

# Fourth International

TROTSKY MEMORIAL NUMBER



**Leon Trotsky**  
November 7, 1879—August 21, 1940

Celebrating the Tenth  
Anniversary of Call for the  
Fourth International

**THERE IS NO PEACE!**  
Manifesto of the National Committee  
of the Socialist Workers Party

Lenin and Trotsky on:

- France — Versailles
- Imperialist 'Peace'
- 'World Security'

A Message from Natalia Sedov Trotsky

August 1945

25 Cents

## Manager's Column

The July issue of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** was completely sold out one week after its publication. When requests started arriving from agents for extra copies, we began somewhat belatedly to figure up the increased bundle orders. We have raised our press run for August, but the fact remains that the July 1945 **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** is now a rare item.

C. Briscoe, our San Diego literature agent, sent us an urgent request: "Please increase our F. I. bundle order. Our sales at the newsstand have taken a sudden and gratifying jump—thus necessitating the doubling of our order."

And from Chicago: "Probably because of some mix-up in the mails our request to increase Chicago's F. I. bundle order to 125 copies was not met. Newsstand sales have been going so well that we must get a larger bundle than 100 as arrived yesterday. Please send us an additional 25 of the July edition and 125 copies per month henceforth."

\* \* \*

The new cover, with the drawing of Lenin and the new masthead should make the magazine even more popular on the newsstands. An interesting and instructive criticism (the kind that every business manager like to receive) comes from Bill Crane, Milwaukee literature agent: "The new masthead of the F. I. looks very good and is refreshingly in contrast with the previous shoddy head. It is in line with what the literature agents suggested at their committee meeting two National Conventions ago. But I see the editors still insist on a messed up, amateurish looking cover. Why must the table of contents, well almost, be printed on the cover? And why the volume and issue number? And why must Lenin look off the page making the magazine look as though it were made up in a high school journalism class? Don't the editors realize that one or two of the most important articles should be played up and the rest printed much smaller in a compact area, thus giving the magazine a clean, dignified look and making the cover easy to read?"

Besides the jump in newsstand sales, there has been an increase in combination subscriptions. These are offered at \$2.50 for one year of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** and **THE MILITANT**. The phenomenal success of the recent **MILITANT** campaign, in obtaining 22,000 new subscribers for this weekly has stimulated interest in our theoretical

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### CONTENTS

There Is No Peace! (Manifesto of SWP National Committee) . . . . .	227
A Message from Natalia Sedov Trotsky . . . . .	229
For the Fourth International . . . . .	230
Trotsky's Orders to the Red Army . . . . .	237
Leon Trotsky on French Imperialism and Its Decay . . . . . By Charles Carsten . . . . .	238
Closer to the Proletarians of the "Colored Races"! . . . . By Leon Trotsky . . . . .	243
The "United Nations"—A New Thieves' Kitchen . . . . . By John G. Wright . . . . .	244
The Transformation of Morals . . . . . By Leon Trotsky . . . . .	248
From the Arsenal of Marxism Perspectives of World Development—III . . . . . By Leon Trotsky . . . . .	250
Trotsky on the National Question . . . . .	254

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magazine. Workers and young students who subscribe to **THE MILITANT** and whose hunger for more theoretical knowledge is aroused have evinced interest.

We now receive orders from **MILITANT** readers for back copies of the magazine containing articles referred to in the news columns and especially in the Workers' Forum (a department in **THE MILITANT** which carries letters from workers). Thus, a Washington reader ordered five copies of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** for June, contain-

ing "Interview With a Soviet Citizen."

\* \* \*

In acknowledging renewal subscriptions to the F. I., it is our custom to urge the subscriber to jot down informally his impressions of the magazine. A subscriber in Pennsylvania wrote this at the foot of our letter, in reply: "Thirty eight years ago I joined the S. P. in Philadelphia, was active there and later (1912-1917) in Herkimer County, New York State. I was on the New York State Committee a couple of

years. 'Ran' for State office a number of times. Have not been active for a number of years but still interested in what is going on.

"I like **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** because it sticks close to Marx and World Revolution. I suppose I'm an orthodox Marxist."

\* \* \*

A reader from New York especially liked "Evolution of the Communist International" in the July issue. He says that this article gives the whole picture of the historical changes in the Third International in two or three pages.

A reader in Cleveland thinks that the article by Leon Trotsky on Thermidor and Bonapartism ought to be made available again. He suggests reprinting it under "Arsenal of Marxism."

\* \* \*

Letters from English readers are coming in more and more frequently. One such letter we feel merits being printed in full: "Many thanks for the three books, the parcel of pamphlets, and regular flow of periodicals. I have already read two of the books and am just starting on the third. The lessons they contain are of value to the entire world movement, especially the younger sections.

"The F. I.'s I find especially valuable. Lily Roy's article was admirable (apart from one or two minor flaws in the third part).

"The article 'Modern Welding and the Welder' in the April issue is a good example of the application of dialectics to a field other than the strictly political one. Engels, of course, demonstrated in many of his works the remarkable potentialities of the application of Marxist dialectics to natural and scientific phenomena. Unfortunately this aspect of Marxism seems to have been neglected since then. Certainly political work is of the greatest importance, and there would be little excuse for taking up too much of one's time with mere theoretical digressions. However, many scientific and other investigators have been unconsciously adopting the dialectical materialist approach to their subject. Freudism, for instance, is one of the best examples; it is pure dialectical materialism applied to psychology. (Incidentally a reading of his works, if one can spare the time, will amply repay, if only for the brilliancy of his dialectical expositions). It is hoped that F. I. will contain, from time to time, articles of a similar nature to 'Modern Welding and the Welder.' It is only in the application of theory that one really learns."

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# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 6

AUGUST 1945

NUMBER 8

## There Is No Peace!

### Only World Socialism Can Save Humanity from Atomic Destruction in Another Imperialist War!

#### *Manifesto of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party*

Workers, Farmers—Toilers of America!

The second imperialist world war has ended. Six years of wholesale slaughter and devastation have been brought to an awful climax with the discovery of the atomic bomb and its use, with frightful effect, against the people of Japan.

The din of battle has ceased. Mankind now must contemplate the destruction and the ruin, the pain and the heartbreak, which the war has caused. People in every land are celebrating the end of the carnage, not so much with joy as with a sense of relief that it has come to an end. They do not and cannot feel secure. Over their celebrations, like a lowering cloud, hangs a grim foreboding of things yet to come. Here in America, where the civilian population has been spared the monstrous agony endured for long, unbroken years by the peoples of Europe and Asia, joy that the war has ended is also tinged with dread for the future.

The atomic bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with a combined population of 600,000 men, women and children, has sent a wave of revulsion and anxiety throughout the world, especially among the toiling populations who are the principal victims of war. It is universally realized that mankind has been saved from total annihilation in World War II only because the atomic bomb was invented so late. There is also the conviction, amounting to certainty, that another world war will mean the doom of the human race.

Hatred of imperialist war, and fear of what the future holds, is driving the workers to revolutionary political conclusions. The imperialist rulers, who alone have profited from the war, seek to prevent this at all costs. They want to sidetrack the workers from the struggle to end the capitalist system and establish socialism, which is the only sure guarantee that another war will be impossible.

#### **Illusions Being Spread**

All the organs of ruling class propaganda are mobilized to deceive the masses into thinking that the end of the war means the dawn of true and lasting peace and that peace can be preserved without revolutionary social change. As a second line of deception, they are trying to persuade the masses that even if another war should come, the American people need not fear annihilation because means will be found to "control" the use

of the atomic bomb and insure that it will not be used against this country.

Among the illusions now being sown is the idea that the unlocked secret of atomic energy possesses such ghastly destructive power that the capitalist rulers will refrain from using it in future wars. But the entire history of imperialist warfare refutes this contention. Between two world wars the most frightful instruments of death were invented and perfected. ALL HAVE BEEN USED! During World War II other death-dealing weapons were invented and perfected. ALL HAVE BEEN USED! Demolition bombs of enormous weight were dropped on helpless civilian populations. Incendiary fire-bombs were used to wipe out whole cities and burn their inhabitants to death. The unspeakable flame-thrower was employed by all the belligerents to burn masses of men to a crisp. The only reason poison gas was not used was its unreliability as a weapon, the danger that it might destroy its users.

To annihilate their opponents, the imperialist criminals will employ every deadly weapon in their arsenals. Let no one deceive himself that the atomic bomb will not be used!

Another illusion being sedulously fostered is that the atomic bomb is "our secret," that it will be kept "our secret" under tight government control and monopoly, and that therefore America will be safe. But the fact is that it is NOT EVEN NOW an exclusively American secret. It is known to the British imperialists, who collaborated in the scientific work from the very beginning up to the time of discovery. It is known also to the capitalist ruling class of Canada, which likewise took part in the project.

#### **Truman's Declaration**

Truman declared that Britain and the United States "do not intend to reveal the secret until means have been found to control the bomb so as to protect ourselves and the rest of the world from the danger of total destruction. . . . We must constitute ourselves trustees of this new force—to prevent its misuse, and to turn it into channels of service to mankind."

But with the defeat of German and Japanese imperialism, the rivalry between British and American imperialism becomes one of the greatest potential sources of another world war. The interests of these two powers meet and clash in every corner

of the globe. Unless the whole world system of capitalism and imperialism is destroyed, war between them is more than probable. Can anyone in his sane senses doubt that in the event of such a war the antagonists will use the atomic bomb in the effort to destroy each other?

And what does Truman mean by "misuse" of the atomic bomb? Was the deliberate and cold-blooded extermination of 600,000 Japanese a high act of humanitarianism? In the shyster language of the imperialist criminals, a weapon is "misused" only when it is employed by their opponents. The Nazis "misused" the weapon of aerial bombardment when they blasted Warsaw, Rotterdam and Coventry. The Japanese imperialists "misused" it when they blasted Canton, Hankow and Chungking. Then the Anglo-American imperialists improved on the performance of their rivals and wiped out dozens of German and Japanese cities and hundreds of thousands of civilian inhabitants. They just "forgot," and hoped their own peoples would forget, their previous pretended indignation.

The atomic bomb, no matter what may be decided in Washington and London, will not remain even an Anglo-American-Canadian secret. Sir James Chadwick, chief British scientist in the atomic bomb project, stated in Washington on August 12 that this deadly weapon was "not a strictly British-American secret" and that "any nation could learn the secret in about five years of experimentation, assuming it had access to the necessary raw materials."

Consider, too, the ominous import of the following extract from a Washington dispatch to the *New York Sun* on August 8: "Twenty-four hours ago, members of Congress were earnestly debating among themselves whether or not the new discovery should be given to the United Nations Security Council and to other Allied governments. Today their thinking is growing up, and they are beginning to comprehend the fact that even if the blueprints and formulae for this new invention were to be destroyed, the scientists of other nations would discover the secret anew in their laboratories."

## They "Know of No Way"

The dispatch then continues: "More awesome still is the realization that the political development of the world has not kept pace with its scientific knowledge—**THAT WE KNOW OF NO WAY TO PREVENT THE MISUSE OF THIS NEW DISCOVERY.** The thought of negotiating an international series of treaties renouncing the use of atomic explosives in war inspires no confidence in any one."

Two terrible world wars have proven—and the foregoing quotation underlines the fact—that capitalism is incapable of utilizing the great advances in science and technique for the enrichment of human life. In "peace," capitalism condemns the masses to poverty and insecurity amidst potential plenty. In war, it conscripts industry and science for the mutual destruction of the peoples.

**THEY KNOW OF NO WAY!** This admission of bankruptcy and helplessness comes from the most powerful ruling class on earth. Out of their own mouths they are condemned as the murderers of the human race. With an insane calmness they tell the peoples to await their doom.

Let no man deceive himself with the thought that because Germany and Japan have been defeated, a new war, at least during the lifetime of this generation, is unlikely. Capitalist appetites and imperialist rivalries remain. Only the focus of the antagonisms has shifted. War is the end result of the ceaseless capitalist hunt for profits, markets, colonies, spheres of influence. It is a lie that war can be prevented by treaties and

agreements among the imperialist bandits. The League of Nations could not prevent war. It was dead and buried before World War II broke out. The United Nations organization will not be able to prevent a third world war. Its very formula of "peace by force" implies war and not peace. In unguarded moments the imperialists admit that they know of no way to prevent war. The admission is implicit in the maintenance of gigantic armaments, which no one proposes to destroy. First Washington dispatches on the atomic bomb quoted official quarters as saying this new weapon would "revolutionize all future warfare." Could anything be plainer?

Nor should any man deceive himself that America will escape the annihilating blasts of the atomic bomb in a future war. Air power and sea power will afford no sure protection. Scientists already tell us that an air force will not be necessary to carry this new missile on its deadly mission. It will be fired immense distances in the form of a jet-propelled rocket that will speed to its target at a lightning rate and with unerring accuracy. New York or Detroit or Los Angeles will be as vulnerable as Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

## A Dangerous Illusion

It is at this point that the liberal apologists and defenders of the bloody capitalist system come forward to explain that the new weapon makes future wars "unthinkable," because its extensive use would mean the utter annihilation of the human race. Thus another dangerous illusion is sown.

After World War I these same liberals declared that another war was "unthinkable." Now that mankind has suffered another terrible blood-bath, do they seek to inquire why the "unthinkable" came to pass? They do not. For honest inquiry leads straight to the conclusion that under capitalism wars are inevitable and inescapable, and that once war begins all the diabolical instruments of killing and destruction are brought into play. The liberal fakers are employed, and generously paid, to cover up for capitalism, to mislead the masses by sowing illusions, and thus divert them from the struggle for socialism which alone can end the horrors of war for all time. That is why, while quaking in their shoes at the realization of what the atomic bomb means, they can only mutter the senseless incantation that a new war is "unthinkable."

THEY know no way!

But there IS a way—**THE WAY OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!**

Capitalism in its death agony, writhing in the toils of mortal crisis, has perfected an instrument of all-embracing annihilation. This deadly destructive force, held in the grip of the criminal capitalist rulers, will be used to decimate mankind unless it is snatched in time from their murderous grasp. The workers must awake, and awake quickly, to the realization that war with all its horrors is the product of the capitalist system.

## Character of the War

To conceal the true source of war, capitalist propagandists divide the nations into "aggressors" and "peace-lovers." This is a lie. The people of every nation hate war, for they are its victims. They are plunged into war by the capitalist rulers, who alone profit from it. It contributes exactly nothing to an understanding of the profound social causes of war to say that Germany or Japan started it. Germany and Japan have been defeated. Yet the germs of war are STILL lodged in the heart of capitalist society. No trust whatsoever can be placed in the "peace-loving" declarations of the statesmen of capitalism in this or any other country. Only the utter wiping out of capitalist

rule throughout the world can insure that atomic explosives will never again be used for mass murder.

Toilers of America! Years before the war and right up to the moment of its outbreak, the Socialist Workers Party, the Trotskyists, warned that war was inevitable if capitalism was allowed to live. We told the workers the truth!

When war began, we exposed the lie that it was a war for "democracy." We laid bare the truth that it was an imperialist war. We have never ceased to proclaim this truth. We proclaimed it alone against all the liars and deceivers of the people!

### **We Told the Truth**

This truth was proclaimed by our comrades in other lands, in Europe and in Asia. Under the proud and stainless banner of the Fourth International, the Trotskyists everywhere fought against the imperialist war and for the socialist future of the working class!

Today, at this great turning point in history, we bring our message of hope to toiling humanity. We point out the road of salvation!

Let the cataclysmic horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki serve as a clarion call to the working class! The workers must wrench the power from the hands of the blood-drenched capitalist criminals and take their destiny in their own hands. The fight for socialism is now more than a fight to end poverty and inequality, to abolish the exploitation of man by man. Today the fight for socialism is a fight to prevent the annihilation of the human race. Mankind must now exterminate the capitalist system—or be exterminated!

Time is of the essence. At an ever faster pace capitalism is rushing mankind toward the last abyss of destruction. The end of the second world war does not mean peace, but only an

interval between wars, marked by smaller conflicts. This interval will be shorter—much shorter—than the last, because the contradictions of decayed capitalism grow ever more acute and capitalism can survive only by means of war. This breathing-space must be utilized by the progressive forces of society, the working class and its allies, to smash the capitalist system and usher in a socialist society.

Socialism—or perish! These are the alternatives. There is none other. Only the working class, which suffers the cruelties of capitalism in peace and war, can deal the death-blow to this foul system. The workers can rally the broadest masses to their liberating banner and can change the world. Having abolished capitalism, they can harness the productive forces and the wondrous discoveries of science to the service of human needs.

The release of atomic energy opens up grandiose vistas for the development of human society. It holds the promise of eliminating all poverty and raising the living standards of all peoples to undreamed-of heights. Hazardous and unhealthy occupations can become things of the past. The drudgery and servitude of ugly and unnecessary toil can be ended. There can be leisure and comfort and cultural advancement for every man, woman and child on earth.

All on one condition—that capitalism, the strangler of human progress, is destroyed!

Toilers of America! Working men and working women in the factories and on the farms! The Trotskyists summon you to the struggle for the socialist revolution! Enlist with us in the great battle for a new world in which permanent peace and well-being will be assured for all!

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

## **A Message From Natalia Sedov Trotsky**

*On the Occasion of the Fifth Anniversary of the Assassination  
of Leon Trotsky by Stalin's Hired Assassin—and in  
Commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the  
Issuance of the Call for the Founding of the  
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL*

July 31, 1945

Dear Friends,

I was deeply touched and gratified by your communication informing me of the projected publication of the August [and September] issues of the *Fourth International*, devoted wholly to the founding and building of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, the Fourth International. After all, the latter stems from the Third International, which took its origin, March 1919, in the storms and stresses of the October Revolution, amid the fires of the Civil War.

Inspired by the idea and ideal of the revolutionary International, the European delegates faced the greatest hardships and gravest risks in order to make the journey, illegally, to the founding Congress at Moscow. The number of delegates was 51, but some of them never reached their destination, being intercepted and arrested en route. The Congress concluded its work with a summons to work indefatigably and to support the Socialist revolution, then fighting for its life.

The fundamental problems connected with the preparation of this First International Communist Congress were broached

and elaborated jointly by Lenin and Trotsky. Those were the burning days, when every minute counted and could not be lost. More than once Lenin and Trotsky would exchange views and arrive at agreement by telephone, catching what each other meant even if words were only half-spoken. On occasion L.D. would hasten to Lenin for more prolonged discussions. They worked together energetically, enthusiastically, with assurance and with joy. Both of them remained cheerful. At the following three world congresses of the Communist International, the main reports were likewise assigned to these two leaders who worked in complete harmony and amity.

