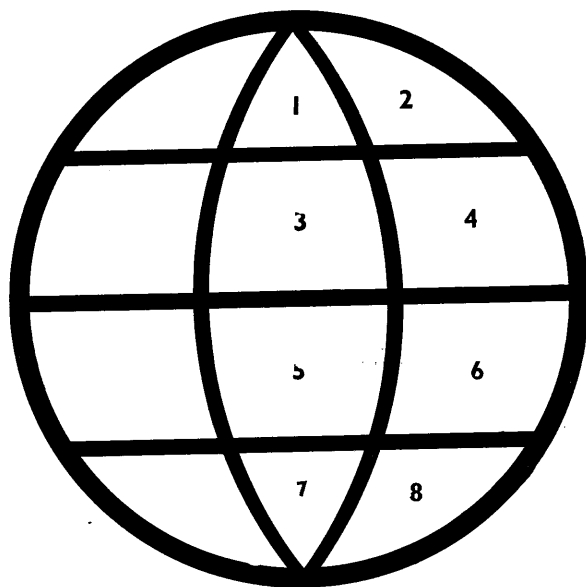
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Editorials

IN THIS ISSUE of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL, we take up once again the role of Marxist theory in the construction of an international revolutionary party. The struggle to develop this theory is the reason for the existence of this magazine, and it is noteworthy that we now carry articles from Trotskyists in Ceylon and in the United States of America as well as our regular European contributors.

As the crisis of imperialism deepens, the vital necessity of this theoretical struggle becomes clearer in every country, and participation in it hastens the formation of genuinely revolutionary parties of the Fourth International.

This number of our journal is, in fact, a double number, which makes up for the gap since the summer 1964 and clears our first volume. This permits us to establish regular quarterly publication right through 1965, and our next issue will appear immediately after this one. In that next issue we will again take up several aspects of the struggle against revisionism, in particular the bankruptcy of the spokesmen of the 'Unified Secretariat' which takes the name of the Fourth International in Paris. Smarting under the progress of the Trotskyist movement around our International Committee the American supporters of this 'Unified Secretariat' have bitterly attacked the Socialist Labour League leadership in the latest issue of the *International Socialist Review*. Our next number will put the record straight on this question with a documentation of the political betrayals of these revisionists.

Our readers will note the controversy published in this issue over Michel Varga's article 'The Consequences of Peaceful Co-existence' (FOURTH INTERNATIONAL, Volume 1, No. 1). We shall be anxious to receive discussion material as a regular feature of the magazine. All contributions, whether on the controversy already begun or on any of our articles, will be welcomed. A later issue of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL will contain the full text of Michel Varga's detailed study of the Stalinist bureaucracy since 1953, from which this article on peaceful co-existence was an extract.

One other important step forward is that from the Autumn of this year, FOURTH INTERNATIONAL will appear simultaneously in French and English. This marks a new stage in the development of the international fight against revisionism and for a revolutionary international.

Since our last issue in the summer of 1964, rapid changes have brought out more and more clearly the indispensibility and urgency of the fight to resolve the crisis of leadership in the world working class movement and the essential role of Marxist theory in this fight. In Britain, the economic contradictions of imperialism have been expressed especially sharply, compounded as they are in that country by the obsolete structure of Britain's

economy and industry. The return of Wilson's Labour government at this time has welded together even more closely the interests of imperialism and the politics of social-democracy. In Italy, the most right wing of Communist Parties has seen the death of Togliatti, whose services in steering the party away from Marxism were recognised with deep mourning by bourgeois politicians, clerics, and all manner of good citizens. In its policy of 'structural reforms' the Italian Communist Party has now openly entered the lists of reformism, and claims recognition as part of the democratic citizenry of the Italian Republic. One of the most valuable acts of this Party in its services to capitalism was finally to vote for Signor Saragat, the right-wing social democrat, as President of the Republic. Thus we have arrived at a point where 'communists' must find ways of helping the bourgeois state to avoid constitutional crisis!

In Ceylon the ill-fated coalition government, in which Mrs. Bandaranaike had persuaded one-time Trotskyists, N. M. Perera and others, to take office alongside capitalist ministers of the SLFP, has collapsed. Its fall, like its origin, for all the demagogy about workers' control and national unity, was executed by parliamentary floor-crossing in the best 'imperial' tradition of subservience to the ruling class.

In Africa, for all the intervention of that 'great force for peace' the United Nations, the Congo has become once again a bloody battlefield as Tshombe's government comes to grips with the popular national forces. Further north in Nigeria, where the more diplomatic handing over of 'independence' by the British had created for middle-of-the-roaders everywhere an impression of stability and 'democracy', the actions of the young Nigerian working class exploded into the mass of national and agrarian contradictions, which, responding to changing conditions in the world market, threatened to disrupt even the existence of the 'nation' in Nigeria. In its general strike on May 31, 1964, the Nigerian working class made a political giant stride in forming a new workers' party as well as frightening the bourgeoisie to death with their organisation and solidarity, which forced considerable concessions.

The frame-up trial of Sidi Kayam, Jonas Kiomasekenagh Abam and Oleshengun Adebayo, and the British University lecturer, Victor Leonard Allen, has rebounded and is incapable of doing anything to save the corrupt ruling clique. Mr. Arthur Bottomley, Commonwealth Spokesman for the British Labour government, told the House of Commons that he was convinced Allen had had a 'fair and just trial' and that 'the Nigerian judiciary is held in very high regard'. Two months later, reports appeared in the press of the whole world about the organised thuggery and intimidation of

opposition leaders in the Nigerian election campaign. This General Election was finally boycotted by the opposition, dozens of whose supporters were killed and hundreds terrorised by organised thugs of the government party, all of whom were released from jail after arrest, while their opposite numbers in other parties were detained by order of . . . the Nigerian judiciary ('which is held in very high regard'). British workers and socialists will know what to expect from Mr. Bottomley's friends in the British judiciary.

In the Communist Parties of the world, the Soviet-Chinese split is as wide as ever. This despite the sudden removal of Nikita Khrushchev in the same week as the election of President Johnson and Prime Minister Wilson. Khrushchev's removal blew sky-high the official myth that 'de-Stalinisation' had restored 'Leninist norms of Party life'. Outside the top members of the Soviet bureaucracy, nobody was admitted to any discussion of the politics of Khrushchev's supporters and opponents. Nor were any of them asked to ratify or even express an opinion on the matter once it was successfully concluded.

Various Communist Party leaders, as in France and Britain, made pathetic journeys to Moscow to ask for a more satisfactory 'explanation' to dish up to their supporters, and came away empty-handed. Khrushchev's fall came after a series of economic and political blunders, particularly in agriculture; it became clearer and clearer from the open nepotism and corruption that the successors of Stalin were only attempting readjustment within the ruling bureaucracy. Khrushchev's removal will bring no basic changes. It is yet another confirmation of the thesis of Trotsky that the problems of the USSR cannot be resolved in a national, bureaucratic framework. The task of the Russian working class is to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy, re-establish Soviet democracy, and resume its place in the ranks of the international working class behind the leadership of a conscious revolutionary international. The immediate step is the construction of revolutionary parties in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China.

All these, and all the political developments in Asia, Latin America and the USA, bring home ever more clearly the impossibility of a revolutionary working-class orientation in any single country without the international perspective of a communist movement. That perspective, developed by Trotsky in continuity with Marx, Engels and Lenin, is the perspective of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. We shall endeavour not only to spread our circulation to all countries, but in so doing we hope to build the organisation and resources in each country which will make our magazine more and more representative of the whole movement of the international working class.

THE POLITICAL and class characterisation of Wilson's government, elected in October 1964, has proved a remarkable test for all those groups claiming to be Marxists. Not only has the Communist Party of Great Britain decided on a policy of support for the 'progressive' aspects and opposition to the 'reactionary' aspects of Wilson's policy, but so-called Trotskyists of the 'United Secretariat' in Paris and their British followers have characterised the government as 'left social-democratic', and have taken to task the Socialist Labour League for its statements on the capitalist character of the Labour government. It is worthwhile to consider the background to this question.

For 50 years, Marxists have written about the political and theoretical bankruptcy of capitalism in its period of decline. So severe and all-embracing is this paralysis that the ruling class completely abandons and brutally rejects all the cultural heritage of human progress, above all the conquests of capitalism's own 'heroic' period of the destruction of feudal privilege and obscurantism. In such a period, when the leading members of the bourgeoisie are either financial tycoons, political and military bosses, or tongue-in-cheek dispensers of lies and deception, a very special task falls to the political and ideological servants of capitalism on the 'left'.

In the second half of the 19th century, there emerged in one country after another mass movements of the working class. In some countries these labour movements were from the first organised and led by Marxists, by men and women who saw that the independent historical interests of the working class must be achieved through the conquest of state power in revolution. In others, it was rather a matter of workers gradually recognising through their trade union and democratic struggles the need for independent political organisation, but in this case only for independent political *representation within the framework of bourgeois parliamentary democracy*. Even the most highly developed consciousness of a trade union type could co-exist with this parliamentarism. It could, and did, support the development of a relationship with middle-class elements like the Fabians, whose reformist programme for 'humanised' capitalism did not clash with the restricted trade union consciousness of the organised workers, particularly the better-paid skilled workers, and above all, the rapidly developing trade union bureaucracy.

Basing itself in the first place upon the traditionally superior position of Britain in the capitalist world market, this reformism emerged at the head of the Labour Party at the turn of the century, and was consolidated despite all the upheavals of the next decades by the advent of the new stage of imperialism, in which all the great capitalist powers set about the transformation and expansion of their empires into fields for the export of capital and the

winning of super profits. The latter were used in part to build up the 'national' war machines and state apparatus of the advanced countries and to incorporate into this 'national' life the leaders of the working-class movement.

The very fact of the existence of a Labour movement claiming the allegiance of the workers as a class required special measures by the bourgeoisie. These special measures were in the first place the corruption and assurance of complete subservience of the Labour leadership, the bureaucratic heads of the working-class parties and trade unions. Imperialism is not at all just a period of wealth for the capitalist class but a period of crisis, 'an epoch of wars and revolutions'. The social-democratic and trade union leaders must be able to guarantee not only the support of the workers for 'national' imperialist wars for the re-division of the world but also to provide actual governments when the direct political servants of the bourgeoisie cannot find immediate solutions within the existing framework which ensure the continued acquiescence of the working class in the fraud of capitalist democracy. Thus every European country has had its 'Labour governments' since the First World War. The alternative, used when necessary, was fascism, the liquidation of the workers as a class.

In the earlier stages of capitalism, it had been sufficient for the ruling class to exercise political control over all tendencies in the enfranchised classes, the middle and upper class, resorting only occasionally to bloody violence against the revolt of the masses. But for the organised labour movement of the working class special detachments were necessary. It was no longer enough to combine a 'democratic' ideology of national consensus with preparedness for repression. The Labour movement must be rendered ineffectual by assuring the loyalty of its leaders to capitalism. The first 20 years of this century brought the fruits of this corruption of 'the labour lieutenants of capitalism' in the victory of reformism in the Socialist International, whose leading parties shamefully drove their followers into the carnage of World War I.

But this period also brought its opposite, the struggle against revisionism, the creation of the Bolshevik Party, the Russian Revolution, and the foundation of the Communist International, consisting of 'parties of a new type'. Given a leap forward in Marxist theory it was possible to come to the essence of the problem of reformism and imperialism, and not necessary to remain at the level of understanding only the *appearance* of the strength of capitalism and its ideology. It was the contradictions and conflicts of imperialism, the very strength of the working class as the representatives of a necessary new mode of production, which made it so vital for the imperialists to win the services of reformism.

A party basing itself upon the independent revolutionary interests of this class, a class which would inevitably be involved in bigger and bigger struggles embracing the whole economic, political and ideological world system of imperialism would find it possible to lead mass movements to revolutionary victory. Lenin's achievements were made on the basis of this perspective. He carried it through only because he knew that the fight against imperialism was nothing if it was not accompanied by a fight against opportunism of all kinds.

The election of a Labour government in 1964 is one of the last acts in the painful long-drawn-out decline of British imperialism. Social democracy's relationship to Britain's special historical position in world capitalism has finally produced Harold Wilson and a government of craven and avowed servants of monopoly capitalism. Having come to power with the open support of influential sections of the employing class at a time when their traditional party is racked by internal conflict, Wilson and company are prepared to carry out policies to make capitalism more 'efficient' with much less regard for the special interests of particular sectors of business, and those with particular imperial connections or old fashioned diplomatic or military privileges—in short all those who exist on some special 'British' economic and political interests—where these prevent him serving most effectively the general interests of monopoly capitalism against the working class, internationally as well as domestically. His membership of the Labour Party has the added advantage of enabling him to call for the co-operation of the working class. His past association with the left-wing Bevanite movement enables him to gain the support of centrists and even of those Marxists of the revisionist variety. If we look at the major aspects of Wilson's policy we shall see what kind of role is played by these centrists and revisionists.

Only four weeks before the General Election, Wilson was reported in the press as saying 'there is no economic crisis'. Less than three weeks later, the deputy leader of his party, Brown, warned his audience that Britain faced perhaps 'the gravest economic crisis in its history'! There had been an agreement between Wilson and the Conservative Party to remain silent on the economic crisis. To put it bluntly, Wilson preferred to ask the working class for their vote but to conspire with the establishment to deceive the people. In fact, the unprecedented balance of payments crisis revealed by the end of 1964 reflects a very grave and insoluble problem for British capitalism. Once in office, Wilson's government continued the deception, a deception which was absolutely necessary from the point of view of the employers. After having promised cheap loans for house purchasers, the Labourites after the election raised the Bank Rate

to 7 per cent, which brought an immediate increase in interest payments on house mortgages to 6½ per cent. Every Labour candidate had promised increased old age pensions, and a small increase was legislated in the first weeks of Wilson's administration. However, the actual payment of the increase was withheld until March 1965, on the grounds that immediate payment would involve an impossible amount of administrative work. Later, Brown admitted what had been clearly the real reason: the economic crisis was so severe that the increase could not be made if Wilson was to retain the confidence of those international bankers who came forward with the biggest monetary 'rescue operation' in the history of capitalism. The proposed pensions increase together with other minor concessions was only made in order to create the conditions for wage freezing under the name of an incomes policy.

The 'left', together with Cousins of the Transport & General Workers' Union, had no hesitation in accepting positions in this government and playing their part in the deception of the working class. Thus Cousins took his place as Minister of Technology alongside Gunter, Minister of Labour, who had earlier in the same year openly anticipated the replacement of trade unions by state-controlled industrial courts: and this is the government which spokesmen of the United Secretariat chooses to call 'left social democratic'.

This is only the logical conclusion of their consistent opposition to the real fighting forces on the left in the British Labour Party, the Young Socialists. These Young Socialists have found it possible to organise the only effective campaign against the treachery of Wilson, something which is impossible for the revisionists. Indeed, the British adherents of the United Secretariat were faced with a situation where one of their most prominent members actually collaborated with the right wing of the Labour Party, under conditions of police protection, in expelling Young Socialists in London. The Young Socialists are campaigning on a clear issue: the immediate payment and backdating of old age pension increases at a time of rapid inflation. In the given situation, such a demand raises the whole problem of the incapacity of capitalism to meet the basic demands of the working class, Labour government or no Labour government. If the Labour movement can be mobilised on this and all similar issues then a programme of transitional demands comes on the order of the day.

It is no accident that the revisionists find themselves effectively in support of the Labour government and against those who lead the fight for the working class demands. As in Ceylon, the 'Trotskyist' revisionists are only the last in line—even if a necessary and sophisticated one—of those who effectively serve capitalism.

An analysis of Wilson's foreign and 'defence' policy would reveal even more starkly the capitalist character of his government. Even the official organ of the Soviet press has denounced the imperialist nature of a number of Wilson's steps: the loan of the Ascension Islands for operations in the Congo; the continuation of Tory policy in Aden and South Arabia; the considerable strengthening of military support for Malaysia; the removal of Cheddi Jagan from power in British Guiana.

But in point of fact we are not concerned here with any old-fashioned colonialist. Wilson's first visit to Johnson after becoming Prime Minister was designed to integrate more closely the whole system of 'western defence'. The full meaning of Wilson's rejection of the so-called independent nuclear deterrent now begins to emerge. Wilson, in his speech to the December Conference of the Labour Party, insisted upon a defence policy in line with 'economic realities'. In other words he acknowledged the inability of British capitalism to carry out the research and investment necessary for modern armaments. The way was being prepared for a joint weapons programme with the US in return for Britain's military resources, including the V-bombers, being placed at the complete disposal of the imperialist alliances.

With this accomplished, Wilson did not need any great skill to pacify (perhaps 'neutralise' is a better word) the left of his party with demagogic praises for the United Nations as the groundwork of his foreign policy, in contrast to the 'sacred cows' of Lord Home which had led him to the blunders of Aden and the Congo. This sabre-rattling in reverse was nothing but the announcement of complete subservience to international capital and reflected very well the fact that Wilson's government was in pawn to the banks from its first week. Less than a month after the conference, Wilson's government was sending gunboats and troops to Malaysia and provoking Indonesia to actually leave the United Nations.

When the revisionists attack the supporters of the International Committee for their characterisation of the Labour government they take their place alongside the centrist apologists for Wilson, providing them with the most sophisticated arguments, especially against the real opposition in the Labour movement. In Britain and all the advanced countries, as in Ceylon, an unmistakeable line, a class line, is now being drawn in real politics which as always is the test of theoretical theses. Pabloism began as a theoretical adaptation to the domination of Stalinism in the Labour movement in the post-war years. Its essence, however, now more clearly revealed, in theory and in practice, was that it provided necessary cover for all the bureaucratic servants of capitalism and fought against the construction of the revolutionary alternative.

Since this article was written the SLFP-LSSP coalition government has fallen. The collapse of the coalition serves to illustrate vividly the correctness of the Marxist method employed by the author of this article.

The Strategy of **BETRAYAL**



From Permanent Revolution to Permanent Coalition *By Wilfred Pereira*

SRI LANKA* can now claim another 'first': a 'Trotskyist party' has accepted office in a bourgeois government and has thereby accepted responsibility for the stability of that government and for maintaining the capitalist system in Ceylon and protecting imperialist interests under the Soulbury Constitution.

Marxists condemn this action of the 'leaders' of the LSSP [Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Trotskyist)] as a defection to the camp of the class enemy and a despicable betrayal of the toiling masses these professed Trotskyists claimed to lead towards the overthrow of capitalism.

To this charge, N. M. Perera and his lieutenants, among whom two are fellow Ministers, two Senators, two Parliamentary Secretaries and at least two other,

behind-the-scenes advisers to their Ministerial comrades—claim that they have not abandoned either Marxism or their party programme, but that, on the contrary, entry into the SLFP† government is only a 'tactic' whose ultimate objective still remains the establishment of socialism.

Tactics

If the coalition is a tactic it must not do violence to the fundamental principles on which the general strategy of the party—which is laid down in its programme—is based. Even though a tactic may deviate from the general line of the campaign, involving sometimes even a retreat, it does not abandon the means of winning the campaign, which

* Revered Ceylon.

† Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

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is to come to grips with the enemy and destroy its forces.

For Marxists, the means of reaching their objective of socialism is determined by the nature of capitalist society which manifests itself in the class struggle between the two polar classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marxists seek to intervene in that class struggle on the side of the proletariat, to lead it in that struggle and imbue it with a scientific understanding of the nature of that struggle which is forced on the proletariat by the nature of its role in the capitalist economy.

Moreover, the general strategy of the Marxist party is laid down in its *revolutionary* programme. Revolutionary, because Marxists seek to develop the class struggle to its logical conclusion in the overthrow of the power of the capitalist class by the working class. The tactics employed by a Marxist party, therefore, must always have the perspective of developing the class struggle and at the same time, the fighting forces of the working class must understand the implications of any tactic in which they are involved.

The Common Weal

Let us now take a close look at this 'tactic'. In a war neither side enjoys a monopoly of tactics. It is now clear that both the LSSP and the SLFP were using coalition as a tactic. But in such a case one would expect the aims of the two opponents to be completely antagonistic. If they were found to be not so, then we can only conclude that the two sides are engaged in a sham fight, or that one side has capitulated wholesale to the other. You can take your choice.

First, what were the aims of the SLFP, what did it hope to get out of a coalition? The Prime Minister made her intentions very clear when she spoke to the Executive Committee of her Party on May 10, 1964 and she explained why she thought it necessary to 'initiate talks with the working-class leaders' to form a coalition:

'However much progressive work we do we cannot expect any results unless we get the co-operation of the working class. . . . Disruptions, especially strikes and go-slows must be eliminated and the development of the country must proceed. . . . It is only by travelling on this path [the middle-path defined by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike] . . . that we can achieve our purpose.'

She went on to state that Philip Gunawardena and N. M. Perera had informed her that 'they could form a [coalition] Government on the basis of a common programme. . . . They were of opinion that it was a Government like this which could

work for the common weal'. (our emphasis)

N. M. Perera, then, appears to have agreed that a coalition could work for the common weal of the bourgeoisie represented by the SLFP and of the toiling masses, and particularly the working class, which the LSSP claims to lead. That is to say that a coalition could reconcile the SLFP policy of the 'middle-path'—socialism without shattering the capitalist framework—and the LSSP policy of socialism only by the destruction of the capitalist system. But any sane person can see that such a reconciliation can be effected only by the complete abandonment of its policy by one of the parties to the agreement; there is absolutely no room for compromise between two completely antagonistic policies. If N. M. Perera has led his Party into the coalition it can only be by completely abandoning its Marxist revolutionary programme.

The 'tactic' of N. M. Perera and his lieutenants appears to be at first sight a peculiar one which plays into the hands of the class enemy. But here our astute tacticians will declare that the SLFP does not represent the class enemy; the real enemy is the UNP.* They say that the prime task is to crush the UNP and prevent its comeback; that the SLFP does contain a 'reactionary' right wing, but that its 'progressive' wing contains 'leftward-moving forces' which can be won over to the socialist cause. Let us see then how this tactic is going to help in winning these battles on the way to the final defeat of the class enemy.

(1) *To prevent the comeback of the UNP.* Any Marxist knows that the resurgence of the UNP after its defeat in 1960 is due entirely to the inability of the SLFP government to shatter the capitalist economic base of the UNP's power. However much the SLFP may denounce the UNP in words it is incapable of smashing the UNP once and for all, because *the SLFP itself is as firmly bound to that capitalist economic base as the UNP.*

The quarrel between these two parties is like that of two gangs of robbers over the division of the booty. To take the side of one gang calling it more 'progressive' will not help to put down robbery, but will only make us its accomplices. In the same way *any socialist policy which does not have the perspective of shattering the capitalist framework against the resistance of the SLFP itself and not only the UNP, is a sham and a deception of the toiling masses.*

If the aim of the coalition is to prevent a dictatorship of the 'Right' surrendering to the tactic of the SLFP and helping to stabilise its 'middle-

* United National Party.

path policy' ('socialism' within the framework of capitalism!) will have just the contrary result. The abandonment of class struggle and revolutionary perspectives in order to avoid embarrassing the coalition government, in plain words a policy of class collaboration, will find the working class completely disarmed and disoriented if the UNP resorts to what it has now begun to call 'revolutionary' methods to dislodge the SLFP-LSSP parliamentary combination.

(2) *To win over the 'leftward-moving forces' in the SLFP and incidentally to convert the Left minority in parliament into a majority.*

Whatever forces of this nature there are will not be converted by speeches in parliament. It is an axiom of Marxist strategy that they will move only when they are *pushed* by the masses engaged in active struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression. But the LSSP policy of class collaboration will leave the toiling masses defenceless when the SLFP, the senior partner in the coalition, begins to unload on their backs the burdens of its futile middle-path policies.

It will then be too late for the LSSP to think of organising the masses for resistance, for it would already have begun to lose the confidence of the masses. In the absence of an alternative revolutionary leadership capable of rallying the toiling masses and taking them forward, fascist demagogues will have a clear road.

Besides, this belated attempt by the LSSP to speak the truth to the masses will be construed by the senior partner of the coalition as disruption and a breach of faith; to be followed by ignominious expulsion from the government at a moment most unfavourable to the LSSP. This will certainly not help to raise the LSSP's prestige in the eyes of either the 'leftward-moving' elements in the SLFP or of the masses who still have illusions in the SLFP.

(3) *To 'bring pressure' on the SLFP to take more 'leftward steps' within the capitalist framework, in the hope that it will be possible to inveigle the SLFP into socialism before it realises where it is being taken by the LSSP tacticians.*

This is the typical reformist illusion that a series of reforms will one day result in socialism under the nose of the capitalist class and behind the back of the working class.

Marxist revolutionaries include the struggle for reforms in their general revolutionary strategy; but they have learned from past experience that the more uncompromisingly they pursue the class struggle the more decisive will be the nature of the

reforms; decisive for the transition to socialism. They also know that the ruling bourgeoisie is too astute and class-conscious to be fooled by the 'tactics' of petty-bourgeois reformists into surrendering its power. The bourgeoisie knows, just as well as the Marxists, that such petty-bourgeois tactics only succeed in duping the working class. Hence the hatred of the bourgeoisie for the Marxists who expose the fraudulence of such tactics.

Marxist Strategy

If the LSSP tacticians are Marxists as they claim to be, their aim must be to carry the anti-capitalist struggle forward and help the working class particularly to overcome its illusions in the SLFP's middle-path policy and in bourgeois parliamentary democracy. In order to mobilise the toiling masses for struggle they must be told the truth about the nature of the SLFP and the coalition and the nature of the struggle they will have to wage to break out of the bonds of capitalism.

It should be the duty of the LSSP to warn the toiling masses whom it professes to lead that whatever the promises of the SLFP, the only 'progressive' measures it will *implement* are those that are advantageous, or at least not harmful, to the bourgeois interests that the SLFP represents; that anything more than this *cannot* be achieved without the conscious and active extra-parliamentary struggle of the toiling masses that will back up the efforts of their representatives in parliament. The masses must be forewarned, pointing to their past experience of SLFP rule, that progressive measures within the capitalist framework will only bring about further disruption of the economy, and that it will be the masses who will be called upon to bear the burden and make sacrifices while the capitalists make their profits.

But the aims of the LSSP tacticians are based on a purely parliamentary perspective which leaves no place whatsoever for the class struggle. On the contrary, class struggle (involving strikes, go-slows, etc.) becomes embarrassing to prospective parliamentarians scrounging for votes by appearing to be all things to all men. In such a situation parliamentary combinations, coalitions, no-contest pacts, i.e., parliamentary arithmetic, is substituted for revolutionary dynamics as a solution for political crises.

Permanent Coalition?

If the ultimate aim of the LSSP tacticians is socialism—that is, socialism as Marxists understand it and *not* as the SLFP is *determined* to have it, within the framework of capitalism—their tactic of



N. M. PERERA
Chief of the
tacticians'

coalition must be in consonance with the perspective of breaking out of the capitalist framework *against the determined opposition of the SLFP.*

Let us for the moment grant N. M. Perera, the chief of the tacticians, his un-Marxist view that socialism can be achieved by parliamentary means. If that is his plan, the LSSP must eventually defeat the SLFP in an electoral contest in which the country will be asked to choose between Marxist socialism and the SLFP's brand of socialism. That is the constitutional parliamentary democratic method. But—we find that N. M. Perera, with the complicity of his lieutenants, has committed the LSSP not only to a coalition, but also to a *no-contest pact* with the SLFP *in which he has surrendered the sole power to determine the allocation of 'seats' to the leader of the SLFP.*

Once again we see the tactic ending in surrender. Not only has the LSSP surrendered its independence and its revolutionary programme, abandoning therewith the method of class struggle which is fundamental to Marxist strategy, but N. M. Perera has abandoned even his own *parliamentary* means of defeating the SLFP on the road to socialism.

This wonderful tactic of coalition appears to be specially devised for surrender all along the line even up to the surrender of the final objective. It is a tactic for 'consolidating' (to use a favourite word of N. M. Perera's when speaking about the coalition) the joint role of the SLFP-LSSP combination in the interests of the capitalist class. Our 'Trotskyist tacticians' have come a long way from the Theory of the Permanent Revolution which they have now repudiated in favour of the Permanent Coalition.

Thus does the substitution of parliamentary for revolutionary means to prevent a dictatorship of the UNP lead to *a constitutional dictatorship of the SLFP in the interests of the bourgeoisie with the LSSP functioning as its political police.* The stage is now set for a merger of these two Parties, and from there, with the aid of the Public Security Act, it could lead to a 'One-Party State'. But the working class will disperse these socialist fakers before that.

The Major-Domo Speaks

Do we need more proof? When N. M. Perera was pleading with the Prime Minister for the inclusion of the entire ULF* in the coalition, the argument he urged was, 'the SLFP needs the co-operation of the *entire* working class to consolidate its policy'. His argument was based *not* on the needs of the working class but on the *urgent necessity of the SLFP!* But perhaps this was a ruse of the astute Doctor? We shall see.

Let us then listen to the new Finance Minister of Her Britannic Majesty's Government in Ceylon. In an interview he gave the *Sunday Observer* (26-6-64) explaining why he joined the Government, N. M. Perera states:

'I am confident that this mobilisation of the masses, particularly the workers, can be achieved and that the country can move leftwards more rapidly, can *consolidate the victories of 1956* and complete other tasks needed for the construction of a Socialist society.' (our emphasis)

Note how he already speaks the language of the SLFP. *Whose* victory in 1956 is he confident of consolidating? After the experiences of the masses, and particularly the workers, under the SLFP regime does he still dare to say that *they* won a victory in 1956? Surely then he must be referring to the 'victories' of that section of the national bourgeoisie that the SLFP represents, together with their petty-bourgeois hangers-on and the black marketeers and racketeers who flourish under SLFP rule.

As he saw it,

'a revolutionary process was started in 1956, not through violence but through the ballot. The political power of the capitalist class was attacked, and in many ways broken. But something was left undone. . . the economic power of this class was not broken.'

He explains why.

'the main cause was lack of full concerted support

* United Left Front.

from the masses, particularly the working class. Thus those gains of 1956 could not be consolidated and were, in fact, threatened.' [Our emphasis]

But now that he has joined the Government, he is confident that the masses, particularly the working class, can be mobilised to do what was left undone up to June 1964.

