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ITALIAN REVOLUTION— and the Tasks of the British Workers *By TED GRANT*

The dismissal of Mussolini marks a new epoch in the development of the revolution and the decay and disintegration of imperialism on the Continent of Europe. In order to appreciate the trends of development in the Italian peninsula, it is necessary to understand the causes which led Italy to take the road of fascist barbarism first among all the countries in Europe, and is now the first country in the war to turn towards revolution.

Italy has always been one of the most backward of the great powers. The peasantry as in Russia, has been burdened by the impositions of the great landowners; the impoverished proletariat, even before the last war, built up a powerful socialist movement

as a means of conducting the struggle against the bourgeoisie. Italy's participation in the last war was essentially that of a second rate power, and though nominally on the side of the victors, Italy's gains in the last war were negligible. The weakened Italian bourgeoisie faced with the ruin of Italian economy, attempted to load the burdens of "reconstruction" as they had those of the war, onto the shoulders of the Italian masses.

It was as a reply to this offensive of the bourgeoisie that the masses of Italian workers and peasants launched the counter-offensive with brilliant success. The years 1918-20 marked the period of "anarchy" for Italian capitalism. The working class, and following them, the peasantry, forced tre-

mendous concessions from the ruling class. By September 1920, the workers had seized the factories and industries, and the peasants had occupied the land. The real power was no longer in the hands of the capitalists, who were paralysed with fear, but in the hands of the working class. What was necessary was a Bolshevik Party to draw the conclusions for the masses from this and guide the workers to the conquest of power.

The reformist leadership of the working class was incapable of drawing the lessons. Blind and impotent, they betrayed the movement and guided it back into the channels of "constitutionalism". Thus they prepared the way for the destruction of the working class movement.

The bourgeoisie, which had been scared out of its wits, by the movement of the workers temporarily gave them some concessions. But the economic crisis continued. The Italian bourgeoisie, without reserves and without rich colonies and with a weak economic base, could not hope to compete with the more powerful bourgeoisie of the Entente on the world market. Consequently, they were compelled to intensify the exploitation of the Italian masses on pain of collapse and extinction.

The heroic attempts of the proletariat to find a way out on the path of the Socialist Revolution had been blocked by the sabotage of the reformist leadership. The bourgeoisie looked for a solution to the intolerable crisis in which "law and order" could be established. The economic crisis was further intensified in the post-war collapse. The middle class found itself completely ruined and rendered desperate. Large sections had followed the lead of the workers in supporting the Socialist Party in the post-war revolutionary party. The core of the petty bourgeoisie could have been won with a bold policy on the part of the proletariat. But in sheer despair, the petty bourgeoisie began to look for another solution. It was thus that the fascist movement arose as an expression of the desperation of the middle class. The big industrialists financed Mussolini liberally. Fascism began to organise its bands of thugs and murderers, of crazed petty bourgeois and lumpen proletariat for the purpose of physically annihilating the leaders and the organisations of the proletariat. These bands of cut-throats roamed over Italy attacking workers' co-operatives, unions, Socialist municipalities etc., under the protection of the bourgeois police. In 1922, Mussolini was placed in power by the landowners, industrialists, Church and monarchy, as the sole means of preserving their interests.

The first few years of his rule saw him precariously attempting to establish his domination.

The murder of Matteotti provoked a wave of indignation throughout Italy and the working class only needed a revolutionary lead to overthrow the Fascist regime. Still the Socialists clung to "legal" methods. Mussolini survived the crisis and proceeded systematically to destroy the organisations of the working class. The disillusionment and demoralisation of the working class at the betrayal of their organisations led them to a position of prostration and apathy. Fascism firmly entrenched itself in power.

But once in power, Fascism begins to lose its middle class base. The impoverishment and ruin of the petty bourgeoisie is not halted, but on the contrary, receives a new impetus by the victory of Fascism. The counter-revolutionary delusions of the petty

bourgeoisie are soon dispelled by the cold reality of the totalitarian states and the support for Fascism ebbs away. The Fascist regime loses its social basis completely and becomes an ordinary military-police bureaucratic dictatorship. That was the position of Mussolini's dictatorship. Yet it has endured for more than two decades!