Contrary to the contemptible slanders of the epigones there was a complete reciprocity and friendly feeling between Lenin and Trotsky. In attesting this, special weight attaches to an extraordinary document which Lenin gave to Trotsky during the Civil War, in a period when sharp differences occurred in the party over the military questions. This document consisted of a blank sheet of paper, at the bottom of which was Lenin's signature accompanied by the following lines:

Comrades, knowing the harsh character of Comrade Trotsky's orders, I am so convinced, so absolutely convinced, of the correctness, expedience and necessity for the good of our cause, of the orders issued by Comrade Trotsky, that I give them my full support.

V. Ulianov (Lenin).

Handing this document to L.D., Lenin said: "I give you this blank and I will give you as many of them as you want." Could there possibly be an expression of greater moral confidence in human relationships? (Incidentally, L.D. never made use of this document.)

Their relationship was based on a profound and perfect mutual understanding, whence came Lenin's boundless confidence, admiration and the Leninist love of L.D. which radiated from the perspicacious and shrewdly laughing eyes of Lenin in such days as the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, or in the days of the defense of Petrograd against Yudenich, or on occasion of victories at the civil war fronts.

At each of my fleeting meetings with M. I. Ulianova (Lenin's sister) and Krupskaya (Lenin's wife), they would both express their rapture over the successes of Lev Davidovich. A few days after the death of Lenin, Krupskaya wrote L.D.:

The attitude of V. I. [Lenin] toward you at the time when you came to us in London from Siberia has not changed until his death. I wish you, Lev Davidovich, strength and health, and I embrace you warmly.  
N. Krupskaya.

There were occasions, during L.D.'s stay at the civil war fronts, when Lenin would chance to meet me and he never failed to inquire about L.D.'s health, his state of mind and the topic and tenor of his letters to me.

Despite the gravity of the general situation and the endless succession of difficulties, Lenin remained vigorous and in high spirits. He knew what he was doing. The general situation was onerous, but there was something out of ordinary in every phase of it, something that aroused, uplifted, something that smacked of holidays, notwithstanding the starvation, the tattered clothes, the black bread, cabbage soup and *kasha* in the Kremlin dining room. How little does all this resemble the Kremlin of today!

L.D.'s reports on the situation at the front invariably raised the spirits, spreading conviction and joy, carrying with them the promise of victory. Assurance would permeate the huge and jammed hall.

You and I, all of us, are living through the pangs that precede the death of an obsolete social system. The bourgeoisie is loath to die, though it has long accomplished everything historically attainable to it. In the struggle between two worlds, the one in its decline, the other in its ascendancy, the hour of decision has come. The old world does not flinch at resorting to any measure in order to tarry a little longer on the historical arena; and it is receiving assistance from the counter-revolutionary Kremlin bureaucracy, spangled with medals, orders, and heaviest gold braid after the fashion of Czarist times.

As guard and guardian of the covenants of its great predecessor, it is the task of the Fourth International to bring about the restoration of the October Kremlin; its task is to regenerate the revolutionary world labor movement and to achieve the victory of Socialism.

In these days when the names of the great revolutionists have been expunged from the columns of the world press, your initiative in publishing the *First Five Years of the Communist International* merits the warmest appreciation.

With all my heart I wish you success,

Natalia Sedov Trotsky

## For the Fourth International

After mankind's gigantic forward leap, after the great victory of the Russian proletariat in October 1917, a wave of reaction set in. The leadership of the working class fell to the Social Democrats and the Stalinists. Defeat after defeat was the price of their policies. The most crushing set-back of all, prior to the outbreak of the second imperialist holocaust, came in Germany when Hitler assumed power. Neither the Stalinist nor Social Democratic leaders lifted a finger in militant struggle against the Nazis.

The German experience of 1929-33 gave proof that the Communist International, founded under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky in March 1919, had succumbed, within a decade of Lenin's death, to the disease of revisionism and opportunism in its Stalinist form.

Upon this catastrophe in Germany, Leon Trotsky pronounced the Third International dead and

resolutely set about to organize new revolutionary parties throughout the world, as sections of the new Marxist International.

For a decade—from 1923 to 1933—Trotsky and his co-thinkers had carried on their work as a faction of the Comintern. At its inception in the USSR in 1923, the Russian Left Opposition posed as its task, the reform and regeneration of the Russian Bolshevik Party and of the Comintern by means of Marxist criticism and internal faction activity. This basic policy remained in force after the formation of the first international Trotskyist organization—the International Communist League (Left Opposition)—in the Spring of 1930 "on a foundation which was still weak and unstable". (Trotsky).

This was the gestation period of the movement. It is hardly possible to exaggerate its importance in the evolution of Trotskyism. Within

the limits of this brief historical review, however, we can touch only upon a few of the main aspects.

### Policy of "Reform"

First, how is one to appraise this basic line of "reform," applied up to 1933? From a superficial standpoint, such a policy appears to have been the policy of "failure," inasmuch as the evolution of the CI proceeded not along the variant of regeneration but, on the contrary, that of decomposition. Such an approach seeks to apply to the historic process the primitive foot-rule of a pragmatist who arrives at judgments on the basis of episodic successes or failures. An altogether different gauge is required for processes that occur in nature, society or the mind. Moreover, one must take not an isolated segment of our epoch but the entire zigzag curve, at least



since October 1917. Only from this higher and correct vantage ground can the Trotskyist policy be correctly appraised. Here is Trotsky's own estimate:

"The course towards 'reform,' taken in its entirety, was, however, not incorrect: it represented a necessary stage in the evolution of the Marxist wing of the Communist International; it gave us the opportunity to educate the cadres of the Bolshevik-Leninists and was not without influence on the labor movement in its entirety. At all times the policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy was subjected to the pressure of the Left Opposition. The progressive measures of the USSR, which have held back the coming of Thermidor, were only partial and belated borrowings from the Left Opposition. . . . To this we must add, that the degree of degeneration, generally speaking, cannot be measured in advance, merely with the help of its symptoms. The living verification of events is indispensable."

### The Formative Period

It ought to be stressed that the early work of the Left Opposition likewise assured the primacy and continuity of revolutionary thought and training, without which no real selection of cadres is possible. No other tendency in the world labor movement, least of all the legion of pompous petty-bourgeois critics and challengers of Trotskyism, proved capable of accomplishing this. On the contrary, every one of the many groupings from the Brandlerites—Lovestonites through the German SAP'ists to all the Burnhams ended up by deserting to the camp of the bourgeoisie. The Trotskyists alone have made it possible for the revolutionary vanguard to telescope within far briefer intervals (than would have been otherwise needed) the transitions to new beginnings and the repetitions of old experiences and trials.

Suffice it at this writing to cite Trotsky's own succinct summation of this formative period:

"The brief history of the work of the Leninists was, at the same time, the history of an internal ideological struggle. A whole number of individuals and groups seeking a haven among us from the vicissitudes of life, have succeeded, fortunately, in leaving our ranks. At this very moment [in 1935] the Belgian section is passing through an acute crisis. Undoubtedly, there will be crises in the future, too. Philistines and snobs, who are ignorant of how a revolutionary organization takes shape, shrugged their shoulders ironically over our 'splits' and 'cleavages.' Yet, upon the whole, our organization has grown numerically, it has established sections in most countries, it has become steeled ideologically, and it has matured politically. . . . The viability of our international organization, its capacity for development, its readiness to surmount its own weaknesses and ills have been proved to the hilt."

Events have corroborated this analysis. When history posed for the fourth time the task of building anew the Marxist International, the Trotskyists alone were prepared. This task was unpostponable. The need itself is inherent in the

objective situation. In conditions of world economy, world trade, world politics, the proletariat cannot get along without a world party. From the subjective side, no serious struggle against imperialist wars and for the revolution can even be contemplated without the International. As Trotsky tirelessly repeated, without the International the proletariat would be crushed—and with it our whole civilization. Further:

"Without a Marxist International, national organizations, even the most advanced, are doomed to narrowness, vacillation and helplessness; the advanced workers are forced to feed upon surrogates of internationalism. To proclaim 'purely theoretical,' i.e., needless, the building of the Fourth International, is cravenly to renounce the basic task of our epoch."

The greatest single obstacle in the way of expediting this *basic task of our epoch* is the unawareness of the masses, lulled, deceived and betrayed by the monstrous machines of Stalinism and Social Democracy, which have been so long synchronized with the state machinery of the world bourgeoisie. There exist other agencies, too, that supplement the operation of these "prime movers," namely, the Centrist cheats, vacillators, fainthearts, and their spiritual kin.

Only one way obtains of bridging this gap between the needs of the objective situation and the subjective backwardness of the masses: to overcome their mental lag it is necessary to raise "the consciousness of the masses closer to the understanding of the historical necessity—in simpler terms: to explain to the masses their own interests, which they do not yet understand" (Trotsky). The International is the sole means by which this can be accomplished.

### Essence of Internationalism

What is the International? Formalistic thinkers either reduce the question to "pure theory" or like the empiricist leaders of the British Independent Labor Party (Brockway, Maxton and the like) view it simply as an "organizational form." Nothing could be falsier. First and foremost, the International is a system of ideas—*theoretical, political, organizational, etc.* The International—that means a world-wide selection and ideological fusion of individuals through this system of ideas. Or, as Trotsky phrased it:

"The International is first of all a *program*, and a system of *strategic, tactical and organizational* methods that flow from it."

For this reason, the Trotskyists declared from the outset that collaboration in building the Fourth International required agreement not on partial or second-rate questions but on the fundamental ones. Thus, the International Plenum of the ICL flatly stated, September 13, 1933:

"There cannot even be talk, of course, that the new International can be built by organizations which proceed from profoundly different and even antagonistic bases."

To gloss over differences of program, instead of clarifying them, meant—and must always mean—to sabotage the work of further building the International. To the end of his life, Trotsky mercilessly fought every attempt, no matter what its source, to undermine the International at its very roots, namely: its programmatic principles

of theory, politics, strategy, tactics, organization, and so on. Above all, he fought the denigrators and opponents of the most powerful weapon in the arsenal of Trotskyism, its dialectic method—the Marxist guide to action—in reaching political, strategical or tactical conclusions.

Supremely conscious of the decisiveness of the International, Trotsky devoted all his energies primarily to this task of tasks. From 1933 on, the constant refrain in his writings is the impermissibility of postponing even for a single hour the work of further building the Fourth International. This does not mean to say that Trotsky and his co-thinkers rushed to mechanically create the World Party of the Socialist Revolution. They neither artificially constituted themselves as the new International nor did they proclaim the ICL sections, in each country, as the new parties. On the contrary, they engaged in an irreconcilable war against sectarians (like the Oehlerites in this country) who were the real proponents of this false course. In 1933 the ICL issued a special proclamation declaring:

"The course towards the new international is dictated by the entire course of development. This does not mean to say, however, that we propose to proclaim the new International immediately. . . . The creation of the new International depends not only upon the objective course of events, but also upon *our own efforts.*"

### The Subjective Factor

"Our own efforts"! This formula remains incomprehensible to Centrists who operate, in the last analysis, with the formulas of prostration, pessimism and fatalism. This usually finds expression in constant and vague references to the "historical process," and pious sighs that "somehow, sometime the work will be accomplished and the working class movement renovated" (Trotsky).

Throughout 1933-35 the world Trotskyist movement kept reiterating the objective set forth in its original proclamation, namely: not the need to establish the new International immediately but rather the need to engage at once in the struggle for its creation. In practice this meant that the various national Trotskyist sections sought everywhere to approach all leftward moving groups, all those who indicated readiness to build the new International. The touchstone of this readiness was not an empty pledge but rather the complete break with reformism in both its classic Social-Democratic and latter-day Stalinist forms. Nor was this all. It was in addition necessary to break with all Centrist moods and currents. Thus, in this initial period of the struggle for the Fourth International, Trotsky and his co-thinkers had to wage warfare simultaneously on two fronts: against sectarianism and against Centrism.

The rich experience and lessons of these struggles will bring their biggest dividends in the days ahead. But at that time, too, important successes were achieved. By 1935, the French section executed a very bold organizational maneuver (entry into the French Socialist Party); the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Holland adhered to the ICL and presently merged with the

Dutch OSP (Independent Socialist Party of Holland). Across the Atlantic, the American section effected the fusion with the Musteites (AWP) on "rigidly principled bases" (Trotsky); and later successfully carried out the entry into the American Socialist Party, out of which the Socialist Workers Party was to emerge.

The first important step toward the founding of the Fourth International was the joint declaration, August 1933, of four parties, known as the "Pact of Four" (see *The Militant*, September 23, 1933). The signatories to this "Pact," calling for the building of the new International, were: the International Left Opposition (ICL); the Socialist Labor Party of Germany (SAP); the Independent Socialist Party of Holland (OSP); and the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Holland (RSP). The signatories affirmed that "in full realization of the great historical responsibility which devolves upon them, the undersigned . . . obligate themselves to direct all their forces to the formation in the shortest possible time of the [Fourth] International on the firm foundations of the theoretic and strategic principles of Marx and Lenin."

### Centrist Obstructors and Foes

This first great step toward the organization of the revolutionary vanguard in a new world party was at the same time the signal for a long and bitter struggle. The leaders of the SAP (later to be followed by the Dutch signatories), without openly withdrawing their signatures from the joint declaration, opened an undercover, devious and disloyal struggle against the very idea of the Fourth International. Like all typical Centrists, the SAP leaders (Walcher, Froelich,

*et al*) never were able to grasp the decisiveness of class-conscious revolutionary activity in the "historical process." Being, in essence, one of the varieties of opportunism, Centristism, as an ideological tendency, shares with the latter an organic hatred of Bolshevism. Most of all they hate its energy, its will to struggle, its will to action. The internationalism of Centrists remains platonic. From slothful procrastination they easily pass into savage opposition. In action, they attacked—and still attack—the "Trotskyist" idea of the Fourth International.

The Trotskyist movement, on the other hand, had become by 1933 thoroughly imbued with the knowledge of the decisiveness of cadres and the importance of "our own efforts" in determining the destinies of the proletariat. Those who really went to the school of Trotsky learned that what really determined the existing world situation was the *crisis of the proletarian leadership*. How could this crisis be overcome?

### Lenin-Trotsky's Way

The only way, the way of Trotsky, reads:

"The crisis of the proletarian leadership can not, of course, be overcome by means of an abstract formula. It is a question of an extremely humdrum process. But not of a purely 'historical' process, that is, of the objective premises of conscious activity, but of an uninterrupted chain of ideological, political and organizational measures for the purpose of fusing together the best, the most conscious elements of the world proletariat beneath a spotless banner, elements whose number and self-confidence must be constantly strengthened, whose connections with the broader sec-

tions of the proletariat must be developed and deepened—in a word: to restore to the proletariat, under new and highly difficult and onerous conditions, its historical leadership."

This was Lenin's way, too.

In Trotsky's eyes it was a heinous and deliberate crime: (1) not to participate in the arduous but indispensable day-to-day work of assembling and fusing the cadres; and (2) not to challenge and oppose those who attacked this work or obstructed it.

"To sing a monotonous song about indefinite future actions in this situation, in contrast to the purposeful selection of the cadres of a new International, means to carry on a thoroughly reactionary work," wrote Trotsky in July 1935.

Beginning with the fall of 1933, the struggle for the Fourth International was to proceed despite and against the Centrists of the SAP, ILP and other members of the Centrist "world organization," the notorious "London Bureau." A critical stage in this struggle was marked by the Manifesto of the five parties, in the summer of 1935, which called for the formation of the Fourth. This historic document was first published in the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*, No. 44, July 1935. It appeared in English in *The Militant*, August 3, 1935. The text which appears in this issue has been checked against the Russian original and minor revisions made wherever necessary.

The formal launching of the Fourth International was to be delayed for three more years, until September 3, 1938, when the Founding Conference was held "somewhere in Europe." Documents and articles pertaining to this stage will appear in subsequent issues of our magazine.

# An Open Letter to All Revolutionary Proletarian Organizations and Groupings

Hitler's assumption of power, which did not meet with the slightest resistance on the part of the two "mighty" working class parties—one of them, moreover, basing itself upon the USSR—has exposed decisively the internal putrefaction of the Second and Third Internationals. In August, 1933, four organizations [International Communist League, (Bolshevik-Leninists), Revolutionary Socialist Party, Independent Socialist Party—both of Holland, and the Socialist Workers Party (SAP) of Germany] formulated for the first time in a programmatic document the new historic task: *the creation of the Fourth International*. The events transpiring since that time have brought irrefutable confirmation that there is no other road.

The annihilation of the *Austrian* proletariat has demonstrated that victory cannot be gained by issuing a last minute call for insurrection to the masses, disoriented and drained by opportunism—after the party had been driven into a blind alley. It is necessary to prepare systematically for victory by means of revolutionary policies in every sphere of the working class movement.

The very same lesson immutably flows from the annihilation of the *Spanish* proletariat. Under all conditions, especially

during a revolution, it is impermissible to turn one's back upon the toilers for the sake of a bloc with the bourgeoisie. It is impossible to expect and demand that the duped and disillusioned masses will fly to arms upon the belated call of a party in which they have lost confidence. The proletarian revolution is not improvised by orders of a bankrupt leadership. The revolution must be prepared through incessant and irreconcilable class struggle which gains for the leadership the invincible confidence of the party, fuses the vanguard with the entire class, and transforms the proletariat into the leader of all the exploited in the city and country.

Following the ignominious downfall of the principal section of reformism—the completely corroded German Social Democracy—the "left wing" of the Second International went down in ruins in Austria and Spain. But these fearful lessons passed by without leaving a trace: the leading cadres of reformism within the party and in the trade unions had degenerated to the marrow of their bones. Their personal interests and their patriotic views bind them to the bourgeoisie and they are utterly incapable of resorting to the road of the class struggle.

The parties of the Second International calmly reconcile



themselves to the fact that their *Belgian* president, at the very first beck of finance capital, joined hands with the Catholic and liberal middle-men to salvage the banks at the expense of the toiling masses. In the wake of Vandervelde there followed de Man, the vainglorious critic of Karl Marx, the originator of the de Man "Plan": nor did the "left" centrist Spaak fail to betray the socialist opposition in return for the livery of a minister.

Mindful neither of lessons nor warnings, the *French* Socialist Party continues vainly to clutch at the coattails of the "Republican" bourgeoisie, and it pins greater hopes upon the friendship of the Radicals than upon the revolutionary might of the proletariat. In all other countries, in every part of the world, in *Holland*, *Scandinavia*, *Switzerland*, the Social Democracy despite the decay of capitalism, continues to remain the agency of the bourgeoisie within the working class and reveals its utter inability to mobilize the masses in its own defense against fascism.

Should the electoral successes of the Labour Party raise it once again to power, the consequence would not be a peaceful socialist transformation of *Great Britain*, but the consolidation of imperialist reaction, that is to say, an epoch of civil war, in face of which the leadership of the Labour Party will inevitably reveal its complete bankruptcy. The parliamentarian and trade unionist morons have yet to be convinced that the threat of fascism in England is no less real than on the continent.