Maligning the Workers

What can we gather from this very frank avowal of his plans by N. M. Perera? First, he wants to inspire confidence in the SLFP; to make us believe that it is really interested in breaking the economic power of the capitalist class. Second, he maligns the working class when he accuses it of withholding its support for breaking the economic power of the capitalist class. Third, he seeks a vote of confidence from the bourgeoisie for himself by reaffirming his undertaking to mobilise the working class in order to 'consolidate' the SLFP's gains of 1956 by eliminating the threat of strikes and go-slows.

But N. M. Perera was, if you will remember, the leader of the LSSP that had been mobilising the working class for 25 years for the task of breaking the economic power of the capitalist class. Was it, perhaps, the still lingering revolutionary traditions that had been dinned into the working class by the LSSP that made it withhold its 'full concerted support' from the SLFP that N. M. Perera now complains about? He and his tactician comrades have not cared to consult the working class, or they would know the answer.

Surely these LSSP tacticians, who still claim to be Marxists and Trotskyists, must know that the failure of the SLFP to break the power of the 'reactionary' capitalists was due entirely to the refusal of the 'progressive' capitalists of the SLFP to shatter the common capitalist economic base of the 'reactionary' as well as the 'progressive' capitalists. *They must also know that if the working class refused its support for 'consolidating' the SLFP victory of 1956 it was because it correctly refused to distinguish between 'progressive' and 'reactionary' capitalists;* all it was able to recognise was the fact of its *exploitation*, and it reacted in the only way that a self-respecting working class will react to exploitation. And we can guarantee that it will continue to do so notwithstanding the 'full concerted' efforts of Mrs. Bandaranaike and Dr. N. M. Perera to hoodwink and discipline the workers.

Revolution by Ballot

When N. M. Perera, with the connivance of his lieutenants, attributes the failure to break the economic power of the capitalist class to the lack

of support from the working class he is *echoing the accusations of Mrs. Bandaranaike and slandering the class he claims to lead.* The working class did its best, under a confused and half-hearted leadership, to complete the 'revolution of 1956' for its purpose. *But it was precisely the SLFP, with its 'middle-path' policy, that stood in its way.* And it is precisely because *the 'SLFP's gains of 1956' were once again being 'threatened' by a united working class with its 21 demands* that Mrs. Bandaranaike summoned N. M. Perera to her assistance. And while his accomplice, Colvin R. de Silva, was engaged in the JCTUO* asking for 'another date', N. M. Perera has obliged the Prime Minister and offered his services for 'consolidating' the chief obstacle in the way of the 21 Demands.

'Revolution by ballot' was the ideological sign-board put up by the petty-bourgeois pandankarayas† and propagandists of the SLFP after Bandaranaike's electoral victory over the UNP in 1956, in order to fool the masses into believing that socialism was round the corner and all they had to do was wait with folded hands until the SLFP delivered the goods. N. M. Perera and his lieutenants have taken over this slogan and round it they have devised a 'tactic' whose purpose is still the same—to stave off the threat to the SLFP's gains of 1956 from Marxist revolutionary action by the working class.

We heartily agree that 'something was left undone' after the defeat of the UNP in 1956. But we know what N. M. Perera and his lieutenants have conveniently forgotten, that *it is only the working class that can complete the task* that the revolutionary national bourgeoisie may initiate but can never consummate, the revolutionary socialist task of solving the social and economic problems of a backward semi-colonial country. But unlike N. M. Perera and his accomplices we are confident that *the working class WILL accomplish its historic task and will do so only over the corpse of the Coalition which the 'tacticians' are trying to make permanent.* The confidence of genuine Trotskyists in the revolutionary potential of the Ceylonese working class flows from the theory of the Permanent Revolution. The tactic of the Permanent Coalition is based on a petty-bourgeois distrust of the working class and, in the last analysis, on the dread of the socialist revolution. Fearing the revolution more than the UNP, the 'progressives' have got together and devised a joint tactic to shackle the working class. By means of that tactic it is the working class that will be 'undone'—so they hope.

* Joint Committee of Trades Union Organisation.

† Literally, torch-bearer, retainer or stooge.

Workers' Councils

But the petty-bourgeois pandankarayas and propagandists for the coalition will remind us of the Workers' Councils and Vigilance Committees which are to be brought into '*active participation in the process of Government . . . and will have positive and creative functions to perform (and) 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*'. (LSSP Conference Resolution, June, 1964). Will not these organisations give a new stimulus to the class struggle? they will ask.

N. M. Perera's grandiose promise has already been whittled down to *Advisory Committees* which will help the government and the employers 'to obtain the best results' from their labour. This is quite in keeping with his chief task as watch-dog of the country's finances—'cutting down' on everything he can lay his hands on, excepting the toil and sweat of the working class.

The Finance Minister, speaking to trade unions of the Inland Revenue Department on July 7, 1964, said:

'Trade unions will be *given* a special role with the formation of Advisory Committees in Departments. However, they could go a step further and do their best to assist the Government *in other capacities as well*.

'Trade unions should sustain this Government by performing the role *assigned* to them in the near future.

'Trade unions would be made *partners* [of the Government] by law.' (our emphasis)

Here is the tactician-in-chief deploying his forces! The role he '*assigns*' to the working class in the new dispensation could not have been expressed more clearly and more economically, and that is 'to sustain this Government'—this Government formed by the alliance with the SLFP of the reformist LSSP leaders who have not been '*assigned*' but have *voluntarily assumed* the role of taming and disciplining the working class by leading it into the close and intimate embrace of the 'authority and power of the (*bourgeois*) state machinery'.

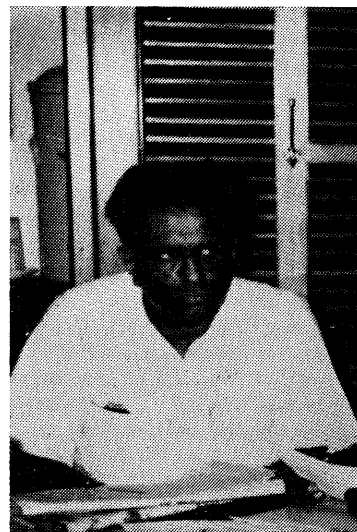
Guns at their Backs

Are there any class-conscious workers who believe that workers' councils and vigilance committees will be able to function as organs of class struggle—to fight not only the UNP capitalists but the SLFP capitalists as well? These sub-governmental organisations set up under the aegis of the coalition will of necessity have to be organs for assisting in

the efficient functioning of the regime, for 'eliminating strikes and go-slows' to please the Prime Minister, 'sustain this government' to please Dr. N. M. Perera, and 'consolidate the victory of the SLFP' to please the capitalist class. The common weal!

We can be sure that the capitalist state machinery will be paralysed in trying to distinguish between 'progressive' and 'reactionary' enemies of the working class. But if at any time class-conscious workers seek to use these organisations to develop the class struggle, they will find the 'authority and power of the (bourgeois) state machinery' *at their backs* to remind them of the role that N. M. Perera and his accomplices have 'assigned' to them. They will be forefully reminded that *strict discipline* is needed to carry out this manoeuvre successfully.

The 'other capacities' in which the Finance Minister expects the Advisory Committees to



**COLVIN R. DE
SILVA**

**Perera's chief
accomplice**

function, will be left to the initiative of the petty-bourgeois pandankarayas whose services will be at a premium, and will consist chiefly in spying and tale-bearing in the name of vigilance against genuine class-conscious workers, to frame them as agents-provocateurs, saboteurs and enemies of the Government. N. M. Perera and his chief accomplice in the trade union field, Colvin R. de Silva, have already displayed their qualities of leadership in this direction. They have eliminated known revolutionaries from the offices they held in the trade unions controlled by the LSSP, and that too without laying any charges against them besides that of 'political differences'.

State Patronage of Trade Unions

It was pointed out long ago by Trotsky that there is 'one common feature in the . . . degeneration of modern trade union organisations . . . it is their drawing closely to and growing together with the state power'. He gave the reason for this 'state patronage' in the case of colonial and semi-colonial countries in the following manner:

'The governments of backward, i.e., colonial and semi-colonial countries, by and large, assume a Bonapartist or semi-Bonapartist character; and differ from one another in this, that some try to orient in a democratic direction, seeking support from workers and peasants, while others install a form close to military-police dictatorship. This likewise determines the fate of the trade unions. They either stand under the special patronage of the state or they are subjected to cruel persecution. Patronage on the part of the state is dictated by two tasks which confront it: first, to draw the working class closer thus gaining a support for resistance against excessive pretensions on the part of imperialism, and at the same time, to discipline the workers themselves by placing them under the control of a bureaucracy.'

He cited the particular case of Mexico where the railways and oil fields had been nationalised, and the trade unions had been given a legal status in their management, ending in their complete subjection to the bourgeois state. In this connection he had this to say:

'The nationalisation of railways and oil fields in Mexico has of course nothing in common with socialism. It is a measure of state capitalism in a backward country which in this way seeks to defend itself on the one hand against foreign imperialism and on the other hand against its own proletariat. The management of railways, oil fields, etc., through labour organisations, has nothing in common with workers' control over industry, for in the essence of the matter the management is effected through the labour bureaucracy which is independent of the workers, but in return completely dependent on the bourgeois state.'

'This measure on the part of the ruling class pursues the aim of disciplining the working class, making it more industrious in the service of the common interests of the state, which appear on the surface to merge with the interests of the working class itself. As a matter of fact, the whole task of the bourgeoisie consists in liquidating the trade unions as the organs of the class struggle and substituting in their place the trade union bureaucracy as the organ of the leadership over the workers by the bourgeois state.'

He warned against the dangers of permitting the trade unions to be stifled in the embrace of the bourgeois state:

'The stultification of the trade unions was, according to the conception of the legislators, introduced in the interests of the workers in order to assure them an influence upon the governmental and economic life. But insofar as foreign imperialist capitalism dominates the national state and insofar as it is able, with the assistance of internal reactionary forces, to overthrow the unstable democracy and replace it with outright fascist dictatorship, to that extent the legislation relating to the trade unions can easily become a weapon in the hands of imperialist dictatorship.' (our emphasis)

(Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay
—Leon Trotsky)

But the 'Trotskyist' tacticians of the LSSP have, in addition to everything else, abandoned even their memories in order to assume the voluntary role of the SLFP's political police who will have the full backing of the capitalist state machinery in carrying out their despicable task. Their tactic of entry into the SLFP government is clearly exposed as a perfidious trick to dupe the working class and deliver it gagged and bound into the power of the capitalist class.

Homeward Bound

Their admiration for the 'revolution of 1956' and yearning to 'consolidate its gains' are a confirmation of the objective role these renegades have been playing in the proletarian revolutionary movement. The truth of the matter is that these *bourgeois and petty-bourgeois revolutionaries* have had enough of their self-imposed exile in an alien milieu. We readily grant that during their sojourn with the proletariat they faced not only ostracism but prison and bullets, and made a lasting contribution to the proletarian revolutionary movement. But for them the time has come to consolidate the gains and reap the fruits of the bourgeois nationalist revolution for which they have made great sacrifices, and they have now decided to return home. *The unpardonable crime is their attempt to drag the toiling masses behind them and turn them into their servile retainers.*

If there is a lesson for the working class in this cynical desertion of a leadership, it is that of the necessity for a rigorous surveillance over its leaders, and particularly those who come from another class with their incorrigible predilection for having the best of both worlds.

However, we can assure these strategists in betrayal that the working class will not allow itself to be duped. The revolutionary propensities of the proletariat will continue to develop the more their betrayers try to 'consolidate' the capitalist order; and with Marxist revolutionaries to guide them

they will soon be on the move pressing forward to complete what was left undone and can never be done by the revolutionary national bourgeoisie—the destruction of the capitalist economic base of the *entire class* of exploiters.

Camouflage

The Prime Minister, on behalf of the 'progressive' bourgeoisie, has accepted the penitent wanderers into her fold. But, in spite of the criticism she has had to face about allying herself with 'Marxists', she has wisely refrained from demanding that they publicly and categorically repudiate their Marxism, whatever else she may have got them to surrender. She knows her onions and her prodigal sons as well. Their protestations of adherence to Marxism, Trotskyism, revolutionism, far from being embarrassing, provide her with just the 'Left' cover she needs to camouflage her plans to subdue the working class, at least until she can 'consolidate' her victory and the profits of the class she serves.

But we can confidently predict that these renegades

who are now eating out of her hand, will before long be compelled to eat their words. And for dessert the working class will ram their filthy lies down the throats of these traitors.

The renegade 'leaders' of the LSSP have held the stage for a quarter of a century and have earned a reputation in the working-class movement which extends beyond the confines of our little island. But as Trotsky remarked concerning Karl Radek who was one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution, 'opportunism in politics is all the more dangerous the more camouflaged it is and the greater the personal reputation that covers it'. We cannot permit the personal reputations of the renegades to stand in the way of our criticism or, what is of primary importance, in the way of the working class.

The socialist revolution does not stand (or fall) on the personal reputations or sacrifices of 'leaders', but on 'the class consciousness of the workers, their trust in their own forces and their readiness for self-sacrifice in the struggle.'

10.7.64.

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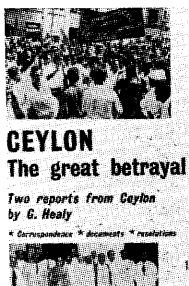
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Leon Trotsky



The Intelligentsia and Socialism

(A review, written for the St. Petersburg review 'Sovremenny Mir' in 1910, of 'Der Sozialismus und die Intellektuellen', by Max Adler, published in Vienna in the same year. Translated, 1959, by Brian Pearce from Vol. XX of Trotsky's Collected Works, Moscow, 1926)

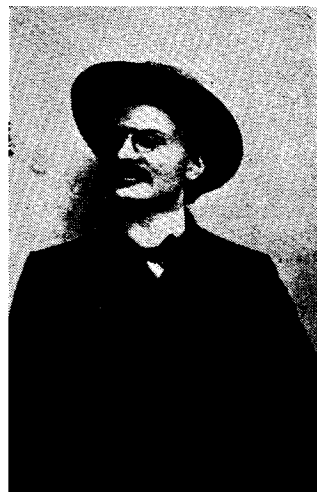
TEN YEARS AGO, or even six or seven years ago, defenders of the Russian subjective school of sociology (the 'Socialist-Revolutionaries') might have successfully utilised for their purpose the latest pamphlet by the Austrian philosopher Max Adler.* During the last five or six years, however, we have passed through such a thorough, objective 'school of sociology', and its lessons are written on our bodies in such expressive scars, that the most eloquent apotheosis of the intelligentsia, even coming from the 'Marxist' pen of M. Adler, will not be of any help to Russian subjectivism. On the contrary, the fate of our Russian subjectivists is a most serious

argument against Max Adler's allegations and conclusions.

The subject of this pamphlet is the relation between the intelligentsia and socialism. For Adler this is not merely a matter for theoretical analysis but also a matter of conscience. He wants to convince. Adler's pamphlet, based on a speech made to an audience of socialist students, is filled with ardent conviction. The spirit of proselytism permeates this little work, giving a special nuance to ideas which have no claim to novelty. To win the intelligentsia for *his* ideals, to conquer their support at whatever cost, this political desire utterly prevails over social analysis in Adler's pamphlet, giving it the particular tone it has, and determining its weaknesses.

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tion: the intelligentsia are not an order bound together by a historic vow, but the social stratum which embraces all kinds of 'brain-work' occupations. However hard it may be to draw a line of demarcation between 'manual' and 'brain' work, the general social features of the intelligentsia are clear enough, without any further going into details. The intelligentsia are an entire class—Adler calls them an inter-class group, but essentially there is no difference—existing within the framework of bourgeois society. And for Adler the question is: who or what possesses the better right to the soul of this class? What ideology is inwardly obligatory upon it, as a result of the very nature of its social functions? Adler answers: the ideology of collectivism. That the European intelligentsia, in so far as they are not directly hostile to the ideas of collectivism, at best stand aloof from the life and struggle of the working masses, neither hot nor cold, is a fact to which Adler does not shut his eyes. But it shouldn't be like that, he says, there are no adequate objective grounds for it. Adler decidedly opposes those Marxists who deny the existence of general conditions which could bring about a mass movement of the intelligentsia towards socialism.

'There exist,' he declares in his foreword, 'sufficient factors—though not purely economic ones, but drawn from another sphere—which can influence the entire mass of the intelligentsia, even apart from their proletarian life-situation, as adequate motives for them to join with the socialist workers' movement. All that is needed is that the intelligentsia be made aware of the essential nature of this movement and of their own social position.' What are these factors? 'Since inviolability, and above all, possibility of free development of spiritual interests,' says Adler, 'are among the essential conditions of life for the intelligentsia, theoretical interest is therefore fully on an equality with economic interest where the intelligentsia are concerned. Thus, if the grounds for the intelligentsia joining the socialist movement are to be sought principally outside the economic sphere, this is explicable no less by the specific ideological conditions of existence of mental labour than by the cultural content of socialism' (page 7). Independently of the class nature of the entire movement (after all, it's only a road!), independently of its everyday party-political image (after all, it's only a means!), socialism by its very essence, as a universal social ideal, means the liberation of all forms of mental labour from every sort of socio-historical fetter and limitation. This premise, this vision provides the ideological bridge over which the intelligentsia of Europe can and must pass into the camp of Social-Democracy.*

This is Adler's basic standpoint, to developing which his whole pamphlet is devoted. Its radical fault, which at once leaps to the eye, is its *non-historical* nature. The social grounds for the intelligentsia to enter the camp of collectivism which Adler relies on have indeed been there for a very long time; and yet there is no trace, in a single European country, of any mass move by the intelligentsia towards Social-Democracy. Adler sees this, of course, just as well as we do. But he prefers to see the reason for the estrangement of the intelligentsia from the working-class movement in the circumstance that the intelligentsia *don't understand* socialism. In a certain sense that is true. But in that case what explains this persistent lack of understanding, which exists alongside their understanding many other extremely complicated matters? Clearly, it is not the weakness of their theoretical logic, but the power of irrational elements in their class psychology. Adler himself speaks about this in his chapter '*Bürgerliche Schranken des Verständnisses*' (Bourgeois Limits to Understanding), which is one of the best in the pamphlet. But he thinks, he hopes, he is sure—and here the preacher gets the better of the theoretician—that European Social-Democracy will overcome the irrational elements in the mentality of the brain-workers if only it will reconstruct the logic of its relations with them. The intelligentsia don't understand socialism because the latter appears to them from day to day in its routine shape as a political party, one of many, just like the others. But if the intelligentsia can be shown the true face of socialism, as a world-wide cultural movement, they cannot but recognise in it their best hopes and aspirations. So Adler thinks.

We have come so far without examining whether in fact pure cultural requirements (development of technique, science, art) are in fact more powerful, so far as the intelligentsia as a class are concerned, than the class suggestions radiating from family, school, church and state, or than the voice of material interests. But even if we accept this for the sake of argument, if we agree to see in the intelligentsia above all a corporation of priests of culture who up to now have merely failed to grasp that the socialist break with bourgeois society is the best way to serve the interests of culture, the question then remains in all its force: can West-European Social Democracy offer the intelligentsia, theoretically and morally, anything more convincing or more attractive

* In this period, Social-Democracy refers to the Socialist political movement, without meaning those who took the path of betrayal during and after the First World War.

than what it has offered up to now?

Collectivism has been filling the world with the sound of its struggle for several decades already. Millions of workers have been united during this period in political, trade-union, co-operative, educational and other organisations. A whole class has raised itself from the depths of life and forced its way into the holy of holies of politics, regarded hitherto as the private preserve of the property-owning classes. Day by day the socialist press—theoretical, political, trade-union—re-evaluates bourgeois values, great and small, from the standpoint of a new world. There is not one question of social and cultural life (marriage, the family, upbringing, the school, the church, the army, patriotism, social hygiene, prostitution) on which socialism has not counterposed its view to the view of bourgeois society. It speaks in all the languages of civilised mankind. There work and fight in the ranks of the socialist movement people of different turns of mind and various temperaments, with different pasts, social connections and habits of life. And if the intelligentsia nevertheless 'don't understand' socialism, if all this together is insufficient to enable them, to compel them to grasp the cultural-historical significance of this world movement, then oughtn't one to draw the conclusion that the causes of this fatal lack of understanding must be very profound and that attempts to overcome it by literary and theoretical means are inherently hopeless?

This idea emerges still more strikingly in the light of history. The biggest influx of intellectuals into the socialist movement—and this applies to all countries in Europe—took place in the first period of the party's existence, when it was still in its childhood. This first wave brought with it the most outstanding theoreticians and politicians of the International. The more European Social-Democracy grew, the bigger the mass of workers that was united around it, the weaker (not only relatively but absolutely) has the influx of fresh elements from the intelligentsia become. The *Leipziger Volkszeitung** sought for a long time in vain, through newspaper advertisements, an editorial worker with a university training. Here a conclusion forces itself upon us, a conclusion completely contrary to Adler: the more definitely socialism has revealed its content, the easier it has become for each and everyone to understand its mission in history, the more decidedly have the intelligentsia recoiled from it. While this does not mean that they fear socialism itself, it is nevertheless plain that in the capitalist countries of Europe there must have occurred some deep-going

social changes which have hindered fraternization between university people and the workers, at the same time as they have facilitated the coming of the workers to the socialist movement.

What sort of changes have these been? The most intelligent individuals, groups and strata from the proletariat have joined and are joining Social-Democracy. The growth and concentration of industry and transport is merely hastening this process. A completely different type of process is going on where the intelligentsia are concerned. The tremendous capitalist development of the last two decades has unquestionably skimmed off the cream of this class. The most talented intellectual forces, those with power of initiative and flight of thought, have been irrevocably absorbed by capitalist industry, by the trusts, railway companies and banks, which pay fantastic salaries for organisational work. Only second-raters remain for the service of the state, and government offices, no less than newspaper editors of all tendencies, complain about the shortage of 'people'. As regards the representatives of the ever-increasing semi-proletarian intelligentsia—unable to escape from their eternally dependent and materially insecure way of life—for them, carrying out as they do fragmentary, second-rate and not very attractive functions in the great mechanism of culture, the cultural interests to which Adler appeals cannot be strong enough independently to direct their political sympathies towards the socialist movement.

Added to this is the circumstance that any European intellectual for whom going over to the camp of collectivism is not psychologically out of the question has practically no hope of winning a position of personal influence for himself in the ranks of the proletarian parties. And this question is of decisive importance. A worker comes to socialism as a part of a whole, along with his class, from which he has no prospect of escaping. He is even pleased with the feeling of his moral unity with the mass, which makes him more confident and stronger. The intellectual, however, comes to socialism, breaking his class umbilical cord, as an individual, as a personality, and inevitably seeks to exert influence as an individual. But just here he comes up against obstacles—and as time passes the bigger these obstacles become. At the beginning of the social-democratic movement, every intellectual who joined, even though not above the average, won for himself a place in the working-class movement. Today every newcomer finds, in the Western European countries, the colossal structure of working-class democracy already existing. Thousands of labour leaders, who have automatically been promoted from their class, constitute a solid apparatus,

* German Social-Democratic newspaper—Trans.

at the head of which stand honoured veterans, of recognised authority, figures that have already become historic. Only a man of exceptional talent would in these circumstances be able to hope to win a leading position for himself—but such a man, instead of leaping across the abyss into a camp alien to him, will naturally follow the line of least resistance into the realm of industry or state service. Thus there also stands between the intelligentsia and socialism, like a watershed, in addition to everything else, the organisational apparatus of Social-Democracy. It arouses discontent among members of the intelligentsia with socialist sympathies, from whom it demands discipline and self-restraint—sometimes in respect of their ‘opportunism’ and sometimes, contrariwise, in respect of their excessive ‘radicalism’—and dooms them to the role of querulous lookers-on who vacillate in their sympathies between anarchism and national-liberalism. *Simplicissimus** is their highest ideological banner. With various modifications and to varying degrees, this phenomenon is repeated in all countries of Europe. These people are, more than any other group, too blasé, so to speak, too cynical, for a revelation, even the most moving, of the cultural significance of socialism to conquer their souls. Only rare ‘ideologues’—using this word in both the good sense and the bad—are capable of coming to socialist convictions under the stimulus of pure theoretical thinking, with, as their points of departure, the demands of law, as in the case of Anton Menger,† or the requirements of technique, as in that of Atlantis.‡ But even such as these, as we know, do not usually get as far as the actual Social-Democratic movement, and the class struggle of the proletariat in its internal connection with socialism remains for them a book sealed with seven seals.

In considering that it is impossible to win the intelligentsia to collectivism with a programme of immediate material gains Adler is absolutely right. But this still does not signify that it is possible to win the intelligentsia by any means at all, nor that immediate material interests and class ties do not affect the intelligentsia more cogently than all the cultural-historical prospects offered by socialism.

If we exclude that stratum of the intelligentsia which directly serves the working masses, as workers’ doctors, lawyers, and so on (a stratum which, as a general rule, is composed of the less talented repre-

sentatives of these professions), then we see that the most important and influential part of the intelligentsia owes its livelihood to payments out of industrial profit, rent from land or the state budget, and thus is directly or indirectly dependent on the capitalist classes or the capitalist state.

Abstractly considered, this material dependence puts out of the question only militant political activity in the anti-capitalist ranks, but not spiritual freedom in relation to the class which provides employment. In actual fact, however, this is not so. Precisely the ‘spiritual’ nature of the work that the intelligentsia do inevitably forms a spiritual tie between them and the possessing classes. Factory managers and engineers with administrative responsibilities necessarily find themselves in constant antagonism to the workers, against whom they are obliged to uphold the interests of capital. It is self-evident that the function they perform must, in the last analysis, adapt their ways of thinking and their opinions to itself. Doctors and lawyers, despite the more independent nature of their work, necessarily have to be in psychological contact with their clients. While an electrician can, day after day, instal electric wiring in the offices of ministers, bankers and their mistresses, and yet remain himself in spite of this, it is a different matter for a doctor, who is obliged to find music in his soul and in his voice which will accord with the feelings and habits of these persons. This sort of contact, moreover, inevitably takes place not only at the top end of bourgeois society. The suffragettes of London engage a pro-suffragette lawyer to defend them. A doctor who treats majors’ wives in Berlin or the wives of ‘Christian-Social’ shopkeepers in Vienna, a lawyer who handles the affairs of their fathers, brothers, and husbands, can hardly allow himself the luxury of enthusiasm for the cultural prospects of collectivism. All this applies likewise to writers, artists, sculptors, entertainers—not so directly and immediately, but no less inexorably. They offer the public their work or their personalities, they depend on its approval and its money, and so, whether in an open or a hidden way, they subordinate their creative achievement to that ‘great monster’ which they hold in such contempt: the bourgeois mob. The fate of Germany’s ‘young’ school of writers—now already, by the way, getting rather thin on top—shows the truth of this as well as anything. The example of Gorky, explained by the conditions of the epoch in which he grew up, is an exception which merely proves the rule: his inability to adapt himself to the anti-revolutionary degeneration of the intelligentsia rapidly deprived him of his ‘popularity’.

* A satirical paper published in Munich—Trans.

† An Austrian jurist—Trans.

‡ Pseudonym of Karl Ballod, a Lettish-German economist—Trans.

Here is revealed once more the profound social difference between the conditions of brain work and manual work. Though it enslaves the muscles and exhausts the body, factory work is powerless to subject to itself the worker's mind. All the measures which have been attempted to get control of the latter, in Switzerland as in Russia, have proved uniformly fruitless. The brain worker is from the physical standpoint incomparably freer. The writer does not have to get up when the hooter sounds, behind the doctor's back stands no supervisor, the lawyer's pockets are not searched when he leaves the court. But, in return, he is compelled to sell not his mere labour-power, not just the tension of his muscles, but his entire personality as a human being—and not through fear but through conscientiousness. As a result, these people don't want to see and cannot see that their professional frock-coat is nothing but a prisoner's uniform of better cut than ordinary.

In the end, Adler himself seems to be dissatisfied with his abstract and essentially idealistic formula on the interrelation between the intelligentsia and socialism. In his own propaganda he addresses himself, really, not to the class of brain workers fulfilling definite functions in capitalist society, but to their young generation who are only at the stage of preparing for their future role—to the students. Evidence of this is provided not only by the dedication 'To the Free Students' Union of Vienna' but also by the very nature of this pamphlet-speech, its impassioned agitational and sermonizing tone. It would be unthinkable to express oneself in this manner before an audience of professors, writers, lawyers, doctors. Such a speech would stick in one's throat after the first few words. Thus, in direct dependence on the human material with which he finds himself working, Adler himself limits his task. The politician corrects the formula of the theoretician. In the end it is a question of struggle for influence over the *students*.

The university is the final stage of the state-organised education of the sons of the possessing and ruling classes, just as the barracks is the final educational institution for the young generation of the workers and peasants. The barracks fosters the psychological habits of obedience and discipline appropriate to the subordinate social functions to be fulfilled subsequently. The university, in principle, trains for management, leadership, government. From this angle even the German student societies are useful class institutions, since they create traditions which unite fathers and sons, strengthen national self-esteem, implant the habits which are

needed in a bourgeois setting, and, finally, supply scars on the nose or under the ear which will serve as the stamp of one's belonging to the ruling class. The human material which passes through the barracks is, of course, incomparably more important for Adler's party than that which passes through the university. But in certain historical circumstances—namely, when, with rapid industrial development, the army is proletarian in its social composition, as is the case in Germany—the party can nevertheless say: 'I won't trouble to go into the barracks. It's enough for me to see the young worker as far as its threshold and (the main thing) to meet him when he comes out again. He won't leave me, he'll stay mine.*' But where the university is concerned, the party, if it wants at all to carry out an independent struggle for influence over the intelligentsia, must say exactly the opposite: 'Only here and only now, when the young fellow is to a certain extent freed from his family, and when he has not yet become the captive of his position in society, can I count on drawing him into our ranks. It's now or never.'