The secret of the long period of Fascist rule lies not at all in the strength of the regime, but in world events on the one hand; and the apathy and torpor of the Italian masses, who had lost all perspectives with the betrayal of their organisations. The victory of Hitler, the defeat of the French and Spanish workers, the further decay and collapse of the working class movement, the strengthening of reaction on a world scale, could not but further demoralise and plunge the Italian working class into gloomy indifference and lack of faith in the future.

But the crisis which overshadowed the regime, forced the Italian bourgeoisie to attempt outward expansion to save themselves from being overthrown. The Abyssinian adventure and the war which Mussolini waged against the Spanish workers, were symptoms of the desperation of Italian Fascism. Far from solving anything, they merely increased the misery of the workers and peasants, and increased the pressure on the regime. After the fall of France, the Italian capitalists eagerly seized the opportunity which they imagined had been presented, to secure a rich Empire on the cheap.

But the calculations of the bourgeoisie were completely falsified by events. Never in history had an army fought with less morale and less belief in their cause than the army of Fascist Italy! The coarse witticisms of the British ruling class against the "cowardly" Italians are completely beside the mark. The Italian army, like that of Czarist Russia, is composed mainly of peasants. Exploited and oppressed by the landlords, beaten and tyrannised by the Fascist thugs, their thoughts of the "enemy" were not against the armies opposing them, but of the landlords in the villages who lived well by battenning on them; while their women and children hungered and even starved. They thought of the burdensome taxes to keep up a bloated, ignorant and lazy fascist bureaucracy and fascist militia. They did not have the will to fight. Mussolini could not even defeat the Greeks! In Africa the Empire disappeared while the Italian soldiery surrendered by the tens of thousands with only a semblance of resistance. Twenty years of Fascism had rotted the regime from top to bottom. There was not a live element in the whole of its apparatus, either in the army or the means of suppression at home. Moreover, Italy as a backward and only semi-industrialised country did not possess the technical

for modern war as her twin Fascist Germany had the fortune of possessing in unrivalled technology and first rate industrial equipment. All these factors combining, the defeat of Italy became inevitable.

Trotsky, with infallible foresight and a profound understanding of the masses and of the historical process, in analysing the problem of the revolution in the fascist countries had shown that it would require some sharp shock to rouse the masses from their lethargy and stupor, to take to the road of mass opposition and mass struggle against the totalitarian regimes; a shock which could be provided by military defeats or the victory of the revolution in one of the democracies.

The defeats of the regime as a final revelation of its bankruptcy; its corruption and decay provided the means for the re-awakening of the Italian proletariat. The molecular process of recovery and revival had been proceeding apace behind the outward facade of strength and stability of the regime. The relationship of forces began to change within the country. For the first time mass strikes had been taking place in the towns against the unbearable increase in the cost of living, the peasants had begun to move in a series of minor revolts against the landlords and the unbearable tax impositions of the Fascist officials, mutinies in the army were an ominous indication of the spirits of the troops. As early as the war against Greece, there were reports of units taken prisoner, singing "Bandiera Rossa" (The Red Flag).

The bourgeoisie and the landowners could feel the ground trembling under their feet. As always in modern society, the approach of revolution was heralded by tension within all strata of society, within the ruling class as well as the workers, within the petty bourgeoisie as well as in the ranks of the fascist bureaucracy and the state apparatus. The pressure from below produces fissures and uncertainty, quarrels and differences within the erstwhile solid ranks of the ruling class. They begin to seek a way out of the impasse, a means of escaping the rising tide of revolt which threatens to engulf them. From regarding the "Leader" as their saviour from the masses, they begin to regard him as the author of their ills whose "mistakes" have landed them in an impossible situation. Abuse of the ruler and his immediate clique of collaborators is replaced by conspiracies and discussions of a coup d'etat, of a palace revolution, which by a timely movement above will prevent and nip in the bud, a movement from below. The existing relations between the classes have become unbearable and the situation cannot last. The ruling class seeks for some means of saving themselves. They cannot reconcile themselves to the doom which they feel is impending and will overtake them un-

less they can forestall it by some means.