The turbulent development of the crisis in the United States, the unending chain of strike struggles and the growth of working class organizations, against the background of the possibilities provided by the demagogy of the Roosevelt "plan," run up against profoundly conservative and bourgeois forces within the working class movement. As for the Stalinist party, it is hogtied by the solemn declarations of Litvinov, who in return for the recognition of the USSR by Yankee imperialism, publicly renounced the American Communists. This party, corrupted by a decade of unprincipled maneuvers and liquidationist experiments with parties (Farmer-Labor Party) which have nothing in common with proletarian parties either in their composition or program—this Stalinist party, upon orders from Moscow confines itself to the role of a radical-intellectual movement which functions in the United States as the valet of Stalinist diplomacy. But the deep-going crisis of American capitalism is awakening broad layers of workers from their semi-provincial slumbers, gradually dispelling bourgeois and petty bourgeois illusions, impelling the proletariat towards large scale class actions (Toledo, Minneapolis, San Francisco) and creates for the revolutionary Marxist party the possibility of gaining a widespread and profound influence upon the development and organization of the American working class. The historic role which accrues to the Fourth International and its American section not only within the confines of the Western hemisphere but on the world arena as well is of exceptional importance (since the smashing of American imperialism is of extreme significance for the world proletariat).

In the meantime the Third International does nothing except squander the remaining shreds of influence and authority acquired during the first five years of its existence. In Austria and Spain, the Communist International, despite extremely favorable circumstances, failed not only to create an organization in the least influential, but systematically compromised in the eyes of the workers the very idea of the revolutionary party. The Saar plebiscite is evidence that the German proletariat has lost every vestige of confidence not only in the Social Democracy

but in the Communist Party as well—the party that so ingloriously capitulated to Hitler. In Great Britain, Belgium, Holland, Scandinavia, on both American continents and in the Orient the sections of the Communist International, burdened by twelve years of fatal policies, are unable to emerge from their obscurity.

True, after the German debacle, the Communist International substituted the capitulatory policy of the united front at any price for the adventurist policy of the "Third Period." However, the experience in France, where this latest turn has attained its greatest development, demonstrates that the Communist International, with all its contradictions and zigzags, manages to retain its functions of serving as a brake upon the proletarian revolution. Rejecting the creation of a workers' militia in face of the immediate fascist danger and substituting its program of immediate demands and a policy of parliamentarianism for the struggle for power, the Communist International is the sower of the worst illusions of reformism and pacifism, gives actual support to the Right Wing in the Socialist Party against the Left, demoralizes the proletarian vanguard, and clears the road for a fascist overturn.

Finally, the founder of the Communist International, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has been completely crushed during the last few years by the uncontrolled bureaucracy which has turned the dictatorship of the proletariat into the conservative absolutism of Stalin. By means of persecutions, falsifications, amalgams and bloody repressions the ruling clique strives to nip in the bud every manifestation of Marxist thought. Nowhere in the world is genuine Leninism hounded so bestially as in the USSR!

The most recent opportunistic somersault of the Communist International is intimately linked with the Soviet turn in foreign policy towards the League of Nations and the military alliance with French imperialism. The ruling bureaucracy of the USSR has definitely arrived at the conclusion that the Communist International is impotent to afford it any assistance whatsoever against the war danger and at the same time, it hinders the work of Soviet diplomacy. The humiliating and truly servile dependency of the Communist International upon the Soviet uppercrust is expressed in a particularly glaring light in connection with the recent declaration of Stalin, approving the national defense of French imperialism.

Through the medium of an imperialist minister the leader of the Communist International has issued the order to the French Communist Party to conclude a patriotic truce today with the French bourgeoisie. Thus the Third International, whose congresses have not been convoked for almost seven years, has now officially gone over from the internationalist position to that of the most outright and servile social-patriotism. Whether or not the Seventh Congress, so continually postponed, convenes—the Third International will not be resuscitated. The Stalin-Laval communique is its death warrant.

Meanwhile, the destructive forces of capitalism continue their hellish work. The disintegration of world economy, the unemployment of tens of millions, the ruination of the peasantry imperiously place on the order of the day the task of the socialist revolution. The toilers, embittered and aroused, are seeking a way out. The prostration, collapse and putrefaction of the Second and Third International leave the proletariat without revolutionary leadership and impel the petty bourgeois masses on the road of despair. The bankrupt leaders seek to shift the responsibility for the triumph of fascism on the "passivity" of the proletariat; thus political betrayal is supplemented with calumny.

Threshing in the grip of insoluble contradictions, capitalism is preparing to plunge *the peoples into a new slaughter*. Ministers and dictators openly speculate whether the outbreak of the war will come in one or in three years from now. All the governments, vying with one another, are preparing the most destructive instruments, and thereby from every side they are hastening the explosion which may be immeasurably more frightful than the war of 1914-1918.

The leaders of the so-called working class parties and the trade unions sing loud the praises of the beauties of peace, they babble about "disarmament," exhort their governments to make peace among themselves, arouse the hopes of the working masses in the League of Nations, and at the same time swear fealty to the cause of "national defense," i.e., the defense of bourgeois rule with its inevitable wars.

Under cover of the "united front" and even of "organizational unity" Soviet diplomacy is preparing, behind the backs of the class-conscious workers, class peace between the sections of the two Internationals and the bourgeoisie of those countries which are in military alliance with the Soviet state. Thus the outbreak of a new war must lead to a new betrayal which will eclipse that of August 4, 1914.

\* \* \*

The betrayal of the cause of the international revolution by the Soviet bureaucracy has thrust the world proletariat far back. The difficulties that face the revolutionary vanguard are incredible. Nevertheless its position at the present time is incomparably more favorable than on the eve of the last war. At that time capitalism appeared to be all-powerful, almost invincible. The patriotic downfall of the International came utterly as a surprise even to Lenin. Everywhere the revolutionary elements were caught unprepared. The first international conference—very small numerically and its majority indecisive—took place more than a year after the outbreak of the war. The formation of revolutionary cadres proceeded slowly. The possibility of proletarian revolution was rejected even by the majority of the "Zimmerwaldists." Only the October victory in Russia in the fortieth month of the war produced a change in the situation, providing a mighty impulse for the formation of the Third International.

Today the internal weakness and corrosion of capitalism are so evident that they even serve as the main theme for fascist demagogy. In the colossal crisis in the United States, in the no less colossal unemployment, in the economic adventurism of Roosevelt, in the sweep of the strike struggles, in the ferment within all working class organizations there are being lodged for the first time the conditions for a mighty development of the revolutionary movement in North America. The example of the first victorious proletarian revolution lives in the memory of the masses. The experience of the great events of the last twenty years have been burned into the consciousness of the best militants. Genuinely revolutionary organizations, or at least groups, exist in all countries. They are closely bound together ideologically, and in part also organizationally. Even at present they represent a force incomparably more influential, homogeneous and steered than the "Zimmerwald Left" which in the fall of 1915 took the initiative in preparing for the Third International.

Within the reformist parties and trade unions, opposition groupings are emerging and growing stronger. Some of these assume the form of independent organizations. Within the sections of the Communist International, as a consequence of the prison regime, the opposition assumes a more mute and masked character, but it is developing here as well. Even in the USSR the need for ever new purges and repressions is proof of the

fact that the bureaucracy is unable to root out the spirit of Marxist criticism which is so hateful to it.

The oppositionist moods and tendencies bear today a predominantly *centrist* character, that is, intermediate between social patriotism and revolution. Under conditions when the traditional mass organizations are in process of collapse and decomposition, centrism represents in many cases an inevitable transitional stage even for progressive working class groupings. Marxists must be able to find access to all such tendencies, in order by example and propaganda to speed their passage to the revolutionary road. In this, the condition for success is irreconcilable criticism of the centrist leadership, exposure of the attempts to create the Two-and-a-Half International, and a ceaseless explanation of the fact that the revolutionary tasks of our epoch doom beforehand to ignominious bankruptcy those unifications which are hybrid and amorphous.

The slogan of "unity" of all working class organizations regardless of their program and tactic is being zealously propagated at present by the centrists, and is being ably exploited by the reformists who are more farsighted, and who fear, with good cause, being thrown overboard. The centrists often substitute the idea of merging the two old Internationals for the idea of a New International. In reality, unity with reformists and social-patriots of the Social Democratic or Stalinist variety signifies in the last analysis unity with the national bourgeoisie, and, consequently, the inevitable split of the proletariat, internationally as well as nationally, especially in the event of war. Genuine unity of the International and of its national sections can be assured only upon the *revolutionary Marxist* foundation, which in its turn can be created only by breaking with the social-patriots. To remain silent about the principled conditions and guarantees of proletarian unity is to join in the chorus for broadcasting illusions, duping the workers and preparing new catastrophes.

The humiliating and hopeless position of the two old Internationals is adequately characterized by the fact that the President of one became the humble Minister of His King, while the real master of the other uses the world proletarian organization as so much small change in diplomatic deals. Regardless of what unification maneuvers the two equally depraved bureaucracies may undertake, it is not they who will create the unity of the proletariat, and it is not for them to point the way out. The efforts of the centrists to reconcile the irreconcilable and to save by means of patching the pieces what is fated to be destroyed, are foredoomed. The new epoch requires a New International. The primary condition for success on this road is the close consolidation nationally and internationally of the genuine proletarian revolutionists, the disciples of Marx and Lenin, on a common program, and under a common banner.

Any attempt to prescribe an identical course for all countries would be fatal. Depending upon national conditions, upon the degree of the decomposition of the old working class organizations and, finally, upon the state of their own forces at a given moment, the Marxists (the revolutionary socialists, the internationalists, the Bolshevik-Leninists) can come forward, now in the form of an independent organization, now in the guise of a faction in one of the old parties, or trade unions. Assuredly, no matter what the time or the arena may be, this factional work serves only as a stage on the road of creating the new parties of the Fourth International, parties which may be created either through the regroupment of the revolutionary elements of the old organizations, or through the agency of independent organizations. But on whatever arena, and whatever the methods of functioning, they are bound to speak in the

name of unqualified principles and clear revolutionary slogans. They do not play hide and seek with the working class; they do not conceal their aims; they do not substitute diplomacy and combinations for a principled struggle. *Marxists at all times and under all conditions openly say what is.*

## Revolution Alone Can Eliminate War

The war danger which is a life and death question for the people is the supreme test for all the groupings and tendencies within the working class. "The struggle for peace," "the struggles against war," "war on war" and similar slogans are hollow and fraudulent phrases, if unaccompanied by the propaganda and the application of revolutionary methods of struggle. The only method to put an end to war is to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The only method to overthrow the bourgeoisie is by a revolutionary assault.

As against the reactionary lie of "national defense" it is necessary to advance the slogan of the revolutionary destruction of the national state. To the madhouse of capitalist Europe it is necessary to counterpose the program of *The Socialist United States of Europe*, as a stage toward the United States of the World.

Marxists irreconcilably reject the pacifist slogans of "disarmament," "arbitration," and "amity between peoples" (i.e., between capitalist governments) etc., as opium for the popular masses. The combinations between working class organizations and petty bourgeois pacifists (the Amsterdam-Pleyel Committee, and similar undertakings) render the best service to imperialism by distracting the attention of the working class from reality with its grave struggles, and beguiling them instead with impotent parades.

The struggle against war and imperialism cannot be the job of any sort of special "committees." The struggle against war is the preparation for revolution, that is to say, the job of working class parties and of the International. The Marxists pose this great task before the proletarian vanguard, without any frills. To the enervating slogan of "disarmament" they counterpose the slogan of *Winning the Army and Arming the Workers*. Precisely in this is one of the most important lines of demarcation between Marxism and centrism drawn. He will never find the courage to solve the revolutionary tasks who dares not utter them aloud.

During the year and a half that has elapsed since the publication of the first program of the Fourth International, the struggle for its principles and ideas has not abated for a single day; the revolutionary national sections and groups have grown in number; some of them extended their ranks and influence, others attained to a greater homogeneity and cohesion; organizations within the same country have united (Holland, USA); a number of programmatic and tactical documents have been elaborated. All this labor will indubitably proceed much better if correlated and unified on a world scale under the banner of the Fourth International. The impending war danger does not brook a delay in this task for even a single day.

The new parties and the New International must be built upon a new foundation: that is the key with which to solve all other tasks. The tempo and the time of the new revolutionary upbuilding and its consummation depend, obviously, upon the general course of the class struggle, the future victories and defeats of the proletariat. The Marxists, however, are no fatalists. They do not unload upon the "historical process" those very tasks which the historical process has posed before them. The initiative of a conscious minority, the scientific program, the bold and ceaseless agitation in the name of clearly formu-

lated aims, the merciless criticism of all ambiguity—that is one of the most important factors for the victory of the proletariat. Without a fused and steeled revolutionary party a socialist revolution is inconceivable.

The conditions are difficult; the obstacles are great; the tasks are colossal, but there is no reason whatever to become pessimistic, or to lose courage. Despite all the defeats of the proletariat, the position of the class enemy remains a hopeless one. Capitalism is doomed. Only in the socialist revolution is there salvation for mankind.

The very sequence of the Internationals has its own internal logic which coincides with the historic rise of the proletariat. The First International advanced the scientific program of the proletarian revolution, but it fell victim because it lacked a mass base. The Second International dragged from the darkness, educated and mobilized millions of workers, but in the decisive hour it found itself betrayed by the parliamentary and the trade union bureaucracy depraved by rising capitalism. The Third International set for the first time the example of the victorious proletarian revolution, but it found itself ground between the millstones of the bureaucracy in the isolated Soviet State and the reformist bureaucracy of the West. Today, under the conditions of decisive capitalist collapse, the Fourth International standing upon the shoulders of its predecessors, enriched by the experience of their victories and defeats, will mobilize the toilers of the Occident and the Orient for the victorious assault upon the strongholds of world capital.

*Workers of the World, Unite!*

(Signed)

Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party of Holland (RSAP):  
P. J. Schmidt; H. Sneevliet.

Workers Party of the United States (WPUS): A. J. Muste;  
James P. Cannon.

International Secretariat of International Communist League  
(Bolshevik-Leninists): Crux; Dubois; Martin.

The Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the SFIO.

Workers Party of Canada (WPC): J. MacDonald; M. Spector.

We herewith append the "Declaration of Four" [See *The Militant*, September 1933] on the Fourth International. Not a single line of this manifesto has become antiquated. The present letter is only a restatement of the "Declaration of Four" in the light of the experience of the last year and a half.

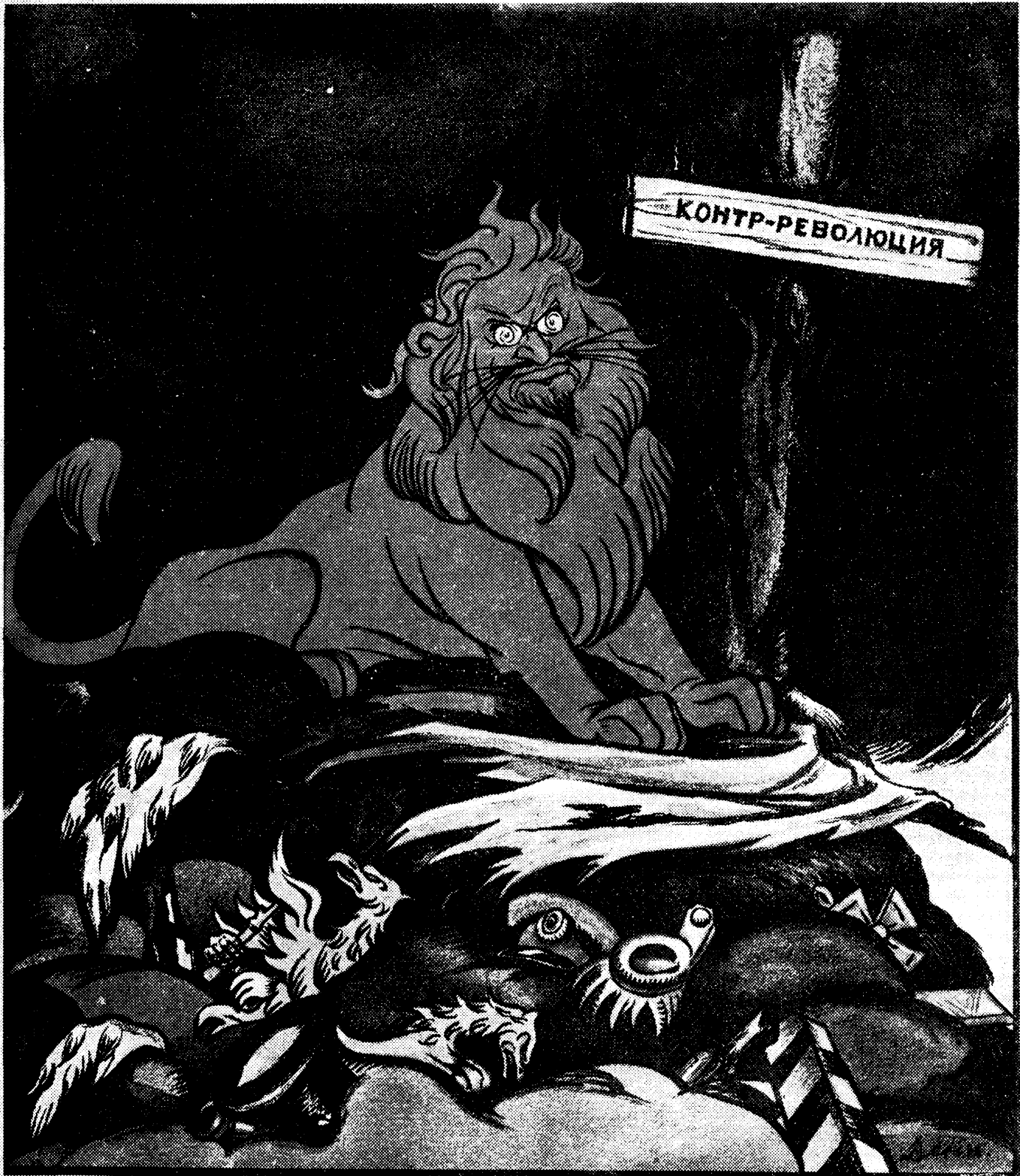
We call upon all parties, organizations, factions, both within the old parties as well as the trade unions, all revolutionary working class associations and groupings who are in agreement with us upon the fundamental principles and upon the great task we have posed—the preparation for and the building of the Fourth International—to send us their signatures to the present Open Letter, together with any proposal or criticisms they may have. Individual comrades who have not been connected with our work up to now, if they seriously intend to henceforth join the common ranks should get in touch with us.

The initiating organizations who are signatories to the Open Letter have resolved to create a *Provisional Contact Committee* between those parties and groups which stand upon the position of the Fourth International. The Provisional Committee is to be entrusted with the issuance of an information bulletin.