Among the workers the difference between 'fathers' and 'sons' is purely one of age. Among the intelligentsia it is not only a difference of age but also a social difference. The student, in contrast both to the young worker and to his own father, fulfils no social function, does not feel direct dependence on capital or the state, is not bound by any responsibilities, and—at least objectively, if not subjectively—is free in his judgment of right and wrong. At this period everything within him is fermenting, his class prejudices are as formless as his ideological interests, questions of conscience matter very strongly to him, his mind is opening for the first time to great scientific generalisations, the extraordinary is almost a physiological need for him. If collectivism is at all capable of mastering his mind, now is the moment, and it will indeed do it through the nobly scientific character of its basis and the comprehensive cultural content of its aims, not as a prosaic 'knife and fork' question. On this last point Adler is absolutely right.

But here too we are again obliged to pull up short before a bald fact. It is not only Europe's intelligentsia as a whole but its offspring, too, the students, who decidedly don't show any attraction towards socialism. There is a wall between the workers' party and the mass of the students. To account for this fact merely by the inadequacy of agitational work, which has not been able to

* This attitude was that of the German Social-Democratic Party and was, of course, completely inadequate from the revolutionary standpoint.—L.T.

approach the intelligentsia from the correct angle, which is how Adler tries to account for it, means overlooking the whole history of the relations between the students and the 'people', it means seeing in the students an intellectual and moral category rather than a product of social history. True, their material dependence on bourgeois society affects the students only obliquely, through their families, and is therefore weakened. But, as against this, the general social interests and needs of the classes from which the students are recruited are reflected in the feelings and opinions of the students with full force, as though in a resonator. Throughout their entire history—in its best, most heroic moments just as in periods of utter moral decay—the students of Europe have been merely the sensitive barometer of the bourgeois classes. They became ultra-revolutionary, sincerely and honourably fraternizing with the people, when bourgeois society had no way out but revolution. They took *de facto* the place of the bourgeois democratic forces when the political nullity of these prevented them from standing at the head of the revolution, as happened in Vienna in 1848. But they also fired on the workers in June of that same year, in Paris, when bourgeoisie and workers found themselves on opposite sides of the barricade. After Bismarck's wars had united Germany and appeased the bourgeois classes, the German student hastened to become that figure, bloated with beer and conceit, who, alongside the Prussian lieutenant, is always turning up in the satirical papers. In Austria the student became the banner-bearer of national exclusiveness and militant chauvinism in proportion as the conflict grew sharper between the different nations of this country for influence over the government. And there is no doubt that through all these historical transformations, even the most repellent, the students showed political keenness, and readiness for self-sacrifice, and militant idealism; the qualities on which Adler relies so strongly. Though the normal philistine of 30 or 40 will not risk getting his face smashed in for any hypothetical notions about 'honour', his son will do this, with fervour. The Ukrainian and Polish students at Lvov University recently showed us again that they not only know how to carry out any national or political tendency to the very end, but also to offer their breasts to the muzzles of revolvers. Last year the German students of Prague were ready to face all the violence of the mob in order to demonstrate in the street their right to exist as a German society. Here we have militant idealism—sometimes just like that of a fighting cock—which is characteristic not of a class or of an idea but of an age-group; on

the other hand, the political content of this idealism is entirely determined by the historical spirit of those classes from which the students come and to which they return. And this is natural and inevitable.

In the last analysis, all possessing classes send their sons to university, and if students were to be, while at the university, a *tabula rasa* on which socialism could write its message, what would then become of class heredity, and of poor old historical determinism?

It remains, in conclusion, to clarify one other aspect of the question, which speaks both for Adler and against him.

The only way to attract the intelligentsia to socialism, according to Adler, is to bring to the forefront the ultimate aim of the movement, in its full scope. But Adler recognises, of course, that this ultimate aim looms clearer and more complete in proportion to the progress of the concentration of industry, the proletarianization of the middle strata and the intensification of class antagonisms. Independently of the will of political leaders and the differences in national tactics, in Germany the 'ultimate aim' stands forth with incomparably greater clarity and immediacy than in Austria or Italy. But this very same social process, the intensification of the struggle between labour and capital, hinders the intelligentsia from crossing over to the camp of the party of labour. The bridges between the classes are broken down, and to cross over, one would have to leap across an abyss which gets deeper with every passing day. Thus, parallel with conditions that objectively make it easier for the intelligentsia to grasp theoretically the essence of collectivism, the social obstacles are growing greater in the way of political adhesion by the intelligentsia to the socialist army. Joining the socialist movement in any advanced country, where social life exists, is not a speculative act, but a political one, and here social will completely prevails over theorizing reason. And this finally means that it is harder to win the intelligentsia today than it was yesterday, and that it will be harder tomorrow than it is today.

In this process, too, however, there is a 'break in gradualness'. The attitude of the intelligentsia to socialism, which we have described as one of alienation which increases with the very growth of the socialist movement, can and must change decisively as a result of an objective political change which will shift the balance of social forces in radical fashion. Among Adler's assertions this much is true, that the intelligentsia is interested in the retention of capitalist exploitation not directly and

not unconditionally, but only obliquely, through the bourgeois classes, in so far as the intelligentsia is materially dependent on these latter. The intelligentsia might go over to collectivism if it were given reason to see as probable the *immediate* victory of collectivism, if collectivism arose before it not as the ideal of a different, remote and alien class but as a near and tangible reality; finally, if—and this is not the least important condition—a political break with the bourgeoisie did not threaten each brain-worker taken separately with grave material and moral consequences. Such conditions can be established for the intelligentsia of Europe only by the political rule of a new social class; to some extent by a period of direct and immediate struggle for this rule. Whatever may have been the alienation of the European intelligentsia from the working masses—and this alienation will increase still further, especially in the younger capitalist countries, like Austria, Italy, the Balkan countries—nevertheless, in an epoch of great social reconstruction the intelligentsia—sooner, probably, than the other intermediate classes—will go over to the side of the defenders of the new society. A big role will be played in this connection by the intelligentsia's social qualities, which distinguish it from the com-

mercial and industrial petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry: its occupational ties with the cultural branches of social labour, its capacity for theoretical generalisation, the flexibility and mobility of its thinking; in short, its *intellectuality*. Confronted with the inescapable fact of the transfer of the entire apparatus of society into new hands, the intelligentsia of Europe will be able to convince itself that the conditions thus established not only will not cast them into the abyss but on the contrary, will open before them unlimited possibilities for the application of technical, organisational and scientific forces; and they will be able to bring forward these forces from their ranks, even in the first, most critical period, when the new regime will have to overcome enormous technical, social and political difficulties.

But if the actual conquest of the apparatus of society depended on the *previous* coming over of the intelligentsia to the party of the European proletariat, then the prospects of collectivism would be wretched indeed—because, as we have endeavoured to show above, the coming over of the intelligentsia to Social-Democracy within the framework of the bourgeois regime is getting, contrary to all Max Adler's expectations, less and less possible as time goes by.

By LEON TROTSKY

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Trends in Soviet Literature

Part 2

By Jean Simon

This is the concluding part of an article begun in the Spring number of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**.

1958, THEN, ENDED with the hysterical triumph of the Stalinists. A whole number of works written during the 'thaw', like those of *Literary Moscow*, were 'erased' from Soviet literature, while deals were made on the fate of others. Thus, Galina Nikolaeva was forced to adapt her novel, *Battle on the Road*, which had been published in the March, May and June 1957 issues of *Oktyabr*. The novel was re-published during 1958 with cuts and modifications: the themes on the inability of the bureaucracy to administer collective property and on the political and anti-semitic persecutions were carefully screened, according to a well-established procedure.

In December 1958, Kochetov published with official encouragement *The Brothers Erchov*, a novel in which some of the well-known liberals, thinly disguised with fictitious names, were covered in mud. Vsevolod Kochetov's theme is simple: the innovators are petty-bourgeois careerists who want to take advantage of the thaw to carve positions in Soviet society for themselves to the detriment of the workers' interests, whose values the party defends valiantly, and of which it is the best guarantor.

Here are a few lines which will reveal the violence of Kochetov's pamphlet—and, by implication, of the danger which the 'liberal movement' represented in the USSR in 1956-57. The action of the novel takes place in 1956. The piece which we quote presents a young student, Popov, 22 years old, a typical dissolute student, in opposition because he transmits the influence of the rotten West, and with him several honest Soviet citizens: Kapa Erchov and Zina, two young women; Kola and Andrey Erchov, two young men:

'Can't you find any more opponents?' cried Popov. 'Doesn't all this bureaucracy, all these new dignitaries, all this filth worry you any more?'

'Just a minute, citizen,' answered Kola calmly, 'have you met many of these dignitaries and bureaucrats? Or do you only know them through reading *Novy Mir*?'

'Don't get excited, comrade,' called someone from the other end of the table. 'Comrade Popov listens to "The Voice of America" and the broadcasts of "Radio Free Europe". All this filth has turned his head . . .'

Popov: 'We will never wipe out the consequences of the cult of the personality if we do not attack the old apparatus.'

'Which apparatus?'

'The bureaucratic apparatus.'

'But my father works in that apparatus,' said Kapa, the hostess, in a voice full of emotion. 'Right from his youth he has fought for the power of the Soviets, for the Party and for the people. He has never known one hour of rest. Never! He gave himself entirely to his people . . . This is not the first time that he (Popov) has spoken like this. He wants to deflect us from the revolutionary path. He is rotten, completely rotten.'

'Whatever are you saying, Kapa?' interjected Zina. 'You have no right to speak like that. Popov is only 22. How and where would he have become rotten?'

'Some people are born rotten,' said Andrei.

'Especially when the weather is bad and when there is a lot of mud about,' quipped someone else, 'or in other words during a thaw.'

This novel was a great success. Kochetov, without doubt, had followed very precise directives, and if he dragged the liberals through the mud, above all from a political angle, it was obviously because their ideas found, and still did find, a following.

Kochetov was quickly rewarded for his zeal: old Panferov died in Autumn 1960. There was now no editor for the magazine *Oktyabr*, which he had made into a liberal bastion. . . . Two months later, Kochetov was appointed editor. The liberals thus lost control of an important journal, which after *Yunost*, had the largest circulation of all the literary journals. After a year and a half's 'freedom', Kochetov was thus once again given control of a press organ.

The conservative triumph received an administrative consecration. In December 1958, the Writers' Union of the RSFSR, whose setting up had been decided more than a year before, held its founding conference. In the chair was the conservative Sobolev, a case-hardened conservative by virtue of the fact that as an ex-officer of the Tsarist navy, a sympathiser of the Social-Revolutionaries, and still not a member of the Communist Party, he found it necessary to show an excess of zeal to obliterate his youth.

The Writers' Union was meant to swamp the all too turbulent Moscow writers with a mass of provincials less open to subversive ideas. Pasternak was violently attacked at this congress and it emerged that two young poets, Khatabarov, who subsequently became a Stalinist, and Pankratov, both of whom had come under Pasternak's 'pernicious' influence, had been expelled from the Komsomol for that reason and sent to work in the virgin lands.

Parallel to the apparently definitive victory of the conservatives, the worries of the bureaucracy were subsiding. In Hungary Imre Nagy, Maleter and their friends had been shot and the Kadar government was getting on moderately well; Poland was quietening down since the banning of the weekly paper *Po Prostu*; agitation had declined; the intellectuals had everywhere been brought to heel, and all plans to set up an independent writers' union around *Literary Moscow* were no more than memories—at the very moment that the extreme right wing was everywhere triumphant, the conditions for a modification of the situation appeared. The third congress

of writers was planned for May 1959 and with the way that things were going it looked like turning out to be a fiasco for the Soviet government, put on the spot by a real conspiracy of silence of all the liberal writers. . . .

Moreover, through one of those ironies with which history is replete, it was at the very moment when reaction appeared victorious that a frail young boy with an innocent look in his eyes came on to the literary scene, and was soon to place himself on the extreme left of Soviet poetry, the writer most hated by the ultra-Stalinists: Andrei Voznessenski.



VOZNESSENSKI

Hated by the
ultra-Stalinists

A few weeks before his final examinations as a student at the Institute of Architecture, Voznessenski saw a fire consume the Institute and with it his projects. This fire was for him a symbol of the burning of Stalinist Russia, of the collapse of the past in flames. He then wrote his famous 'Fire in the Institute of Architecture', one of his first poems which was only to be published two years later. What he describes is the collapse of Stalinist Russia in an immense fire which wipes out the past:

A fire at the Institute!

It flies through the rooms like the news

Of an amnesty through the prisons!

Fire! Fire!

Adieu, age of restrictions. Life

is the dance of the flames.

We are all aflame,

To live is to burn . . .

In November 1958, whilst the hysterical outburst against Pasternak was at its height, *Znamya* published some fairly inoffensive poems by this admirer of Pasternak under a title symbolic of the young generation's wish for renewal: 'Twentieth Century'. In the same month, *Novy Mir* published a poem by him on Lenin.

In any case, the twenty-first congress of the

Communist Party, which was held in January-February 1959, far from being a step forward in the struggle against the liberals, shows a slight reduction of the pressure. To implement the goodwill, the government retired Kochetov from the editorship of

the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in March 1959 and replaced him by S. Smirnov, thus enabling this journal to publish during the congress itself, a long article by Paustovsky, which questioned certain dogmas of socialist realism.

The Third Congress of Writers

The third congress of writers was held in May. No one expected much from it. After the traditional message from the central committee which taught the writers that they should 'show in a true and living way, the exploits of the people at work . . . be the passionate propagandists of the seven-year plan and instil courage and energy into the heart of the Soviets', the report of the Secretary of the Writers' Union, A. Surkov, interminably expanded on the most outworn themes of socialist realism. Tvardovsky prudently asserted the need for a liberal policy and a comprehending attitude towards young writers. He stressed first of all the mediocre quality of Soviet literature, then the tasks of the Soviet writer, by invoking the existence of aesthetic laws without linking these to the 'party-spirit' (the famous 'partinost') and he finally ended with an eclectic statement far from the traditional dogmatism:

'As for me, reader, I fall upon a book which enchants me, which affords me the real joy of finding life in its most brilliant images, I do not worry much whether this aspect reveals romanticism or realism with a touch of romanticism, or I know not what. I am simply grateful to the author for the gift that he has made me.'

In spite of these lines, demanding a vast field of creative freedom for the artist, it seemed that the boring work of the third congress would give rise to nothing, and was only leading towards a negative balance between the two camps present, when Khrushchev made a 'sensational' speech. Of course, he reaffirmed the validity of the principles of socialist realism. Indeed, it is likely that he could not do otherwise: it is literature that he likes naturally . . . Then he explained amiably that even if he had 'exaggerated and generalised' a little hastily the faults that were denounced in his book, 'Dudintsev had never been and was not an opponent of the Soviet system.' He had not read Dudintsev's book himself, but Mikoyan had and had found it to be good. He did not know much about literature, he concluded. Consequently, no one could decide between the writers present, except themselves.

'You may say: criticise us, control us; if a work is bad, do not publish it. But you know that it is not easy to decide between what must and must not



DUDINSTEV

'had never been and was not an opponent of the Soviet system'

be published. The most simple course would be to publish nothing at all, in that way there would be no mistakes . . . but this would be stupid. And so, comrades, do not weary the government with these questions. Sort them out yourselves, in a comradely way . . .

Khrushchev added that the young writers must be left to do their own apprenticeship: 'to learn to swim, you must have the right to throw yourself into the water'. You must be indulgent with the young writers if they make mistakes, as these mistakes cannot be compared to crimes. 'A writer, if he is really a Soviet writer, makes mistakes involuntarily, and because he starts from false premises, or because he has an incorrect understanding of life . . .'

He concluded jovially: 'If I have talked nonsense, I think that you will forgive me . . . I am not sure that I have not made a mistake. That is why I am asking you not to be severe judges.'

This speech, unexpected, as Khrushchev likes them to be, brought the liberals two fundamental guarantees:

1. Some freedom of manoeuvre was permitted, since the distinction between 'mistake' and 'crime' had been made.
2. The government had told the writers: We do not want to interfere in your conflicts . . . It is up to you to settle them yourselves.

In return for this enormous concession, the government asked the writers to put into effect what it called a 'consolidation', that is to stop fighting amongst themselves: the spectacle of a semi-open

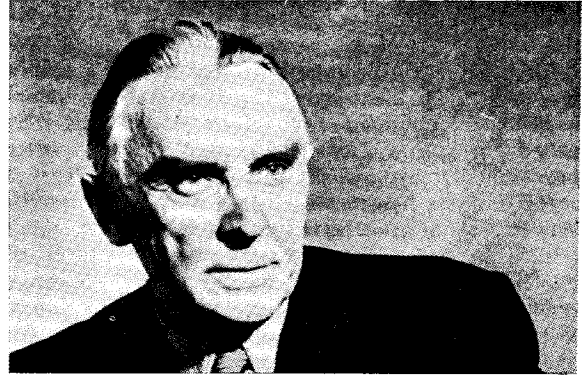
fight between two clans is, in fact, a serious crack in Stalinist monolithism. But on this ground, now deprived of the automatic support of the repressive apparatus, the conservatives were obviously in the weaker position.

Organisational measures were introduced to give substance to the new balance of forces. Konstantin Fedin, the doyen of Soviet letters, replaced Surkov in the office of general secretary of the Writers' Union. Surkov remained on the bureau, but he was accompanied by two men whose suspension from their jobs as editors-in-chief of *Novy Mir* and *Oktyabr* he had demanded and obtained at the time of the Pomerantsev affair: A. Tvardovski and Panferov.

The third congress had thus established a balance of forces favourable to the liberals, but an unstable balance. One of the big problems confronting the liberals was the problem of the press, vital for the propagation of their theses, especially as they had opted not to engage in battle at the congress, but to go into print. If we leave aside the dailies, *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, which were directly under party control, the situation in 1959 was as follows:

(a) the organs which favoured the liberals were: the journal *Novy Mir*, edited by the poet Alexander Tvardovsky who was sacked in 1954 after the Pomerantsev affair, but who regained his post in 1956; the journal *Yunost*, edited by the veteran writer Katayev; the journal *Oktyabr* which regained Panferov as its editor in 1956, after he too had been sacked in 1954 with Tvardovski.

(b) the three-weekly journal *Literaturnaya Gazeta* was neutral. Undecided but more favourable to the



FEDIN: Doyen of Soviet letters

liberals was the journal *Znamya*. Also undecided, but more favourable to the conservatives was *Moskva*.

(c) the conservatives held the journals *Don*, *Neva*, the journal of the Leningrad Writers' Union, *Zvezda*, the mass circulation magazine *Ogonyok*, edited by the hardened Stalinist A. Sofronov, and the three-weekly journal *Literatura i Zhizn* edited by the ultra-Stalinists Markov and Starikov.

The alignment of the press was obviously vital for the struggle which was about to begin. We shall see that in the ensuing period, as the liberals consolidate themselves more and more on the literary scene, the organs of the press will tend more and more to slip from their grasp.

The emergence of the young poets

1960 was also marked by a number of positive events; the first two anthologies of the young poet Andrei Voznessensky's verse appeared one after the other: *Mozaika*, printed in Vladimir, and *Parabola*, printed in Moscow. In them is to be found, among other things, the symbolic and brutal denunciation of the definitive silence to which the tyranny had condemned the poets ('The Masters').

Others managed to express themselves at last, like the poet Boris Slutsky, who was already writing anti-Stalinist poems under Stalin himself and whose collection with the significant name *Today and Yesterday* was now published. Others confirmed themselves, like Eugene Vinokurov, who published *The Human Face*. 1960 was also the year when, for the first time since the institution of Zhdanovism—

since 1940 in fact—a selection of the verses of the futurist poet Khlebnikov, the prophet of 'beyond reason', who died in 1922, appeared.

In 1961, once again the current turned when *Kommunist* published the speech that Khrushchev gave at a writers' meeting—together with Suslov—in the summer of 1960. The main theme of this long speech was that Khrushchev declared himself to be satisfied with the activity of the Soviet writers and stated that: 'under present conditions we are able to correct those who make mistakes without resorting to extreme measures'. He added that 'Setbacks in the work, in particular in artistic creation, can occur even to those who serve the people faithfully and loyally. . . .'

The Aksionov and other scandals

The relaxation produced by Khrushchev's speech was soon to be disturbed. The June and July issues of *Yunost* contained a novel by A. V. Aksionov called *The Starred Ticket*. Aksionov, a young writer born in 1932, had already published *The Colleagues* a few months before. Like this work, *The Starred Ticket* was a novel on youth, but was far more critical in approach. Through the adventures of two brothers, Victor and Dimka Denissov, Aksionov drew a very non-conformist picture of Soviet youth. Witness this outburst by young Dimka towards his elder brother, who is preparing himself for a remarkable scientific career:

'Do you think that I am dreaming about walking in your footsteps, that you are an ideal for me? Your life, Victor, was drawn up by mother and father when you were still in the cradle. First prize at school, first prize at the Institute, more diplomas, assistant lecturer, Ph.D., academician . . . and what next? Dead, respected by everybody? Not once in your life have you really made a decision, not once have you taken a risk. That is all nonsense! We are scarcely born and everything is already mapped out for us, and our future is already decided on! Nothing doing! It is better to be a tramp and to move from failure to failure than to be a little boy all your life carrying out other people's decisions.'

This same elder brother who receives this declaration of burning revolt, has himself to fight tenaciously against a thousand and one difficulties which he brings upon himself when he upholds scientific ideas contrary to the official ones. His stubbornness leads him to be summoned to certain strange military manoeuvres, on which he meets a no less strange fatal accident. His nihilist younger brother makes it his duty to pursue his interrupted work.

This lyrical and brutal depiction, both criticising and romanticising Soviet society, brought forth the conservatives' fury. 'A forgery,' shouted V. Kotov and I. Chvetsov in *Literatura i Zhizn*; 'phony romanticism,' replied L. Stichova in *Young Communist*. 'A glorification of nihilism,' declared all Aksionov's opponents.

The disturbances created by *The Starred Ticket* were hardly over when *Yunost* did it again. In its September issue, while the preparation for the Twenty-Second Congress of the party was in full swing, it published a film script by Victor Rozov, a member of the editorial board of the review called *A.B.C.D.* The young people which it presents are so optimistic that one of them, Volodya Fedorov, said:

'The whole globe should be blown up. All of them should be annihilated! And it should all start

again with amoeba. Perhaps they would stand a better chance! Eh!'

Reactions were a long time coming . . . the Twenty-Second Congress was on its way and there was no shortage of sensational material there, and a third scandal was about to break. . . .

The September 19, 1961, issue of the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* contained a poem by Yevtushenko which was to make the latter world-famous: 'Babi Yar'. It recalled the atrocities of tsarist and Nazi anti-semitism and wondered at the absence of any monument to commemorate the 'ravine of the good wives', near Kiev, where so many Jews were massacred by the Nazis. This plea was made even stronger in that the author proclaimed a solidarity with the destiny of the Jewish people that was astonishing in the Soviet Union, where Stalin had recreated in all its monstrosity the anti-semitism of tsarist Russia. . . .

' . . . Oh Russian people

I know

deep down inside you

You are international

But often those whose hands are impure

Have called to arms in your name . . .

. . . The silence screams and bare-headed

I feel my hair slowly turning white.

I am no longer anything but a voiceless scream

Above thousands who are buried.

I am each old man shot in this ravine.

I am each child shot in this ravine.

And nothing in me will forget it!

Let the 'Internationale' thunder out

When for eternity

is buried

the last anti-semite . . .'

A few days later, a certain Starikov, in *Literatura i Zhizn* attacked 'Babi Yar' violently and accused its author of anti-Leninist provocation:

'Why does the editorial board of the literary journal of our union allow Yevtushenko to belittle the triumph of Lenin's nationalities policy by an association of ideas and of evocations that can only be called provocative acts.'

The October 4 issue of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* carried a moderate criticism of the poem. For the time being, indeed, the important problem was not that one. The Aksionov, Rozov and Yevtushenko

scandals were to be settled after the Twenty-Second Congress which was imminent (October 17-31). This congress was entirely unexpected by the foreign observers and by the Soviet citizens, who knew no more than they did. But when its course is examined, there can be no doubt that it was carefully prepared. Why was there this brutal outburst against the politically conservative group? We do not know, and the answer is even more uncertain as the outburst was followed by no practical measure, until the recent expulsion from the CPSU of Molotov, Kaganovitch and Malenkov. In any case, Khrushchev does not do two contradictory things at once, even if he does do them one after the other. Thus, the affairs pending on the left were postponed until after the Twenty-Second Congress, which was to deal with the old Right.

Four writers spoke at the congress: Sholokov, Tvardovski, Gribatchov and Kochetov, these last two being amongst the most ferocious Stalinists. Sholokov's speech demonstrated that it is perfectly possible to be a good writer and a dull individual. He courageously kicked the backside of the semi-disgraced minister of culture, Fursteva, and violently criticised those 'writers who cannot distinguish between spring wheat and autumn wheat, and who confuse barley with oats . . . it is better if these people do not play the part of counsellors.' Reducing literature in this way to the level of a household encyclopaedia is absolutely characteristic of Stalinism. Gribatchov went even further, by recalling the liberal deviations of the summer of 1956 in the terms of a lackey:

'A few years ago, our literature had a feverish crisis because a small group of writers had bitten the not-too-subtle bait prepared by Western fishermen. At that time, there could be noticed—sometimes even by communists—a reconsideration of the party's line on literature, and the elimination of the party's influence on literature. The demand was even made for everything to be published in the state in which the author had written it for, as one speaker put it, "the writer has the right to err". On the whole this was a literary expression of revisionism. The central committee of the CPSU, and in particular N. S. Khrushchev, with his explosive polemical temperament, his splendid practical firmness and his good sense, brought a rapid and efficacious aid to our literature. The storm which growled over our heads one summer's day, swept away the rubbish, refreshed the atmosphere and gave way to fine weather.'

Kochetov, who spoke after Gribatchov and Tvardovski, and who was implicitly answering the latter, drew out the present conclusions from Gribatchov's 'historical' and rather general picture. Together with his direct attack on the leadership of the Writers' Union, which he considered to have

capitulated, he reaffirmed that the innovators were foreign to Soviet literature, bringing them into two complementary categories: the old and senile writers and the young mad-caps; both of them completely irresponsible:

'There remain, in the writers' milieu, some sullen memory makers, who look more to the past than towards the future, and who, by virtue of this twisted vision, with a zeal worthy of better use, poke in the dustbins of a somewhat squiffy memory to bring back to daylight literary corpses, long rotten, to pass them off as something still capable of life . . . there are also some prose-writing and even versifying chicks, still spattered with yoke of egg, who are dying to take on the dangerous aspect of fighting cocks.'

These two groups are pernicious because they are introducing into the USSR an ideology that 'capitalist writers' defend, an ideology bringing disintegration: 'The world of these writers is not large. It has the dimensions of a sheep's skin or, to be more accurate, of the bed in which take place the actions of an innumerable multitude of Western novels, stories, plays and films.'

Tvardovski's speech started clearly with a criticism of the aspects of Soviet literature that holds it back:

'Our literature has not yet been able to benefit from the favourable conditions accorded it by the Twentieth Congress . . . The reader cannot put up with lies in what is essential, basic . . . Yet the fault of many books, is that truth is lacking in them, that the writer is circumspect, constantly asking himself what is and is not allowed . . . This is simply a hangover from methods and habits of an epoch of our history that was characterised, in general, by a spirit of suspicion that proved absolutely deadly as far as literature and art were concerned . . . the cult of the personality; unfortunately, because of the force of inertia, echoes of the past can still be heard in literature and, generally, in the press.'

The congress did not solve any of these literary quarrels, the ideological importance of which, the conservatives' mouthpieces attempted to stress. The writers elected to the central committee were A. Korneichuk, who was already a member of the central committee under Stalin, V. Ermilov, and Sholokov, three more or less floating and opportunist conservatives. As alternate members there were elected: Gribatchov, Tikhonov and Surkov, three apparatus men, although the last named was already showing signs of wavering which were to get worse . . . and Tvardovski, then only recently honoured with the Lenin prize for literature.

Moreover, the desire, a thousand times repeated, 'to re-establish Leninist norms' of legality and of socialist democracy does not seem to indicate a hardening of the party in the literary sphere, but on

the contrary a new broadening of the process of liberalisation now begun. In fact there was a move in this direction, accompanied by administrative measures destined to control certain 'excesses'. Thus, while allowing greater freedom to the writers, the party stressed, by its intermittent interventions, the permanent nature of its control over literary life.

A good example of this policy of balance is the way in which the three literary scandals were handled.

The editor-in-chief of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Kossolapov, who had replaced S. Smirnov, sacked on December 15, 1961, for liberal excesses, received a reprimand for having published a poem that was 'politically harmful', but the editor of *Literatura i Zhizn* was sacked for having published a criticism of Yevtushenko 'unworthy of Soviet internationalist writers'. *Literatura i Zhizn* was to be finally suppressed in December 1962 and replaced by the weekly *Literaturnaya Rossiya*. Finally, it was decided to pass by 'Babi Yar' in silence, and it was not included in the two Yevtushenko anthologies published in 1962: *A Sign of the Hand* and *Tenderness*. Yevtushenko was asked to rewrite his poem, which he finally decided to do, as he announced while passing through Paris in February 1963.

The *Yunost* affair ended in a different way. First of all, *The Starred Ticket* was never published as a book, whereas this is the normal course of events for any work published in a journal. Then the editor-in-chief of *Yunost*, V. Katayev, was sacked and replaced in February 1962 by Boris Polevoi, one of the most notable examples of the Stalinist writer-policeman, while Rozov kept his place on the editorial board. Under Polevoi's editorship, *Yunost* was to become so conservative a journal that even *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was to get worried about it in October 1962. Finally, Aksionov was sent on a mission to the island of Sakhalin, at the other end of the USSR, by Khrushchev's son-in-law Adzhubei, editor-in-chief of *Izvestia*. On his return at the beginning of summer, he published two short stories which proved that the lesson had had very little effect.

The plenary meeting of the Writers' Union of Moscow on April 4-5, 1962, unexpectedly accelerated the process of 'relaxation'. The meeting had been announced by all the literary journals. The Minutes of the meeting have yet to appear. For in those two days, literary deStalinisation began to take on a dangerous aspect. A new leadership, of 80 members, was to be elected by the approximately 600 writers present. The elections were marked by the following incidents:

1. The party section itself withdrew three of the retiring members from the list of 76 official candidates which it was putting forward, because it foresaw their certain defeat. They were Kochetov, Gribatchov and A. Sofronov.