Thus it was in Czarist Russia before the February Revolution. Thus it was in Fascist Italy before the fall of Mussolini. Even a better analogy perhaps, is made by the removal of Primo de Rivera, the military dictator in Spain, by Alfonso in an effort to save the monarchy. Tomorrow we will observe the same process in Hitler Germany. But all these moves in the ruling class, far from preventing the revolution, dialectically, are the means of precipitating it. The movement from above produces a mighty echo in the movement from below. Thus it was that Mussolini was flung aside by the ruling class in Italy in order to avert their overthrow. Thus as always in history, they have merely opened the first chapter in the Revolution.

Whatever the fate of the Italian revolution may be, in passing it has dealt the death blow to the cowards and renegade from the Labour movement, ex-'Marxists' such as James Burnham in the United States and C. A. Smith in Britain, and the whole tribe of petit bourgeois intellectuals and sceptics who have regarded the proletariat and the struggle for Socialism with irony and scepticism. This short sighted professional rabble regarded the outward varnish of fascism as its inner essence, and even regarded fascism as the development of a new form of society with a new ruling class neither bourgeois nor proletarian! To them the inert attitude of the proletariat in Italy and Germany, which bowed its head passively in face of the Fascist tyranny, was proof of the incapacity of the proletariat and as proof of a new society.

Incapable of understanding the dialectics of the development of society, they regard with irony, condescension and contempt, the strivings of the proletariat. As in the case of C. A. Smith this was merely a bridge to justify desertion to the camp of the bourgeoisie. But they were not alone. The traitors of Stalinism and of the Labour bureaucracy, attempted to justify their own treachery by unloading the blame for the passivity of the masses onto the 'incapacity' of the proletariat and the lack of ripeness for the Socialist Revolution, which they have put decades hence. How pitiful is Stalinism, which dissolved the Comintern on the eve of the fall of Mussolini, how pitiful the Vansittartistic Labour bureaucracy and Stalinism which unload the blame for Hitler onto the shoulders of the German proletariat which 'tolerates' Hitler. In reality it is the unending defeats of the past two decades, caused by the self-same 'leaders' and their present policies, which has lain like a pall over the proletariat of the whole world and produced the mood of frustration and despair, of demoralisation and demoralisation, of lack of belief in itself and its own future. It is this

indeed, which has led to the prolongation of the war and its continuance for four nightmare years before the first movement of the proletariat. All these forces and moods were merely the result of the reaction, which they themselves had called forth.

—Alone of all tendencies in the Labour movement, the Trotskyists maintained faith in the working class and themselves. Even at the darkest depth of reaction they maintained the banner of International Socialism, of the International revolution and retained their faith and confidence in the proletariat. And this was not accidental either. They had analysed and foreseen the reasons for the defeats and understood the basis of the turn towards reaction and naturally understanding the causes which did not lay in the proletariat but in the leadership of the proletariat, they could carry on with the sure confidence given by an understanding of Marxism. All other tendencies were blind. They had caused the defeat and were incapable of understanding the way out of the impasse.

The crisis in Italy came to a head with the invasion of Sicily. The unprecedented lack of support of the regime, was revealed from the fact that even on their 'own' soil, the Italian soldiers demonstrated no great eagerness to fight. Their resistance was no more energetic and hearty than that on the shores of Africa across the seas. Despite the exaggerations of Allied propaganda, it seems clear that the alien invaders were regarded with no great hostility in Palermo and other towns. Surely a rare occurrence in history! Anything, anything could not be worse than Mussolini, was the attitude of the inhabitants of this island. The regime was so rotten and so loathsome to the broad masses that they did not regard it as much better than that of a foreign conqueror. To this catastrophe had Mussolini's bragadocio and bombast reduced Italy! An emptiness and feeling of terror must have gathered round the hearts of the ruling class in Italy.