In the immediate future the Committee is to assure the regular and collective working out of the fundamental programmatic and tactical documents of the Fourth International.

The question of preparing an International Conference will be decided on the basis of replies received and the general course of the preparatory work.

# Leon Trotsky



Лев Троцкий

(Explanation on the Next Page.)

## An Explanation

← Reproduction of a Soviet painting which shows Leon Trotsky (depicted as the raging red lion) in the act of destroying the counter-revolution (depicted, in part, as the dead eagles of Czarism). Note the silk hat of the bourgeoisie among the welter of Czarist insignia. The post-sign reads "Counter-Revolution." The name of the artist is Deni. In Lenin's lifetime, the propaganda departments of the Soviet government, of the Russian Bolshevik Party and of the Communist International frequently used this and similar representations of Trotsky in order to symbolize the revolution's triumph in the Civil War of 1918-21. It was thought to be of especial importance to the youth. The colored print, of which our cut is a copy, was bound in as a supplement to the April 1922 issue of *Molodaya Gvardia* (Youth Guard), one of the early theoretical and cultural magazines of the Russian Communist youth movement.

# Two Orders of the Day to the Red Army Under Lenin and Trotsky

Order of the Day No. 83 and the June 15, 1921 Order are only two of the countless historical documents attesting that Lenin and his co-thinkers never viewed the Red Army otherwise than as the military arm of the world working class in its struggle for emancipation. In Lenin's day the Congresses of the Third International were invariably the occasion for great propaganda and agitational campaigns, especially in the ranks of the Red Army. Order of the Day No. 83 was issued during the sessions of the First World Congress. The day after the adjournment of the First World Congress, March 7, 1919, was proclaimed a public holiday, the Red Army paraded in the Red Square and that evening great mass meetings were held throughout the country. Similar procedure was followed so long as Lenin remained alive.

## ORDER OF THE DAY NUMBER 83 TO THE RED ARMY AND NAVY

### *Greetings from the Communist International*

In Moscow early in March the representatives of the revolutionary workers of various countries of Europe and America came together in order to establish close revolutionary collaboration among the toilers of the world in the struggle against their oppressors. This conference founded the Communist International, that is, it founded the international alliance of workers, soldiers and toiling peasants for the establishment of the World Soviet Republic which will forever put an end to enmity and wars among the peoples. At one of its sessions

the Communist International adopted the following resolution of greetings to the Russian Workers' and Peasants' Red Army:

*The Congress of the Communist International sends the Red Army of Soviet Russia its heartiest greetings and extends its fullest hopes for a complete victory in the struggle against world imperialism.*

This fraternal salute of the world proletariat must be made known to all the warriors of the Red Army and Navy. I hereby order the Commissars to make it publicly known to all squads, detachments, squadrons, batteries, and all ships. Every soldier

of the Red Army, every sailor of the Red Navy will hear with merited pride this message of greeting from the highest and most authoritative body of the world working class. The Red Army and the Red Navy will not fail the expectations and hopes of the Communist International.

*Under the Banner of the World Working Class—Forward!*

Issued March 9, 1919. Moscow.

L. Trotsky,

Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Council of the Republic;  
Commissar of War and Naval Affairs.

First published in

*Izvestia*, No. 54, March 11, 1919.

June 13, 1921. Moscow.  
Warriors of the Red Army!

For the third time the World Congress of the Communist International convenes in Moscow.

It is a great joy and honor for the workers, peasants and Red soldiers of Russia to greet within the walls of the Red capital the best representatives of the world working class.

Red warriors! For three and a half years you have defended the first Toilers' Republic in the world against the uninterrupted predatory attempts and attacks of the brigands and oppressors of all countries. On

## THE RED ARMY TO THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE REVOLUTION

the Volga and the Obi, on the Northern Dvina and the Neva, on the Berezina and the Dnieper, on the Don and the Kuban, you have fought and died under the banner of the International. You have shed your blood in defending Soviet Russia—the fortress of the world proletariat. At the same time you have defended the heart of Soviet Russia—Red Moscow. You have assured to the representatives of the world working class the opportunity to come together under your protection in order to elaborate the further ways and methods of waging the

struggle against capitalist coercion—in the name of the fraternity, liberty and happiness of all oppressed mankind.

On June 17, in the name of the entire Red Army, the Moscow garrison will solemnly greet our dear guests, our brothers in struggle. Revolutionary fighters—Red soldiers, commanders, commissars! Let us join in a fervent cheer for the Communist International!

L. Trotsky,

People's Commissar of War and Naval Affairs.



# Leon Trotsky on French Imperialism and Its Decay

By CHARLES CARSTEN

As early as 1922, during the era of the Communist International under Lenin, Leon Trotsky analyzed the contradictions which were tearing apart the economic and social structure of France. He foresaw in the earliest stages, when the appearances to most observers were those of growth and strength, the degeneration that reached its climax in the rapid defeat of France in World War II. At that time in the *Resolution on the Versailles Treaty*, which he wrote for the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, November-December 1922, he made the following prophetic analysis:

The appearance is that France, of all the countries, has grown most in power. But in reality the economic basis of France, with her small and steadily diminishing population, her enormous domestic and foreign debt, and her dependence on England, does not provide an adequate foundation for her greed for imperialist expansion. So far as her political power is concerned, she is thwarted by England's mastery of all the important naval bases, and by the oil monopoly held by England and the United States. In the domain of economy, the enrichment of France with the iron mines given her by the Treaty of Versailles, loses its value inasmuch as the supplementary and indispensable coal mines of the Ruhr Basin remain in German hands. The hopes of restoring shattered French finances by means of German reparations have proved illusory. When the impracticability of the Treaty of Versailles becomes apparent, certain sections of French heavy industry will consciously bring on the depreciation of the franc in order to unload the costs of the war on the shoulders of the French proletariat.

In 1934, five years before the outbreak of hostilities, Trotsky declared in the theses, *War and the Fourth International*:

The collapse of the League of Nations is indissolubly bound up with the beginning of the collapse of French hegemony on the European continent. The demographic and economic power of France proved to be, as was to be expected, too narrow a base for the Versailles system.

Throughout the critical years from 1934 to 1937 Trotsky wrote articles and books analyzing the situation in France and explaining to the workers the only possible way out of the morass of French capitalist decay. In the light of events these articles, contained in the book *Whither France*, are truly prophetic. Nowhere has a Marxist analysis received such swift and tragic confirmation.

In his last great programmatic document, *Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution*, published in May, 1940, Leon Trotsky pointed out that the weakness revealed by France in the course of World War II "was not unexpected." After a brief characterization of England's role on the world arena, he wrote of France:

A similar lack of correspondence between her economic weight and her world position is characteristic of France too, but on a smaller scale. Her hegemony in Europe rested on a temporary conjuncture of circumstances created by the annihilation of Germany and the artificial combinations of the Versailles Treaty. The size of her population and the economic foundation supporting this hegemony were far too inadequate. When the hypnosis of victory wore off, the real relationship of forces surged to the surface. France proved to be much weaker than she had appeared not only to her friends but to her enemies. Seeking cover, she became in essence Great Britain's latest dominion.

In the fall of 1940, after the collapse of France, Trotsky's analysis was used as the basis for the further delineation of the degeneration of France by the Fourth International:

The curve of French imperialism has been steadily declining since the "victory" of 1918. Its status in Europe and in the world as a result of the Versailles Treaty was extremely disproportionate to its real economic strength. It could provide its political vassals in Europe (the Little Entente, the Balkan States) with financial aid but was incapable of making them customers for an industry, which could not compete successfully with Germany, England or the United States. The handling of the tremendous French colonial empire was also beyond the power of the industrial apparatus of the metropolis.

The rebuilding of industry depleted and destroyed by the First World War forced the economic curve slightly upward. But by 1930, with the advent of the world economic crisis, French imperialism had reached the phase of absolute decline; it was never able to recover from the depression.

The victory of 1918 did not infuse new life but merely engendered illusions, gave the impression of strength while a decline was actually taking place. Even prior to 1914 French development was backward in comparison with the other great powers. And although French imperialism exploited the colonies ferociously, they netted relatively little because of the backwardness of the economy and methods of the metropolis.

"French imperialism might be termed usury imperialism," wrote Lenin, and characterized this form of exploitation in the following manner:

The export of capital, one of the most essential economic bases of imperialism still more completely isolates the *rentiers* from production and sets the seal of parasitism on the whole country that lives by the exploitation of the labor of several overseas countries and colonies.

The policy of investment in countries outside of France at high rates of interest not only has had an effect on the political, cultural and social aspects of French life, but has been a decisive factor in determining the character of the country's economy. It has operated to prevent the rebuilding and modernization of the French productive plant. French economy therefore has failed to keep abreast of capitalist development in other countries, and has even lagged far behind. Investments that might "normally" have accomplished this task were drained out of the country to fields of more lucrative return.

As early as 1886 Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, French economist, observed that:

The same capital which will earn three or four percent in agricultural improvements in France will bring ten, fifteen, twenty percent in agricultural enterprises in the United States, Canada, La Plata, Australia, or New Zealand.

Parker Thomas Moon in his book *Imperialism and World Politics* remarks of French investment during the same period:

Sums invested in building new railways in France would hardly earn two or three percent, but in new countries they would earn ten to twenty percent.

The fundamental reason for this disparity between the returns on investments at home and abroad lies in the exceptionally poor natural resources at the disposal of French capitalism.



The drain of capital to other countries and colonies, in turn, dried up basic French industries, made them less remunerative and less attractive to French investors. Trotsky explained that the "assured flow of colonial super-profits" was at the root of economic "sluggishness." And added: "Privileges always foster sluggishness and stagnation."

According to Parker Moon, "investment of capital was more emphasized at a later period, but even in 1895, Declassé, the man who was later to become the guiding genius of French imperialism, was stressing the need of governmental protection and aid for French investments in the colonies. . . ." This "protection" was guaranteed by a large army and navy and a colonial administration that left nothing undone to accommodate the desires of French imperialists, through the application of those brutal methods with which they ruled and exploited the colonial population.

The French imperialist empire expanded until by 1926 it was possible for Parker Moon to state: "For every acre in France there are twenty in the French colonies and protectorates."

The burden of supporting the army, navy and colonial staff to maintain the position of French banker-usurer in world economy sapped and still further weakened the economy of the country. Thus, rationalization of production, carried to its peak by the United States and Germany, remained a utopia for France.

## Gangrene Sets In

French economy declined and degenerated. What is true of France is in varying degrees true of capitalism in general in this period of the general decline of capitalism. Precisely because the development of world capitalism proceeds unevenly—now spurting violently forward and at other times falling into stagnation, with certain countries skipping stages or telescoping them, which results in phenomenal differences in the levels of development at any particular time—in the period of the absolute decline of capitalism tremendous differences in tempo exist at every given stage.

Capitalist decay first reached the gangrenous stage in France because her economic base was weakest of all the great powers. This decay, having attacked and nearly destroyed the economic base, then spread through the entire superstructure, manifesting itself in every aspect of French life. The dialectic of the processes in the foundation, their effects upon the superstructure and vice versa could be traced and observed in art, morality, philosophy, in the general culture of the country. We shall find that the same sluggishness, stagnation and decay which decomposed the roots couldn't help but extend to the topmost branches. The rest of our exposition will be limited to the manifestations of this gangrene in two important aspects of French life: the political regime and especially its military arm.

For purposes of illustration we shall draw upon material presented by the sly and well-informed bourgeois journalist and apologist Pertinax, whose book *The Gravediggers of France* constitutes an annihilating indictment of the French capitalist class.

Let us begin with the army. The General Staff mirrored the degeneration of French economy by the method with which they prepared the country for the war they knew was inevitable. In the very image of a banker who entrusts his gold to the safekeeping of a steel bank vault, the French Generals and the bourgeoisie placed their faith in the massive steel and concrete of the Maginot Line. But while bankers at least make sure their vault is sealed at both ends, the Maginot Line, so to speak, the military vault extended only from Alsace to Montmedy, thus leaving one end open to the Germans for the execution of the Schlieffen Plan which depended upon a flanking movement

through the low countries and into northern France. "The continuous front" on which the General Staff based their entire strategy contained a fatal flaw, which they tried to rectify by hastily building field fortifications after war was declared. Even these, however, remained poorly armed and poorly garrisoned.

Six months before Poland was attacked, Petain was still deriding tanks and declaring dive-bombers to be useless. What was the source of this glaring lack of foresight? More than provincialism prevented the General Staff from embracing the techniques of modern warfare. After propounding the stale arguments of the cretinized Generals, Weygand let slip the real cause for their conservative distrust. According to Weygand: This "professional army would not be ready for five years, as even its proponents admit. Think of it! Five years! War will come long before that! *And what a fertile breeding ground for communists those gangs of mechanics would be!*" So ingrained was the fear of revolution that it tended to paralyze even the reflexes of self-preservation among the French ruling class and its generals.

In 1934 Hitler created his first three armored divisions. Weygand and Petain ordered seven new tanks! As minister of war in the same year, Petain cut a six billion franc appropriation for national defense to four billions. Weygand, feeling the hot breath of the proletarian revolution, confided, "an army of mechanics would be a regular hotbed of communism."

Gamelin, as head of the Army when the war began, as Pertinax\* reports, "failed to demand in time the weapons he deemed indispensable . . . failed to assemble what he had." The infantry lacked rifles! Somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 men were armed with the 1936 model, the rest were armed either with the Lebel rifle of 1886 or the Gras of an even earlier date. They had no machineguns or automatic pistols. The army had two-thirds enough modern anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery, and for two of their best weapons, the 105's and the 47's, they had no shells: a controversy was raging within the General Staff as to the merits of different types!

## How They Prepared

The few heavy tanks they did have were designed for defensive warfare, capable only of limited speed, and armed with antiquated 37mm guns. Despite the fact that their tanks had a limited range which necessitated frequent refueling, the army had no fuel supply trucks!

Communications, the nerve system of a modern army, were likewise completely inadequate. Radios were poorly designed and built, limited in number, and not even installed in tanks used by the infantry and cavalry. Because "once again the technical forces had been unable to terminate their wrangling in time," and decide upon the type to manufacture, there was only one-third the needed quantity of telephone equipment.

In aviation as in every branch of the army, the General Staff was impotent to profit by the lessons of the postwar world:

Here we find all the military witnesses at one. In the quantity and quality of our machines, in spare parts, in accessories, and even in the training of pilots, our failure was dismal. "The training courses had to be extemporized, almost from the whole cloth, in September 1939." (General Mouchard.)

These examples of "deficiencies," "mistakes," and "miscalculations" could be multiplied a thousandfold. They only serve to confirm what is already obvious: the actions and policies of the High Command and Government fall into a pattern of

\**The Gravediggers of France* (Military Defeat—Armistice—Counter-revolution), by Pertinax. Doubleday, Doran & Co. New York, 1944. 612 + XI pp.

bankruptcy and "betrayal." These actions and policy are a striking manifestation of the degeneration and decay of French imperialism.

A little over a month after the Wehrmacht launched its Blitzkrieg, France capitulated to Hitler. Was there any way such a swift and crushing defeat could have been avoided? If we assume for a moment that the General Staff and the Government seriously wanted to resist Germany, what alternatives were open to them after the first disasters of the war?

They could have withdrawn, consolidated their forces, defended Paris street by street and house by house as the proletariat did in the days of the Commune, 1870-71. They could have defended France "inch by inch," finally retreating to the province of Brittany to put up a last-ditch fight. There remained a further avenue of retreat and resistance from this redoubt: evacuation of the troops by French and British fleets to Britain and Africa.

Why didn't they call for the defense of Paris, as Stalingrad was later defended? Why didn't they retreat to Brittany? Or to North Africa? Why didn't they call upon the masses for a struggle to the death?

Because such a resistance, they felt, would have taken on a revolutionary character. To this alternative they preferred defeat.

## Paralysis of Fear

The bourgeoisie feared the proletariat. They were determined to give the workers no opportunity to rise. They were determined that the French proletariat should be crushed. They would have preferred their own fascist gangs, but since these were not strong enough they gratefully accepted the Nazi gangs and the Gestapo.

The wealthy could not forget so many red flags waving above silent factories, nor the clenched fists raised at their passing automobiles. A vision of revolution on the march had visited them. It dawned upon them that Hitler and Mussolini were allies of their social class rather than enemies of their country.

Weygand, Commander in Chief of the French Army, admonished:

Should we put up with bands scouring the countryside, with local governments set up after the Soviet model? "I do not want France to suffer the anarchy which follows a military defeat."

When the army was in full rout and the Cabinet had fled to Tours, Weygand replied to advocates of resistance who pointed out that there were still fresh troops: "I still have fresh divisions. I intend to keep them to maintain order." This was reported by Louis Levy in his book *The Truth About France*.

In opposing the decision of the council to retreat toward Brittany, Weygand again expressed the terror of his class unprotected by an army in the face of an aroused proletariat. According to Pertinax, Weygand summed up his views in the following utterance:

Must it not be assumed that in the midst of ruin, misery, and death, with the Army utterly wiped out, Soviets would sprout forth from the earth?

These capitulationist attitudes and policies were not at all restricted to the General Staff or a few isolated, reactionary politicians and capitalists:

... From 1936 to 1939 the government found among them (the capitalists) many bitter men. They trembled at the idea that their possessions might be torn from them; they felt sure that a state of war would touch off a fresh wave of sit-down strikes, bound to culminate, this time, in wholesale expropriation. Their personal risks haunted them and they could not conceive that life was worth living if the existing social hierarchy was to change.

Actually the capitulation of imperialist France to Hitler was the inescapable result of French capitalism's inability to consolidate its own ranks, develop a strong fascist movement and crush the proletariat. It came from a fear that grew to be all-dominating, the same fear that cemented unity among the capitalists during the revolutionary demonstrations of 1936. French capitalism had to import its fascism from across the Rhine.

Pétain and Weygand frantically sought an armistice before the French army completely disintegrated, for "were disorders to spread throughout the army and the population he (Weygand) would consider the usefulness of the armistice as being already lost. Then the harm would have been done." Thus Weygand testified at the Riom trials.

If the "disorders" referred to by Weygand had broken out they would have led to the only possible *ideological* war against fascism: the revolutionary war of the proletariat to destroy capitalism, build Soviets and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. But this war the General Staff and their masters were firmly determined to prevent at any cost. Far preferable to them, complete defeat by Hitler's army.

The bourgeoisie believed with the General Staff that, "... the High Command of the Wehrmacht felt united with the French command by a bond, fastened above the clash of battle, a sort of spiritual fraternity, an ennoblement which the sword confers, or should confer, on those whose profession is to wield it." There is a bond between the bourgeoisies even of belligerent countries. The defenders of capitalism and its state always find themselves solidly united when the question arises as to *which class* shall rule.