2. Of the 76 official candidates, eight were defeated, among them N. Abalkin, editor of the literary page of *Pravda* and L. Sobolev, chairman of the Writers' Union of the RSFSR.

3. Three famous 'lefts' were elected: Y. Yevtushenko, A. Voznessenski and the literary critic, Mariamov, who had brought himself into the public eye a year previously by publishing a pitiless criticism of Kochetov's latest rag 'The Secretary from Obkom' in *Novy Mir* (January 1962).

Demitchev, party secretary for the Moscow area, gave expression to the disarray into which the elections had plunged the officials when he declared in his closing address: 'the way was easy in the time of the cult of the personality, when you knew exactly what to write and what to avoid.' Today you no longer quite know. How can the bureaucrats clearly distinguish the good from the bad?

During the following months, the movement for literary liberation grew apace. As well as the two Yevtushenko anthologies, which we mentioned above, and both of which reached 100,000 copies, the publication of *The Triangular Pear* of Voznessenski, a collection of poems as modernist in content as in outward presentation, which printed 50,000 copies, was the sign of a profound development. In a brief introduction, Voznessenski, who was to declare in January 1963, 'I am a guilty son of socialist realism' (*Yunost*, 1963, No. 1) defined the birth of his poem in a way which is indeed far from the canons of socialist realism:

'I am working on a great theme, on the "discovery of America" . . . In the course of this work, events, life, memories, the Russian countryside and the Baltic coastline interrupt the story and turn the author away from the course which he had set himself. From whence the "discovery" of all other objects. Birch trees, sunsets, and motor bikes mix with the characters. The poem sunk like an overloaded ship . . . the verses sorted themselves out according to their wishes, with neither theme nor geography . . .

This is the elaboration of a doctrine of artistic creation which recalls the surrealist conceptions so reviled by the bureaucrats. These three volumes by Yevtushenko and Voznessenski soon disappeared from the shops, so great was their success. It is said that even before the publication of *Tenderness*, this anthology of Yevtushenko had received 300,000 orders.

The Plenum of the leadership of the Moscow Writers

At the end of September, the new leadership of the Moscow Writers' Union held its first plenum, devoted to the examination of the work of young writers and the preparation of the meeting of the Writers' Union, anticipated for the beginning of 1963. Two detailed reports were given, the first on 'Young Prose', by A. Borchagovski, the second on 'Young Poetry' by J. Smeliakov.

The discussion which followed these two reports was extremely favourable to the young writers. One of them, the poetess B. Akhmadulina, could rightly declare at the end of the plenum: 'I think that time has worked in our favour and that circumstances are now favourable to us, to myself and my young comrades.'

A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich . . .

On October 21, *Pravda* published Yevtushenko's 'Stalin's Heirs'; on November 24, *Izvestia* published five anti-Stalinist poems by Boris Slutsky; the November issue of *Novy Mir* announced the accession of Yevtushenko and of Aksionov to the editorial board of the journal; the November issue of *Novy Mir* published the astonishing story by A. Solzhenitsyn, *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*—the story of life in the Stalinist concentration camps, hailed by Simonov in *Izvestia* as a great event. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* stressed the far-reaching effect of the work, stating: 'We must, all together, throw ourselves on this theme and repeat what has been said . . . the dialogue with the reader has risen a degree, and that is new. Many things with which we could have been contented even very recently have now become devoid of interest and have been superseded.' (November 22.) On November 27, an ultra-conservative writer, I. E. Elsberg, was expelled from the Moscow Writers' Union as a 'provocateur' and 'voluntary informer', accused of having sent people to prison under Stalin, people who never came back. On November 30, the young Soviet poets brought together an audience of more than 15,000 young Muscovite enthusiasts in the Lenin stadium, to hear their poetry. It was announced at the same time that the conservative organ of the Writers' Union of the RSFSR, *Literatura i Zhizn* was to be suppressed at the end of December.

This liberal upsurge seemed to be carried out with the complete agreement of the party leadership, as witness the publication of Yevtushenko and of Slutsky in the party dailies and the fact that the publication of *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was carried by a majority vote in the Central Committee. Yevtushenko, in any case, stressed in 'Stalin's Heirs':

'The party has ordered me not to appease myself.
I may be told: calm down!
But I would not be calmed.

SOLZHENITSYN

His 'Day' carried
by majority vote
on the Central
Committee



As long as there are on earth
Some of Stalin's heirs
It will seem to me that Stalin
Is still in the mausoleum.'

Perhaps it was not decisive, but an exhibition of 'abstract' paintings and sculpture opened in Moscow during the last week of November. And it was then that the current turned suddenly.

Stalin's return?

At the same time as the suppression of *Literatura i Zhizn*, the suppression of *Moskovski Literatur* (the organ of the Moscow Writers' Union), demanded by Gribachov at the 22nd Congress, was announced.

In the first days of December, Khrushchev, while visiting an exhibition of painting and sculpture, violently criticised the 'abstract' works which were on view. He declared:

'Art like this is foreign to our people, who reject it. Those people who aspire to be artists should think of that. They aspire to be artists, but they

make pictures of such kind than one cannot understand whether they have been drawn by a man's hand or by a donkey's tail. They must understand their errors and work for the people.'

Stressing the contrast with the developments of the previous months M. Tatu wrote from Moscow in the Paris *Le Monde*: 'the brutal offensive carried out against the non-conformist tendencies in the graphic arts and in painting have had the effect here of a bolt from a clear sky'. (4.12.63.)

The clouds were not long in appearing. A few days later, the moderate conservative Johanson was replaced as chairman of the Academy of Fine Arts by the hardened conservative Vladimir Serov. On December 17, the leadership of the CPSU called together the representatives of the intelligentsia to whom the propaganda chief, Ilichev, made a speech, still very moderate in tone. He stated, among other things, which was curious, if one thinks of what was to follow: 'the Central Committee of our party is satisfied with the state of affairs in the cultural sphere. Culture is progressing on a healthy basis along a correct road, in step with the times. Our art is healthy'. However, he notes that 'Unfortunately, formalist tendencies have begun to spread, not only in the visual arts but also in music, literature and the cinema.' It was to face up to this danger that the party leadership organised the first meeting in two and a half years between themselves and the intellectuals. After the speech and a brief contribution by Khrushchev, a real and very confused discussion followed. Gribflatchov demanded the suppression of the Moscow Writers' Union. Yevtushenko took up the defence of the 'abstract' sculptor Neizvestny, against attacks from Ilichev and, especially, Khrushchev. The ex-inmate of the Stalinist camps, Serebriakova, launched into a brutal attack against Ehreaburg. In fact, it would seem that a new balance, less favourable than before, but acceptable, has been set up. This was confirmed by the speech given by Ilichev on December 26 to the ideological committee of the Central Committee of the CPSU. He stated: 'We can only salute the search for new artistic forms. But this search can only be fruitful if it is directed on to the right path. To accept formalism and abstract art is to admit the existence of different ideologies. It is to go along the wrong path.' But on the other hand, he stressed that there must be no fear 'that the criticisms by the party of certain deficiencies in artistic life might bring back to life in the country the atmosphere that reigned at the time of the cult of the personality. That would be a grave mistake: the party will tolerate no more witch-hunts, or indexes' . . . Practically, simultaneously, on December 14, *Pravda* brought to light the case

**Neizvestny's
abstract
sculpture
attacked**



of a Soviet citizen, Rudolph Friedmann, who had become an American spy through his love for abstract art. At the beginning of February, general Epichev, who had recently replaced Golikov as political chief of the Soviet armed forces, declared that the penetration of decadent western art into the Soviet troops was a factor of demoralisation in the Red Army!

On the very day of Ilichev's speech, the editor-in-chief of the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the liberal Kossolapov, was sacked for having slowed up the appearance of an article hostile to abstract art. He was replaced by a dull-witted conservative, Tchakovski. Three weeks later, the editorial board of the journal was reshuffled. Two famous writers of liberal views, Solukhin and Bondarev, disappeared; they were replaced by G. Markov, I. Smeliakov and E. Osietrov, of whom only the first was on the right wing. On the whole, although the young poet, R. Rozhdesvenski remained on the board, the most important Soviet literary journal passed over to the conservative camp, which was

curiously marked by the almost total disappearance of poetry from its columns, previously so full of it.

Contrary to what might have been expected, things did not rest there. The conservative offensive grew. I. Ehrenburg was the first target: in a violent article by Lakhtionov (*Pravda*, January 4), then three weeks later in a perfidious article by V. Ermilov (*Izvestia*, January 29) which reproached Ehrenburg for having been Stalin's conscious accomplice. Ehrenburg had been too consciously the bloody buffoon of the 'father of the peoples' to be able to defend himself in any way except by turning the accusation back on his accusers. But he obviously could not suggest that those who bore down on him today had their own quota of blood on their hands, starting with the sinister Khrushchev, the instrument of repression against the communist cadres of the Ukraine.

A new stage was reached with the enlarged meeting held between the party leaders and the writers, on March 7 and 8, 1963. Ilichev gave Ehrenburg the *coup de grace*, overwhelming him with quotations from 'past times'. The attack against the young writers was carried out at the same time, with great brutality. The opportunists sailed with the wind. Sholokov, for example, declared that 'I have wanted to criticise Ehrenburg for a long time' . . . whereas on December 17, 1962, he had ostensibly supported him against Serebriakova. Khrushchev made a long speech, of which about a quarter was devoted to a semi-rehabilitation of Stalin, and in which he violently attacked the writers Nekrassov, Paustovski, Voznessenski and Katayev. On the other hand he defended Yevtushenko, whose conduct in France he found to be satisfactory.

A month later, the chairman of the Moscow Writers' Union, S. Shipachev, was relieved of his functions and replaced by the conservative Markov. The fortress of liberalism was thus being dismantled. Fifteen days later there followed a new hardening which was to take on some rather surprising aspects. The fourth plenum of the Soviet Writers' Union met on March 26, 27 and 28. The very same Yevtushenko, to whom Khrushchev had issued a certificate of good conduct on March 8, found himself constrained to carry out a painful self-criticism. Such a change in the situation leads one to believe that the turn carried out by Khrushchev in the field of the arts was imposed on him by an opposition strong enough by March 20 to attack a poet with whom Khrushchev had declared himself satisfied on March 8. *Pravda*, in any case, deemed the poet's self-criticism to be insufficient, as he was attacked for having had published in France an autobiography considered presumptuous, and certainly embarrassing for the rulers, insofar as the

anti-Stalinism in it did not have the merely tactical value that it had for the Soviet bureaucracy. The attacks against the young literature at this plenum were general. Tikhonov, who had shown some liberal impulses in December 1962, retrieved himself by making a speech along the lines of the new directives. Voznessenski was also constrained to make a self-criticism, which he did very evasively, remaining within honourable limits. R. Rozhdestvenski, B. Akhmadulina, A. Tvardovski, V. Nekrassov (who refused to submit I. Ehrenburg, A. Borchagovski, Shipachev, A. Solzhenitsyn, A. Surkov, and B. Polevoi were themselves accused of having bent to the liberal wind.

The overwhelming majority of the writers answered the conservative offensive which was backed up by the government apparatus, by a retreat into complete silence. Podgorny noted with amazement that V. Nekrassov, who refused to make a self-criticism at the Kiev Writers' Union had said that 'to publicly admit one's errors is, for a communist, lacking in self-respect'. Self-respect in front of a bureaucrat!

It quickly became apparent that the offensive had petered out. On June 18, Ilichev explained: 'Our task is not to excommunicate Soviet artists, but to help them to understand their artistic and ideological mistakes.' This kind of statement marked a definite retreat. From the moment that the party leaders themselves accepted that the struggles between the innovators and the conservatives was purely literary, they were forced to reduce the pressure. And that was what happened. None of the editors of the journals was sacked, as for example Tvardovski, the editor of *Novy Mir*, the bastion of liberalism, who was to have been replaced by that shameless Stalinist V. I. Ermilov. The latter, amongst other things, had denounced Mayakovsky as a Trotskyist! In August, *Izvestia* published a long poem by Tvardovsky, called 'Vassily Tiorkin in the other world', a lively satire on the Stalinist bureaucracy. Since then, all the other exorcised writers have reappeared in the journals: Yevtushenko, then Nekrassov and Voznessenski, and finally B. Okudzhava. Khrushchev denied that V. Nekrassov had been expelled from the CPSU—an expulsion that he himself had announced. However, with the exception of Yevtushenko in March 1963, none of the writers confessed to his mistakes. Doubtless, some of the young writers took up a fairly dubious attitude of compromise, whilst old Ehrenburg played the fierce and immovable resistant, and this may have been considered half a success by those in power. But this half-success was more than counterbalanced by the pitiable retreat that they had to make before a conspiracy of silence on which

they were unable to make any significant impression, even though Voznessenski was sent to work in a factory for a while as an example. Reconciliation between the regime that needs its intelligentsia and this intelligentsia's demands for freedom, appears to be ever more difficult. Without doubt, the weakness displayed by the bureaucracy in this sphere can not have any serious consequences so long as the force which it confronts is the intelligentsia. At the moment, the bureaucracy is only receiving scratches. But when the objective conditions are right, a scratch could lead to gangrene. Unconsciously, this is what the writers are preparing.

The writers are beginning to raise fundamental questions. In *Polytika*, the weekly paper of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party, Aksionov asks 'how could they allow 1937 to happen?' (March 2, 1963). A. Gladilin, in his book *Eternal Mission*, explains that a good communist militant must ask himself a thousand questions including: 'how could there be a 1937?' He goes even further in *The First day of the New Year* where he makes an old communist remember 'the days when, very sharp with one another, we discussed Trotsky, our old teachers, the NEP, in our meetings'; this old communist goes on to explain that the scaffolding holding up the trials of 1937 has been completely dismantled: 'the old Bolsheviks told themselves that the more monstrous the charges, the sooner would the future bring their absurdity to light. It was possible to believe that an old Bolshevik, in the heat of the inner party struggle, could have wanted to remove Stalin from the general secretaryship. But today, even a child does not believe that this old Bolshevik on top of that plotted in 1918, organised assassinations, set fire to warehouses, sabotaged our equipment, poisoned grain and caused little children to die, gave himself over to the British, American, French, German, Japanese, Polish, Brazilian and Iranian spy services all at once, and that he promised to hand over to foreign countries the Ukraine, White Russia, the Crimea, the Caucasus and the Far East'. This represents a certain development. I remember in 1959 having told a student who was questioning me about my political opinions: 'I am a Trotskyist', and the student answering 'how can that be? Trotsky was responsible for the death of so many Bolsheviks, and you seem to be progressive!'

Finally, the son of the old communist states: 'the consequences of the cult of the personality will not be wiped out if we are content with taking down portraits and renaming towns. . . . we do not want to be an undifferentiated mass, all alike, voiceless participants on the chess board of some great policy.

. . . We do not want to be simply small cogs. . . ' sometimes the critical audacity is involuntary, but this merely gives it more weight. Thus in his novel *The Return to Birthplace* (1964), the conformist novelist Anatol Kuznetsov shows us a collective farm which goes to pieces because the manageress is lazy and a thief. The dairywomen manage to get the manageress dismissed, as her incompetence was flagrant, but to encourage their development, she is not replaced. The result, which astonishes the collective's peasants themselves, is that, now that they can organise their time themselves, the formerly fairly lazy, passive dairywomen, without initiative or ideas, become unrivalled workers. Once they stop mutely obeying orders from on high, once they have got rid of the parasite which had been imposed on them, they change themselves profoundly.

It would, however, be illusory to believe that the floating mass of Soviet anti-Stalinist writers could be transformed into a serious revolutionary centre of attraction. It is sufficient to talk to Yevtushenko, Voznessensky or Nekrassov for a few hours to realise their ignorance of and indifference to Marxism. This attitude is clearly widespread in numerous circles of the intelligentsia and is one of the survivals of the success of the Stalinist policy of liquidation of Bolshevism. It explains, for example, why the anti-Stalinist intelligentsia made Pasternak (in spite of—or because of?—his Christian view of the world) its master, or rather its model. To this lack of any Marxist view of society, which is linked to the ambiguous position of the intelligentsia, is added an extremely burdensome spiritual inheritance. From the 19th century onwards, as a result, amongst other factors, of its place in Russian society, a place modified only in the disastrous post-revolutionary years of war communism and the NEP, the Russian intelligentsia has always oscillated between equally unfortunate Dostoievskiyism and Tolstoyism: between the withdrawal into a demoralising feeling of nothingness or worthlessness, and a mystical exaltation of individual mission and of regeneratory non-violence!

From there comes the instability of the Russian intelligentsia, subject both to wild adventure as at the time of the *Narodniki*, or to utter demoralisation or even cynicism, as at the time of Stolypin. In the *New Leader* of December 9, 1963, there is a letter from a Soviet writer which shows just where this moral and intellectual unbalance, this inheritance from the past maintained by the present conditions of the existence of the intelligentsia in the USSR can lead.

'Russia, one feels, will always be an unhappy country. Even when it ceases to be impoverished,

it will still be unhappy . . . How can this unhappiness be explained? Certainly not by communism alone. In Russia, unhappiness is almost a national character. Today it stands like Death in Holbein's dances before the writer whose hand cannot hold a pen after the latest gutter campaign against him. It stands before the glum tense face of the man in the street. It stands before the sadist Stalin and the busybody Khrushchev. It stands next to everybody. How can it be escaped? I have not the slightest idea.'

Confronted with this metaphysical amorality, how much weight can be given to the personal conviction of the communist writer Tendriakov that one day democratic demands will triumph in the USSR? His school headmaster in *An Extraordinary Tale* praises the merits of discussion, of differences of opinion and organises a symbolic vote in his school on three conflicting programmes. His ideal is 'We will live to see the day when the highest rules of a new discussion are instituted'. This reformism is a bit anaemic. To this latent demoralisation is added

the constant threat of the omnipresent police force, which has just sent away the young Leningrad poet Brodsky for five years' hard labour for social parasitism.*

Finally, it should be added that the Chinese polemic today adds yet another element of confusion, insofar as the Peking bureaucrats cover their criticisms of the Kremlin bureaucrats with Stalin's banner. This can only hold up any progress of political consciousness in a social environment particularly decimated by Stalinist terrorism. If Peking seems to be the only way out for those who reject both Washington and Khrushchev, it will lead to a dead end. Even here, in this restricted field, the vital need for a real Fourth International shows itself with cruel force.

* After having *falsely* announced the release of the poet Brodsky, who was sentenced despite the protests of S. Marshak, K. Chovkovsky, D. Shostakovitch and other famous artists, the Soviet government has just announced his release for the second time.

The struggle for Marxism in the United States

BY TIMWOHLFORTH

FROM ALMOST THE first moment of its beginnings as a colony in the 1600s the United States has had a violent, tumultuous history. Struggle against the ruling class was never absent for long in any period of United States history. But rarely was this struggle a *conscious* one, for there was always a deep antipathy towards conscious thought, towards theory of any kind in the United States. As Engels comments in a letter to his close collaborator Sorge in 1886: '... from good historical reasons the Americans are worlds behind in all theoretical things, and while they did not bring over any medieval institutions from Europe they did bring over masses of medieval traditions, religion, English common (feudal) law, superstition, spiritualism, in short every kind of imbecility which was not directly harmful to business and which is now very serviceable for making the masses stupid.'¹

The Americans were and are the most empirical of peoples on earth. Never having to struggle against feudal institutions and ideology this American empiricism generally did not even reach the level of theoretical defence that it did in England. Empiricism has existed here largely as an *absence* of *conscious coherent thought* rather than as a philosophical body of thought fought for against metaphysical thought. Lacking a conscious and logical approach towards theory does not mean that Americans were ever *free* from theory. Rather it meant that, without conscious effort, Americans continued to hold the most discredited mumble-jumble of old and discarded theories pasted together in an eclectic manner to fit whatever practical project was at foot.

1. Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *Correspondence*, 1846-1895 (International Publishers, New York), p. 451.

A — POPULISM

The major stress of American radicalism is what we call *Populism*. Essentially this was a struggle of the great mass of the petty bourgeoisie against the largest capitalists and against the very logic of the market economy which has always kept this group in a weakened and impoverished state. Over and over again, since the days before the American Revolution, the very same demands have been raised.



Details from frescoes by Diego Rivera: Marx addresses the above him), Powderly (Knights of Labor), Silvis, Engels, pioneers of American Labour against the backdrop of the 'anel above: epic scenes from the class war, featuring Debs Haymarket massacre; lower left: J. Most, Henry George centre), De Leon (book in hand), Haywood (facing bayonet).

I. American radicalism

The enemy is always 'Big Business' and especially 'The Banks' and 'Wall Street'. The basic demand is for cheap money through one gimmick or another which will aid the debtors and hurt the creditors. As time went on more radical demands, such as the nationalization of the banks and the utilities, were also added, but these demands were intended to accomplish the same purpose.

This populist current has had great strength during different periods and has played an enormous role in American history. The struggle against the ratification of the Constitution after the Revolutionary War in reality centred around this issue. The poor farmers and small artisans rallied to the Articles of Confederation and the autonomy of the local states; they used their control of these states to print large quantities of almost worthless currency which they used to pay off their debts.

The commercial and banking interests succeeded in establishing the Constitution with its relatively centralised government only by circumventing the real will of the overwhelming majority of the population. The great Jacksonian movement based itself on the populist ideology though it utilised this in a highly demagogic manner. Jackson was able to fuse into one movement the artisans and journeymen of the Northern cities with the small farmers of the West and South, though he administered the government basically in the interests of the ever-dominant big business and commercial capitalists of the North-east. Populism flared up again in the Greenback movement, the silver standard movement which expressed itself almost simultaneously in Populism, Bryanism and Teddy Roosevelt's Progressivism.

Even after World War I this populist outlook found partial expression in La Follette's Progressive Party, and appeared in an almost pure form in the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota, the Non-Partisan Leagues of the Dakotas, and the 'socialist' CCF in Saskatchewan and other Western provinces of Canada. Even today some of this spirit can be found in the National Farmers Organisation of Iowa and other Midwest agricultural states.

Basically, then, populism was a struggle of the petty-bourgeoisie—primarily the small farmer, and secondly the artisan of the small town and city—against the very logic of the capitalist system which pitted one small producer against another and subordinated all to the few large industrial and financial capitalist concerns, traditionally concentrated in the North-east. Being a struggle against the very logic of the market economy populism fought a battle which *could not be won*.

This being the case, populism had of necessity to have a *false ideology*. The populists had a *classless* outlook. Theirs was the battle of the poor against the rich, the battle for an *equality* which was utopian under capitalism. Thus it is understandable that populism paid little attention to theory and never had any real understanding of the American economy and society. Empiricism sprinkled eclectically with idealism (expressed in utopian dreams of small communist communities free from the terrible pressures of the ever-present market) was the ideological mixture of American radicalism for over two hundred years.

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B — GROPPINGS TOWARD CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

It was within this political and ideological framework that the American working class grew up. The history of the American working class during the nineteenth century is a history of one hopeful effort after another to assert class independence in developing the rudiments of class organisation and elementary class consciousness, only to have the whole effort swallowed up and destroyed by the latest outburst of populist fever.

In the 1830s, a full decade before Marx and Engels were to write the *Communist Manifesto*, the workers in the North-eastern cities of the United States formed their own political parties, the Workingmen's Parties, on the basis of an elementary class consciousness. Over one hundred years have passed since these parties were formed and still today the class as a whole has not yet reached this level of class consciousness. Of course various petty-bourgeois do-gooders sought to infuse these parties with all varieties of utopian socialist nonsense but this is not what really destroyed this first large-scale outburst of consciousness on the part of an infant class. It was destroyed by the outbreak of Jacksonian 'democracy' which swept the Northern cities and absorbed these parties into the Democratic Party, developing a base among urban workers which this capitalist party enjoys to this day.

In the 1860s, following the Civil War, the National Labor Union, headed by one William H. Silvis, flourished briefly. This was the first great attempt of American workers to build an organisation encompassing the class as a whole to fight for its own independent interests. The times were more auspicious for the class than during the 1830s, as the period following the Civil War was one of great industrial growth and a tremendous increase in the size of the working class. But the NLU got itself involved in American political life and by 1872 ended up being merged into the Greenback Party, the contemporary expression of populism.

In the 1870s and 80s, during a period marked by great strike actions of a most violent character, the Knights of Labor came into existence and thrived for a period. But by the late 1880s most of the craft unionists had left it and gone into the new non-radical American Federation of Labor; the remnants were merged into the Populist Party in 1892.

The first real, clear break of any sizeable section of American workers from this petty-bourgeois populist tradition took, naturally enough, an *anarcho-sindicalist* form. The formation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905

was an extremely important turning point in the whole history of the American working class. The IWW was an indigenous organisation of revolutionary American workers. It was the organisational expression of the great strikes of the class which had taken place in the latter part of the nineteenth century during that great period when the 'Robber Barons' were amassing their fortunes on the backs of the workers.

The significance of the IWW lies in the fact that it represented the highest stage of class consciousness reached by the native American proletariat. Essentially it represented on a higher level that outburst of class independence which occurred earlier in the Workingmen's Parties, the National Labor Union, and the Knights of Labor. Its essential ideas were very simple—the basic rudiments of class consciousness. There are basically two classes: the capitalist class which owns the means of production and runs the government, and the working class which is propertyless. The working class must band together in a common organisation and struggle *uncompromisingly* against the capitalist class until it brings down the whole economic and social system and builds a new society on the basis of the rule of the working class.

The IWW, however, rather than adapting to populist type politics like its predecessors, rejected politics altogether, a rather natural reaction under the circumstances. The central weakness of the IWW was not this rejection of politics but its rejection of *theory*. On this score no other revolutionary working-class organisation in history anywhere in the world was to equal the IWW. At least the French syndicalists defended their rejection of politics theoretically. The IWW presented its essential 'theory' in a three-paragraph preamble to its Constitution. And they really never said anything more than what was in this statement.

Many historians see the AFL and the IWW as polar opposites—the former the conservative 'business unionist' organisation of the privileged craft unionists and the latter the epitome of class-warfare radical extremism. In reality the two organisations had much in common. Both shared a *rejection of theory*. Both felt that the working class could solve its problems by itself solely on the field of trade union organisation and did not need to really understand American and world capitalism and the long struggle internationally to build a working-class movement. One in a reformist way and the other in a revolutionary way expressed the level of the American working class at the turn of the century

—its consciousness of the need for class organisation but its rejection of the need to understand the society in which it lived. By perpetuating this empiricist outlook both organisations showed the primitive

nature of the working class in the United States which, despite its heroic class battles, had failed as yet to break *theoretically* from the method and theory of its oppressors.

C — THE FOREIGN-BORN

We have discussed briefly *two trends* in American radicalism: the dominant populist rebellion of the petty-bourgeoisie and the nascent empirical groping towards class independence by the working class which was constantly being swallowed up in populism. There was a third factor in the development of the American working class that it is difficult to over-estimate—the *foreign-born worker*. From the 1860s on there was a constant wave of immigration from Europe to the United States. With rare exceptions, such as the Scandinavians in the Midwest, these immigrants settled in the large cities of the North East and Great Lakes region and provided the basic manpower for the growth of American industry in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth.

The most significant fact to understand about American development, and a fact least understood by historians of American labour, is that the American industrial worker was first of all a foreign-born worker who in most cases could not speak a word of the language of the country he lived in. As early as 1872 F. A. Sorge described the American working class at the Hague Conference of the First International as follows: 'The working class in America consists 1. of Irishmen, 2. of Germans, 3. of Negroes, and only 4. of Americans.'² We must face the fact that as far as the Northern industrial working class was concerned, Sorge was speaking the truth.

Engels understood the deep significance of this for the development of the American working class. This is the way he stated it in a letter to Herman Schlueter, editor of the New York *Volkszeitung*:

Your great obstacle in America, it seems to me, lies in the exceptional position of the native-born workers. Up to 1848 one could speak of a permanent native-born working class only as an exception. The small beginnings of one in the cities in the East still could always hope to become farmers or bourgeois. Now such a class has developed and has also organized itself on trade union lines to a great extent. But it still occupies an aristocratic position and wherever possible leaves the ordinarily badly

paid occupations to the immigrants, only a small portion of whom enter the aristocratic trade unions. But these immigrants are divided into nationalities, which understand neither each other nor, for the most part, the language of the country. And your bourgeoisie knows much better even than the Austrian government how to play off one nationality against the other; Jews, Italians, Bohemians, etc., against Germans and Irish and each one against the other, so that differences in workers' standards of living exist, I believe, in New York to an extent unheard of elsewhere.³

This situation had a deep distorting effect on the development of the American working class. The early working-class movements we have briefly described were organisations of the *native* working class and largely *hostile* to foreign-born workers. The NLU and Knights of Labor were openly opposed to immigration and closed the doors of their organizations to many immigrants. The IWW, while formally having a good position on this question, was deeply infected with anti-Chinese poison on the West Coast. Most important, the IWW was basically an organisation of a section of the native working class and in this respect was similar to the AFL. While the IWW organised the Western miners, the agricultural migrant workers and the lumberjacks, the AFL organised the Eastern skilled workers. Except for rare occasions which did not result in permanent organisation, both groups were incapable of organising the industrial working class which was almost entirely made up of foreign-born. The IWW, to its credit, led great strikes of foreign-born workers in Lawrence, Mass., and Patterson, N.J., in the period just before World War I, but these strikes did not lead to a permanent organisation. Much the same can be said for William Z. Foster's AFL-backed efforts with the steel workers in Chicago a little later. There cannot be the slightest doubt that this antagonism between native and foreign born workers was a potent force in pushing the native worker time and time again into the mire of populism—that is to seek an ally in his own petty-bourgeoisie on the basis of a petty-bourgeois programme, rather than to turn to his fellow worker with a different language and culture.

2. Gerth, Hans. *The First International—Minutes of the Hague Congress of 1872* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), p. 197.

3. Marx. *op. cit.*, pp. 496-497.

D — MARXISM BEFORE WORLD WAR I

It was in this kind of political situation which had grown up on what Trotsky called 'the virgin, unhistorical soil of America',⁴ that efforts were made from the late 1860s on to build a conscious Marxist movement in the United States. The first Marxists in the United States were German immigrants, many of whom had gone through the 1848 Revolution in Germany and had come into contact with Marxism in the old country. The leading German Marxist in the United States was F. A. Sorge, a close confidant of Marx and Engels who played an important role within the First International as a solid supporter of Marx during a difficult period.