This unity of opinion did not exist among French capitalists during the crisis in the thirties. They were sharply divided in their opinion as to the solution of the impasse.

One section of the capitalists, represented and served by Reynaud-Blum, believed France should ally herself with England and Russia, gain England's aid in preserving her colonies, crush Germany and through some miracle, more dreamed of than expected, rejuvenate French economy.

## Utter Impotence

The opposing section, whose political proponents were the Laval-Flandin-Bonnet group, believed that the economy was exhausted to such an extent that France could not retain the position of a first-rate power. They extolled the advantages of alliance with Germany, in which France would play the role of junior partner. Although this policy would relegate France to a subordinate role internationally, it found support among the so-called realistic capitalists who recognized that French economy was not only weak but to a large extent complementary to that of Germany. They bolstered their reasoning with references to the importance of Germany as a protector of capitalism from the onslaughts of Bolshevism. It was this school of capitalist thought that encouraged Germany to satisfy her expansionist aims at the expense of the Soviet Union.

Actually French imperialism was caught in an insoluble contradiction. The government could do nothing to alleviate the situation. French production, with one slight interruption in 1936, continued its steady decline. Neither bourgeois group was able to consolidate power and retain governmental control long enough to carry out its policy to the logical conclusion. As a result Cabinet followed Cabinet. "A relative stability was obtained by a sort of high frequency," until the last stages of the war when fear of a proletarian revolution welded the capitalist class behind the proponents of a partnership with Hitler.

The Radical-Socialist Party, which occupied the dominant

position in political life during the Third Republic, reflected the vacillation of the bourgeoisie. Their inability to solve the contradictions of moribund capitalism had caused them to lose steadily to the Socialist Party since 1924.

The Radical-Socialist Party, supported by peasants, the urban lower middle class, doctors and lawyers, shopkeepers and most of the government employees, ruled France from the time the Dreyfus Affair stripped the Conservatives of governmental monopoly.

"The life of the party [Radicals] was a painful see-saw between right and left." It was "the crucible in which violent differences were composed through a process of compromise. . . ." Like a pendulum, the party absorbed the shock at one time from the right, at another from the left. Although in earlier years it always returned to center, from 1937 onward it moved as though a powerful magnet were pulling it to the right. Its servile submission to big industry and banking interests was demonstrated by its readiness to allow direct representatives of France's 200 families to hold important posts in every Cabinet and always to control the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

With its main prop, the unstable, crisis-torn middle class, becoming more and more desperate in a country whose economy had failed to show any signs of recovery since the beginning of the decade, the Radical-Socialists could not within the limits of capitalism stabilize the government. The vacillatory course of the Radicals was analyzed by Trotsky in 1936:

As a matter of fact, the politics of Radicalism is the politics of perpetual internal conflict, its words diverge from its actions, the intentions from the results. The cause for this duality, however, lies not in the "personal conscience" of leaders but in the character of their social support. [*Fourth International*, December 1941. Page 302.]

## Those Responsible

Daladier was typical of the petty-bourgeois elements that composed the leadership of the Radical-Socialist Party "of which", as Pertinax says, "he was elected 'president' and which produced him as a tree produces its fruit." Pertinax goes on to record some of the "sins" of Daladier and illustrates the latter's cynicism by quoting a remark Daladier made when he sought the creation of the People's Front in coalition with the Socialists and Communists: "When one is out of office, the way back starts at the extreme Left." But Pertinax avoids disclosing the participation of the Radical-Socialists and Daladier in the growth of French fascism. A case cited by the Social Democrat Levy proves their guilt beyond a shadow of a doubt.

In 1937 the Socialists were demanding of the police and the magistrates that they seek out and prosecute criminals of the Cagoulard organization. Searches and inquiries by the police, urged on by a Socialist Minister of Interior, brought many to light. "Later, Daladier, as Prime Minister, undertook to hush up the affair, and one after another he had the leading prisoners released. Here is the best proof, better than the most ingenious argument, of the complicity, direct or indirect, of some of the Radical leaders in the crimes of French fascism." [*Truth About France*, p. 148.] Levy further states that in 1938-39, "Daladier suited the reactionaries all the more because he was a Radical. . . ."

Daladier was not the only member of the Radicals who was following that course. There is ample proof of the complicity of others, proof making it quite obvious that the leading elements of the Radicals either tolerated the growth of fascist organizations, aided fascist individuals and tendencies, or openly embraced fascism.

In 1936 Trotsky warned that "the political fate of France

in the period immediately ahead will take shape depending largely upon the manner in which Radicalism will be liquidated, and who will fall heir to its legacy, i.e., the influence upon the petty bourgeoisie: Fascism or the party of the proletariat." (*Whither France*, p. 133.)

Neither the Socialist nor the Communist parties sought the liquidation of the Radical-Socialist Party. Just the contrary. Instead of attempting to win the ranks of the Radical Party to their own organizations, they aroused new hopes in capitalism and injected new life into the Radical-Socialist Party by entering into a "People's Front" coalition with it in 1935.

The limitations of the People's Front formed by the three parties was apparent from the beginning. It could not go beyond the bounds of capitalism. As a matter of fact the Radicals were exceedingly hesitant about any and all reforms. Therefore, the coalition of labor and capital was doomed from the start, as all such class collaborationist efforts are, to the mildest kind of parliamentary opposition, to a continuation of policies already proved bankrupt.

The politicians of the People's Front were swept into office by an overwhelming vote. To the surprise and chagrin of the Stalinists, who had hoped that the Radical-Socialists would receive the largest vote and hence form the government, the Socialist Party polled the majority of votes.

The revolutionary crisis, given added impetus by the results of the elections, found its expression in demonstrations which broke out and assumed the proportions of "a veritable popular revolution." During May 1936, almost two million workers participated in 12,142 sit-down strikes.

The bourgeoisie were quaking in their boots, and although President Lebrun was loath to appoint a "Marxist" Premier, "at least the worst could be avoided. If reforms were not promised, revolution might follow. . . . Lebrun, indeed, was not alone in his attitude; the leaders of the French employers, it is said, joined him in begging Blum to speak. . . .", promising reforms and ending the strike struggles.

The "Marxist" Blum formed a Cabinet composed of Socialists and Radicals, stating,

"We shall try to bring forth out of capitalism all the reforms it can stand," [and on June 7] the cabinet laid before Parliament a whole series of bills which . . . prescribed the forty-hour week and vacations with pay, nationalized the armament industry, reformed the Bank of France, and set up a wheat board.

The legislative machine, under the regime of the People's Front, worked at high speed in an attempt to restore the prestige of the parliamentary form of bourgeois domination. The immediate effect of the "reform" legislation it passed was intended solely to stem the revolutionary tide that swept France. The bourgeoisie, fearing they might lose everything, were quite willing to make large concessions—on paper. As Pertinax explains to capitalist critics of the People's Front:

. . . In the spring and summer of 1936, the quasi-revolutionary movement which swept the country gave the government of the day little scope to do better . . . In 1936 all ministers bowed very low to sit-down strikes. Let us recognize that political necessity hardly admitted any other attitude.

Blum and the partisans of the coalition hoped the forty-hour week would reduce the number of unemployed and that this, combined with higher wages, would stimulate industry. Production rose a bare 3 to 6 per cent in the months immediately following the reforms. "Owners showed no desire to invest fresh capital to 'rationalize' their methods of operation, to run new risks. They were swayed by fear of losses rather than the hope of profits." At the same time wage increases were

effected the government began devaluating the franc and by October real wages had dropped 10 to 15 percent. "French production costs were about equal to other countries for the first time in five years."

Capitalism's major criticism of Blum are echoed by Pertinax who complains:

He [Blum] proved too submissive when confronted with the widespread social commotion unleashed by the mere prospect of his accession to office . . . Could he not have used his moral ascendancy over the strikers to sidetrack those of their claims which were against the national interest?

The People's Front's gravest deficiency, according to the capitalists, lay in the fact that it permitted the introduction of the forty-hour week at a time when German production was at a high peak; and that it failed to carry the policy of devaluation of the franc far enough. Leaving aside the outright sabotage of production by the French capitalists, which is usually ignored by bourgeois journalists, the first is refuted by the fact that production actually rose after the institution of shorter hours. True, it rose only a little, but enough to indicate that the lag in production was not at all a result of a shorter working week. Furthermore, even with the cost of production 20 percent below other countries in 1938, and with orders pouring in, French industry couldn't increase its productivity. They couldn't fill the orders. Factory equipment was too obsolete and run down. As a result, on the eve of war, French production was 30 percent below the 1930 level.

Blum's crime lay not in his *lack* of demagogy, as Pertinax and other bourgeois journalists allege, but in that he shared, with the Stalinists, the responsibility for not carrying out an independent working class policy.

In our era of the general decline of capitalism, failures on the part of working class leadership are followed by quick and savage retribution. The bankruptcy and impotence of the People's Front, explained as inevitable by Trotsky and the Fourth International, disoriented the proletariat and destroyed the confidence of the middle class in the socialist solution to their plight. The drift of the petty-bourgeoisie from the Radical-Socialist Party to the left, which had been taking place at a constantly accelerating tempo since 1924 and had reached its peak in 1936, ceased abruptly and began shifting in the opposite direction—toward fascism.

The bankruptcy of the Socialist Party was exceeded in point of responsibility only by the treachery of the Stalinists who, in their complete submission to the Kremlin, followed the People's Front policy that led to betrayal of the working class in France, as it had time and again in the rest of the world.

After the assumption of power by Hitler in 1933, the Stalinists made a quick turn to the right. They began to preach People's Frontism. In France, on February 9, 1934, under the leadership of Doriot, who at that time had not yet gone over to the fascists, they participated in a demonstration organized by the CGT. Even then evidences of their recent adventurism could be detected in the ultra-demagogic slogan: "Death to Daladier!"

As French-Soviet relations improved the Stalinists moved further and further to the right. They became "democratic" and above all patriotic. They came out for unity with all the patriots, calling for the "union of all Frenchmen."

Stalin, seeking a closer relationship with France, believed this could be attained through the Radical-Socialists and instructed the French Party to express sympathy for and gain the support of the Radicals. The Stalinist leaders were only

too eager to betray the interests of the French working class at Stalin's request. As a result of this policy, in the first People's Front manifestation in 1935, the Stalinists promptly dropped their hangmen's noose for Daladier, and shouted: "Daladier for Premier!"

To avoid alienating Radicals who opposed even limited nationalization of industry, they refused to support the mild proposal of the Socialist Party for "structural reforms"—the nationalization of certain key industries.

## Stalinist Treachery

The Social-Democrat Levy states that although the Stalinists didn't take posts in the Blum Cabinet, they did support the government loyally. And even the conservative and critical Pertinax finds words of praise for the Stalinist Thorez, who during the strike wave of 1936 demonstrated his value to the capitalist class by acting as strikebreaker. At the height of 1936 strike waves Thorez told the workers that "One of the most important things in a strike was to know when to stop." *Important*—to whom? To the bourgeoisie. And to the Kremlin bureaucracy who saw its alliance with the French bourgeoisie threatened and who feared the proletarian revolution as much as the capitalist class!

The Stalinist Party which is the strongest political force in France today is repeating its former treacherous role. Masses of the workers are still under the illusion that it will lead them on the path of the October Revolution. But the Stalinists are again preparing to betray them in the interests of Stalin's diplomatic deals.

De Gaulle, who now rules by virtue of Allied support, believes like Richelieu, French statesman of the early seventeenth century, that France should "draw money from other countries." De Gaulle, revenant of nineteenth-century French imperialism, wants to retain and expand the colonial empire which is an indispensable part of this economic program. *Declassé*, the guiding "genius" of French imperialism, who expounded the necessity of colonial expansion and the building of an army and navy commensurate with the tasks of colonial aggrandizement and protection, is the ideological forefather of de Gaulle's imperialist philosophy. In de Gaulle's reactionary mind the grand era of French life was the Ferry decade of the 'eighties when France acquired sixty thousand square miles of territory in Asia and one million in Africa.

The model of France de Gaulle admires and seeks to emulate is personified in Marshal Pétain about whom de Gaulle wrote in the foreword to his own book, *La France et Son Armée* (published in 1938, long after Pétain's sympathy for fascism was well known): "A chief appeared (in the last war). Upon the day when we had to choose between ruin and reason, Pétain was promoted. In him harmony is so complete as to seem a decree of nature." Most pleasing to de Gaulle is this Pétainist "harmony," the music of the past imperialist story of France.

Try as he will the past cannot be recaptured. De Gaulle's appearance at the head of the French government is only a mockery of the will of the people, an attempt by the Allies to assure stability where stability can no longer be maintained on the basis of capitalist economy. The rot which began at the base of French imperialist economy has spread throughout the entire structure.

Leon Trotsky warned in 1934:

Capitalism has brought the means of production to such a level that they are paralyzed by the misery of the popular masses, ruined by the selfsame capitalism. The whole system has thereby begun to

decline, decompose and rot. Capitalism not only cannot give the toilers new social reforms, nor even petty alms. It is forced to take back what it once gave. All of Europe has entered an era of economic and political counter-reforms. The policy of despoiling and suffocating the masses stems not from the caprices of the reaction but from the decomposition of the capitalist system. That is the fundamental fact which must be assimilated by every worker if he is not to be duped by hollow phrases. (*Whither France*, p. 13.)

Today this warning is the grim reality, greatly aggravated by the havoc and destruction of the war. The only way out of the welter of decline and decay is the path followed by the Bolsheviks in 1917 under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky.

There is but one party in France equipped with the program and with the will to lead the masses on that course. It is the French section of the Fourth International. Of it Leon Trotsky wrote:

The Fourth International rises on the shoulders of its three predecessors. It is subjected to blows from the front, the sides and rear. Careerists, cowards, philistines have nothing to seek in our ranks. . . . Let pedants and skeptics shrug their shoulders about 'small' organizations that issue 'small' papers and fling a challenge to the entire world. Serious revolutionists will pass contemptuously by the pedants and skeptics. The October Revolution also once began with its swaddling clothes.

## Closer to the Proletarians of the 'Colored' Races!

To the International Secretariat:  
(Copy to the National Committee of the American League)

I have received a copy of the letter dated April 26, 1932, sent by an organization of Negro comrades from Johannesburg. This letter, it seems to me, is of great symptomatic significance. The Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) can and must become the banner for the most oppressed sections of the world proletariat, and, consequently, first and foremost, for the Negro workers. Upon what do I base this proposition?

The Left Opposition represents at present the most consistent and most revolutionary tendency in the world. Its sharply critical attitude to any and all varieties of bureaucratic haughtiness in the labor movement makes it possible for it to pay particular attention to the voice of the most oppressed sections of the working class and the toilers as a whole.

### The Left Opposition and ALL Its Enemies

The Left Opposition is the target for the blows not only of the Stalinist apparatus but also of all the bourgeois governments of the world. This fact, which, despite all the slanders, is entering gradually into the consciousness of the masses, is bound to increasingly attract towards the Left Opposition the warm sympathies of the most oppressed sections of the international working class. From this point of view, the communication addressed to us, by the South African comrades seems to me not at all accidental, but profoundly symptomatic.

In their letter, to which 24 signatures are appended (with the notation "and others"), the South African comrades expressed particular interest in the questions of the Chinese revolution. This interest, it ought to be acknowledged, is wholly justified. The working masses of the oppressed peoples who have to carry on the struggle for elementary national rights and for human dignity, are precisely those who incur the greatest risk of suffering the penalties for the muddled teachings of the Stalinist bureaucracy on the subject of the "democratic dictatorship." Under this false banner, the policy *à la* Kuomintang, that is, the vile deception and the unpunished crushing of the toiling masses by their own "national" bourgeoisie, may still do the greatest harm to the liberating cause of the toilers. The program of the permanent revolution based on the incontestable historic experience of a number of countries can and

must assume primary significance for the liberation movement of the Negro proletariat.

The Johannesburg comrades may not as yet have had the opportunity to acquaint themselves more closely with the views of the Left Opposition on all the most important questions. But this cannot be an obstacle in our getting together with them as closely as possible at this very moment, and helping them fraternally to come into the orbit of our program and our tactics.

When ten intellectuals whether in Paris, Berlin or New York, who have already been members of various organizations, address themselves to us with a request to be taken into our midst I would offer the following advice: Put them through a series of tests on all the programmatic questions; wet them in the rain, dry them in the sun, and then after a new and careful examination accept maybe one or two.

### The Root Difference

The case is radically altered when ten workers connected with the masses turn to us. The difference in our attitude to a petty bourgeois group and to the proletarian group does not require any explanation. But if a proletarian group functions in an area where there are workers of different races, and in spite of this, remains composed solely of workers of a privileged nationality, then I am inclined to view them with suspicion. Are we not dealing perhaps with the labor aristocracy? Isn't the group infected with slave-holding prejudices, active or passive?

It is an entirely different matter when we are approached by a group of Negro workers. Here I am prepared to take it for granted in advance that we shall achieve agreement with them, even if such an agreement is not actual as yet. Because the Negro workers, by virtue of their whole position do not and cannot strive to degrade anybody, oppress anybody or deprive anybody of his rights. They do not seek privileges and cannot rise to the top except on the road of the international revolution.

We can and we must find a way to the consciousness of the Negro workers, the Chinese workers, the Indian workers, and all the oppressed in the human ocean of the colored races to whom belongs the decisive word in the development of mankind.

**Leon Trotsky**

Prinkipo, June 13, 1932.  
First published in  
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No. 28, July 1932.

# "The United Nations"— A New Thieves' Kitchen Deadly Parallel With Versailles And the League of Nations

*Lenin and Trotsky's Teachings on Imperialist  
"Peace" and "World Security"*

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

The objective economic and political conditions of the "United Nations Charter" world differ considerably from those that prevailed after the Peace of Versailles. Despite these differences, the "peace" and "postwar security" issuing out of World War II is strikingly parallel to the "peace" and "security" that followed the termination of hostilities in 1918. This is hardly surprising. Identical class causes tend to produce identical class results. Nothing except an imperialist peace could possibly come out of an imperialist war, unless the proletarian revolution first intervened.

The peace frolic of the first world holocaust was staged in Geneva, Switzerland, on January 10, 1920, when the representatives of the victorious Entente formally launched the League of Nations. Essentially the same obscene fraud was repeated on April 25, 1945, at San Francisco when the Anglo-American imperialists jointly with the Kremlin formed the "United Nations." The League of Nations came into existence automatically under the Versailles Treaty; the "United Nations" was hatched, even before the signing of any peace, in the secret conferences of the "Big Three" at Moscow, Teheran, Yalta, and it was preceded by such purely decorative gatherings as the one at Dumbarton Oaks.

The League of Nations, according to Lenin, was a unification "on paper only; in reality it is a group of beasts of prey, who only fight one another and do not at all trust one another." (Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 297. Third Russian Edition.) He branded the League as a Thieves' Kitchen, a "piece of fakery from beginning to end; it is a deception from beginning to end; it is a lie from beginning to end." (*Idem*, p. 97.) Lenin's position was also that of Leon Trotsky. It was the position of the Communist International in Lenin's lifetime.

If the League of Nations is inseparable from the Versailles Treaty and the secret diplomacy which produced it, then the "United Nations" is the product of the super-secret Washington-Kremlin-London diplomacy and equally inseparable from it. Like the League of Nations, the "United Nations" bears all the features of the source from which it sprang—the second imperialist slaughter. It is inseparably bound up with a super-Versailles, still unsigned. It is calculated to counteract and to destroy any and all insurgent movements of the European peoples, above all Germany. It is aimed to perpetuate the existing

inequality among nations rather than to establish any genuine equality among them. The chances for a peaceful coexistence of nations and harmonious collaboration among them are far slimmer under the "United Nations" than they were in the days of the League.

Structurally the "United Nations" organization differs in name only from the defunct League. In place of the latter's executive body, the San Francisco Conference set up a "Security Council." The utterly impotent International Labor office has been supplanted by an "Economic and Social Council." The emptier the barrel, the more noise it makes. As for the "World Court," the guiding spirits of San Francisco did not even bother to change the name, retaining the old one: International Court of Justice.

The similarity between the League and the "United Nations" extends even to the leading figures. Many of the participants at Geneva bobbed up again at San Francisco. Columnist Samuel Grafton was among those dismayed by "an array of depressingly familiar faces, and the feeling is that those who couldn't do it once are going to try to do it again" (*New York Post*, April 30).

To cover up this insolent repetition of bankrupt policies, the propagandists of Anglo-American imperialism and the pen-prostitutes of the Kremlin have been proclaiming with unbounded cynicism that the Versailles Peace was a "soft" peace; and that in this softness are rooted the causes both for the failure of the League of Nations as well as for the outbreak of World War II.

Had Versailles been "hard," they allege, the League of Nations would not have turned into the soft, poisonous, reeking slime it actually turned out to be. It goes without saying, that this same lie of lies serves concurrently to justify the bestial crushing of Germany, the enslavement and vilification of the German people and spoilation of Europe as a whole by the "democratic" imperialists and their Kremlin ally. Let us yield the floor to two of history's most candid, unimpeachable and incorruptible witnesses,\* in order (1) to expose the lies of

\*Unless otherwise specified in the text, all citations from Trotsky are from his book, *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, scheduled for publication in September by Pioneer Publishers; the citations from Lenin are translated by the writer from the Third Russian Edition of Lenin's *Collected Works*.



Washington-Moscow-London; and (2) to cast additional light on the abysmal degeneracy of the "Big Three."

Lenin and Trotsky characterized the Treaty of Versailles, signed by the German delegation on January 28, 1919, as a peace of imperialist pillage, rapine and oppression. The treaty imposed in 1918 by the victors upon the vanquished was "infamous and ignoble," "utterly permeated with cruelty, greed and baseness" (Trotsky). It was the peace of "plunderers and robbers" "a hundred times more humiliating, rapacious and predatory than the Peace of Brest-Litovsk" (Lenin).

Upon the signing of the Versailles Treaty, Lenin declared:

A peace has been imposed on Germany, but it is a usurer's peace, a strangler's peace, a butcher's peace; because they have plundered and dismembered Germany and Austria. They have deprived these countries of all the means of livelihood; they have left children to starve and die of starvation. It is an unheard-of robbers' peace. And so what is the Versailles Peace? It is an unheard-of robber's peace which has plunged tens of millions, including the most civilized peoples, into a condition of slavery. This is no peace but a set of conditions dictated to a helpless victim by highwaymen with knives in hand. (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XXV, pp. 417-18.)

While Versailles was still in its preparatory stages, Lenin insisted:

We see that they are preparing a peace for Germany that amounts to regular strangulation and is more coercive than the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XXIII, p. 283, English Edition.)

## Lenin and Trotsky on Versailles And the League of Nations

Lenin and Trotsky alike were not taken by surprise by the unprecedented harshness of Versailles. They knew its authors and their goal, namely: to serve the interests of their respective imperialisms. The views of Lenin and Trotsky appear in literally scores of articles, speeches, books and programmatic documents. Among the latter is the resolution on Versailles passed by the Fourth World Congress (1922) of the Comintern. This resolution characterizes the treaty as an "attempt to stabilize the world domination of the four victorious states [the United States, England, France and Japan] through the reduction—politically and economically—of the rest of the world to the status of colonies and semi-colonies." The imperialist victors of World War II have an identical program.

The Communist International under Lenin stresses that the Versailles Treaty was in reality the most powerful lever created by the victorious bourgeoisies for the purpose of extending their political and economic domination over the European continent. The League of Nations served simply as a fulcrum for that lever, a role that is now assigned to the "United Nations."

In Lenin's estimation, Versailles constituted irrefutable proof of his analysis of imperialism. And among Lenin's theses on imperialism a main one is that capitalism in its final stage of development renders all imperialists, regardless of the political form of their rule, equally reactionary. No distinction whatever can be drawn among the imperialists, insisted Lenin:

The history of recent times, (the history of the war and post-war period, is distinguished by an extraordinary speed of development, and it proves the thesis that British and French imperialism is just as infamous as German imperialism. (*Idem.*, p. 330.)

He repeated this indefatigably:

. . . These spokesmen, these protectors of democracy, these Wilsons and the like, are imposing on the vanquished people

treaties of their own a good deal worse than the Brest-Litovsk Peace imposed on us. (*Idem.*, p. 439.)

And again:

The Versailles Peace has demonstrated even to imbeciles and the blind, even to the mass of myopic people, that the Entente was and remained an imperialist brigand just as bloody and dirty as Germany. This could have been overlooked only by hypocrites and liars, consciously transmitting bourgeois politics into the labor movement, or by the direct agents and errand-boys of the bourgeoisie (labor lieutenants of capital, in the words of the American socialists); or by people who have so succumbed to bourgeois ideas and bourgeois influence as to become socialists only in words, while in their deeds they remain petty bourgeois, philistines, chorus boys of the capitalists. (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XXIV, p. 389.)

In Lenin's eyes only hypocrites or liars could draw a distinction in favor of the "democratic" imperialists; only direct agents and errand-boys of the bourgeoisie could stoop to defend Versailles. But the Stalinists have gone even beyond this during the Second World War, when the Kremlin began by drawing distinctions in favor of the "peace-loving" Nazi imperialists and ended by hailing and collaborating with the "peace-loving" and "democratic" imperialists. They prescribe treatment for Germany and other European countries that really does make Versailles seem "soft" by comparison. And, finally, the Kremlin is aiding directly in the Allied attempts to stifle the European revolution.

From the Leninist standpoint, it is least of all permissible to spread any illusions about the role of either the United States or any "world security" organization it initiates or sponsors. Thus, in the days of Versailles and the League Lenin insisted that both imperialist camps were equally reactionary, and he especially warned:

By now it is clear to all the appetites of the Allied imperialists even exceed those of the German: the terms they have demanded of Germany are even worse than the Brest-Litovsk Peace; and, what is more, they are out to stifle the revolution generally and act as international gendarmes. (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XXIII, p. 317, English Edition.)

And Trotsky wrote:

Under the "League of Nations" flag, the United States made an attempt to extend to the other side of the ocean its experience with a federated unification of large, multi-national masses—an attempt to chain to its chariot of gold, the peoples of Europe and other parts of the world, and bring them under Washington's rule. In essence the League of Nations was intended to be a world monopoly corporation, "Yankee and Co."

The American bourgeoisie is jamming through today the same program that it sought but failed to apply after 1914-1918. The "United Nations" charter is designed to finally install the "world monopoly corporation, 'Yankee and Co.'" Thus far, the Kremlin's sole objection has been to the role assigned to it by Wall Street. Stalin wants to be promoted from the ranks of a junior partner to that of a senior.

What sort of peace will and must the "United Nations" impose? The Stalinists swear it can and will be a "people's peace." They are merely parroting the words of Woodrow Wilson who hailed Versailles as a "people's peace." To counter this hypocrisy and deception, Lenin and the Bolsheviks compared Versailles with the Brest-Litovsk Peace, which the young Soviet Republic was compelled to sign, and which was universally denounced at the time as the most rapacious, ruthless peace ever imposed by victors upon a vanquished foe. Needless to mention the "democratic" Allies were the loudest in their spurious indignation. The Allied Supreme War Council issued a

statement in London protesting against the Brest Peace as a set of "political crimes which, under the name of German peace, have been committed against the Russian people." These bourgeois Tartuffes jesuitically lamented that the Brest provisions were so onerous that "Russian economic life was reduced by it (Brest Peace) to a shadow. . . ."

One of the authoritative spokesmen of the English Tories, Lord Cecil shrieked in horror at the news of the most "hypocritical part" of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, namely: the indemnities clause which, according to Lord Cecil, "imposed one of the heaviest war indemnities ever levied." For his part, Woodrow Wilson fulminated not only against Brest, but also against the Bolsheviks. In Wilson's eyes, Brest-Litovsk was a "cheap triumph in which no brave or gallant nation can long take pride. A great people, helpless by their own act, lies for the time at their mercy."

This did not hinder the same Wilson from imposing a peace on Germany which surpassed many times the savagery of the Brest Peace; nor do the successors of Wilson hesitate to treat defeated Germany with a savagery which surpasses by far the savagery of Versailles.

Where Versailles provided for the military occupation of sections of Germany, today all of Germany and Austria, not to mention the rest of Western and Eastern Europe, groans under military occupation. Nor have the victors the slightest intention of withdrawing their troops. When Monarchist Germany of the Hohenzollerns tried to impose the military occupation of Moscow in its peace terms, the young and weak Workers' Republic firmly resisted. The Junkers were forced to withdraw their demand. Here is what Lenin said in 1918 about the military occupation clause in the Versailles Treaty:

This is the peace which those who cried that the Bolsheviks are traitors because they signed the Brest-Litovsk Peace are now imposing on a comparatively weak state that is already falling to pieces. When the Germans wanted to send their soldiers to Moscow, we said that we would rather lay down our lives in battle to a man than consent to such a thing . . . And now the democratic soldiers of England and France are to be used to "maintain order" . . . We know what this order means. It means that the British and American soldiers are to act as butchers and hangmen of the world revolution. (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XXIII, p. 282. English Edition.)

Today, the imperialist spokesmen together with the Stalinists and all the liberals—from all the Lerner's of *PM* to the writers of *The Nation* and *The New Republic*—proclaim that military occupation is the principal guarantee of peace. In his day, Lenin viewed it as a deliberate act of aggression against the revolutionary peoples. Just what has altered since Lenin's day to impel any one who is not gullible or a Stalinist knave to take a different position?

Lenin denied that the imperialists could employ their troops with impunity to crush the rising revolution in Europe. Lenin, like Trotsky, based his revolutionary optimism on the impact of Versailles and the League of Nations upon the consciousness of the war-weary masses, upon the sharp break in mass moods that suffering, disillusionment and indignation would bring. In the Manifesto of the Second World Congress (July-August 1920) Leon Trotsky wrote:

**Workers and Peasants of Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia!—You have suffered ten million dead, twenty million wounded and crippled. Today you at least know what you have gained at this price!**

In an introduction written in 1920 for the then projected French and German editions of his book, *Imperialism*, Lenin stated:

The Brest-Litovsk Peace, dictated by monarchist Germany, followed by the infinitely more bestial and ignominious Versailles Peace, dictated by the "democratic" American and French Republics along with "free" England—all this has performed a most beneficent service to mankind, by exposing both the hired pen-and-ink coolies of imperialism as well as the reactionary townspeople, even if they do call themselves pacifists and socialists—the same townspeople who sang paeans of praise to "Wilsonism" and who argued that peace and reforms are possible under imperialism." (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XIX, p. 75.)

Again:

. . . Many religiously believed in the purity of the aims of the Allies; but now all this has been exposed, and everybody can see that the notorious Allies, who have dictated terms to Germany even more monstrous than those of the Brest-Litovsk Peace, are robbers no less than the German imperialists. (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XXIII, pp. 303-4. English Edition.)

And again:

But what do we find the Wilsons doing to defeated Germany? See what a picture of world relations is unfolding before our eyes! This picture, from which we get our idea of what the Wilson gentry are offering their friends, is a million and a trillion times more convincing. What we are arguing over, the Wilsons would settle in a trice. These gentry—the free billionaires, the most humane people in the world—would wean their friends in a trice even of thinking, let alone talking of "independence" of any sort. (*Idem*, p. 442.)

And again:

Until now the petty bourgeoisie hoped that the British, French and Americans stood for real democracy; until now it still cherished that illusion; but now that illusion is being completely dispelled by the peace that is being imposed on Austria and Germany. The British are behaving as if they had made it their special purpose to prove the correctness of the Bolshevik views on international imperialism. The British, French and Americans are behaving as if they made it their purpose to prove that the Bolsheviks were right. (*Idem*, p. 329.)

And again:

And now history, with the malicious irony characteristic of it, has brought it about that, after German imperialism, it is now the turn of Anglo-French imperialism to expose itself, and it is doing it thoroughly. And we declare to the Russian, German and Austrian working class masses: "These are not the Russian serf troops of 1848! They are going to crush a people which is about to liberate itself from capitalism—to strangle a revolution." And we say with absolute confidence that this gorged beast will meet its doom, just as did the beast of German imperialism. (*Idem*, pp. 282-3.)

Any number of similar quotations from Lenin and Trotsky can be cited. But there is one fact that is worth a whole library of quotations, namely: in Lenin's lifetime, the fight against Versailles, especially in the victor countries, was placed at the head of the political agenda of the Communist International. Thus the French Communist Party placed "the fight against the Versailles Treaty in the foreground of our tasks" as one of its spokesmen wrote at the time, and then went on to add:

It lays upon us the duty of strengthening by word of mouth and by aid of the press the feeling of solidarity binding the workers of France to the workers of Germany. (*Inprecorr*, 1923, vol. VI, p. 53.)

Today the Stalinists in France, England, the U.S. and elsewhere express their solidarity not with the German workers but with the French and Allied Imperialists and, in return, demand slave labor from Germany. One must be either blind or hypnotized to accept this, in good faith, as—"Leninism"!

Neither Lenin nor Trotsky based their revolutionary op-

timism solely on the break in mass-moods, following the war and the Peace of Versailles, crucial as this subjective factor is. They also took into account the objective foundation of the revolution, namely: the ruination and disintegration of the economic (and political) system of capitalism. "The victory of the Entente and the Versailles Peace have not halted the process of economic ruination—and decay but have only altered its paths and forms." (Trotsky).

And, moreover, there are additional important considerations:

The war, through the Versailles Treaty, has imposed such conditions upon the advanced peoples that they now find themselves in a position of colonial dependency, poverty-stricken, famished, ruined and deprived of all rights. Because they have been bound hand and foot by the Treaty and placed by it for many generations to come under conditions such as no civilized people have ever had to live. There you have a picture of the world: Immediately following the war, not less than a billion and a quarter of the world population remains subject to colonial bondage, and must submit to the bestial exploitation of capitalism which has boasted so much of its peace-loving nature. Some fifty years ago, there was some justification for this boast, that is, before the earth was already divided, before the monopolies established their rule, at a time when capitalism was still able to develop in relative peace and without plunging into colossal military conflicts. But today, in the wake of this epoch of peace, there has taken place a monstrous intensification of oppression; there is to be observed a regression toward colonial and military bondage worse than any hitherto. The Versailles Peace has placed Germany and a whole number of defeated states in conditions which make economic existence impossible—conditions that deprive them of all rights and plunge them into degradation.

The foregoing citation is from a three-hour opening speech delivered by Lenin to the Second World Congress of the Comintern (*Loc. cit.* vol. XXV, pp. 332-3). The economic chaos, aggravated by Versailles, was so critical that the English economist Keynes called Europe a "madhouse." Lenin used Keynes' volume *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* to illustrate, at the Second World Congress, his own views on imperialism and the impasse into which it had driven mankind: "Economically Germany cannot exist after the Versailles Peace, and not only Germany, but all of the defeated countries." (*Idem*, p. 507).

This was likewise acknowledged by Keynes, the same gentleman who today unhesitatingly underwrites wilder and more destructive schemes for Germany and all of the world.

The economic consequences of Versailles which brought only calamities to the European continent, was summed up by the Bolsheviks as having "dismembered, tortured, Balkanized all of Europe" (Lenin); "while the Balkan peninsula is being barbarized, Europe is becoming Balkanized" (Trotsky).

And further:

... And indeed from the standpoint of economic development this entire particularism of tiny states (set up by Versailles) with their shut-inness, their tariff systems and so on, represent a monstrous anachronism, an insane implantation of medievalism into the twentieth century (Trotsky).

By the Versailles Peace they have created a financial system of which they are themselves unable to make either head or tail (Lenin, *loc. cit.*, vol. XXVII, p. 346).

German technology and the high productivity of German labor, these most important factors in the regeneration of world economy, are being ever more paralyzed after the Versailles Peace than was the case in wartime. The Entente is

faced with insolvable contradictions. In order to exact payment, one must provide the possibility of work. In order to make work possible one must make it possible to live. And giving crushed, dismembered, exhausted Germany the possibility to live means—to make it possible for her to resist (Trotsky).

In the interval between the two world wars, Versailles and the League of Nations secured anything but peace. In the space of 21 years, almost a score of wars were fought, as a prelude to the second world collision. In place of peace Versailles brought growth to militarism, one of the biggest obstacles in the way of economic progress. As for the "peace" brought by San Francisco, its sessions were accompanied by the beating of the war drums. Failing the revolution, militarism will continue its fearful growth.

What has changed since Lenin and Trotsky made their foregoing analyses? Every single one of the conditions cited and analyzed by them has been aggravated. Europe under the League of Nations seems almost like good times compared with Europe under the "United Nations" charter.

"But what about the United States?" Precisely this same cry was raised after the war of 1914-1918. The French bourgeoisie was then the loudest booster of America's humanitarian future.

Here is what Trotsky wrote at that time:

But what about the United States? "America is the hope of humanity!" Through the lips of Millerand, the French bourgeois repeats this phrase of Turgot in the hope of having his own debts remitted, although he himself never remits anyone's debts. But the United States is incapable of leading Europe out of its economic blind alley.

America's incapacity, to say nothing of her utter lack of desire, to succor Europe was manifested almost three decades ago, when America, during and after World War I, not only preserved but actually expanded her economic apparatus, in large measure at the expense of the imperialist rivals, whether allies or enemies. Today, the United States emerges not richer but much poorer than it entered the Second World War. The whole world has been wrecked and impoverished. Not only does the United States still remain incapable of leading Europe out of her economic blind alley, but it is making all the necessary plans to prevent the European peoples from rising to their feet again.