The first big crisis within the American section of the International was highly symptomatic of the problems that were to plague Marxism in the United States through the early years of the American Communist Party. A split developed between an English-speaking section led by one Victoria Woodhull and the German-speaking section led by Sorge. The struggle between the two sections was to take up a good deal of time at the Hague Conference of the International in 1872. Mrs. Woodhull had achieved a certain notoriety in the United States as an outspoken exponent of free love. Her 'section' was made up almost entirely of native-born middle-class reformers active in multitudinous causes like free love, feminism, spiritualism and temperance, as well as running their private businesses on the side. This section disagreed with the statement in the Communist Manifesto that 'The emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself.' They felt it was the task of Mrs. Woodhull and friends. Sorge did not feel that Mrs. Woodhull's views would go over very well with the Irish workers who were the people the International needed primarily to reach at that time. Needless to say the International rejected Woodhull's group and recognised the Sorge group.⁵

Thus we see that the English-speaking base of the first Marxist group in the United States lacked a serious proletarian content. The solid base for the International was among the foreign-born workers, primarily Germans. But it was soon discovered that this group itself had serious weaknesses, weaknesses which were to mark virtually all foreign-born Marxist groups in the United States for the next quarter of a century. These German-speaking

Marxists were mainly interested in Europe. Their ideas, like themselves, never went beyond being European imports. But theory cannot develop inside a small group isolated from the real class struggle going on in one's country. Thus these Marxist groups turned Marxism into a sterile dogma and refused to learn the English language and in any serious way take part in the life of the working class as a whole in the country.

Engels, of course, understood this situation and wrote a number of letters to correspondents in the United States urging the Germans to break out of their isolation and to play the critical role of *bringing revolutionary theory into the mass movement of the American working class*. For instance, he writes in 1886:

I think also the K of L a most important factor in the movement which ought not to be pooh-pooed from without but to be revolutionized from within, and I consider that many of the Germans there have made a grievous mistake when they tried, in the face of a mighty and glorious movement not of their creation, a kind of *alleinseligmachendes* (necessary to salvation) dogma and to keep aloof from any movement which did not accept that dogma. . . . What the Germans ought to do is to act up to their own theory—if they understand it, as we did in 1845 and 1848—to go in for any real general working-class movement, accept its *faktische* (actual) starting points as such and work it gradually up to the theoretical level by pointing out how every mistake made, every reverse suffered, was a necessary consequence of mistaken theoretical views in the original programme; they ought in the words of the *Communist Manifesto*, to represent the movement of the future in the movement of the present.⁶

This, I am afraid, did not take place. Rather a few native-born intellectuals joined the organisation, later called the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) and themselves adapted to and developed the sectarianism of the German immigrants. In this way *De Leonism* was born. It is inevitable that in a country as empirical as the United States will develop *both* a political tendency which divorces thought from action, by devoting itself solely to action, like the IWW, and an organisation which accomplishes the same thing by doing the exact reverse, like the SLP. Neither trend was anywhere near the real Marxist method in which theory and action are constantly and at every moment a unity, each enriching the other.

4. Trotsky, Leon. *Marxism in the United States* (Workers Party Publication, 1947), p. 37.

5. Gerth. *op. cit.*, p. 195-199, 263-268.

6. Marx. *op. cit.*, p. 453.

E — THE SOCIALIST PARTY

The Socialist Party, which grew up between 1900 and World War I, was perhaps the world's most peculiar socialist organisation. Needless to say it has been the world's least understood one because of its unique nature. Many seek to view the SP as an American reflection of the great social democratic parties of Europe which broke up over World War I and the Russian Revolution. Not only was the party as a whole quite different from these European parties, so too the left wing within it was very, very different from similar left wings in Europe. This is extremely important, for it was out of this left wing that the Communist Party emerged and this party, too, was quite different in critical aspects from most of the European Communist Parties.

The Socialist Party was, in fact, a loose combination of *all* the trends in American radicalism which had preceded it. Had it been simply a sizeable working-class party which had become bureaucratized and conservatised like the European parties, then certainly a sizeable section of the party would have survived the war. But it was far broader, more heterogeneous and unstable than this, and therefore virtually nothing of the SP survived World War I.

The *dominant* ingredient in the SP during the period of its greatest strength—around the time of the 1912 election when it got almost 900,000 votes—was *populism*. With the collapse of the regular Populist Party many populists flooded the SP. The largest votes for the party in 1912 came from predominantly agrarian Midwestern and Western states. In Oklahoma, for instance, the SP held large revival-type tent meetings throughout the rural areas and it was this kind of appeal that marked much of the work in such areas. It was the turn of the populists to other parties after 1912 that did much to contribute to the decline of the party.

There was also a legitimate reformist working-class trend within the party led by men like Victor Berger of Milwaukee and Morris Hillquit of New York. The primary base for this trend was an older generation of immigrant workers, like the Germans, who carried over socialist traditions from Europe but who had, by the 1900s, achieved a more privileged position within the American working class when contrasted with the new immigration from the Slavic countries and Southern Europe. One commentator has claimed, not without a certain justice, that the *right wing* of the SP was more working-class in composition than the left wing.⁷ This was certainly true when one realises that the

populist sections of the party generally supported the left wing.

There was a third radical trend within the SP which represented a sort of amalgam of the sectarianism of the SLP and the syndicalism of the IWW. 'Only in America' could such opposite outlooks as extreme rigid sectarian Marxists and absolute opponents of all 'politics' get along so well. They wrote for the same journals and in many cases one and the same individual espoused both causes. The main plank they rallied around was a rather ill-defined concept taken from the Dutch ultra-lefts called 'mass action'.

Adding to the already confused situation was the influx of foreign speaking socialists into the SP especially just before and during World War I. These foreign language groups came in as separate foreign language federations with their own publications and internal life. They maintained their affiliation with the Socialist Parties in their native lands and divided between left and right during the war along the lines of the divisions within the native parties in Europe. In 1917 35 per cent of the SP membership was in these foreign language federations and by 1919 the figure had risen to 53 per cent.⁸

Sitting on top of all this was Eugene V. Debs, the great spokesman for the party. Debs was, of course, no theoretician. He had learned his rudimentary Marxism from the popularising pamphlets of Kautsky, never reading Marx himself. Ideologically he represented the same stage of consciousness as did the IWW. His ideas were the elementary recognition of class division and his programme was the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class. But to how this could be achieved he gave little thought. There was also a strong populist element in all his speeches and in many ways all sections of the party could find something in Debs that they felt close to.⁹ But American Marxism was to need more than the pamphlets of Kautsky, the heroic class battles of the Wobblies, the dogmas of the De Leonists, and certainly the money schemes of the populists. What was needed was exactly what Engels called for in 1886. Real living Marxism had to be taken into the great mass movements of the American working class, foreign-born and English-speaking alike, and a conscious vanguard for the class as a whole created. This is what the Communist Party set out to accomplish.

8. Draper, Theodore. *The Roots of American Communism* (Viking Press, New York, 1957), p. 137.

9. Debs, Eugene V. *Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs* (Hermitage Press, New York, 1948).

7. Weinstein, James. 'Socialism's Hidden Heritage: Scholarship Reinforces Political Mythology', *Studies on the Left* (Vol. 3, No. 4, Fall 1963).

II. The early Communist Party in the USA

Detail from a mural by Diego Rivera. Bottom row, left to right: Foster, Lovestone, Cannon, Ruthenberg, Wolfe. Top row: Stalin, Marx, Lenin, Engels, Trotsky and below them Bukharin, Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin

A — 1919-1924

The Russian Revolution had a deep impact among American radicals just as it did throughout the world. October showed the empirically minded American socialists that the working class could come to power. The Russian party and its history were generally unknown to the native American radicals and its theoretical ideas were way, way beyond the comprehension of any of the radical socialists in the United States in that period. But the *concrete act* could be seen and in a general way understood. The challenge of October for American socialists was that, once recognising and supporting the revolutionary act and what emerged from it, would they be able to understand the theoretical development which produced the kind of party which carried through October?

The American Communist Party¹⁰ was to carry over all the contradictions which had beset American working-class politics since the days of the birth of Marxism in the United States in the late 1860s. In

10. Throughout its early period the Communist movement in the United States went through a number of splits and reunifications appearing under a number of different names: Communist Labor Party, United Communist Party, Workers Party, etc. As this is not a party history we are simply using the term 'Communist Party' to designate the Communist Movement as a whole whatever its specific name or names may have been at the time.

this sense the CP was the legitimate heir of the American radical tradition. Certainly all other pretenders to that title—the IWW, the SLP and SP—soon passed into oblivion. However, as a legitimate heir of American radicalism, the evolution of the CP was significantly different from the traditional pattern in Europe and this difference is of considerable importance in understanding the struggle for Marxism in the United States.

Most European Communist parties were born out of rebellion against the degeneration of the major Marxist parties of Europe—the degeneration of the Second International as a whole. The American Socialist Party had never really been a Marxist party and, while it went through a number of crises, it would be incorrect to see its evolution as a degenerative one. Rather it would be proper to see the Communist Party as an outgrowth of a socialist party which itself was in the throes of being created. Thus the American left wingers who formed the Communist Party lacked the all-important background in struggle for Marxism against revisionism which many of the leading figures of the European parties had. The formation of the CP in 1919 was an attempt to create a Marxist party by people who had almost no knowledge of Marxism itself.

Quite naturally the overwhelming bulk of the Communist Party in its early years were members of foreign-language federations. In fact these foreign-

language groups made up at least 90 per cent of the membership in this period.¹¹ Thus, in large part, the creation of the CP was a reflection of the impact of October on foreign-born workers, many of whom came from countries directly affected like Russia, Finland, Latvia, etc. In this respect the early Communist Party reflected in its composition the problems of the actual composition of the industrial working class.

In 1872 Sorge saw the American working class as composed primarily of Irishmen and Germans. In 1886 Engels noted that while native-born workers held the aristocratic positions in labour (some of them now second generation Irishmen and Germans) the poorer workers were new immigrants. By World War I this situation had become more severe. Now the immigrants were coming from the East European and Southern European countries by the million. While some of these immigrants had been workers in Europe and carried over to America European socialist traditions, the bulk of the immigrants by 1900 were of *peasant stock*, who not only had to become assimilated into a new country but into a new class position as well. This was particularly true of the Poles and Italians who entered the country in such immense numbers in this period. These language, cultural and even class differences in background of the American industrial working class were, in our opinion, the major factor in preventing the development of a class-conscious working class in this country for several generations to come. Only in the 1930s were these divisions overcome to the point where basic industry could be organised on a trade union level.

It was, however, the thin strata of native-born English-speaking radicals who gave the early American Communist Party its first political ideas and who were to become the leadership of the party. Louis Fraina (Lewis Corey) contributed more than any of the early CP leaders to the ideological development of the party. Fraina in his early youth was a member of the SP. Then he spent a good period in the SLP where he received his basic education in Marxist theory (De Leon's version thereof). By 1912 he developed strong sympathies for the IWW and this led in time to a separation from the SLP. When he rejoined the SP to become active in its left wing in 1917 his ideas were a not-so-unusual mixture of SLP dogmatism and IWW syndicalism. It was with this theoretical outlook that he sought to understand the Russian Revolution and it was within this framework that he proselytised for the Bolsheviks within the SP left wing.

11. Draper. *op. cit.*, p. 190.

The central theoretical doctrine of the CP at the time of its birth was *Mass Action*. This concept was imported from Holland where it was first formulated by such ultra-lefts as Pannekoek. Essentially this concept held that the working class *spontaneously* and *instinctively* would rise up in massive class actions, such as a general strike (but also including in some ill-defined way 'political mass action') and overthrow the whole capitalist system. Considering this it was of course only proper for true revolutionaries to propagate the *full programme* of revolutionary overturn at every and all occasions and any emphasis on immediate demands was 'sewer socialism'. Parliamentary action was seen as permissible only if one utilised parliament to advocate immediate insurrection. On the trade union level reformist unions like the AFL must be destroyed as agents of the ruling class and either the IWW was to be supported or we must call for new revolutionary unions which would again reflect the mass action of the class.

It was within this framework that the early Communists saw the Russian Revolution. Fraina declared it to be a demonstration of 'the meaning and power of Mass Action'.¹² The acting secretary of the IWW at the time stated: 'Bolshevism was but the Russian name of IWW'.¹³

The most important strain within native-born American sections of the early CP were those radicals who had some experience in the American class struggle. These included William Z. Foster (who joined the party a couple of years after its initial formation), Earl Browder, and James P. Cannon. These men had a syndicalist outlook—Foster and Browder as syndicalists working within the AFL and Cannon as a leading member of the IWW. Their background typified the native American working class. Foster had bummed around the country from one end to another working here and there on this and that, though doing his most significant trade union work in Chicago. Browder and Cannon came from Kansas which grew as many populists as it did ears of corn. They were deeply empirical practical people with no theoretical background of any kind. To the extent they held any theories at the time of their entry into the CP they were undoubtedly of the level of the views summarised earlier. They reflected the consciousness of the native American workers which had been expressed earlier in the Knights of Labor and the IWW and in the great class struggles of the past period.

While these men, especially Foster, had important

12. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

experience in seeking to organise foreign-born industrial workers, generally this native-born stratum of workers in the early CP reflected a very different America from the America of the Jewish worker in a New York garment sweat shop or a Hungarian or Bohemian worker in a Pittsburgh steel mill, or a Polish worker on an auto assembly line in Detroit. When Jim Cannon thought of his father he thought of American populism, of the great expanding American West and the struggle of the farmers and other 'small people' against the banking interests of the East. When a Polish worker thought of his father he thought of a downtrodden peasant living in illiterate existence in the countryside of Poland. These are two very, very different worlds.

The Fosters, Cannons and Browders did not represent the American working class as a whole in the 1920s. They did, however, represent a very significant section of it. The foreign-language groups, in a distorted fashion as we shall see, represented another section of it. The American working class today—the first time in American history that a more or less culturally cohesive class has emerged—is a bit different from both these trends. The footloose meanderings of the Wobblies, their corn-fed rural-based populist cultural and political background—all this is quite alien to most American industrial workers. To the younger generation the life around the Polish or Slovenian home with its good companionship and polkas and its old-world culture is also quite alien.

The problems facing the fledgling Communist Party were immense. A party without any serious Marxist background, it needed to absorb the meaning of the whole history of the Marxist movement since Marx's time. It was not enough to simply adhere to the Bolshevik Revolution and to call for insurrection here. What was needed was the creation in the United States of the *kind* of party which led the Russian workers to power. This was not a matter of mimicking the external forms of the Bolsheviks within the United States. It was rather a matter of developing a party capable of *understanding* Marxist theory and *developing* this theory in the course of the concrete struggle of the American workers—as an integral part of that struggle.

The equipment available to the American CP for this task was very meagre indeed. They had almost no theoreticians of any kind and those they had were trained in the sterile school of ultra-leftism, as distant from Marxist method as those who openly opposed all theory. Not a single one of the native American Communists who had any experience in the American class struggle had any real interest in or understanding of anything but the most

rudimentary theory. Furthermore the critical section of the working class the Communists had to penetrate—the industrial workers in basic industry—were divided into a number of conflicting nationality groups.

What the early American Communists needed to do was to pull together out of all this a reasonably cohesive body of revolutionists—no matter how small—willing to learn theoretically and to begin to come to grips with the whole problem of developing a class movement in the United States both theoretically and practically. To accomplish this task it was necessary for at least some of the Communist Party leaders to really 'go to school with the Russians'—that is to learn the basic method of Marxism from the Bolsheviks and from the Communist International as a whole. The native-born working-class elements needed to develop an understanding and appreciation of the importance of Marxist theory. The intellectuals needed to develop a deeper understanding of the American working class by listening to those in the party who had played a role in the struggles of the class. The foreign-born workers needed first of all to learn English and begin to play a role as *American* workers rather than simply being extensions of revolutionary movements on the Continent. Both the English-speaking trade unionists and the English-speaking intellectuals needed to learn about and reach the foreign-born worker with the aid of the foreign-born workers in the party.

The early history of the CP was a history of constant struggle, split and reunification, and the various sections which made up the organisation battled with each other for control of the organisation. From the beginning the foreign-language federation leaders sought to control the organisation. They looked down upon the English-speaking party members as inferior politically and theoretically, as untrustworthy and opportunist. However, the foreign-language federation leaderships themselves were quite similar to the early German Marxist groups in the United States. Isolated from their homeland, the federations were essentially circles of radicals with their hearts elsewhere. They did little to reach even workers of their own language in industry and devoted themselves rather to maintaining their small fraternal organisations in the foreign language ghettos of the major cities. They advocated the most extreme of revolutionary theories—but they advocated these views safely within the confines of the foreign circle existence. They were, in reality, quite *conservative* organisations which needed to be broken down if the CP was to reach foreign language workers in *struggle* in basic industry itself.

The native working-class leaders were as anti-theoretical as the foreign-language sections accused them of being. In the whole first period *none* of them showed any real signs of theoretical development. They did have a much better feel for American reality than the federation leaders and for this reason generally received the support of the Communist International in the internal disputes of the time. These were the people who led the fight to take the CP out of its self-imposed underground existence, to begin serious trade union work, and to develop a programme to bring the basic idea of class politics to the American workers.

The early Communist Party learned theoretically from the Russians. It learned certain lessons so well that American radicalism was never to be the same again. Basically the Russians were able to break the early American Communists from their sectarian ultra-left outlook. They taught them to work in the traditional organisations of the class despite their conservatism and to fight there for a class line. They taught them the importance of *transitional* demands such as the Farmer-Labor Party and broke them out of the dichotomy of immediate demands as contrasted to the full programme. They taught them, in other words, how to approach the class in *development*, how to represent the future within the present, as Engels had told them in the 1880s.

By and large the Americans learned these things. Whatever sectarian or opportunist errors American radicals were to make in the years to come they would be within a different, more advanced framework. The Americans learned these things from the Russians because they could see their *practical value* for the effective building of an organisation in the United States. When Americans went to international gatherings there was only one question *any* of them expressed any real interest in—the *American* question. The great revolutionary developments in Germany, the internal evolution of the USSR and the beginnings of the great battles within the Bolshevik party, the struggles to create parties in Italy, France, England and to properly judge the tempo of the development of capitalism in Europe and on a worldwide basis, and in a later period the great Chinese Revolution—these events, though dutifully reported in the Communist Press, were never really understood by the Americans. The Americans played no real role in the internal theoretical life of the Communist International. The great educational experience of the first four con-

gresses of the CI, unparalleled in importance since the death of Marx, left the Americans largely untouched. This is understandable considering the whole past of American radicals.

There can be no doubt that the Russian leaders understood this basic weakness of the Americans and did their very best to encourage healthy theoretical development of the Americans. Theodore Draper makes a passing reference to one such example of this. In 1920 Louis Fraina came to the USSR, the first intellectual directly in the leadership of the party to make the trip. Fraina was, undoubtedly, the most gifted theoretically of the political leaders during the first years of the party. Ruthenberg was little more than a capable administrator and Cannon was a mass worker with a deep disdain for intellectuals and theory. Fraina had two conversations directly with Lenin. In the first conversation Lenin urged upon him the concept of a Labour party, which he rejected. In the second discussion Lenin interestingly shifted the area of discussion. 'During the second interview, which took place while the Red Army was knocking on the gates of Warsaw, Lenin tried to impress Fraina with the need for philosophy in the revolutionary movement.'¹⁴ Sadly Fraina was soon to leave the organisation and whatever impact Lenin made on Fraina was not to be transmitted to the American party.

This conversation was, in our opinion, an extremely important event. All Lenin needed was one conversation with Fraina on the labour party to see what was *basically missing* in the outlook of the leadership of the American Communist Party. The party had not the slightest understanding of the basic *method of thought* of Marxism. It was one thing for the Americans to *empirically apply* this or that proposal of the Russians to their work in the United States. It was quite another thing for the Americans to break with a way of thinking more deeply rooted in American consciousness than in the consciousness of any other people on the globe. But as long as the Americans borrowed a correct recipe from the Russians without really learning how to cook, they might very well end up borrowing quite a few incorrect recipes in the time to come. This is, of course, just what happened. And *every* leader, *every* faction within the early Communist Party was responsible for this outcome.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

B — FROM 1924 TO 1928

By 1924 the American Communist Party was still very far from being a Marxist party. It had made substantial progress with the aid of the CI. It had broken out of underground existence; it had dispensed with much of the ultra-left baggage inherited from the old left wing; the foreign language federations were no longer the power they once were. But lacking real maturity and devoid of any serious theoretical development, the party was torn asunder by a deep factional division between Ruthenberg-Lovestone on one side and Foster-Cannon on the other. This factional battle was an all-consuming project and the factionalists were concerned above all else with the progress of the faction. Meetings of the International became places primarily devoted to manoeuvres to get international support for one's faction.

Of course there was a certain political basis for the factions. Basically the Ruthenberg-Lovestone group were the 'politicals' in part supported by the remnants of the foreign-language groups while the Foster-Cannon group were the 'trade unionists' having the support of the bulk of the native workers in the party. Thus in a distorted way the old dichotomies of American radicalism were perpetuated. On concrete American issues the Foster-Cannon formation generally had a better feel of things—especially when Pepper, a footloose international meddler, called the tune in the Ruthenberg camp.

The 1925 convention of the party put the Foster-Cannon faction in control of the party. But this victory was to be shortlived, for Stalin, through a personal agent Gusev, rearranged the leadership in such a way as to give a majority to Ruthenberg-Lovestone. This development was the beginning of a new chapter in the American Communist Party—the *Stalinization* of the party.

The Stalinization of the American Communist Party was to be a much easier task than the Stalinization of the European parties. These parties, by and large, had certain Marxist traditions going back before 1919. This was certainly true of the German, Polish, and Bulgarian parties. Furthermore the leaderships of these parties had played more decisive roles in the internal life of the CI before 1924. They were thus much more developed theoretically, had a much deeper understanding of Marxism, than the small American party. E. H. Carr notes this difference when he comments on the American party: 'in the years between 1923 and 1926 it reflected with unusual precision the shifts and variations of the Comintern line'. This he attributes to 'its remoteness from American political

realities'.¹⁵ Considering that men like Foster and Cannon had a pretty good grasp of American reality in this period, it would be more proper to view this weakness of the CP in relationship to a changing CI as a reflection of the failure of the early American CP to develop *theoretically*.

Needless to say hardly anyone in the CP understood in the least¹⁶ what was going on in Russia. Lovestone, who was to succeed Ruthenberg as head of that faction when Ruthenberg died, simply latched on to the current head of the CI, Bukharin, hoping in this way to maintain his control over the American CP. Foster twice sought to oppose the interference of the CI into American party affairs but his opposition was an empirically based one. Cannon broke with Foster primarily because Foster wished to oppose Comintern policy.

From 1925 on, the factional strife within the CP was aggravated by the Comintern which was seeking to wear down the two opposing factions, not trusting either of them. Whatever political differences had existed between the factions prior to 1925 quickly disappeared and the overriding issue was power—and power depended on getting the nod from the Kremlin. In time Stalin was able to either break or expel the prominent leaders of the party and create a new Stalinist leadership out of the remnants of the former factions around Browder. This leadership survived solely by supporting every twist and turn of international Kremlin policy.

The Stalinization of the American Communist Party was not a matter simply of the degeneration of a healthy Marxist party. It was rather a process of *deformation* of a party at a very early stage of developing into a Marxist party. The challenge facing the few Marxists who emerged from the CP in 1928 was not to go back to the healthy days of the early CP. It was rather to begin again, on the basis of the CP's early work, the task of creating a Marxist party, a task not yet completed in even an elementary form in the United States.

15. Carr, E. H. *Socialism in One Country 1924-26*, Vol. 3, Part 1 (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1964), p. 237.

16. There were, however, two minor exceptions—Ludwig Lore and Max Eastman. Lore, the editor of a German paper, was personally friendly with Trotsky and supported him in 1924. Shortly thereafter he was expelled from the party with the support of those with whom he was in a factional bloc at the time—Foster and Cannon. Eastman, a well-known intellectual figure in the United States, was the sole propagator of Trotsky's views from 1925 until the Cannon expulsion in 1928. Eastman, however, was never a real party man and played no role at all in the CP.

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Jim Cannon was an American-born radical from that great homeland of agrarian radicalism, Kansas. His father had been successively a supporter of the Knights of Labor, the Populists, the Bryanites, and then the Socialist Party. Cannon joined the IWW and received within the IWW his basic training in the class struggle. The IWW experience taught him two basic things. First and foremost was his deep confidence in the revolutionary potentiality of the American working class. Second was an understanding of the necessity to *organise* the class into an effective revolutionary instrument to battle the capitalists. This he felt at the time could be done simply with the IWW's 'One Big Union'.

It is easy to understand the tremendous attraction the Russian Revolution had for Cannon and why he thus became a part of the left wing in the SP which soon emerged as a Communist Party. What is more critical, however, is exactly what *concretely* Cannon *learned* from the Russian Revolution.

Interestingly Cannon's own writings in the 1950s, in which he reminisces over his own past and the past history of American radicalism, reveal the essential lessons which Cannon, as well as others, drew from the Russian experience. Cannon's long essay on Debs shows this very clearly.¹⁷ In a section entitled 'Debs and Lenin' he contrasts the two leaders to show what he feels was the greatest weakness in pre-war American radicalism expressing itself even in the greatest leader of the pre-war period—Debs. Lenin, by contrast, illustrates for Cannon that essential new element which he and others learned from the Russian experience—that essential new ingredient which he added to his outlook when joining the Communist Party. Lenin's great contribution was—the *disciplined combat vanguard party*, what Cannon called 'Lenin's theory of the party'.¹⁸ The same essential point is made

in his companion essay on the IWW.¹⁹

There is, of course, no question of the extreme importance of this lesson *if* it is really understood. The victory of October was made possible by the kind of party Lenin struggled to create for fifteen years. But this involves far more than a 'theory of the party'. To Lenin the *organisational form* of the party was at every moment directly related to the *theoretical development* of that party. It was precisely Lenin's great struggle for Marxist *method* and *theory* which made possible the creation of a party capable of overthrowing capitalism. Lenin's specific theory of *party organisation* was but one part of his whole theoretical outlook.

Cannon, and most others in the early CP as well, did not understand this. They responded *empirically* to the Russian experience and sought to abstract from this experience a useful *implement* with which to overturn capitalism in the U.S. To Cannon this implement was the disciplined combat party. So now he was equipped with three essentials—his deep understanding of the revolutionary potential of American workers, his conviction of the need to organise these workers into a fighting class organisation on the economic front, and his recognition of the additional need of a disciplined party to lead the workers in the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

Essentially Cannon's role in the Communist Party flowed from this outlook. He was from the very beginning in battle for the interests of the native American section of the party as against the foreign-born federations. He played an important role in the fight to bring the party out of its self-imposed underground existence and to begin to develop serious work in the class. He joined in a common faction with Foster in a battle for a line of work in the United States which reflected existing American realities and to gain control of the party apparatus for the 'trade unionist' elements within the party.

The primary concern of Cannon's from the moment he joined the party until the moment he was expelled in 1928 was the American question. His task, as he saw it, was to keep the party in touch with American realities and to struggle to build the party as an organisation. Cannon never evinced any interest in the great questions of Marxist theory and politics which occupied the major attention of the Communist International in this period. The basic political positions of the movement and its international line and analysis was something to be

17. Cannon, James P. *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (Lyle Stuart, New York, 1962) 'Eugene V. Debs and the Socialist Movement of His Time', pp. 245 ff.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 275.

19. *Ibid.*, 'The IWW—The Great Anticipation', pp. 277 ff.

produced for the party by the CI. The task of the Americans was to accept this as *given* and to proceed with the practical work of building an organisation in this country. Thus the only questions upon which Cannon was to form definite opinions and fight for were the tactical questions which came out of the American situation. On these questions he had strong opinions—and by and large he was right.

In 1923, at a time when the fight with Ruthenberg-Pepper-Lovestone was just beginning, Cannon made a characteristic statement of his attitude toward Marxist theory.

The American movement has no counterpart anywhere else in the world, and any attempt to meet its problems by the simple process of finding a European analogy will not succeed. The key to the American problem can only be found in a thorough examination of the peculiar American situation. Our Marxian outlook, confirmed by the history of the movement in Europe, provides us with some *general principles to go by*, but there is no pattern, made to order from European experience, that fits America today.²⁰ [Emphasis ours]

Of course Cannon was absolutely right in criticising those, like Pepper, who sought to impose in a mechanical fashion a European experience on the United States. But he was dead wrong when he saw Marxism as only 'some general principles to go by'. Marxism is essentially a scientific method of understanding reality so as to enable us to change reality—American reality as much as European reality. Marxism is neither the imposition of mechanistic formulas on an unknown reality nor is it an unconscious and empirical absorption of that reality unguided by a real understanding of theory.

Virtually no one in the American party, *least of all* Cannon, either understood or was really interested in the great struggles going on within the CI and the Bolshevik party—struggles affecting all the most important issues of revolutionary politics of the day and in fact of all time. Cannon, like the rest of them, was concerned only to the extent that these struggles affected the American party and most specifically the struggles of his own faction within the party. In fact William Z. Foster was to show greater resistance to the Stalinization of the CI than Cannon—though, of course, only in an empirical way. In 1925 the Foster-Cannon faction split into two factions precisely over this issue. When Stalin had manoeuvred to remove the Foster-Cannon faction from control of the CP, Foster wished to protest this. Cannon insisted that the faction accept and support the CI decision without protest, hoping

20. Draper, Theodore. *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (Viking Press, New York, 1960), p. 82.

to get CI endorsement at a later date. On *this* issue the faction split and Cannon formed his separate faction.

In 1927 when Stalin was preparing his 'left' turn and struggle against Bukharin, the Red Trade Union International sought to impose on the Americans a sectarian 'dual' trade union line. Foster once again rebelled and Cannon once again supported the International and flailed at Foster.