## Revolutionary Horizon

From the crisis of the war and the crisis of the liquidation period of the war, Lenin and Trotsky drew the most direct revolutionary conclusions. Lenin was of the opinion that Versailles must lead to revolutionary upheavals:

The Entente powers have overstepped the bounds of the possible for bourgeois policy; they have overdone it, just as the German imperialists overdid it in February and March 1918 in concluding the Brest Peace. The cause that led to the collapse of German imperialism is again clearly perceptible in the case of Anglo-French imperialism. The latter have imposed peace terms on Germany that are far worse, far more onerous than those which Germany imposed on us when concluding the Brest Peace. In doing so, Anglo-French imperialism has overstepped the bounds and this will later prove fatal to them. Once beyond these bounds imperialism forfeits the hope of holding the laboring masses in obedience. (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XXIII, p. 470. English Edition.)

Again:

Tens of millions of corpses and cripples left by the war—a war to decide whether the English or German group of

financial bandits would obtain the greater share of the loot, and on top of all this, the two peace treaties (Brest and Versailles) are opening at an unprecedented speed the eyes of millions and tens of millions of those whom the bourgeoisie grinds down, crushes, deceives and dupes. (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XIX, p. 75.)

For his part, Trotsky analyzed the situation in exactly the same way:

Today the one and only issue is: Who shall henceforth be the bearer of state-ized production—the imperialist state or the state of the victorious proletariat? In other words: Is all toiling mankind to become the bond slaves of the victorious world cliques who, under the firm name of the “League of Nations” and aided by an “international” army and an “international” navy, will here plunder and strangle some peoples and there cast crumbs to others, while everywhere and always shackling the proletariat—with the sole object of maintaining their own rule? Or shall the working class of Europe and of the advanced countries in other parts of the world take in hand the disrupted and ruined economy in order to assure its regeneration upon socialist principles. It is possible to shorten the epoch of crisis through which we are passing only by measures of the proletarian dictatorship which does not look back to the past, which respects neither inherited privileges nor property rights, which takes as its starting point the need of saving the starving masses.

For all these reasons, Lenin’s conclusion was:

Everybody knows that the social revolution is maturing in Western Europe not by the day but by the hour; that the same thing is taking place in America and in England—these al-

leged representatives of culture and civilization, and these victors over the Huns—the German imperialists. (*Loc. cit.*, vol. XXIV, pp. 545-6.)

The social revolution did come in Western Europe but it ran up against the betrayal of the official leadership of the labor movement—the Socialist parties of the Second International—and the immaturity of the Communist parties of the Third International.

This time, the bourgeoisie has passed far beyond the bounds it transgressed in 1918-1919. Nowhere in Europe can the workers be kept docile. The revolutionary process which began in the period following World War I is clearly to be discerned today both in England and in America. The English workers have shown what their real temper and aspirations are by crushing the Tory government at the polls. But the same internal enemies—the labor agents of imperialism—still obstruct the road. The old generation of renegade “Socialists” have been re-enforced by a new generation of renegade “Communists” (the Stalinists). On the other hand, the necessary instrument of the revolution—the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, The Fourth International—has been forged well in advance of the war, and not during its aftermath as was unavoidably the case with Lenin’s Comintern.

With the League of Nations, in Lenin’s opinion, the bourgeoisie began “digging its own grave.” With the “United Nations” charter, our entire civilization will be dragged into the abyss, unless the workers succeed in providing the long-overdue burial for the brutalized, blood-crazed brigands of imperialism.

# The Transformation of Morals

By LEON TROTSKY

The article published below, written in October 1923, was first printed in English in *Inprecorr*, Vol. 3, No. 67.

Communist theory is some dozen years in advance of our everyday Russian actuality—in some spheres perhaps even a century in advance. Were this not so, the communist party would be no great revolutionary power in history. Communist theory, by means of its realism and dialectic acuteness, finds the political methods for securing the influence of the party in any given situation. But the political idea is one thing, and the popular conception of morals another. Politics change rapidly, but morals cling tenaciously to the past.

## Why Bourgeois Enlightenment Failed

This explains many of the conflicts among the working class, where fresh knowledge struggles against tradition. These conflicts are the more severe in that they do not find their expression in the publicity of social life. Literature and the press do not speak of them. The new literary tendencies, anxious to keep pace with the revolution, do not concern themselves with the usages and customs based on the existing conception of morals, for they want to transform life, not to describe life! But new morals cannot be produced out of nothing, they must be arrived at with the aid of elements already existing, but capable of development. It is therefore necessary to recognize what are these elements. This applies not only to the transformation of morals, but to every form of conscious human activity. It is therefore necessary first to know what is already

existing, and in what manner its change of form is proceeding, if we are to cooperate in the re-creation of morals.

We must first see what is really going on in the factory, among the workers, in the cooperative, in the club, the school, the public house, and in the street. All this we have to understand, that is, we must recognize the remnants of the past and the germs of the future. We must call upon our authors and journalists to work in this direction. They must describe life for us as it emerges from the tempest of revolution. The study of the morals of the working people must become one of the main tasks of our journalists, at least of those who have eyes and ears for such things. Our press must see to it that the history of revolutionary morals is written. And the press must also draw the attention of its contributors among the working class to these questions. The majority of our newspapers could do much more and much better in this respect.

In order to reach a higher stage of culture, the working class—and above all its vanguard—must consciously alter its morals. It must work consciously towards this goal. Before the bourgeoisie came into power, it had fulfilled this task to a wide extent through its intellectuals. When the bourgeoisie was still an oppositional class, there were poets, painters, and writers already thinking for it.

## Observe Life as It Is

In France the Eighteenth Century which has been named the century of enlightenment, was precisely the period in which the

bourgeois philosophers were changing the conception of social and private morals, and were endeavoring to subordinate morals to the rule of reason. They occupied themselves with political questions, with the church, with the relations between man and woman, with education, etc. There is no doubt but that the mere fact of the discussion of these problems greatly contributed to raising the mental level of culture among the bourgeoisie. But all efforts made by the 18th Century philosophers towards subordinating social and private relations to the rule of reason were wrecked on one fact—the fact that the means of production were in private hands, and that this was the basis upon which society was to be built up according to the tenets of reason. For private property signifies free play to economic forces which are by no means controlled by reason. These economic conditions determine the morals, and so long as the needs of the commodity market rule society, so long is it impossible to subordinate popular morals to reason. This explains the very slight practical results yielded by the ideas of the 18th Century philosophers, despite the ingenuity and boldness of their conclusions.

### “Young Germany”

In Germany, the period of enlightenment and criticism came about the middle of the last century. “Young Germany,” under the leadership of Heine and Boerne, placed itself at the head of the movement. We here see the work of criticism accomplished by the left wing of the bourgeoisie, which declared war on the spirit of servility, on petty bourgeois anti-enlightenment education, and to the prejudices of war, and which attempted to establish the rule of reason with even greater scepticism than its French predecessor. This movement amalgamated later with the petty bourgeois revolution of 1848, which, far from transforming all human life, was not even capable of sweeping away the many little German dynasties.

In our backward Russia, the enlightenment, and the criticism of the existing state of society, did not reach any stage of importance until the second half of the 19th Century. Chernishevsky, Pissarev, and Dobrolubov, educated by the Bielinsky school, directed their criticism much more against the backwardness and reactionary Asiatic character of morals, than against the economic conditions. They opposed the new realistic human being to the traditional type of man, the new human being who is determined to live according to reason, and who becomes a personality provided with the weapon of critical thought. This movement, connected with the so-called “popular” evolutionists (Narodniki), had but slight cultural significance. For if the French thinkers of the 18th Century were only able to gain a slight influence over morals—these being ruled by the economic conditions and not by philosophy,—and if the immediate cultural influence of the German critics of society was even less, the direct influence exercised by this Russian movement on popular morals was quite insignificant. The historical role played by these Russian thinkers, including the Narodniki, consisted in preparing for the formation of the party of the revolutionary proletariat.

### Premises for the Transformation of Morals

It is only the seizure of power by the working class which creates the premises for a complete transformation of morals. Morals cannot be rationalized, that is, brought into congruity with the demands of reason, unless production is rationalized at the same time, for the roots of morals lie in production.

Socialism aims at subordinating all production to human reason. But even the most advanced bourgeois thinkers have confined themselves to the ideas of rationalizing technique on the one hand (by the application of natural science, technology, chemistry, invention, machines), and politics on the other (by parliamentarism); but they have not sought to rationalize economics, which have remained the prey of blind competition. Thus the morals of bourgeois society remain dependent on a blind and non-rational element.

When the working class takes over power, it sets itself the task of subordinating the economic principles of social conditions to a control and to a conscious order. By this means, and only by this means is there a possibility of consciously transforming morals. The successes which we gain in this direction are dependent on our success in the sphere of economics. But even in our present economic situation we could introduce much more criticism, initiative, and reason, into our morals than we actually do. This is one of the tasks of our time. It is of course obvious that the complete change of morals: the emancipation of woman from household slavery, the social education of children, the emancipation of marriage from all economic compulsion, etc., will only be able to follow on a long period of development, and will come about in proportion to the extent to which the economic forces of socialism win the upper hand over the forces of capitalism. The critical transformation of morals is necessary, in order that the conservative traditional forms of life may not continue to exist in spite of the possibilities of progress which are already offered us today by our sources of economic aid, or will at least be offered tomorrow.

On the other hand, even the slightest successes in the sphere of morals, by raising the cultural level of the working man and woman, enhance our capacity for rationalizing production, and promoting socialist accumulation. This again gives us the possibility of making fresh conquests in the sphere of morals. Thus a dialectic dependence exists between the two spheres. The economic conditions are the fundamental factor of history, but we as a communist party, and as a workers' state, can only influence economics with the aid of the working class, and to attain this we must work unceasingly to promote the technical and cultural capacity of the individual element of the working class. In the workers' state culture works for socialism, and socialism again offers the possibility of creating a new culture for humanity, one which knows nothing of class difference.

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### From Gorki's Reminiscences of Lenin

One evening Lenin was in Gorki's company listening to a fine pianist play Beethoven in a house of a friend. After listening, with obvious enjoyment, he turned to Gorki and remarked wryly:

“I know nothing more beautiful than the *Appassionata* and I could listen to it every day. Invariably the thought strikes me and fills me with pride, perhaps naive, childlike: ‘What marvels people are capable of!’”

And smiling through half-shut eyes, Lenin added not at all joyously:

“But it is hard for me to listen to music frequently. It grates on my nerves. I feel the urge to utter pleasant banalities and to caress the heads of those who while living in such a filthy hell are nevertheless capable of creating such beauty. But nowadays one cannot caress anybody's head, they'll bite your hand off. And besides, it is necessary to keep rapping them over the head, rapping unmercifully, even though our ideal is to oppose all violence against human beings. Hum, hum—it is an infernally difficult responsibility.”

# From the Arsenal of Marxism

## Perspectives of World Development—III

By LEON TROTSKY

In the first two installments of his July 1924 speech, Leon Trotsky presented the Marxist approach to the preconditions for the proletarian revolution and an analysis of America's role in post-Versailles Europe. This issue contains the concluding section with his analysis of the basic world antagonism in that period, namely: the conflict between the interests of the United States and Britain.

### United States and Britain

The basic world antagonism occurs along the line of the conflict of interests between the United States and England. Why? Because England is still the wealthiest and most powerful country, second only to the United States. It is America's chief rival, the main obstacle on its path. If England should be squeezed, or undermined, or, all the more so, battered down, what would then remain?\* The United States will, of course, dispose easily of Japan. America holds all the trumps: finances and iron and oil, political advantages in relations with China, which is, after all, being "liberated" from Japan. America is always liberating somebody, that's her profession. (Laughter; applause.) The main antagonism is between the US and England. It is growing and approaching ever closer. The English bourgeoisie has not been feeling so well, since the first years of Versailles. They know the value of ringing coin; they have had great experience in this connection. And they cannot have failed to notice that the Dollar now outweighs the pound sterling. They know that this preponderance inescapably finds its expression in politics. The English bourgeoisie has completely demonstrated the power of the pound sterling in international politics, and it now senses that the era of the Dollar is dawning. It seeks consolation, and tries to console itself with illusions. The most serious English newspapers say: "Yes, the Americans are very rich, but they remain, in the last analysis, provincials. They do not know the paths of world politics. We

\*In the Manifesto (on the tenth anniversary of the war) which I have written on the assignment of the Fifth World Congress, this idea is expressed as follows:

"The sharpest world antagonism proceeds slowly but stubbornly along the line of the clash of interests between Britain's empire and the United States. During the last two years it might have appeared that a firm agreement had been reached by these two giants. But this appearance of stability will be retained only so long as the economic rise of the North American Republic continues to develop primarily on the basis of its domestic market. Today this development is obviously drawing to its conclusion. The agrarian crisis, growing out of the ruination of Europe, has already come as a harbinger of the impending commercial-industrial crisis. The productive forces of America must seek ever broader outlets on the world market. The foreign trade of the US can develop first of all only at the expense of Britain's trade; the American merchant marine and navy can grow only at the expense of the British marine and navy. The period of Anglo-American agreements must cede place to an ever-sharpening struggle, which, in its turn, signalizes the threat of war on a scale never seen before."—L. T.

English have had far more experience. The Yankees need our advice and our leadership. And we English will guide these provincial relatives of ours, who have suddenly grown so rich, on the paths of world politics; and naturally we shall retain the corresponding position, while collecting a fee into the bargain."

There is, of course, a modicum of truth in this. I have already mentioned my doubts about the Senatorial knowledge of European geography. I am sincerely uncertain about it. Yet in order to do big things in Europe, it does not hurt to possess a knowledge of European geography. But how difficult is it for a possessing class to learn the sciences? We know that it is not at all difficult for the bourgeoisie, grown quickly rich, to learn the sciences. The sons of the lapti-wearing Morozovs and Mamontovs (rich merchant families in Russia whose founders were peasants) bear a striking resemblance to hereditary nobles. It is the oppressed class, the proletariat, that finds it difficult to rise, develop and conquer all the elements of culture. But for a possessing class, especially one so fabulously rich as the American bourgeoisie, this is not at all hard. They will find, train or buy specialists in all fields. The American is just beginning to take stock of his world importance, but is not yet fully cognizant of it. His American "consciousness" still lags behind his American and world "being." The whole question must be approached not from the standpoint of a cross-section of the present-day situation, but in its proper perspective. And this is a perspective not in terms of many long decades, but rather in terms of a few brief years.

This Babylonian tower of American economic might must find its expression in everything, and it is already expressing itself, but not yet fully by far. What capitalist Europe has now at its disposal in world politics is the heritage of its former economic power, its old international influence which no longer corresponds to today's material conditions. America has not yet learned to realize her power in life. That is true. But she is learning quickly, on the bones and flesh of Europe. America still needs England as a guide on the paths of world politics. But not for long. We know how swiftly a possessing class, in its ascent, alters its character, its appearance and its methods of operation. Let us take, for example, the German bourgeoisie. Was it so long ago that the Germans were considered as shy, blue-eyed dreamers, a people of "poets and thinkers"? A few decades of capitalist development transfigured the German bourgeoisie into the most aggressive, armor-clad imperialist class. True, the settlement came very quickly. And the character of the German bourgeois again underwent a change. Today, on the European arena, they are rapidly assimilating all the customs and usages of beaten curs. The English bourgeoisie is more serious. Their character has been molded in the course of centuries. Class self-esteem has entered into their blood and marrow, their nerves and bones. It will be much harder to knock the



self-confidence of world rulers out of them. But the American will knock it out just the same, when he gets seriously down to business.

In vain does the British bourgeois console himself that he will serve as guide for the inexperienced American. Yes, there will be a transitional period. But the crux of the matter does not lie in the habits of diplomatic leadership, but in actual power, existing capital and industry. And the United States, if we take its economy from oats to big battleships of the latest type, occupies the first place. They produce all the living necessities to the extent of one-half to two-thirds of what is produced by all mankind. Oil, which now plays such an exceptional military and industrial role, totals in the United States two-thirds of the world output, and in 1923 it had even reached approximately 72 percent. To be sure, they complain a lot about the threats of the exhaustion of their oil resources. In the initial postwar years, I confess I thought that these complaints were merely a pious cover for coming encroachments on foreign oil. But geologists actually do affirm that American oil at the current rate of consumption will, according to some, last 25 years, according to others—40 years. But in 25 to 40 years America with her industry and fleet will be able to take away the oil from all the others ten times over again. (Laughter.) There is hardly any need for us, comrades, to spend sleepless nights over it. (Applause.)

The world position of the United States is expressed in figures which are irrefutable. Let me mention a few of the most important ones. The US produces one-fourth of the world grain crop; more than one-third of the oats; approximately three-fourths of the world corn crop; one-half of the world coal output; about one-half of the world's iron ore, and about 60 percent of its pig iron; 60 percent of the steel; 60 percent of the copper; 47 percent of the zinc. American railways constitute 36 percent of the world railway network; its merchant marine, virtually non-existent prior to the war, now comprises more than 25 percent of the world tonnage; and, finally, the number of automobiles operating in the trans-Atlantic republic amounts to 84.4 percent of the world total! While in the production of gold the US occupies a relatively modest place (14 percent), thanks to its favorable trade balance 44.2 percent of the world's gold reserve has collected in its vaults. The national income of the United States is two and a half times greater than the combined national incomes of England, France, Germany and Japan. These figures decide everything. They will cut a road for themselves on land, on sea and in the air.

What do these figures presage for Great Britain? Nothing good. They signify one thing: England will not escape the common lot of capitalist countries. America will place her on rations. Whether Lord Curzon likes it or not, he will have to accept rations. This is our "ultimatistic" message to him from here. But we must also add: When England's position becomes such as to compel her openly to accept rations, this will not be performed directly by Lord Curzon—he will not be suitable, he is too unruly. No, this will be entrusted to a Macdonald. (Applause.) The self-esteem of the politicians of the English bourgeoisie is not such as to make them amenable to the transference of the greatest empire in the world to the meager foundations of American rations. Required here will be the benign eloquence of Macdonald, Henderson and the Fabians in order to exert pressure on the English bourgeoisie and to convince the English workers: "Are we, then, actually to engage in war with America? No, we stand for peace, for agreements." And what does agreement with Uncle Sam mean? The foregoing figures speak eloquently enough on this score. Accept

rations. That's the only agreement for you, there is no other. If you refuse, get ready for war.

England has up to now retreated step by step before America. Before our very eyes, it is still fresh in our memory, President Harding invited England, France and Japan to Washington and in the calmest way offered England—what? That England limit her fleet. No more, no less.