There was, however, a certain difference in the nature of the Foster and Cannon groups, in addition to this question of loyalty to Stalin, which it is important to note. Basically Foster and those who supported him were *trade unionists* first and foremost and Communists in the second place. The party, to them, was simply a vehicle to advance their trade union work. Cannon, on the other hand, had developed beyond this level in becoming a Communist. This lesson of the importance of the party organisation, if not understood theoretically, had been assimilated practically *deep* into his outlook. His supporters within the CP tended to include more *organisers* and party *apparatus* men than was the case with Foster. This, of course, explains in part his greater concern as against Foster for the decisions of the CI.

All commentators, including Cannon himself, testify to the fact that Cannon's support to Trotsky came as a deep shock to all in the CP. In no way had the party been prepared for it. In this sense Cannon's evolution contrasted even with that of Maurice Spector²¹ in the Canadian party. Spector had had doubts over the evolution of the situation in the Bolshevik party since 1923-24 and these doubts were well known within the Canadian organisation. This was not the case with Cannon who had shown neither interest in this great dispute nor independence from the Kremlin.

Shachtman, certainly not an unprejudiced judge of Cannon, claims that Cannon's adherence to Trotskyism was purely 'accidental'.²² This, of course, leads us nowhere—for instance, we could only conclude that Shachtman's own adherence to Trotskyism was an accidental response to Cannon's accident for he had no pre-history on this question either. Cannon's own explanation of his conversion

21. Maurice Spector was a prominent member of the Canadian Communist Party who attended the Sixth World Congress of the CI with Cannon. He adhered to Trotskyism at the same time as Cannon and later came to the United States where he played a role in the intellectual work of the American Trotskyist movement in the 1930s.

22. Shachtman, Max. 'Twenty-Five Years of American Trotskyism' *New International* (Vol. XX, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1954), p. 17.

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There is, of course, no question of the extreme importance of this lesson *if* it is really understood. The victory of October was made possible by the kind of party Lenin struggled to create for fifteen years. But this involves far more than a 'theory of the party'. To Lenin the *organisational form* of the party was at every moment directly related to the *theoretical development* of that party. It was precisely Lenin's great struggle for Marxist *method and theory* which made possible the creation of a party capable of overthrowing capitalism. Lenin's specific theory of *party organisation* was but one part of his whole theoretical outlook.

Cannon, and most others in the early CP as well, did not understand this. They responded *empirically* to the Russian experience and sought to abstract from this experience a useful *implement* with which to overturn capitalism in the U.S. To Cannon this implement was the disciplined combat party. So now he was equipped with three essentials—his deep understanding of the revolutionary potential of American workers, his conviction of the need to organise these workers into a fighting class organisation on the economic front, and his recognition of the additional need of a disciplined party to lead the workers in the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

Essentially Cannon's role in the Communist Party flowed from this outlook. He was from the very beginning in battle for the interests of the native American section of the party as against the foreign-born federations. He played an important role in the fight to bring the party out of its self-imposed underground existence and to begin to develop serious work in the class. He joined in a common faction with Foster in a battle for a line of work in the United States which reflected existing American realities and to gain control of the party apparatus for the 'trade unionist' elements within the party.

The primary concern of Cannon's from the moment he joined the party until the moment he was expelled in 1928 was the American question. His task, as he saw it, was to keep the party in touch with American realities and to struggle to build the party as an organisation. Cannon never evinced any interest in the great questions of Marxist theory and politics which occupied the major attention of the Communist International in this period. The basic political positions of the movement and its international line and analysis was something to be

17. Cannon, James P. *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (Lyle Stuart, New York, 1962) 'Eugene V. Debs and the Socialist Movement of His Time', pp. 245 ff.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 275.

19. *Ibid.*, 'The IWW—The Great Anticipation', pp. 277 ff.

also is not totally satisfactory. Interestingly Theodore Draper, the painstaking historian of the early CP, was not overly satisfied with Cannon's account as he probed Cannon once again on the question several years after his first discussions with him on it.²³

Cannon claimed a certain dissatisfaction with the whole trend of the International before 1928, a certain unexpressed doubt. Then, when he accidentally saw a copy of Trotsky's critique of the programme of the CI,²⁴ he suddenly saw the light and agreed with every word of it and remained a convinced Trotskyist thereafter.²⁵

There can be no doubt that by 1927 Cannon was very much in a blind alley inside the Communist Party. Against the will of the majority of the party he and Foster had twice been denied their rightful place in the leadership of the party. His personal experience with Foster since 1925 had not been overly friendly and he had almost as much to fear from a party run by Foster as he had from one run by Lovestone. By 1927 it was becoming increasingly clear that whoever was to finally end up in control of the CP it was not to be Cannon and his group. In many ways his whole life work had come to a dead end. Instinctively he turned away from preoccupation with the factional struggle and devoted himself to mass work. Only the persistent pressure of his co-factionalists got him to attend the Sixth Congress of the CI in 1928 in the first place.

So he came to Moscow a disillusioned man in many respects. His struggle to create an American revolutionary movement, seemed constantly to be thwarted—and it was in Moscow that the major problem always was. Cannon reports that Trotsky's document 'hit us like a thunderbolt'.²⁶ But Cannon never explains *exactly what* in the document hit home with him. This is why his own account of his conversion raises so many questions in one's mind. The document is a very fundamental critique of Communist strategy and tactics since the death of Lenin. A large section is devoted to the Chinese Revolution, a question Cannon is not known to have shown the slightest interest in previous to this moment. No, we can see no reason why the discovery of Stalin's errors on China should strike Cannon, the

American radical personified, in such a way.

We feel it was that essential thesis of Trotsky's whole analysis—the *conflict between Stalin's doctrine of socialism in one country and the struggles of Communists in other lands to overthrow capitalism*—which went right to the heart of Cannon's whole being, which touched all that was fine and healthy in Cannon and in American radicalism as a whole.²⁷ Now he could finally understand why his own efforts to create an American revolutionary party always went aground in international seas. Why Lovestone was forced upon the American party, why policies which hindered rather than helped the party's work in this country were supported by the CI—this all was now clear to him. Having no future within the party but having a deep conviction of the need to create a revolutionary party in the United States his siding with Trotsky is understandable.

Cannon's break with the Stalinized CP was no more prepared for by Cannon's own theoretical development prior to 1928 than the formation of the CP in 1919 was prepared for by the prior theoretical development of the American revolutionists who initiated that venture. Having only four or five years of collaboration with a healthy international force the early communists were unable to create a real Marxist party in the United States. They learned much from the Russians but they did not learn that essential thing—the need to break from American empiricism and to develop a movement with a vital theoretical life and a real understanding of Marxist method. Cannon's break was to give the American communists another chance to go to school with the Russians—this time Trotsky—and to learn what they did not learn in the earlier period. It was not a matter of maintaining a lost orthodoxy from an earlier period. This time the American communists needed to make a *qualitative* advance over the whole past history of American radicalism by definitively breaking with empiricism—the method of thought of their own ruling class. They could have found no better teacher and guide in this project than Trotsky. That fundamentally was the real challenge facing the American Trotskyists in 1928. (To be continued)

23. Note Cannon's reply to a fresh request in a letter dated May 27, 1959 (Cannon *op. cit.*, p. 224). The bulk of Cannon's correspondence with Draper is dated 1955. Draper's book was published in 1960.

24. Published later in full as: *The Third International After Lenin* (Pioneer Publishers, 1957).

25. Cannon, James P. *The History of American Trotskyism* (Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1954), pp. 40-50.

26. Draper. *op. cit.*, p. 374.

27. Cannon himself gets closest to clarifying this point when he writes in 1954: 'When I read Trotsky's "Criticism of the Draft Program" at the sixth World Congress of the Comintern in 1928, I was convinced at once and for good—that the theory of "Socialism in One Country" was basically anti-revolutionary and that Trotsky and the Russian Opposition represented the true program of the revolution—the original Marxist program.' (Cannon, *op. cit.*, page 27). This is the only mention he has ever made of the *specific content* of the book.

International, with all its pacifist friends in every corner of the earth' (My emphasis) (*Revolution Betrayed*).

Peaceful Co-existence in no sense is a product of the post-Stalin era. The original theory of Socialism in One Country depended upon an estimation of capitalism as a stable system with which it would be possible to have harmonious relations *over a long period*. Alongside this theory went the view of Stalin that capitalism was no longer in an epoch of wars and revolutions but entering a period of stabilisation in which all hope of revolution had to be given up. The old Bolshevik conception of negotiations as a means of 'buying time while the Soviet Union and the international revolutionary movement were both built up was thus abandoned in favour of negotiations as a means of establishing long-term relations. The Fourteenth Party Congress (1925) declared: 'In the sphere of international relations we have a reinforcement and lengthening of the "breathing spell" which is transforming itself into a whole period.' (My emphasis) The Left Opposition declared this to be a result of the defeats of the international revolutionary movement and the pessimism growing out of them and a 'renunciation of the tactics of world revolution' (*Platform of the Left Opposition*).

Thus, the idea of long-term peaceful co-existence and even lasting peace treaties occurs long before the post-Stalin leadership in the Soviet Union. In 1928 Trotsky wrote: 'The new doctrine proclaims that socialism can be built on the basis of a national state if only there is no intervention. From this there can and *must* follow a collaborationist policy towards the foreign bourgeoisie with the object of averting intervention, as this will guarantee the construction of socialism, that is to say, will solve the main historical question' (*Draft Programme of the Communist International*. Emphasis mine.) In my view this sums up exactly the policy of the Khrushchev bureaucracy today.

And in *Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky points out: 'The bureaucracy has arrived at the idea of insuring the inviolability of the Soviet Union by including it in the system of the European-Asiatic status quo. What could be finer, when all is said and done, than an eternal pact of non-aggression between socialism and capitalism?'

Finally, Comrade Varga refers to 'the "parliamentary roads to Socialism" developed by Khrushchev'. (My emphasis) In fact, Khrushchev himself some time ago chided the Chinese for denying the possibility of a parliamentary road to socialism and yet at the same time supporting Stalin. He pointed out that the passage on parliamentary roads in

The British Road to Socialism had been drafted by Stalin.

It might be argued that the difference between the period I have referred to and the Khrushchev era is that in the former the Stalinists were not yet perpetrating deliberate cold-blooded sabotage of revolutions but were rather pursuing wrong policies. This is true, yet it was Stalin who began the policy of deliberate betrayal of the international working class. The withholding of arms from the Spanish working class, the Popular Frontism of the thirties, the Stalin-Hitler pact, the withholding of arms from the Yugoslav partisans, the halting of the Red Army outside Warsaw while the German army put down the Warsaw uprising, the classic 'peaceful co-existence' policies of post-war Europe with the mass French and Italian Communist Parties entering bourgeois governments and making possible the recovery of capitalism in Western Europe, the ruthless abandoning of the Greek communists, the support for Chiang Kai-shek. Lack of space prevents a proper documentation of all these events and allows only one.

Herbert Feis in his book on the Potsdam Conference *Between War and Peace* refers to the conversations in 1945 between Stalin and Averell Harriman, American ambassador to Russia, on the Question of China: 'Harriman then went on to ask a series of pointed questions. What would the Soviet attitude be if China was not unified when Soviet troops entered Manchuria? Would the Marshal consider it possible in that case to make the necessary arrangements with Chiang Kai-shek? Stalin answered without pause: the Soviet government did not propose to alter the sovereignty of China over Manchuria or any other part of China; and the Soviet Union had no territorial claims on China, either in Sinkiang or elsewhere. In regard to the Generalissimo Stalin said he knew little of any Chinese leader, but he felt that Chiang Kai-shek was the best of the lot and would be the one to undertake the unification of China. He said he saw no other possible leader and that for example he did not believe that the Chinese Communist leaders were as good or would be able to bring about the unification of China.

Was Stalin going to ask Chiang Kai-shek to organise the civil administration when Soviet troops entered Manchuria? He would, Stalin replied; in Manchuria, as in any part of China where Soviet troops went, the Chinese civil administration could be set up by Chiang Kai-shek. 'Chiang could send his representatives to set up the Kwantung regime in any areas where the Red army was'. (*Between War and Peace*, pp. 112ff)

Feis, quite correctly, calls this an 'open and amiable assent to American aims and American tsardom in China'—and that is not Khrushchev, but Stalin.

I am aware that Comrade Varga's article as it appeared in *FOURTH INTERNATIONAL* is an abridged version of a much longer work, but I cannot see how he has really made out a case for declaring that the present leadership of the Soviet Union is carrying out a new foreign policy based on a theoretical development worked out by them. Stalinism produced a different foreign policy from Bolshevism, based on different theories, because Stalinism was qualitatively and completely different from Bolshevism—it was a degenerated bureaucratic caste which had to destroy the Bolshevik party in order to get power. In my view Khrushchev is the head of a bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union, as was Stalin, and his *fundamental* aims are the same—the defence of the privileged position of that bureaucracy, the holding down of the Russian working class, the prevention of the spread of revolution, and the defence of the Soviet Union but by methods which could only bring about its downfall. If there was a fundamental, qualitative difference in the foreign policies of Khrushchev and Stalin, a Marxist would look for such a difference in their social role inside the Soviet Union. In my view there is no *basic* difference in those roles.

2. The question of the role of the Soviet bureaucracy leads on to the second criticism of Comrade Varga's article. Comrade Varga states: 'Acceptance of an armaments control on USSR territory would represent the opening of a breach which would allow imperialism to infiltrate into the planned economy, threatening to dismantle the monopoly of foreign trade . . . this is the projected route for the re-establishment of capitalism in the USSR.'

Let me make it clear, I am not advocating that the Soviet Union *ought* to allow inspection posts on her territory. Clearly the Soviet Union must arm herself with all the means necessary against the aggressive war plans of imperialism. There can be no disagreement amongst Trotskyists about that.

What I am questioning is whether such posts could, in fact, have the devastating effect that Comrade Varga suggests. It seems to me that to go from a military inspection post to the overthrow of the monopoly of foreign trade would be a tremendous jump and not in any way an easy thing to do. The overthrow of the planned economy of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism would be a much more difficult task than Comrade Varga seems to imply here. It could not be done without either armed intervention from without or

armed counter-revolution from within or both. It is true that without the economic defences of the Soviet Union, of which the monopoly of foreign trade is the most important, the workers' state would be subjected to tremendous pressure from the capitalist market, but even this would require the use of force, in the final analysis, to bring about such a fundamental change in the class structure of the Soviet Union as the restoration of capitalism, making the USSR into a 'special colony of imperialism'.

Comrade Varga seems to me to be on completely false ground when he develops this point further and says that 'the Russian leaders . . . are ready to trade the socialist heritage of the October revolution'. This contradicts the Trotskyist analysis of the Russian bureaucracy and at the same time credits the bureaucracy with more strength than it has. The bureaucracy is not ready to trade the socialist heritage of October. At the present stage of development it could not do it even if it wanted to.

Trotsky spoke of the *dual nature* of the Soviet bureaucracy. In international politics it is completely reactionary, whereas in the Soviet Union it has expropriated the working class politically but is compelled to defend the social conquests of October by means of its own. This classic Trotskyist definition retains all its validity today.

'The Soviet bureaucracy has expropriated the proletariat politically in order by methods of its own to defend the social conquests.' (My emphasis) (*Revolution Betrayed*, Chapter 9 'Social Relations in the Soviet Union')

'The bureaucracy has not yet created social supports for its domination in the form of special types of property. It is compelled to defend state property as the source of its power and its income. In this aspect of its activity it still remains a weapon of proletarian dictatorship.' (*Ibid.*)

To justify the statement that the Soviet leaders are ready to trade the socialist heritage of October, Comrade Varga would have to show that these leaders had already created the social basis for this within the Soviet Union by creating new forms of property. This he does not do.

He would also have to show that the bureaucracy has not only betrayed the revolution politically but defeated the working class completely within Russia. To quote Trotsky again:

'As a conscious political force the bureaucracy has betrayed the revolution. But a victorious revolution is . . . not only political institutions, but also a *system of social relations*. To betray it is not enough. You have to overthrow it. The October

Revolution has been betrayed by the ruling stratum but not yet overthrown.' (*Ibid.* My emphasis)

The Soviet bureaucracy could not deliberately and willingly open the doors to the domination of U.S. imperialism without first having overthrown the system of social relations within the Soviet Union. This they have not done. Nor could they do it without a violent and victorious struggle against the working class. 'On the road to capitalism the counter-revolution would have to break the resistance of the workers, on the road to socialism the workers would have to overthrow the bureaucracy' (*Revolution Betrayed*). All the present indications are that the bureaucracy lives in fear and trembling of the working class, as the recent spate of rehabilitations shows.

3. The position taken by Comrade Varga in relation to the Communist Party of China should be treated with some caution. In section 5 of his article 'The Split inside Stalinism' he declares that 'revisionism characterises the Stalinist Parties', which is true, but then he goes on to say that this revisionism 'fights the revolutionary position of the Chinese Party'. (My emphasis)

In fact, the Chinese party does not hold a revolutionary position but an opportunist, revisionist one. The Chinese party is still a Stalinist party and this for deeper reasons than Comrade Varga allows when he says: 'So long as they maintain their unprincipled alliance with the murderer Enver Hoxha, and so long as they hail the bourgeois regime of Ben Bella as authentically revolutionary and so on, their criticism of Khrushchev remains within the framework of Stalinist conceptions.' It is not Marxism to see the Chinese position as a mixture of good (opposition to Khrushchev and referring back to Lenin) and bad (worship of Stalin, support of Hoxha, etc.). The Chinese Communist party is faced with the direct threat of world imperialism in Asia and this brings it up empirically against the policies of Khrushchev (which are a continuation of the policies of Stalin). But the Chinese leaders, while attacking Khrushchev, defend Stalin. This is not because there is any basic difference between the policies of Khrushchev and Stalin, nor because of a mysterious blind spot on the part of the Chinese, but because the stubborn defence of Stalin by the Chinese reflects the stubborn bureaucratic domination of these leaders over every aspect of Chinese life, including the Chinese Communist Party.

The Chinese leaders are a bureaucratic caste standing above the Chinese working class and peasantry, just as the Khrushchevites are in Russia, except that the Khrushchevites were compelled to attempt to adjust to mass pressures from below in the

Soviet Union by denouncing the crimes of Stalin and trying to hide their part in them.

Thus, it is not true that the conflict within the world Communist parties is one between 'the capitulatory position of peaceful co-existence and the revolutionary position of the class struggle'. There is not a single Communist party in the entire world putting forward the revolutionary position of the class struggle. Such policies can only be put forward by genuine revolutionary parties—that is, by Trotskyist parties.

The Chinese leaders have repeatedly declared their own belief in peaceful co-existence and they have not carried out revolutionary policies in Asia. Their attitude to the Asian national bourgeoisie, for instance in regards to Indonesia, is a classical Stalinist one of supporting 'progressives' like Sukarno and completely subordinating the real revolutionary forces in Indonesia to him.

And Chou En-lai's tour of the Middle East some months ago in no way differed from the recent visit of Khrushchev, except that the latter had more to offer in the way of loans.

The fact that the Chinese Communist Party addresses its criticisms in the main to the official leaderships of the Communist parties instead of attempting to build revolutionary support amongst the international working masses is not due to a 'serious illusion' in the possibility of convincing those leaders, as Comrade Varga suggests, but because the bureaucratic position and policies of the Chinese leaders prevent them from making any such revolutionary appeal.

Finally, Comrade Varga calls upon 'the Chinese' to adopt Marxist revolutionary theory and practice and declares: 'Is it possible for the Chinese Communist Party to manage to adopt such a position? That is a question to which we cannot give a categorical reply.'

It is quite clear from the context that by 'the Chinese' Comrade Varga means the Chinese party leaders and that he is referring to the Chinese Communist Party as it is now, with the existing leadership.

In that case, we *can* give a categorical reply to his question. It is not possible for the Chinese Communist Party to adopt Marxist revolutionary theory and practice without the overthrow of the present bureaucratic leadership of that party. In other words, without the political revolution in China to remove the present bureaucratic caste and replace it by real workers' power, there can be no international revolutionary leadership from China.

It is not the task of Trotskyists to speculate upon the 'possibility of a recovery by this (the Chinese)

party' (Comrade Varga says, 'We cannot *a priori* dismiss this possibility') but to utilise the deep split within world Stalinism for the construction of a genuine revolutionary (i.e., Trotskyist) international,

with sections in every land, including Russia and China.

Only along this road will Marxist revolutionary theory and practice be developed.

Reply by M. VARGA

THE CRITICISMS BY Comrade Gale concerning my text on the USSR and the Stalinist bureaucracy certainly prove one thing: they show a willingness to seriously examine and discuss at last this fundamental problem. If the discussion continues and ends in a better understanding of the USSR today, of the recent policies of the bureaucracy and along with this of our own tasks, then the aim of my own work will have been realised.

From this point of view it is significant that the Pabloite revisionists have not up to now made any serious analysis of the *social problems* of the USSR. Their 'liquidationist' attitude, particularly towards the task of constructing revolutionary parties in the USSR, in China and in the peoples' democracies, is profoundly linked with this theoretical 'negligence'. I consider the opening of such a discussion in FOURTH INTERNATIONAL as one of the signs of a decisive break with the revisionists: a break with their attitude of adaptation to the bureaucracy, in whatever form, and, as a result, a serious and, of course, practical tackling of the task of building Marxist parties and the International.

Gale says frankly that he has not read my whole text and therefore his criticisms concern one chapter, which appeared in translation in the first number of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. Of course, this fact, at least in part, is bound to distort the discussion. We can do nothing about that but I am obliged to reply through the method which I employed in my original text: it must be understood that we cannot begin at the end, i.e., by the foreign policy of the bureaucracy, but by taking my own point of departure: the social and economic analysis of the USSR.

It is right to say that the Stalinist bureaucracy is a contradictory social group which, despite its counter-revolutionary character, is linked to the conquests of October and to their preservation. In fact my whole text is based on the examination of this contradiction. It would be a mistake to consider this contradiction as something fixed and immovable, given for all time. It seems to me that Gale, instead of examining the *development* of this contradiction in *contemporary* Soviet society and its repercussions on the international level, tries to refute my analysis by leaning solely upon quotations.

I cannot follow him in that. To the extent that

Soviet society is contradictory the writings of Trotsky—more precisely quotations from them—are themselves apparently contradictory. And since it is a matter of dialectical contradictions, i.e., perpetual development in which the opposites are changing each in relation to the other, the use of quotations alone will not take us very far. Only the whole analysis of Trotsky provides the key to a correct approach to the understanding of Soviet society. But if Gale thinks that since Trotsky's assassination, Soviet society has remained the same and, more precisely, that the social content of the contradictory nature of the bureaucracy has not developed, then I am afraid that he will be on his own on that point. He is obviously right when he says that neither the USSR nor the bureaucracy has changed *qualitatively*. But against whom does Gale advance this particular statement? It certainly cannot be against me since I have shown and repeated expressly a number of times that it is not a question of a *qualitative* or *fundamental* change.

However, the continued repetition of this truth has the possible danger of concealing from us the fact that there is a difference between qualitative change and other change. Quantitative changes have their importance: through a number of *detailed* changes they develop a qualitatively different *form*. On the basis of an analysis of contemporary Soviet society I am stating then that in the social relations and the policies of the bureaucracy, international as well as foreign, there is an accentuation of the contradictory development which tends to the liquidation of the conquests of October. The dual nature of the bureaucracy remains a fact. But within this dual nature forces tending to change it have developed and are influencing it. I stress this phenomenon in my text. During the period 1923-27 the Left Opposition laid stress on the dangers of counter-revolution and if one recalls what Trotsky wrote—in 1936—i.e., 'The predominance of socialist tendencies over petty-bourgeois tendencies is guaranteed not by automatic economic development . . . but by the political strength of the dictatorship. The character of the economy depends entirely then on that of the state power'—I do not think I was mistaken when I refused to consider the social relations as immovable. Thus, on my side I take account of the dynamics of the contradictory nature of the bureaucracy and of

the Soviet situation. In proceeding in this way I was not alone. And since Cde Gale is well acquainted with Trotsky's writings I will recall for him this conclusion of *The Revolution Betrayed*: 'The scientific task, as well as the political, is not to give a finished definition to an unfinished process, but to follow all its stages, separate its progressive from its reactionary tendencies, expose their mutual relations, foresee possible variants of development, and find in this foresight a basis for action.' In my text all I did was to try and make some accounting of the stage reached *today* by these 'unfinished processes'.

Now, Cde Gale quotes freely from this work of Trotsky's but he does not advance any explanation of the *contemporary* position and policy of the bureaucracy. However, such an attitude can only lead to a complete distortion of *The Revolution Betrayed*. For example, how can the following statement of Trotsky's be explained if one remains faithful to the very letter of the text? 'If the Soviet bureaucracy succeeds, with its treacherous policy of "people's fronts" in ensuring the victory of reaction in Spain and France . . . the Soviet Union will find itself on the edge of ruin. A bourgeois counter-revolution rather than an insurrection of the workers against the bureaucracy will be on the order of the day.'

In my opinion the military attack against the USSR and consequently the defence of the conquest of October by the masses had the effect historically of *postponing* the onset of this bourgeois development. However, one must not proceed as if no development of this kind took place. Since the war and above all since the 50s the development showed its full meaning inside the USSR. I nowhere stated that the bureaucracy—and above all the bureaucracy as such, as a whole social group—*deliberately* and voluntarily opens the door to imperialism. On the contrary I do write that the logic of this policy leads in that direction; today even more, within the midst of the bureaucracy, powerful forces have appeared who wish to go further, and these forces already influence the domestic and foreign policy of the USSR. It is not my intention here to re-write my whole text. I try therefore to analyse the social problems of the USSR not forgetting this other statement by Trotsky, also from *The Revolution Betrayed*: 'The bureaucracy continues at the head of the state. Even under these conditions social relations will not jell . . . it must inevitably in future stages seek supports for itself in property relations.'

But let's finish with quotations now. I should say that revisionists of the Pablo type, although they

have not made any analysis of the problems of Soviet society, try to explain after their own fashion the political development of the USSR. They assert that the Soviet bureaucracy is evolving peacefully towards workers' democracy. Isaac Deutscher, their unofficial ideologue, also takes this so-called dynamic view of the situation (see *The Prophet Outcast*), but their 'dynamism' goes in a direction fundamentally opposite to mine. Their 'theory' results from their political adaptation to the bureaucracy and serves as a 'scientific' cloak for the latter. Whereas my aim above all has been and is still ' . . . to find in this foresight a basis for action'. So I could not remain content with repeating quotations. How can we explain the present rightward trend of the bureaucracy? Is there in fact such a rightward trend? Is it different in any way from the policy carried out up to now? And why? And how? But if there is no change how then can we explain that Trotsky, and along with him the Left Opposition, made a clear distinction between the policies of Stalin before and after 1929 while, however, the bureaucracy's policy remained *fundamentally* the same, that is to say counter-revolutionary? How else can we explain if not by this difference (before and after 1929), the capitulation of a good number of oppositionists? These differences existing upon the same basis, did they not have their own meaning for activity—that is, for the building of the party?

The revisionists acclaim the bureaucracy; they draw their 'proof' from the change in the bureaucracy's policy. I, on the contrary, fight for the political revolution, wishing to build the weapon of that revolution, the party. And so I must take into consideration this change. If I dare say it we also look at it 'dynamically'. But where does Comrade Gale find himself? His metaphysical arguments—instead of explaining the present policy of the bureaucracy, he employs quotations—makes me think theoretically he remains in the middle of the road and, politically, in a 'wait-and-see' position.

I hold fast to the analysis that the present policy of the Soviet bureaucracy is already very largely and to a disturbing extent threatening directly the conquests of October; that it is changing to a certain extent (not qualitatively, of course) the social relations themselves, thereby weakening the position of the workers' state, and that in this way its policy menaces *directly* and not only historically the fruits of the revolution. How does Comrade Gale explain, for example, the current discussions on planning? Does he really think that such attacks by petty-bourgeois forces, encouraged by the very strong fraction in the bureaucracy, against one of the

fundamental conquests of October, mean nothing new? Is he really of the opinion that the bourgeois counter-revolution or the workers' political revolution—of which Trotsky spoke—falls from the sky all at one moment, without any preparation and without any *quantitative* changes which, in their *details* (as for example the break-up of the machine tractor stations and the sale of their machines to the collective farms), take qualitatively different forms? I repeat that it is impossible for me to reproduce here the analysis of social problems in the USSR presented in my text, but it is on the basis of these changes that I explain the foreign policy of the bureaucracy.

Comrade Gale asserts that the policy of 'peaceful co-existence' differs in no way from that practised by Stalin. Certainly the bureaucracy has for a long time collaborated with international capitalism against the revolution. It is also true that the theory of peaceful co-existence follows logically from that of 'socialism in one country' (is it necessary to make clear again that it *flows* from this but is not *identical* with it?). For all these reasons I even began my own text—and I return to the point on several occasions—by saying that *essentially* the policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie against the revolution is the fundamental policy of the bureaucracy set going by Stalin long before Khrushchev. But it must be said once again that we do not get any further just by repeating this basic truth. In order to show how this problem can in no way be looked at as a static one, I refer to history.

It is well known that Trotsky criticises in the same way, for example, the Anglo-Russian Committee and the Popular Front as being *essentially* the same policy of class-collaboration against the revolution. Nevertheless there is a difference between them which reveals the difference between two stages of the foreign policy of the bureaucracy. The difference comes from the fact that between 1926 and 1936, the bureaucracy 'passed definitely to the side of the bourgeois order'. Up to 1933, although he criticised the policy of collaboration, Trotsky viewed this question differently from after 1933; because he situated the question in a much *wider context*, notably, within the real possibility of a revolution outside the USSR and of a reform within. After 1933 these possibilities were wiped out by the bureaucracy itself, and this gave a new scope to its policy of class-collaboration. We can speak about a new scope, for the *generalised* tactic of the Popular Front, Spain included, was different from the policy in the Anglo-Russian Committee of 'neutralisation' of the bourgeoisie.

Thus, precisely through the foundation of the

Fourth International, we can see a new appraisal of the policy of the bureaucracy, despite the *fact that there was no qualitative change in the social relations*. Better still, this new appraisal was formulated immediately after the time when Stalin made his turn to the Left, accentuating the 'socialist' character of these relations. And because they were transfixed by this turn and did not see the general context, many leaders of the Opposition capitulated.

It is obvious that class collaboration characterises the foreign policy of the bureaucracy. But there is a difference between the various stages in this basic policy. Thus we have seen the period of 'neutralisation' of the bourgeoisie, that of the Popular Front, then that of the 'cold war' and, finally, 'peaceful co-existence'. Naturally I agree with Comrade Gale that all these periods are essentially the same. But I am also certain that they differ from one another. In general the difference reflects the concrete situation in which the bureaucracy finds itself at the time in relation to world imperialism but above all in relation to the working class of the Soviet Union.

Comrade Gale sees no difference between the policy of 'cold war' and that of 'peaceful co-existence'. At least, he says, there is no basic difference. And yet, even though there is no basic difference, which is true, there is nonetheless a difference which everyone can see and tries to explain, except Comrade Gale. I will not take up space here in describing these attempts at explanation. Generally speaking, they have an organic weakness: the foreign policy of the bureaucracy is presented as a thing in itself, explained only in terms of itself. But this metaphysical and idealist approach, all the same, does recognise that there is a difference between the present policy and that which preceded it. What is more, it welcomes this difference.

I maintain that this difference is more important than it appears. I place the problem in its *general context* and I affirm that in this general context there is a change (not qualitative but very important) which, determining the foreign policy of the bureaucracy, has changed it into 'peaceful co-existence'. What is this change in the general context? It is that internally as well as externally the situation of the bureaucracy and its power has undergone a modification which is by no means negligible. Externally, the imperialist crisis developed to bring increased pressure from imperialism on the USSR. Parallel with this, the Soviet working class, emerging from the trials of the war, prepared for a settling of accounts with the bureaucracy. The latter tried to reply defiantly: reinforcement of terror and ultra-

left adventurist policy internally, 'cold war'—or even 'hot'—abroad. The deep and aggravated crisis of the bureaucracy which resulted obliged the bureaucracy not only to abandon the policy pursued up to then, but to change it in an *unprecedented* manner. Why? Because this time the crisis appeared in the form of an imminent *actual* revolution inside the USSR. And this fact was something new, something without precedent in the history of the bureaucracy. Contrary to the years before the war—and here we have to go as far back as the Civil War—the Soviet working class has since the Second World War gone constantly forward without defeats. This was the menace to which the bureaucracy replied with its course to the right, based on the encouragement of the petty-bourgeoisie against the working class, and through a *strengthened* alliance with world imperialism for the prevention of revolution *not 'only' externally but also inside the USSR*. This is what constitutes what is 'new'. Encouragement of the petty-bourgeoisie took the form of important concessions to them which weakened the position of the workers' state in social relations. Begun as a policy, this encouragement turned into a pressure to which the bureaucracy was subjected, whether it liked it or not, a pressure which reinforced, in its turn, the rightist policy both domestic and foreign. 'Peaceful co-existence' is then the stage of the counter-revolutionary policy of the bureaucracy at which it establishes its strategic and military collaboration with the international bourgeoisie in order to stifle the political revolution and where the bourgeois forces within the USSR prepare to make an organic fusion with imperialism. In view of the rise of the Soviet working class and the strengthening of its struggle, for the moment still elementary, the bureaucracy no longer has the old room for manoeuvre. The efficacy of its power, constituting as it does a balance between the forces of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, is reduced. The *historical* alternative which Trotsky formulated is now placed *concretely* on the order of the day: political revolution or bourgeois counter-revolution.

It is for this reason that 'peaceful co-existence' became a general theory. Comrade Gale is wrong in my opinion when he says that Stalin already had such a theory. Certainly Stalin talked about it, but the Soviet bureaucracy and the international Stalinist movement never made of it a finished and general theory, that is, they never used it to characterise the nature of the epoch or as their strategy. There were diverse tactics of collaboration to preserve the building of socialism in a single country. Today, there is a generalised theory which, in its totality and not only in its implications, *formally* contradicts the Marxist

theory of imperialism. Comrade Gale underlines that the 14th Party Congress, under Stalin's leadership, declared the stabilisation of imperialism 'for a whole period', and that the Left Opposition criticised it as 'a renunciation of the tactic of world revolution'. For Comrade Gale, this is proof that 'peaceful co-existence' is not a new theory. Only the bureaucracy today, through the blackmail of the existence of nuclear weapons, says that this has completely changed the world situation, no longer 'for a whole period', but *permanently*. Is there any difference? Certainly. And our explanation, too, must differ from that given by the Opposition. The latter states that Stalinist policy is—I use Comrade Gale's quotation—'the result of the defeats of the international revolutionary movement and the pessimism flowing from them'. We said, on the contrary, 'peaceful co-existence' results from the combined crisis of imperialism and the bureaucracy, arising out of the ascent of the Soviet working class and the pressure of imperialism.

I hold therefore that the policy of 'peaceful co-existence' is a different theory, a new theory. Clearly there is an organic link between this theory and the theory of 'socialism in one country'. But strategic and active collaboration only became a theory through 'peaceful co-existence'. And consequently, if Stalin had already raised the possibility of a parliamentary road to socialism—for England—today this localised possibility has become a generalised and avowed tactic, more, the theory laid down for the whole international Stalinist movement.

The problem of inspection posts on the territory of the USSR cannot be examined in itself either. We must place it afresh in the general context, i.e., precisely in this situation where the reinforced and encouraged bourgeois forces in the USSR are seeking to forge their links with imperialism. To use more concrete language: if Comrade Gale approaches this question of inspection together with that of the current attack concentrated against planning, and adds the fact that within the bureaucracy there are elements working more or less consciously for these links with imperialism, he himself will arrive at the conclusion that it is time to sound the alarm. But not a military alarm, as you think, Comrade Gale. It is a political problem, essentially political and not 'simply' military.

Again, I must emphasise: a peaceful path to bourgeois counter-revolution, as we know, is out of the question. But like every revolution, counter-revolution also has its own preparation. And if Comrade Gale only recognises certain facts when it is too late then for my part I prefer the attitude of the Left Opposition, which never failed to give

warnings more severe than mine.

In his critical remarks, Comrade Gale assures me that the Soviet bureaucracy is not ready to trade the heritage of October. I must point out that I never used the word 'trade', but I deliberately used the word 'bargain' (*marchander*); and although I am not an etymologist, this shade of meaning is worth emphasising. Not to mention the fact that immediately after this statement, I write the following phrase: 'For the time being, they (the bureaucracy) preserve a hesitant attitude, but at the price of an ignoble betrayal of the Chinese revolution.' The main problem is not a semantic one. Against the rise of the workers in the USSR and under the pressure of imperialism, the bureaucracy is ready enough for such bargaining. The best and most visible proof is the Moscow test-ban treaty.

Personally, I consider the Chinese revolution and its victory as belonging to the heritage of October, and the Moscow treaty as an attack against this revolution. Comrade Gale cannot shake me from this conviction. If one considers the heritage to consist 'only' of the *direct* conquests of October in the USSR itself, I maintain that the bargaining around inspection posts on Soviet territory constitutes the proof that at least a fraction of the bureaucracy is in the course of bargaining.

Let us come to the question of the Chinese Communist Party. I think that both Comrade Gale and I were wrong in this matter: I take this party to be absolutely different from the Stalinist parties, Comrade Gale considers them as identical.

On re-reading my article, I must say frankly that it contains an equivocation, more, a confusion. Comrade Gale is right to emphasise that our central task is the construction of Marxist parties based on the Transitional Programme, *in China also*. On this point his criticism is valid: from the affirmation of the possibility that the Chinese CP might make the Transitional Programme its own, the reader naturally concludes that this party can become the workers' Marxist party in China. Now we must declare once and for all and without any equivocation, that our task, in China as elsewhere, is to construct Marxist revolutionary parties, and that no bureaucratic party, including the Chinese party, is capable of becoming such a revolutionary Marxist party. And since that was also my task in writing my article then the confusion could only be increased. It arises above all from the fact that the Chinese party showed signs which distinguished it from the other communist parties. At the same time this party, because of the betrayals of the Kremlin, objectively finds itself in different conditions. But instead of analysing this problem, linked with Chinese social phenomena, to the inter-

national problems of the revolution and to our own tasks—impressed by the *words* of the Chinese regarding the rightward policy of Khrushchev, I arrived too hastily at my equivocal and mistaken conclusion.

By criticising me Comrade Gale has raised a problem which I consider to be incorrectly posed in his critique. Now, while I created the impression that the Chinese Communist Party could become a Marxist workers' party, Comrade Gale himself made a mistake in treating this party as exactly the same as the other Stalinist parties. It is a fact that it is a Stalinist party in its main lines. But one Stalinist party differs from others. In my opinion, it is important for Marxists to seriously analyse the nature and the possibilities of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese Communist Party. This analysis cannot be presented here. Nevertheless I will put forward certain arguments to support my criticisms of Comrade Gale's opinion.

First of all, this party is not simply a servant of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Several times it has acted against the instructions of that bureaucracy. Further, contrary to the other Stalinist parties, it would be difficult to characterise this party as a deformed and bureaucratic party of the *working class*. Not only does it rest on the peasantry, its development has been determined and influenced by the peasantry and the peasant army. Nor must it be forgotten that this party led a victorious revolution and that this revolution has been marked, both in its nature and in its development, by the conditions of the country and by the character of the party. Finally, another difference: to my knowledge the Mao faction has not yet liquidated the other factions; even the self-styled rightists of 1957, expelled and humiliated, have been reintegrated into the party. Clearly, a deeper and more detailed analysis could—and must—establish more firmly the 'specific' character of the Chinese party. But already, on the basis of certain facts, I think that the reform of this party is not excluded. Such a reform implies, of course, the decisive throwing out of the leadership and the victory of a revolutionary current. Such a reform is not impossible. Yet—and I must make this clear—for the Chinese party, in view of its class character, reform would not have the same meaning as for the Bolshevik Party before 1933. The Chinese party could *approach* the Transitional Programme but could not identify itself with it, since it cannot become a workers' party. After its reform, this party could at best become one of the 'Soviet parties' spoken about in the Programme.

I think then that we must distinguish our own task, which is the construction of a Marxist party

in China, and the present nature and future possibilities of the Chinese Communist Party. I cannot agree at all with Comrade Gale who, without making any differentiation, classes this party together with the other Stalinist parties.

In conclusion, I will express again my hope that the discussion will go on and extend to the world Trotskyist movement, thus showing the will to break with revisionism and construct revolutionary parties in the USSR, China, and the peoples' democracies. This is an indispensable part of the steps forward to build parties in Britain, France and the western countries. In order to improve such a discussion we must all strive to use the method of dialectical materialism, which tolerates neither confusion, nor the substitution of quotations and abstract truths for a concrete analysis of the whole.

MICHEL VARGA.

Postscript.

I had already finished my reply when the news arrived of Khrushchev's dismissal. Although it is impossible as yet to evaluate the full significance, the exact content of this event, it is certainly right at the centre of our discussion.

It seems that the bureaucracy reacted precisely because of its dangerous steps along the road of capitulation. I wrote in effect that the bureaucracy had been obliged to change from the policy practised under Stalin. This new policy, analysed in my previous article, strengthened petty-bourgeois layers inside Russia and the bureaucracy's collaboration with imperialism abroad. In consequence, the petty-bourgeoisie began its direct and open attack on the conquests of October domestically, and international Stalinism began the process of decomposition. The removal of Khrushchev indicates the crude reaction of the bureaucracy to this development. In this, its behaviour confirms indirectly the reality indicated

by my analysis. That this is more likely a frightened leap back by the bureaucracy in face of the concrete threat brought up by the recent evolution, the possibility of which I indicated in my article, rather than a more accentuated preparation of the bourgeois forces—that is probable. In any case the political crisis of the bureaucracy is now out in the light of day.

If this event is, in fact, shown to be a sign of fright before the bourgeois development, it must be stated that this fright will not be capable of translation into a whole change in line, a long-term turn to the 'left', like Stalin's turn in 1929. The conditions have changed: the alignment of classes within the USSR between working class and bourgeois forces is no longer the same. If, on the other hand, the removal of Khrushchev (this is very unlikely) reflects a further thrust forward by the petty-bourgeois forces in the USSR—even including trying to make it up with the Chinese—the bourgeois tendency will try to bring about a direct attack. In either case, the workers' revolution will become imminent. The present political crisis shows the fragility of the bureaucracy in face of the approach of such a revolution, its fragility before the opposed class forces. Probably it will now try to settle 'reasonably' its very sharp contradictions. But it is incapable of becoming reasonable. The path taken by Stalin led the bureaucracy into an 'unreasonable' impasse for the maintenance of its power; Khrushchev's path threw it into another impasse, equally 'unreasonable'. Even if policy changes indicate the will of the bureaucracy to arrest the bourgeois development, that cannot last long. Through this present crisis, the Soviet bureaucracy now enters a very agitated phase in its history, filled with convulsions, successive political crises and adventures. The Brezhnev-Kosygin regime is only transitory, the political revolution is approaching.

M.V.

Plekhanov 'Orthodox' Marxist

Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism

By Samuel H. Baron. Routledge 1963, 55/-



PLEKHANOV was the key figure in the development of Russian Marxism, its 'father' according to the sub-title of Baron's biography. As a young man he was caught up, despite his gentry background, in the revolutionary fervour of the intelligentsia of Russia in the 1870s. In the passionate debates among the young students and intellectuals who made up the revolutionary milieu he made his mark initially as an advocate of Bakuninism. Doubtless he was drawn to this position by what seemed to be its resolute character. Bakunin's followers, however, placed their main hopes upon what they believed to be the revolutionary potential of the peasantry. In this they shared the illusions of many populist revolutionaries who 'went to the people', with discouragingly little success, in this period. From these failures sprang the terrorist acts of the late seventies

carried out by members of the Zemlya i Volya organisation. Plekhanov, however, stood by the principle of a mass revolution and had already had, by this time, some experience of work among industrial workers as well as peasants. When the parent organisation split into two factions, one devoted to individual terrorism, the other carrying on agitation for a mass revolution, he became one of the leading figures in the latter trend and, in view of the danger of arrest, went into exile.

It was as an exile that the orthodox young Narodnik became the leading and most influential critic of Narodnik ideas from the standpoint of Marxism. At the same time, the shift from active participation in a clandestine revolutionary movement to the life of a materially well-provided-for exile had a profound effect on his personality. It emphasised his tendency to see revolution in Russia as an intellectual problem, rather than as an organisational or practical one. His break from Populism was not free from a negative side. Once drawn into West European society, moreover, he gradually accepted, along with Marxism, some of the ways of thought of the European socialists of the Second International which weakened his feel for Russian problems. When he returned to Russia after 37 years, when Czarism had at last fallen, he was completely out of touch with the needs and problems of the Revolution.

It was, however, in the first 20 years of his exile that Plekhanov accomplished his best work. From his studies of Marxism and Russian economic development he worked out a full-scale and penetrating criticism of populism which broke many of the intelligentsia away from populism and brought them into the

social democratic movement which grew rapidly in the 1900s. The Populists had stressed what they believed to be the unique features of Russian development. They were confident that the peasant commune provided the basis for some form of socialism and that Russia could not, or need not, undergo a period of capitalist development. Such ideas, which even found some support in suggestions made by Marx in correspondence with Russians, died hard. By the 1880s, however, the Russian economy was going through a process of rapid economic development on capitalist lines: modern industries were being established, a proletariat was in process of recruitment from the villages, and the commune was progressively undermined. Plekhanov accepted these facts as inevitable and found in Marx's historical method and economic teaching an explanation and a reason for assuming that Russian development would not be essentially different from that of the more advanced West European countries. On this basis he wrote a series of scholarly and polemical articles and books which established Marxism as an influential trend in Russian social thought even before a labour movement of any size was established.

Baron assumes that Plekhanov was an 'orthodox' Marxist and even uses his theories as a yardstick by which to judge other trends. No doubt he sought to be 'orthodox' and, in his writings and attitude, took up what was frequently a doctrinaire position which prevented him from understanding the richness of Marxist method or developing theory in line with the complexities of real life. His writings, for the most part, are intellectual struggles with erring members of the intelli-



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gentsia or pedagogic works for the uninstructed; it is in these important, but still limited, ways that they conserve their value today. However, there can be little doubt that he missed important areas of Russian experience and took his own 'orthodoxy' as sacrosanct, instead of making a continuous and fresh study of Russian experience. Because he thought of theory as part of a debate he was seldom able to penetrate the secret of his opponent's position: why did they hold the views that they did and tenaciously maintain them when the truth had been revealed? From argument Plekhanov is apt to shift to abuse rather than to an examination of the social roots of the opposing viewpoint. This lack is found, for example, in his treatment of Populism itself.

As for Plekhanov's 'orthodoxy', it finds its clearest expression in the rigidity with which he maintained the view that Russia would have to go through a period of capitalist development which, though it would be shorter than in the West—from which borrowings could rapidly be made—would nonetheless involve a completed bourgeois revolution and a more or less prolonged period of bourgeois rule. Only after the bourgeois revolution, after Russia had become a fully-fledged capitalist country, would the pre-conditions exist for a socialist revolution. In one form or another this 'two-stage' theory was adopted by the Mensheviks, by Stalin and by the Khrushchevite revisionists today. If, as Baron says, 'his was the first attempt to devise a Marxist socialist programme for an under-developed country', it was based on a faulty analysis and has had baneful consequences for socialism. Rejecting the Narodnik view, based on Russian 'exceptionalism', that the existence of the peasant commune enabled Russia to skip the historical stage of capitalism, he overlooked the possibility that Russia's particular relationship to the whole capitalist world might mean that every stage traversed by the advanced capitalist countries need not be followed by Russia.

Immersed in West European history and caught up in the en-

vironment of bourgeois democracy, he failed to see that there were crucial peculiarities about Russian history—just as there had been in French, German or English history. Despite what the Populists maintained, Russia was developing on capitalist lines, and would continue to do so. At the same time, the belated nature of this capitalist growth, the weakness and timidity of the bourgeoisie, the role of foreign capital, the concentration of the proletariat in large-scale plants, the impoverishment of large sections of the peasantry and the failure of the autocracy to master its problems, opened the way for a revolutionary upheaval which need not bring the bourgeoisie to power and enabled the proletariat to stake out its own claim to rule. Plekhanov's views, which had some justification when he first turned against Populism in the eighties, were progressively outmoded by the changes which took place in the early years of the 20th century. His complete rejection of Populism prevented him from considering some of the problems it had raised, in particular it led him to write off the peasantry as a revolutionary factor. It looked like impeccable orthodoxy to proclaim that socialist revolution was out of the question until the proletariat and rural proletariat or poor peasants had become a majority. In fact, Russia was not so very special; in Marx's day Plekhanov's prerequisites for socialist revolution, apart from the existence of a bourgeois state, were met nowhere on the Continent.

Plekhanov's manner of presenting the problem of the coming Russian revolution was thus a mechanical one. It depended upon the maturing of objective conditions in the economic sphere and upon the destruction of the autocracy in the political sphere. The task of socialists in the immediate period was first and foremost to hasten the downfall of Czarism. Beyond that, as capitalism developed and the proletariat grew, the conditions would be prepared for the socialist revolution. This emphasis on objectivism conditioned Plekhanov's political responses to the developments of the last phase of his life,

notably the revolutions of 1905 and 1917. It made him see the tasks of socialists as essentially propaganda in character: to enunciate principles rather than programmes of action. Caught up in the discussions which took place inside the Russian Social Democratic Party over the party organisation and policy, his positions seem to lack consistency until it is seen that he was trying to maintain his own 'orthodoxy' which, in the end, won but a handful of adherents.

Plekhanov was one of the first to take a firm theoretical stand against Bernstein's revisionism and was equally strong in his opposition to the 'economist' trend in the Russian labour movement. Again, his counter-attack was made from the standpoint of 'orthodoxy', concentrating on argument and personal attack, rather than upon explaining why such tendencies had arisen. In any case, as Baron points out, there was less soil upon which they could grow in Russia than in Western Europe. He adds, rightly enough, that since Plekhanov anticipated a period of bourgeois development in Russia, 'under his aegis the Russian party would have emulated the German example of revolutionary orthodoxy in words and evolutionary revisionism in deeds'. The rise of an independent working-class movement in Russia already, by the end of the nineties, displayed these problems in embryo with the 'economist' trend. This was a policy of immediate economic gains to be attained by struggles of a trade union type. It issued from the ranks of the more skilled, self-taught workers who were appearing in the more advanced industrial centres. Many of the intelligentsia capitulated to this trend and showed themselves willing to put aside the political struggles. Plekhanov took up the cudgels against it, but rather from the angle of denying that the workers would fail to see that their partial struggles were part of a general class struggle against capital as a whole. The economists had to be resisted because they blocked the growth of such consciousness and failed to exploit opportunities to show the importance of the political struggle.

This leads on to a discussion of Plekhanov's conception of the role of the intelligentsia, and also to his relationship with Leninism, which Baron makes a central part of his study. His mechanical acceptance of Marxism led him to believe that proletarian self-consciousness would develop automatically; his Pöpulist background left him with a belief in the mission of the intelligentsia, its role being now to raise class consciousness. When members of the socialist intelligentsia accepted Bernsteinism or took the workers as they were, with their existing level of consciousness, they committed a kind of treason. He was not able to understand the dialectics of this process in its full complexity. Baron maintains that Plekhanov came round to over-emphasising the role of 'Leadership'—and thus opened the way for the arch-villain himself, Lenin. On the question of the intelligentsia and its relationship to the working-class movement and to working-class consciousness, Lenin gave a more fully-rounded picture than Plekhanov, one which made no concessions either to the working class or to the intelligentsia.

Both had to be understood in the social context of capitalism and, in Russia, absolutism. For Lenin theory was not a rigid orthodoxy. In fact, of course, it was this orthodox representation of Marxism to be found in party documents and vulgarisations which was most open to the attacks of the Revisionists. Marxists had a task to develop a method and a theory which could arm the working class by raising its consciousness in the class struggle. This consciousness would not rise naturally to the level demanded by the political tasks of the class, nor was it the prerogative of the intelligentsia, as a stratum, to introduce this consciousness from outside. Members of the intelligentsia would be found in the service of absolutism, of the bourgeoisie and of all trends in the labour movement. Neither workers nor intellectuals, as such, could develop theory and prepare the revolution. This was the responsibility of the party; it was its *raison d'être*. Thus there was bound to be a difference

between the party member and the non-party worker or intellectual. The party had to embody the highest level of consciousness of the proletariat as a class, to develop the theoretical weapon against all alien classes as well as the alien class tendencies which found their expression in the working-class movement itself. Hence Lenin's emphasis on 'demarcation', to which Baron so deprecatingly refers.

As is to be expected from an American academic enquirer, Baron misunderstands and distorts Lenin's organisational intentions. He claims that Lenin's view of the party was 'alien to the conception of Marx and to the practice of Marxian parties of Europe'. In fact, Lenin took over his organisational scheme from the existing structure of the Social Democratic parties, though insisting that there was, of necessity, a sharp distinction between the party member and the ordinary worker, even when he had achieved some class consciousness. In the conditions of Russia it was necessary, in any case, to move onwards from the kind of circle discussions and activity, to which the left-wing intelligentsia were so prone, and to form a disciplined party able to carry on illegal activity imposed by the conditions of Czarist autocracy. Baron is obviously wrong in seeing Lenin's intentions in the light of the practice of Stalinism. Of course, Lenin wanted the party to be an instrument of revolution: a notion which in itself Baron must find distasteful. As for Plekhanov, it was not until after the famous Second Congress, which led to the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, that he began to attack Lenin's view of the party, although already relations between the two men had become troubled, notably on the question of land nationalization, which Plekhanov opposed.

No doubt Baron is right in seeing the source of the coming estrangement in Lenin's unwillingness to be bound by Plekhanov's 'two stage scheme' for the Russian revolution. By 1904 the latter turned to attack Lenin's 'What Is To Be Done?' on the grounds that he had underestimated the instinctive opposition of the workers to the capitalist

system as a whole and had 'proclaimed the socialist intelligentsia the demiurge of the socialist revolution'. As Baron puts it: 'In reaction to Revisionism, Plekhanov had placed a heavier emphasis than ever on the intelligentsia; in reaction to Leninism, he went to the other extreme, denying completely its indispensability.' p. 251) Though he did not wish the intelligentsia to retire from the scene, his orthodox faith in the ability of objective forces to generate a revolution led him to assert that it was inevitable even without the intervention of the socialist intelligentsia. What that amounted to, of course, was a denial of the need for conscious leadership; a denial which Plekhanov couched in terms of the strictest orthodoxy: the inevitability of the revolution brought about by objective forces. Far from his being an impeccable Marxist, as Baron asserts, Plekhanov's thought had become entirely mechanical: an unmistakable departure from the method of Marx, as well as from his teachings.

Through this new phase of controversy Plekhanov saw things more and more as a scholar who was, at the same time, the custodian of the orthodox word. He was caught unprepared by the three major events of his time: the two Russian revolutions and the war of 1914, and, as Trotsky pointed out, 'this profound and brilliant theoretician oriented himself in the events of the revolution by means of empiric, essentially rule-of-thumb appraisals; he felt unsure of himself, whenever possible preserved silence, evaded definite answers, begged the question with algebraic formulas or witty anecdotes, for which he had a great fondness'. The tragedy of Plekhanov was that he spent virtually the whole span of his productive life in exile, as an observer, not as a participant in practical struggles. He developed the characteristics and outlook of the scholar-philosopher looking at great events as an observer from afar, as the custodian of orthodox truth.

From 1905 he sometimes had sound positions; more often he wandered into opportunism and to reconciliation with the Kantianism he had once so vigorously opposed;

and to compromise with the revisionists. His policy turned on the axiom that the coming revolution would be a bourgeois revolution. The Russian bourgeoisie was so weak and timorous that any independent action by the proletariat was likely to throw it back for safety into the arms of the autocracy. His confidence that the proletariat would eventually make a socialist revolution was thus opposed by his real fear that if it struck out on an independent path too soon it would only delay the necessary bourgeois stage in Russian development. He was, as Baron puts it, haunted by the 'fear that proletarian class consciousness . . . was over-reaching the desired mark, or rather was assuming distorted forms, thus paralysing the bourgeoisie and creating the frightening possibility that the proletariat might attempt a premature seizure of power'. (p. 269) Although he disagrees with them, Baron sees that both Lenin and Trotsky were nearer than Plekhanov to an understanding of Russian reality in what were, in fact, Marxist terms.

In the last 20 years of his life he failed to make any real contribution to Marxist theory. Like Kautsky, he was able to use some of the instruments of Marxism to produce scholarly works in various fields; even his efforts to defend Marxism take on a quasi-religious air. It is as the defender of the faith, not as a revolutionary practitioner, that he approaches the problems of the age. As Baron puts it, he 'had become a doctrinaire, a man so blinded by doctrinal allegiances to the true nature of his world that he was incapable of adapting to it'. From different angles Bernstein and Lenin provided ways of approaching reality which made more sense to participants in the labour movement. However, it would be wrong to assume, with Baron, that Plekhanov was the Marxist, as opposed to these deviants. Plekhanov had abandoned Marx's method, perhaps never understood it. His thinking became increasingly bound up with literary sources rather than with life. It was his inability to think dialectically which made him see Russian

development in fixed categories. He thus ignored the revolutionary potentialities of the peasantry and was forced, by his 'two-stage' system, to conciliate with the liberals. His failure to break from a form of determinism made him underestimate the role of consciousness in revolution. Buffeted by the storms of the post-1905 period we find him moving from one position to another in increasing isolation, even from the Mensheviks with whom he had most in common. The logic of his position leads, inevitably, even to the abandonment of so-called 'orthodox' Marxist canons, and he takes stands which could not be reconciled at all with his former views. Immersed in scholarly pursuits he not only finds a way towards reconciliation with some aspects of Kant's philosophy but emerges, in 1914, as an open supporter of defensism.

The last act of Plekhanov's life is played out as a tragedy, made worse by the indifference or hostility of his former comrades. The man who had demonstratively shaken hands with Katayama Sen during the Russo-Japanese war called on socialists to fight for Czarism against German militarism, and did so while proclaiming that he was the true Marxist internationalist. Even on the eve of the first 1917 revolution he had written that a working-class struggle against the war would be criminal. Clearly he had been left behind by events. When he returned to Russia it was as a declared enemy of Lenin and Bolshevism, declaring them to be anarchists and demagogues. Events had delivered his theory 'a final crushing blow'. In fact, he had failed to base his policy on a full analysis of Russia's social backwardness and its relation to the whole capitalist world economy. It was illusory to suppose that the feeble Russian bourgeoisie could accept, and retain, the alliance of the working class in the overthrow of absolutism and then go on to consolidate its rule and carry out the tasks of the bourgeois revolution. Plekhanov assumed that the Russian bourgeoisie would have to rule, if not for a whole epoch, at least for some years or even decades

(the time-span was not clearly specified) before Russia could become ripe for socialism. The shortcomings in this stand are clear enough and are pointed out at some length by Baron. Revolutionary working-class activity would decrease the readiness of the bourgeoisie to move against absolutism; workers who had made gains in revolutionary struggle would not willingly co-operate in the consolidation of bourgeois power. Misunderstanding even the French Revolution of 1789, Plekhanov had not absorbed the lessons of 1848. Baron is right in discerning that Plekhanov went some way in sensing the 'law of uneven development' but failed completely to perceive its corollary, 'the law of combined development'. Plekhanov's view of Russian development should be contrasted with that of Trotsky as found in *The Permanent Revolution* and *The History of the Russian Revolution*. Much can be learned from the comparison between creative Marxism, which uses the richness of the method to enrich the old formulas, and the grey orthodoxy which seeks mainly ready-made recipes.

There are many false assumptions and questionable assessments in Baron's book. Despite the sympathy which he shows, at times, to his subject, Baron is not a Marxist, even of the Plekhanovite kind. The book, however, despite its often pedestrian style, does cast light on an important figure whose role is often neglected and who lacks another biography in English. Unfortunately, from his particular standpoint, it is impossible to measure the whole tragedy of Plekhanov, which was not the degeneration of one individual but was symptomatic of a whole trend within the Marxist movement of his time. Further, many so-called Marxists have adopted Plekhanov's methods and schema. His two-stage theory, for example, finds expression in the Stalinist policy for the national revolution in the underdeveloped countries which is pursued to this day by his successors, with tragic results for the revolutionary movement.