Yet before the war it was England's doctrine that her navy must be more powerful than the combined fleets of the next two strongest naval powers. The US has put an end to this, once and for all. In Washington, Harding began, as is customary, by invoking the "awakened consciousness of civilization," and he ended by telling England that she must except rations. You will take 5 units; I will take (meanwhile) 5 units; France—3 units; Japan—3 units. Whence these proportions? Before the war the American fleet was much weaker than England's. In the course of the war it grew enormously. And therewith, whenever the English write with alarm concerning the American navy, the American naval writers reply by demanding: "What did we build our navy for? Why, it was to defend your British isles from the German submarines."

That is why, mind you, they built their fleet. But it is useful for other purposes, too. But why did the United States resort to this naval limitation program at Washington? Not because they are unable to build warships fast enough, and the biggest battleships, at that. No, in this respect no one can match them. But it is not possible to create, train and educate the necessary cadres of sailors in a brief period. For this time is required. Here is the source of the ten year breathing space projected in Washington. In defending the program limiting the construction of battleships, the American naval journals wrote: "If you so much as dare to balk at an agreement, we shall turn out warships like so many pancakes." The reply of the leading English naval periodical was approximately as follows: "We are ourselves in favor of pacifist agreements. Why do you keep threatening us?"

This already expresses the new psychology of ruling England. It is growing accustomed to the fact that it is necessary to submit to America, and that the most important thing is to demand . . . polite treatment. This is the most that the European bourgeoisie can expect from America on the morrow.

In the competition between England and the United States, only retreats are possible for England. At the price of these retreats English capitalism buys the right to participate in the deals of American capitalism. Thus a coalition Anglo-American capitalism seemingly arises. England saves face, and does so not unprofitably, for England derives substantial profits from it. But it receives them at the price of retreating and clearing the way for America. The US is strengthening her world positions; England's are growing weaker.

Only the other day, Britain renounced the previously adopted plan of reinforcing Singapore. It is too bad we have no map here. Singapore and Hongkong mark the most important highways of imperialism. Singapore is the key between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. It represents one of the most important bases of English policy in the Far East. But in the Pacific England can conduct her policy either with Japan against America, or with America against Japan. Huge sums were appropriated for the fortification of Singapore. And Macdonald had to decide: with America against Japan? or with Japan against America? And so, he renounced the fortification of Singapore. This is not, of course, the last word of English imperialist policy. The question can come again for a new decision. But at the given moment it is the beginning of England's

renunciation of an independent policy—or an alliance with Japan—in the Pacific. And who ordered England (yes, ordered!) to break the alliance with Japan? America. A formal ultimatum was issued: break the alliance with Japan. And England broke. Meanwhile, England is conceding and retreating. But does this mean that this is how matters will proceed to the very end, and that war between them is excluded? In no case. On the contrary, at the cost of concessions today England is buying only redoubled difficulties on the morrow. Under the cover of collaboration, contradictions of unprecedented explosive power are accumulating. Things not only can but must come to war, because it will be extremely difficult for England to move to a secondary position and to roll up her empire. At a certain point, she will be compelled to mobilize all her forces, in order to resist with arms in hand. But in an open struggle, too, so far as it is possible to foresee, all the odds are on America's side.

England is an island and America is likewise an island of a sort, but much larger. England is completely dependent in her day-to-day existence on countries beyond the ocean. But the American "insular" continent contains everything that is necessary for existence and for the conduct of war. England has colonial possessions on many seas and America will "liberate" them. Having begun the war with England, America will summon hundreds of millions of Indians to rise in defense of their inalienable national rights. The same summons will be issued to Egypt and Ireland—there is no lack of those who can be called upon to free themselves from the yoke of English capitalism. Just as today America in order to drain the living juices from Europe comes to the fore draped in the toga of pacifism, so in the war with England she will step out as the great emancipator of the colonial peoples.

Beldam history has made things easy for American capitalism: for every act of rapine there is a liberating slogan ready at hand. With regard to China, it is—the "Open Door" policy! Japan seeks to dismember China and to subjugate certain provinces by military force, because there is no iron in Japan, no coal, no oil. These constitute three colossal minuses in Japan's struggle with the United States. For this reason Japan seeks through seizure to assure herself of the riches of China. But the United States? It says: "Open Door in China."

With regard to oceans, what does America have to say? "The Freedom of the Seas!" This rings superbly. But what does it mean in action? It means: Get over to one side, England's navy, make room for me! "Open Door in China" means: Stand aside Japan and let me pass! It is essentially a question of economic seizures, of robberies. But because of the specific conditions of U.S. development, this travail appears at one time under the guise of pacifism, and at another, it almost assumes a liberating aspect.

Naturally, England, too, possesses great advantages which derive from her entire past history. First and foremost, she disposes of powerful bases of support and the strongest naval bases in the world. America doesn't have that. But, in the first place, it is possible to create all this; secondly, it is possible to take all this away, piecemeal and by force; thirdly, and lastly, England's bases are bound up with her colonial rule and are vulnerable for just this reason. America will find allies and helpers all over the world—the strongest power always finds them—and together with these allies, America will find the necessary bases.

If at the present time, the United States binds Canada and Australia to herself through the slogan of defending the white race against the yellow—and in this way justifies her right to naval supremacy—then, on the next stage, which may come very

soon, these virtuous Presbyterians may announce that in the last analysis the yellow-skinned peoples are likewise created in God's image and are consequently entitled to replace the colonial rule of England by the economic domination of America. In a war against England, the United States would be in a highly favorable position, since it could from the very first day issue a summons to the Indians, the Egyptians and other colonial peoples to rise up, and could assist them with arms and supplies.

England will have to think ten times before deciding on war. But, in avoiding war, she will be compelled to retreat step by step under the pressure of American capitalism. The conduct of war requires the Lloyd Georges and the Churchills; the Macdonalds are required for the conduct of retreats without a battle.

What has been said about the interrelations of U.S. and England also applies, with corresponding changes and, so to speak, in miniature, to Japan, and on a truly minute scale to France and other second-rate European powers. What is at stake in Europe? Alsace-Lorraine, the Ruhr, the Saar territory, Silesia, that is, some tiny area of land, some petty strips. In the meantime, America is drafting a plan to place everybody on rations.

In contrast to England, America is not preparing to create an American army, an American administration, for the colonies including Europe. It will "allow" them to preserve at home a reformist, pacifist, toothless order, with the assistance of the Social Democracy, with the help of the (French) Radicals and other middle class parties and at the expense of their respective peoples. And it will extort from them blessings (up to a certain time) for not having violated their "independence." This is the plan of American capitalism and this is the program on the basis of which the Second International is being resuscitated.

## Perspective of Wars and Revolutions

This American "pacifist" program of universal bondage is by no means a peaceful one. On the contrary, it is pregnant with wars and the greatest revolutionary paroxysms. Not for nothing does America continue to expand her fleet. She is busily engaged in building light and fast cruisers. And when England protests in a whisper, America replies: You must bear in mind that I not only have a 5 to 5 relationship with you but also a 5 to 3 relationship with Japan; and the latter possesses an inordinate number of light cruisers which makes it necessary for me to restore a balance.

America chooses the largest multiplicand and then multiplies it by her Washington co-efficient. And the others cannot vie with her, because, as the Americans themselves say, they can turn out warships like so many pancakes.

The perspective this offers is one of preparation for the greatest international dog-fight, with both the Atlantic and the Pacific as the arena, provided of course the bourgeoisie is able to retain its world rule for any considerable length of time. For it is hard to conceive that the bourgeoisie of all countries will docilely withdraw to the backyard, and become converted into America's vassals without putting up a fight; no, this is hardly likely. The contradictions are far too great; the appetites are far too insatiable; the urge to perpetuate ancient rulership is far too potent; England's habits of world rule are far too ingrained. There will be military collisions. The indicated era of pacifist Americanism is laying the groundwork for new wars on an unprecedented scale and of unimaginable monstrosity.

If we return now to the question—which I have made central in my exposition—namely: the question of what the

chances are for European reformism as it exists today, then our answer would read: Up to a certain point the chances of European reformism are directly proportional to the chances of America's imperialist "pacifism." Should the operations directed toward the transformation of Europe into an American dominion of a new type meet with a certain measure of success, that is, unless they run up in the next few years against the resistance of the peoples or unless they are interrupted by war or revolution; then, in consonance with this, the European Social Democracy will, as the shadow of American imperialism, retain a certain measure of its influence. In Europe a rotten equilibrium will be established, resting on the remnants of ancient power and on the elements of a new and lean existence upon standardized American rations. All this will be overlaid with an ideological hash consisting of the warmed-over truisms of the European Social Democracy, with an American dressing of Quaker-pacifism. It is hard to imagine anything more repulsive and obscene than this perspective. The question therefore ought not be posed as follows: What are the forces of the European Social Democracy? But rather: What are the chances that American capitalism will succeed, through a parsimonious financing of Europe, in propping up a new regime in Europe? It is impossible here to make any exact predictions. All the less so is it possible to fix any dates. Suffice it for us to understand the new mechanics of world relations: to clearly grasp the basic factors which will determine the situation in Europe; and to be able, in this perspective, to follow the march of events, taking stock of the successes and failures of the master-in-chief of the current epoch, the United States of North America. Suffice it for us to understand the political zigzags of the European Social Democracy, and thereby to increase the assets on the proletariat's side. Therewith it is quite incontestable that from the very outset those contradictions which prepared the imperialist war and doused it over Europe's head ten years ago; those contradictions which have been aggravated by the war, and sealed diplomatically by the Versailles Peace, and which then were deepened by the further development of the class war in Europe—it is quite incontestable that all these contradictions still exist today like gaping wounds. And the United States will collide with these contradictions in all their acuteness.

It is a difficult job to place a hungry country on rations. We know it from our own experience. True enough, we passed through this experience under different conditions and proceeding from different principles, obeying the iron necessity of the struggle for the salvation of a revolutionary country. But through this experience we have been able to convince ourselves that a regime of hunger-rations is bound up with shocks and upheavals, which upon intensifying resulted in the somber Kronstadt uprising. Today, out of her own capitalist considerations and driven by the logic of imperialist rapacity, America is making the experiment with rations on a gigantic scale and in relation to many peoples. This plan will not go through without meeting with resistance, without arousing a cruel struggle along class lines and along national lines. The more the might of American capitalism tends to become transformed into political self-assurance—and this process is picking up in tempo; the more American capitalism expands internationally; the more commands the American bankers issue to the governments of Europe, all the greater, all the more centralized, all the more resolute will be the resistance of the broadest masses of Europe, not only among the proletariat but also among the petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Because, Messrs. Americans, it is not at all so simple a task, as you deem, to transfer

Europe to a colonial position! (Stormy applause.)

We stand before this process; we stand at its very beginning. Today, for the first time in a number of years, the German proletariat experiences a slight and pitiful alleviation. As you all know, when a worker becomes terribly exhausted, after he has gone hungry for a long time, he becomes very sensitive even to the slightest alleviation. The German worker has now been given this, by the stabilization of the mark and the stabilization of wages. For this very reason a certain political stability has been regained by the German Social Democracy, that is to say, a temporary stability. But this will not suffice for long. America is not at all preparing to increase German rations, least of all the share earmarked for the German worker. The same thing will apply to the French and English worker—who stand second and third in line, respectively.

For what does America need? She needs to secure her profits at the expense of the European toiling masses, and thus render stable the privileged position of the upper crust of the American working class. Without the American labor aristocracy, American capitalism cannot maintain itself. Failing Compers and his trade unions, failing the skilled well-paid workers, the political regime of American capitalism will plunge into the abyss. But it is possible to keep the American labor aristocracy in its privileged position only by placing the "plebians," the proletarian "rabble" of Europe on rations of cold and hunger, rations rigidly fixed and stingily weighed.

The further this development unfolds along this road, all the more difficult will it be for the European Social Democracy to uphold the evangel of Americanism in the eyes of the European working masses. All the more centralized will become the resistance of European labor against the master of masters, against American capitalism. All the more urgent,—all the more practical and warlike will the slogan of the All-European revolution and its state form—*The Soviet United States of Europe*—become for the European workers.

What is the Social Democracy using to benumb and poison the consciousness of the European workers? It tells them that we—the whole of Europe, dismembered and sliced up by the Versailles Peace—cannot get along without America. But the European Communist Party will say: You lie, we could if we wanted to. Nothing compels us to remain in an atomized Europe. It is precisely the revolutionary proletariat that can unify Europe, by transforming it into the proletarian United States of Europe. (Applause.) America is mighty. As against the little English isle, which rests on colonies all over the world, America is mighty. But we say: As against the united proletarian-peasant Europe, bound together with us into a single Soviet Federation, America will prove impotent. (Applause.)

American capitalism senses this. There is no enemy of Bolshevism more principled and more savage than American capitalism. Hughes and his policy are not accidental whims. This is not a caprice: this is an expression of the will of the most highly concentrated capitalism in the world, which is now entering the epoch of open struggle for its autocratic rule over the planet. It comes into collision with us, if only because the paths through the Pacific lead to China and Siberia. The thought of colonizing Siberia is one of the most alluring thoughts of American imperialism. But a guard stands there. We hold the monopoly of foreign trade. We possess the socialist beginnings of economic policy. This is the first obstacle in the way of the autocracy and undivided rule of American capitalism.

And even where American capitalism penetrates into China with its slogan of "The Open Door"—and it does penetrate into China—it finds there among the popular masses not the re-

ligion of Americanism, but the political program of Bolshevism translated into the Chinese language. (Applause.) Not Wilson, Harding nor Coolidge, nor Morgan nor Rockefeller, not these names are on the lips of the Chinese coolies and Chinese peasants. The name of Lenin (applause) is spoken with ecstasy not only in China, but throughout the Orient.

The United States can undermine Great Britain only by means of slogans calling for the emancipation of the peoples. On its lips this is the policy of hypocrisy, just as is its policy of pacifism in Europe. But in the Orient alongside the American consul and the American merchant and the American professor, alongside the American newspaperman there stand fighters, revolutionists who have proved capable of translating the liberationist program of Bolshevism into their own language. Everywhere, in Europe as well as Asia, imperialist Americanism is colliding with revolutionary Bolshevism. This, comrades, are the two principles of modern history.

I recollect that in 1919 in a conversation with Vladimir Ilyich (Lenin) with regard to Wilson's arrival in Europe and in reference to the fact that the entire bourgeois press was filled on one side with Wilson's name and on the other with the name of Lenin, I said in jest: "Lenin and Wilson—these are the two apocalyptic principles of modern history."

Vladimir Ilyich laughed. Naturally, at that time I did not realize with what a vast content history would fill this jest. Leninism and American imperialism—these two principles alone are now fighting in Europe; these two principles alone cut across both the Atlantic and the Pacific. The fate of mankind hinges on the outcome of the struggle between these two principles.

The American enemy is far more centralized and powerful than the divided European foes. But our own strength, too, lies in concentration and our enemy is concentrating the workers of Europe. The resuscitation of the Second International is only a temporary and surface symptom of the fact that the proletariat of Europe finds itself compelled to feel and fight not within national frameworks but on a continental scale. And the broader the labor masses seized by the need to resist, the broader the base of resistance, all the more revolutionary the ideas which must unfaillingly gain preponderance. And the more revolutionary the ideas, all the more favorable the soil for Bolshevism. Every success of Americanism, insofar as Americanism does score successes, will thereby signify the centralization of the soil for the growth of Bolshevism—in a more concentrated and more revolutionary form, and on a more gigantic scale. The future works for us!

Since I am addressing a gathering called by the friends of the physico-mathematical faculty, you will permit me, comrades, after I have given you a revolutionary Marxist critique of Americanism to point out that we do not at all mean thereby to condemn Americanism lock, stock and barrel. We do not mean that we abjure to learn from Americans and Americanism whatever one can and should learn from them. We lack the technique of the Americans and their labor proficiency. Science is the premise of technology: natural sciences, physics, mathematics. Now, along this line we are reduced to the last extremity in our need to catch up with the Americans. To have Bolshevism shod in the American way—there is our task! We must get shod technologically with American nails. Today while we are still so poorly shod, we have nevertheless managed to hold our own. In the future, however, the struggle can assume far more terrible proportions. But it is easier for us to get shod in the American way than it is for American capitalism to place Europe and the whole world on rations. If we get shod

with mathematics, technology; if we Americanize our still frail socialist industry, then we can with tenfold confidence say that the future is completely and decisively working in our favor. Americanized Bolshevism will crush and conquer imperialist Americanism.

*First published in Izvestia, No. 177.  
August 5, 1924.*

## Leon Trotsky on the National Question

Trotsky elucidated the National Question in his article, *A Fresh Lesson*, printed in 1938:

An imperialist war, no matter in what corner it begins, will be waged not for "national independence" but for a redivision of the world in the interests of separate cliques of finance capital. This does not exclude that in passing the imperialist war may improve or worsen the position of this or that "nation"; or, more exactly, of one nation at the expense of another. Thus, the Versailles treaty dismembered Germany. A new peace may dismember France. Social patriots invoke precisely this possible "national" peril of the future as an argument for supporting "their" imperialist bandits of the present...

In reality all speculative arguments of this sort and raising bogies of impending national calamities for the sake of supporting this or that imperialist bourgeoisie flow from the tacit rejection of the revolutionary perspective and a revolutionary policy. Naturally, if a new war ends only in a military victory of this or that imperialist camp; if a war calls forth neither a revolutionary uprising nor a victory of the proletariat; if a new imperialist peace more terrible than that of Versailles places new chains for decades upon the people; if unfortunate humanity bears all this in silence and submission — then not only Czechoslovakia or Belgium but also France can be thrown back into the position of an oppressed nation (the same hypothesis may be drawn in regard to Germany). In this eventuality the further frightful decomposition of capitalism will drag all peoples backward for many decades to come. Of course if this perspective of passivity, capitulation, defeats and decline comes to pass, the oppressed masses and entire peoples will be forced to climb anew, paying out their sweat and blood, retracing on their hands and knees the historic road once already travelled.

Is such a perspective excluded? If the proletariat suffers without end the leadership of social-imperialists and communochauvinists; if the Fourth International is unable to find a way to the masses; if the horrors of war do not drive the workers and soldiers to rebellion; if the colonial peoples continue to bleed patiently in the interests of the slaveholders, then under these conditions the level of civilization will inevitably be lowered and the general retrogression and decomposition may again place national wars on the order of the day for Europe. But then we, or rather our sons, will have to determine their policy in relation to future wars on the basis of the new situation. Today we proceed not from the perspective of decline but that of revolution. We are defeatists at the expense of the imperialists and not at the expense of the proletariat. We do not link the question of the fate of the Czechs, Belgians, French and Germans as nations with episodic shifts of military fronts during a new brawl of the imperialists, but with the uprising of the proletariat and its victory over all the imperialists. We look forward and not backward. The program of the Fourth International states that the freedom of all European nations, small and large, can be assured only within the framework of the Socialist United States of Europe.

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