T.K.



Kamenev



Stalin



Zinoviev

Under the sign of the Troika

Socialism in One Country 1924-1926 By E. H. Carr. Volume Three, Parts I and II. Macmillan 1964. £6 the set.

THE two years after Lenin's death have been shown by history to have an importance for the USSR and for the world communist movement far greater than anyone could have imagined at the time. On the surface this could be seen as a period of relative tranquillity in Europe following the abortive revolutionary attempt in Germany in 1923. In Asia the second Chinese revolution had begun its tragic course and the events preliminary to the British General Strike of 1926 were under way. The key events in these years took place in committee rooms and congress halls or 'behind the scenes' in discussions between politicians. The presence of the masses as a historical force is hardly felt in this section of Carr's history dealing with the foreign relations of the USSR and covering both diplomacy and the development of the Comintern and its main constituent parties. The space occupied by the latter in a *History of Soviet Russia* and in a volume subtitled 'Socialism in One Country' might even have surprised its author some years ago. Carr has, in fact, found, contrary perhaps to his original intentions, that the history of the Soviet Union, product of a revolution of international significance, cannot be separated from the history of the communist movement as part of the history of the international working class. If he does not say so in so many words that is the obvious implication of the space which he allocates not only to the Comintern—which is sometimes hastily dismissed as nothing more than an agency of Soviet foreign policy—but also to the internal history even of Communist Parties such as the British and the American which in numbers and influence at this time

would not appear, at first sight, to justify much attention in this context.

In short, to achieve his purpose Carr has to provide us not only with a record of events in Russia but also with an account of the communist movement internationally which is generally much fuller than that to be found in other histories. Carr does not write as a sympathiser with any of the trends in the world communist movement—though one discerns a certain antipathy towards Trotsky—but rather as a serious bourgeois historian who has learned something from Marxism and stands far above most of his colleagues in his ability to meet the problems in historiography raised by the history of Soviet Russia. He retains unmistakable traces of prejudice, but they pass almost unnoticed, at least in this volume, amid serried ranks of carefully arranged facts and restrained, but generally fair, comment.

With the failure of the last revolutionary spasm in Germany in 1923 the USSR was left as a pariah in a hostile world. At the same time this event signalled the inability of any Communist Party but that of Russia to carry out a successful revolution against capitalism. In the capitalist world the disorganisation and social ferment which had followed the war had given way to renewed economic expansion and relative stability. The post-war revolutionary tide had ebbed away throughout Europe. In the Soviet Union itself Stalin was carefully and inconspicuously consolidating his position and playing on the moods in the party and the state yearning for some secure resting place after the breath-taking storms of revolution, civil war and the battle to

breathe some life back into the economy. With great skill he made use of Zinoviev and Kamenev until they, belatedly, came to recognise the dangers of Stalin's course. Enouncing the new theory of 'socialism in one country', which was closely attuned to the conditions now appearing, he was able to use the prestige of the Soviet party to impose it on the Comintern through bringing the apparatus of both under his direction.

Carr's book is largely concerned with one or another aspect of this process. He considers what it meant in terms of relations with the capitalist world, both the advanced countries of the West and the colonial or semi-colonial countries of the East. A final section describes in some detail the actual organisation of the Comintern and its dependent agencies: the clearest picture yet available of this aspect. For purpose of this review the main emphasis will be on the first part, since the problems of the colonial revolution will be dealt with at a later stage.

Russia's relations with the West fall into two main divisions: those at the level of state relations which came within the province of diplomacy and those between the Comintern and its constituent parties. A first priority of Soviet diplomacy at this time was to break out of the dangerous isolation which no longer seemed likely in the near future to disappear as the result of the spread of the revolution to the advanced countries of Western Europe. This meant, as far as possible, a normalisation of relationships with the capitalist governments and even the search for political or commercial agreements with them. Of course, already in

1920, at Rapallo, the diplomats of the USSR had come to terms with those of the Weimar republic, also made a pariah by the Versailles treaty. Indeed, throughout this period secret military, as well as economic, co-operation between the two countries took place. At the same time Western diplomacy recognised the danger of driving Germany into the arms of Russia and began, from its side, to court Germany. The main result of these efforts, and by far the biggest diplomatic event in these years, was the Locarno pact which, by guaranteeing Germany's Western frontiers and strengthening those elements in German governing circles which stood for a Western orientation, opened up the danger of German expansion towards the East. To say the least, it brought into question the co-operation between Russia and Germany which had been going on since Rapallo. The result of Locarno was to cause apprehension and a feeling of insecurity in Moscow which could not fail to have its repercussions on Comintern policy.

But what was the relation between Soviet state interests and the Communist International? As Carr puts it, the recession of the revolutionary wave imposed the necessity of 'peaceful co-existence'—the normalisation of state relations—without the abandonment of the premise that a permanent reconciliation with capitalism was unthinkable: the capitalist countries, by their nature, were bound to seek the isolation and destruction of the USSR. On the other hand, their own internal contradictions, which could be exploited by diplomatic means, provided a barrier to their combined action against the USSR. The task of Soviet diplomacy therefore appeared relatively straight-forward and unexceptionable from a Marxist standpoint. It was reasonable to seek an understanding with the weakest capitalist power and to turn to advantage the mutual jealousies of the imperialist powers. But the situation was not without its paradoxes—and its dangers. It meant, for example, that the closest state relations were established with the very country which had the most

important Communist Party and which, until 1923, had stood nearest to revolution. One result, for example, had been to encourage trends in the German party willing to work with nationalists of the right against the Entente powers.

On the ebb-tide of revolution, moreover, the Communist Parties became proponents of the more cautious policies which were decided in Moscow in order to safeguard Soviet security. How much nationalism and how much concern for world revolution was there in the efforts of Soviet diplomacy in this period? That a conflict between the two later became apparent is evident, but when did it begin? In this period Carr's opinion is clear. He takes it as evident—and shows from an examination of the facts—that the Soviet Government could, and did, control the words and deeds of the Comintern. But he sees no evidence of waning confidence in world revolution; 'the agents of Soviet diplomacy and of world revolution, of Narkomindel and Comintern, met on the common ground of an unbounded confidence in the eventual outcome of their efforts'. In practice, however, the pursuit of the former made world communist policy a handmaiden of Soviet interests.

The slogan under which this was being done was calculated to appeal to the revolutionaries of all countries who were attracted by the Russian revolution and concerned by their own failure to follow the Russian example. That revolution had been made by the Bolshevik party. The new-born Communist Parties, formed of break-aways from the mass social-democratic parties or from small Marxist and syndicalist groups, were still far from being in practice parties of the Bolshevik type, nor did lip-service to the Twenty-one Conditions make them so. For many would-be revolutionaries the shortest way to Bolshevism seemed to be to copy the Russian model as it then was. Russian influence in the Comintern, which had worried Lenin, was deliberately strengthened in the years after his death by the Troika. The divisions

within the Russian party were carried into the foreign parties. In addition, leaders and policies were changed at the bidding of the Comintern until the parties became its servile instruments. Part of this story is told by Carr in this volume. Its context, all the time, is the inevitable drift of policy once 'socialism in one country' became the touchstone of orthodoxy. What was called 'bolshevisation' amounted, in practice, to making the national sections of Comintern docile instruments for the operation of this policy in the context of the given country.

This end was perhaps not consciously sought, it was certainly not achieved all at once or without resistance. In the period 1924-26 covered by this volume it was still in a preparatory stage. There were bitter struggles within the individual parties and in Comintern itself but the great confrontation between the Left Opposition and Stalinism was only to come after 1926 when 'socialism in one country' yielded its first bitter fruits in China and Britain. The crucial struggles, in any case, were fought out inside the Russian party and do not figure in this part of Carr's narrative. As far as the implications of 'socialism in one country' are concerned he seems to be perfectly right in his judgement: 'It was of the essence of that doctrine to give precedence to the construction of a socialist regime in the Soviet Union over the conquest of power elsewhere, to treat this as the first essential condition of progress towards world revolution, and to make resistance to intervention by the capitalist Powers against the new Soviet order the prime duty for foreign communist parties.'

Objective conditions in this period favoured the acceptance of this conception in the foreign communist parties. Dissidents were crushed and driven out and a new type of leadership was emerging whose loyalty to Moscow was unquestioned. Even recruitment to the parties took place on different lines and they changed their character until it is difficult to find many points of similarity between Lenin's Bolshevik party and a 'bolshevised' communist

party obedient to Stalin's domesticated Comintern of the late 1920s. Before this process could be carried through to completion, however, the Left Opposition had to be defeated and the decline had probably not become irremediable until several years later. By 1926, however, Carr can already justly comment that 'what was most significant of all was the change in the character, composition and leadership of the parties to which the process of Bolshevisation was applied'. The new leaders were obedient, mostly had a working-class background and support and less interest in theory than in impressing Comintern with some successes in 'mass struggles'. The interest of Comintern in the parties turned from interventions on matters of policy—still vital in the early twenties—to questions of choosing leaders. His diagnosis here seems to be correct. The Communist Parties ceased to have a vigorous theoretical life and only had to apply to the conditions of their own country principles which were laid down in Moscow, eventually by Stalin himself.

Of some Communist Parties it was true to say they had never had much concern with theory. The CPGB was a classic case; in fact, despite its small size it was, in the 1920s, a favourite of the Comintern. It never had splits and its leadership kept together over long periods. As Carr puts it: 'The maintenance of solidarity in the leadership of the CPGB, which distinguished it so markedly from other communist parties, reflected the traditional empiricism of British politics. The leading British communists were indifferent to the issues of doctrine and theory which divided the leaders of the German, French, Italian and other parties, and had little or no understanding of what these issues involved. . . .' It is just as true of the CPGB in the face of the Sino-Soviet dispute today.

The successful operation of the policy of 'socialism in one country' required not parties preparing for power but parties able to win the largest number of supporters and sympathisers on broad campaign

programmes organised around support for the Soviet Union or issues affecting its security. This produced travesties of the 'united front' and finished up in the quagmire of 'popular fronts' in the 1930s. Tight Comintern control over the parties went hand-in-hand, not with a revolutionary policy but with whatever policy, be it to the right or to the left, the Soviet leaders considered best served their needs. Such control had largely been made effective in this interim period. Though there was still more possibility of discussion and opposition than was the case later, already 'Loyalty to the line laid down by Comintern was the test of a good party member'. Thus, in the struggle which was to come between Stalin and the Left Opposition there was relatively little support for the latter in the ranks of the foreign parties. Many of those ready to support Trotsky, or, at least to give him a hearing, had been driven out of their parties before 1926: a period in which, unfortunately, Zinoviev, as head of Comintern, had been doing Stalin's work for him to his own later regret and ultimate undoing.

Undoubtedly Carr's book provides incomparable material for a study of these processes in the international communist movement. He is extremely sparing of comment and is content, in the main, to let the record speak for itself. It speaks inevitably against Stalin if examined from a Marxist standpoint, which is not, of course, Carr's own position. His major weakness lies in a tendency to see Stalinism as in some way a legitimate offspring of Leninism and, consequently, to see Trotskyism with a jaundiced eye. Fortunately, it is not a very perceptible tendency and it does not detract from the value of his book, but a historian of Professor Carr's calibre should try to rise above such prejudices. For instance, he says of Bolshevisation in 1924 that 'it would have been difficult to attach any other meaning to it, or to distinguish it from the policy, first embodied in the 21 conditions of 1920, of welding together all communist parties, on the well-trying and disciplined

Russian model, into a single fighting organisation schooled for the revolutionary offensive' (pp. 293-4). But he has already described it as 'primarily an off-shoot of the Trotsky controversy' and 'the hallmark of opposition to Trotsky'. Taken in this context 'bolshevisation' cannot be cleared of the association with the bureaucratic degeneration taking place in the Soviet Union and in Comintern. The 21 Conditions were framed to deal with all manner of opportunist and conciliationist trends in order to build principled parties. Stalin ostensibly sought the same object, but Carr shows frequently that this meant in practice finding docile leaders, left enough to ensure mass support, but in other respects remarkably similar to the 'opportunist' type leaders of the old Second International: these were the Pollitts, Thorezes, Thaelmanns, Neumanns, Togliattis, etc., products of 'bolshevisation' and anti-Trotskyist to a man, of course, though with the name of Lenin ever on their lips. Right from the beginning the 'bolshevisation' campaign must be seen with a scepticism which Carr unfortunately does not show, although he is discerning enough to underline its close connection with the struggle against Trotskyism. This was, however, not only a matter of 'the more rigid insistence on doctrinal orthodoxy and on party discipline'. It is true that is the *form* in which it shows itself in the record. It is the task of the historian to go beyond the formal words of speeches and resolutions and to examine in depth the structures of power from which they sprang and their social bases. Carr does not do this. Therefore, however carefully he has examined the records and however skilled his eye in extracting from masses of material the main lines of development it seems that he has missed the essential significance of the process he has depicted. The great value of Carr's work should not blind the reader to the limitations of his assumptions and the defects of his method. It is a most valuable addition to the increasing number of works dealing with the international communist movement. T.K.

NIGERIAN IMPRISONMENTS

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

1964 has marked a major step forward for the working class in West Africa, because of the success of the Nigerian general strike and the beginning of independent working class politics in Nigeria.

When these Nigerian workers won important wage concessions and defeated all attempts at victimisation after their general strike, they struck fear into the hearts of the bourgeois government, which is nothing more than a caretaker for British and United States capital investments. At the end of the strike, 6,000 workers gave union leaders a mandate to form a new socialist workers' party, and the government decided to act.

Using the arrival in Nigeria of a British University research worker, Dr. Victor Allen, they manufactured a fantastic charge of sedition and 'conspiracy' for the overthrow of the government and arrested three prominent Nigerian trade union leaders: Sidi Kayam and Jonas Kiomasenagh Abam, port workers' leaders, and Oleshengun Adobayo, teachers' leader.

During the trial, the police (whose head was a white South African) submitted as their main

evidence to the prosecution an alleged statement of confession by Allen.

Allen insisted that this confession was obtained by illegal pressure upon him, and the judge was forced to disallow it as evidence.

Despite this complete collapse of the prosecution's case, the judge found all four defendants guilty and sentenced them to one year's hard labour each.

While the prisoners were on bail during the trial police raided their homes at night, on one occasion arresting and beating up a British visitor from Ghana, Mr. G. Jones. On this occasion the judge warned the police not to interfere with witnesses.

In the statement containing the judge's verdict there is not even mention of the specific acts which are supposed to constitute sedition and conspiracy. The 'plot' is pure fabrication.

The International Committee of the Fourth International condemns this blatant use of the machinery of police and the law courts to suppress and imprison trade unionists, and calls for the maximum protest against the

sentences.

The Nigerian government has distinguished itself by supporting the mercenary armies and 'rescue' intervention of the imperialists against the Congolese people.

This exposes very clearly all those 'left' social democrats who have remained silent on the conspiracy trial, concerned about the good name of an 'independent' African government.

In Britain the Labour government has stated, through its Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary, Bottomley, that it will not protest, since it is convinced that Allen had a fair trial. The Stalinist parties remain shamefully silent on the question.

Not a shred of proletarian internationalism remains in these traditional leaderships of the working class. Everywhere the organised workers, the youth movements and the trade unions of every country, must respond to the call for political and financial support for the four imprisoned men.

International Committee of the
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CEYLON

LSSP(R) and the Coalition

1 *The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary) held a special conference on July 18 and 19, 1964. Below we print the full text of decisions issued by the party secretary, Edmund Samarakoddy. The LSSP (Revolutionary) is the minority section which split from the reformist LSSP, led by Dr. N. M. Perera, just before the latter formed a coalition government with Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's capitalist Sri Lanka Freedom Party.*

'Pursuant to the decision of the conference of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary Section) held on June 7, 1964, at the Workmen's Resort, Slave Island, a special conference of the party was held in Colombo on Saturday the 18th and Sunday the 19th July. This conference was attended by members and candidates from all over the island. Only members had voting rights who had voting rights prior to the split of June 7.

Three resolutions were discussed and approved: on the question of affiliation to the Fourth International; on the national political situation, and on organisational tasks.

With regard to the Fourth International the conference decided to accept the recognition granted to the LSSP (RS) and will hereafter function as the Ceylon Unit of the Fourth International, and will call itself LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY (REVOLUTIONARY) Ceylon Unit of the Fourth International.

The conference further decided to request the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to expressly declare that the entire membership of the Reformist LSSP are no longer regarded as members of the Fourth International and that Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene be expressly expelled by name in so far as they were members of the International Executive Committee

of the Fourth International and are now serving as advisers to the Ministers of a bourgeois Government.

The resolution on the National Political Situation is as follows:

In the context of the decline and decay of world capitalism Ceylon's capitalist class cannot hope to develop the economy with any degree of success. However, the only road for the Ceylon bourgeoisie that can help them with increasing difficulties to sustain capitalism is the road leading to industrial development. The role of the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Government is the salvaging of capitalism through whatever industrial development is possible in the present situation of Ceylon's Capitalism. With this perspective the Sirimavo Government resolved on drastic measures.

One aspect of the results of the drastic steps taken by the Sirimavo Government to sustain capitalism is the further rise of prices of essential commodities and the increasing scarcity of goods. Workers, the lower middle class and the rural poor have been worst hit. Severe import restrictions have resulted in the closing of trading concerns and the restriction of business causing an increase in unemployment, and the enforcement of the wage freeze has meant a virtual wage cut on wage earners.

The resulting mass situation was that workers (wage earners, rural poor and the middle

classes) moved away from the Government and developed opposition to it. The organised working class launched on strike action of a very determined nature. Prolonged strikes involving wide sections of wage earners, even of better paid categories, took place. The mounting dissatisfaction of the rural masses was also evident.

Since July 1960 the Government utilised the organs and apparatus of the bourgeois state to suppress and deal with the developing mass movement. The frequent use of police, army and emergency powers to deal with the workers and peasants was a marked feature of SLFP rule. During this period the opportunism and reformist outlook of a section of the working-class leadership helped in a large way the bourgeois SLFP Government to keep the mass movement under control. But throughout the last year (1963) the organised working class were taking determined steps to close their ranks for a struggle to win their urgent demands and to break the wage freeze. The proposed action around the 21 demands under the leadership of the Joint Committee of Trade Union Organisations was a challenge to the SLFP Government and the capitalist class.

An open assault on organised labour was extremely risky in a situation of general mass unrest. If the SLFP Government was to continue in power it was imperative that the mass situation, particularly the relations with the organised working class, be changed in its favour—to secure this objective an alliance with Rightist Parties (UNP) was of no purpose as working-class mass support was gathered around the Left Parties: The Government required nothing less than a guarantee against

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An open assault on organised labour was extremely risky in a situation of general mass unrest. If the SLFP Government was to continue in power it was imperative that the mass situation, particularly the relations with the organised working class, be changed in its favour—to secure this objective an alliance with Rightist Parties (UNP) was of no purpose as working-class mass support was gathered around the Left Parties: The Government required nothing less than a guarantee against

the intervention of the organised working class for the achievement of their pressing demands and the pacification of the masses generally. When this guarantee was forthcoming from some leaders of the working-class movement and when these leaders were ready to go much further and accept a share of the responsibility of office, the Sirimavo Government agreed to grant them portfolios—hence the SLFP-LSSP Coalition.

The entry of the LSSP (Reformist) into the SLFP Government on a so-called 14-point programme has not changed the class character of the SLFP Government which remains capitalist as before.

However, the influence of the LSSP (Reformist) on the Government and its direct intervention in administration means that the capitalist Coalition Government is exposed to considerable pressures from the working class, the radical petty-bourgeois and the rural poor.

The LSSP (Revolutionary) defines its attitude to the present bourgeois Coalition SLFP-LSSP Government as one of opposition.

The Coalition Government has created a new political situation. The imperialist interests and class-conscious and developed sections of the capitalist class have already expressed their cautious approval of this development as they see no threat to their fundamental property rights and interests. The middle classes and the working class generally have welcomed the new set-up as they believe in the possibility of an improvement of their conditions. However, whilst class collaboration has commenced openly, sections of the wage earners could without being antagonistic to the Gov-

ernment, well take to struggle to win their demands as they could interpret the new situation as favourable to struggle. But despite the general approval of the working class, the class-conscious and ideologically developed sections of the working class already regard the Coalition as a historic betrayal of the working class and toiling masses by some of their erstwhile leaders. As for the minorities (the Ceylon Tamils and other linguistic and religious groups and the Plantation Workers)—they are able to recognise that the LSSP (Reformist) has capitulated to the SLFP on Language, Citizenship, Religion and Minority Rights.

The present prevailing mass moods will soon change from one of sympathy to one of criticism and opposition. The toiling masses generally have received nothing except promises. Despite the efforts of the Reformists to promote class collaboration, even now, the class struggle has broken out. (Police arrests of strikers and police baton charges against the Velona strikers have already compromised the Coalition Government.)

With the widespread talk of achieving Socialism through the Coalition Government and the stimulation of a new interest in Workers' and Peoples' power, the Party will pose the need for real Socialism as opposed to fake Socialism.

To concentrate the future realisation of the burning needs of the working masses and the toiling people the LSSP (R) declares:

Not a Coalition Government with the bourgeoisie in Parliament but a Coalition of the workers, wage earners and rural masses. Forward to a Workers' and Peasants' Government."

2 *Statement of LSSP (R) on the fall of the coalition in Ceylon in December 1964.*

6 While the ranks of the Government are weeping and gnashing their teeth over its defeat in Parliament as a result of a split in the SLFP and while the Reformists of all shades are also shedding tears over this development, the LSSP (R) has no tears to shed whatsoever for the Government.

The working class, which has suffered under a still continuing wage freeze and has also been struck by the batons of Sirimavo's police, has no tears to shed at the defeat of her government. The masses of workers on the plantations who have been denied the elementary democratic rights of citizenship and of the vote, and who have been the subject of a barter agreement between Sirimavo and her fellow capitalist Prime Minister, Shastri of India, have no tears to shed. The vast masses of landless, jobless and miserably housed toilers in the countryside as well as the masses of jobless and slum dwelling people in the towns have no tears to shed. The linguistic and religious minorities who have been openly discriminated against, and been subject to direct oppression under the pressures of the Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism also have no tears to shed for the defeat of Sirimavo's Coalition Government.

All that these various sections of the exploited and oppressed masses of our people need to shed completely are the illusions that large numbers of them still unfortunately have in the prospects of some measure of im-

provement in their conditions through political combinations of one kind or another that are set up to maintain decaying capitalism in Ceylon. Such combinations, whether they be admixed with Red, Blue, Green, or Yellow can only continue to deceive, divide and confuse the people in the way that S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's MEP and Mrs. Bandaranaike's Coalition with the Reformist LSSP have done. Both coalitions led to a strengthening of rightist reaction.

The LSSP (R) calls for a break with the politics of Parliamentary Combinations with bourgeois parties, and for the unification and independent assertion of the organised power of the working class at the head of all sections of the toilers and the oppressed in town and countryside.

Whatever may be the outcome of the coming elections it is clear that none of the democratic or socialist tasks of the mass movement for socialism in Ceylon will be achieved through the next Parliament. All that the masses can expect and should strive to attain is an independent position within the next Parliament for the purpose of serving and strengthening the development of the class struggle outside it by exposing and opposing whatever bourgeois government that may emerge within it.

The crisis of capitalism will continue to advance and it will lead either to the suppression of the mass movement by the forces of capitalism or to the revolutionary triumph of the masses in direct action for the overthrow of capitalist rule. It is in the latter perspective that the LSSP (R) calls upon the working people and all genuine socialists in the country to unite in the coming struggle. 9

Under a stolen flag—

A Statement by the Political Committee of the

PIERRE FRANK, the member of the Pabloite Unified Secretariat, who recently visited Ceylon, has been describing himself as a founding member of the Fourth International in 1938. This is done in order to convey the impression that he was a close collaborator of Trotsky and that he carries on Trotsky's tradition in the international movement at the present time.

In this connection, the following information should be of interest to Trotskyists.

In the autumn of 1934, the French Trotskyist movement of which Frank was a member, acting under advice from Trotsky, entered the French Social-Democratic organisation, the SFIO. The purpose of the entry was to organise a struggle against the centrists and the right wing and to win over left-wing elements, especially the youth, to the programme of the Fourth International.

By the summer of 1935, France, according to Trotsky, had entered a pre-revolutionary situation and this in turn led to the launching of a witch-hunt against the youth and the Trotskyists who had entered the SFIO, by the right wing headed by Leon Blum.

After analysing the nature of the situation Trotsky called upon his supporters, including Pierre Frank, inside the SFIO to prepare to launch the independent Trotskyist party. This led to a sharp crisis inside the French Trotskyist organisation.

Raymond Molinier and Pierre Frank, who worked closely together, opposed Trotsky and formed an alliance with the centrist Marceau Pivert. The purpose of this alliance was to disobey Trotsky's instructions by capitulating to the demands of the right wing. In September, 1935, both Frank and Molinier were preparing to give up the publication of *La Verite*, the paper of the French Trotskyists who had entered the SFIO in order to placate the right wing and continue their alliance with Pivert.

Each concession that they made to Pivert weakened the struggle of their comrades inside the SFIO against the right wing. At precisely the time when the French Trotskyists should have been united in fighting the right wing, Molinier and Frank were engaged in preparing a split inside their organisation.

Trotsky described their activity as 'a betrayal'.

On November 29, 1935, Trotsky telegraphed the International Secretariat about a letter which he had received from Pierre Frank. The telegram read:

'Frank letter reveals centrist demoralisation stop consider rupture preferable to concessions.'

In December 1935 he proposed to the International Secretariat, resident in Paris, the following resolution concerning the activity of Molinier and Pierre Frank:

the case of Pierre Frank

Socialist Labour League

of the Plenum. I do not think his political attitude allows him to be kept formally within the leading body of our international organisation.

Politically, Molinier has gone over to centrist positions.

Organisationally, he has created a bloc with the centrists, against our tendency. He has not consulted the IS on his "turn". He has allowed himself to pose ultimatums to our organisation, relying on the methods of quasi-capitalist "launchings". His activity becomes increasingly demoralising. I propose on the decision of the IS to invite the Central Committee of the French Section to recall Comrade Molinier. At the same time I propose the setting up of an international control commission, concerning the activity of Com. Molinier and possibly of other comrades connected with him.'

Also in the same month Trotsky wrote to the Central Committee of the French Section concerning Frank and Molinier:

'It is capitulation before the social-patriotic wave. Who does not understand that is no Marxist. The approach of war has given (provisionally) the social-patriots a powerful weapon against the internationalists. Hence the exclusion of the Leninists. Hence the cowardly capitulation of Pivert. . . . Hence the fear of unstable elements in our own midst of "isolation" and the tendency to stay at whatever cost beside the centrists and to be distinguished from them as little as possible. There is no other political content in the attitude of Molinier and Frank. They are capitulating to the social-patriotic wave.'

Eventually, these deep-going differences came to a head when Molinier and Frank broke away from Trotsky and founded their own organisation with its paper *La Commune*.

In the winter of 1939 Pierre Frank came to England to organise a struggle against Trotsky and the International Secretariat.

Some months after the outbreak of the Second World War he was interned for a short period in the Isle of Man as an alien.

The police later released him and he worked in Britain for the duration of the war, returning to France early in 1946. Immediately on his return he applied for entry into the Fourth International and was accepted.

The activities of Pierre Frank recently in Ceylon where he supported the centrist United Left Front is quite consistent with his opposition to Trotsky and Trotskyism.

Right from the early '30s Frank was always 'a demoralised centrist'. He was regarded by Trotsky as a demoralised centrist and he continues so to this day.

Naturally Cannon and the Socialist Workers Party, who in the past have treated Frank with contempt, know he is a political imposter but they remain silent about his role because he now supports their revisionist course.

Political Committee of the Socialist Labour League, 20/7/1964

For information

Copy of a letter to *International Socialism*, 47 Fitzroy Road, London, N.W.1, dated 21st October, 1964.

To the Editor,
Dear Sir,

My attention has just been drawn to the fact that in issue No. 18 of your magazine you reproduced long extracts from my pamphlet on the Central Workers' Council of Budapest, which appeared in 1961.

Allow me to express my great surprise and astonishment at your attitude in not going through the generally acknowledged procedure of asking the author's permission before printing a text. It is true that you refer to permission from the Imre Nagy Institute, who published my pamphlet. However, I must make it clear to you that I made a definitive break with this institute in autumn 1961 because of its revisionist position which arose from its dependence upon capitalism. The said institute has thus no right of any kind to dispose of my writings—above all now that it has been dissolved.

As for my permission, I would have thought differently about it three years ago, but now, I would not have given you this permission even if, in accordance

with normal procedure, you had asked me for it. I have broken with the revisionists and consequently also with you. The point is, the experience of the Hungarian workers' councils is inconceivable along with your opinion about the character, so-called 'State Capitalism', of the USSR. And when you write (page 3, No. 18 of your magazine) that 'Lenin's concept of "imperialism" and Trotsky's of "permanent revolution" . . . are no longer adequate'—be consistent and do not evoke the Hungarian Revolution, the course of which and the lessons of which are living proofs of these 'concepts'. Your opinion and your practical actions are as much in contradiction with these 'concepts' as with the Hungarian workers' councils. And if there is in England an organisation whose 'concepts' and actions are close to the experiences and support of the Hungarian councils, that organisation is only the Socialist Labour League and not you.

For these reasons I ask you to publish my letter and to please refrain from printing the entire text of my pamphlet as you have already promised to do.

I trust, Mr. Editor, that you will agree.

Yours, etc.,

BALAZS NAGY

The Newsletter

WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

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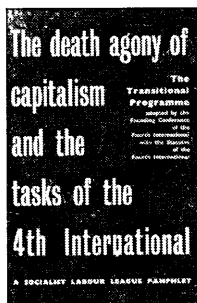
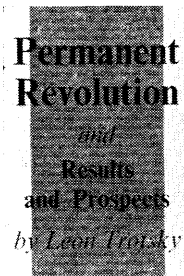
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The Draft Programme of the Communist International by Leon Trotsky

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.

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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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