The denouement was not long in coming. In fear of the movement of the masses and realising that for Italian Imperialism the war was irretrievably lost, the ruling class sought to save something from the wreckage. From Germany, already hard pressed and the virtual certainty of defeat in the future, they could expect no more aid than would reduce Italy to the status of France or the satellite Balkan countries even in the event of problematic victory. And with the certainty that the 'democratic' allies would extract ever greater penalties and tribute in that event. Mussolini was of no more use to them. They feared revolution in Italy. They feared the invasion of the Allies. They feared their mightier 'partner'. In frantic panic, trapped in insuperable contradictions, the ignoble ruling classes of

Italy contemptuously cast Mussolini onto the scrapheap of history.

But the bourgeoisie have lost all perspective for the morrow. The monarchy and the General Staff imagined that they could drop Mussolini and carry on as before, graciously offering Mussolini's hide to the masses as a scapegoat for their crimes. Surely Badoglio's proclamation of martial law will rank in history as the perfect example of the illusions of a regime, which has been condemned by history to destruction. The dismissal of Mussolini was followed by a declaration of stringent martial law. But the decree merely remained on paper. Badoglio did not have the resources to carry it out despite the illusions of the General Staff.

The fall of Mussolini acted like an electric shock to the Italian workers. When the news came over the wireless, moved by a common impulse, hundreds of thousands rushed into the streets in the black-out to demonstrate their relief and their joy. The process that Trotsky had visualised would develop in Italy to mark the fall of fascism, had begun. (As the news trickled through, one could not but allow one's thoughts to dwell on the Old Man and to marvel at his unerring instinct and profound understanding which could develop in advance almost exactly the stages through which the revolution would pass.)

After 20 years of fascism the proletariat, now hardened by terror and persecution, has stepped on to the arena reinvigorated and fresh, like a giant awakening from a long sleep. Mass strikes in all the industrial cities, Milan, Turin, Genoa, etc., broke out in 24 hours. The railways in the whole of North Italy were paralysed within a few days. The jails were stormed by the workers and the political prisoners were set free. The fascist headquarters in the large towns have been sacked and the fascist printing presses seized by the workers in Milan and other areas. Anyone wearing the insignia of fascism in Italy on the day after Mussolini's disappearance stood in danger of being lynched. Fascism vanished overnight. The belated decree dissolving the fascist party merely took cognisance of a fact that had already been irrevocably established by the workers and soldiers themselves. Symbolically, in Milan, which once again has proudly taken the lead as 'Red Milan', short shrift was given by the indignant workers to the murderer of Matteotti. In other areas too, the most hated of the fascist bosses have been despatched by the workers. In Turin 'two millionaire fascists' have been executed by the workers. Streets in Milan have been renamed in honour of Matteotti and other working class leaders murdered by the fascists. The attempt to use the soldiers against the demonstrating crowds in Milan, has resulted in the soldiers going over to the side of the workers.

Overnight the working class has demonstrated its vitality and strength as though fascism had never existed. Workers' Committees have been set up in the factories in the industrial towns. Even the Stalinist "Daily Worker", following on the news published in the bourgeois press, is compelled to report:

"The radio (Swiss) reported that a Citizens' Committee, consisting of representatives of the industrial workers, soldiers and peasants has been created in Milan, centre of the industrial north."

"A majority of the troops of the Milan garrison are reported to have sworn allegiance to the Committee. The banned Communist paper 'La Roscosca' and the Liberal paper 'La Mundo' were republished on Saturday—produced in former fascist printing offices.

Similar moves were reported by the radio in Turin, Varese, Brescia and Vercelli.

In Brescia—according to the Swiss broadcast—workers have been armed from the Army arsenal and have established a Workers' Militia, which took over the police authority—with little interference from the police."

What are these "Citizens' Committees" if not Soviets, which the cowardly and treacherous Stalinists are afraid to avow at the present time? **These are living proofs that the Italian Revolution has begun.**

Whatever the vicissitudes of the Italian revolution in the next period, the lie has been given to all the faint hearts and deserters, to all the cowards and the sceptics. The wonderful resilience and buoyancy, the tremendous powers of recuperation and recovery of the working class, the only through and through progressive class in modern society, has been demonstrated. The victories of reaction are shown to be built on shifting sands. After every defeat, the proletariat recovers from its wounds and rises again with even greater force to vanquish the enemy.

All these events have been crowded into the short space of a single week! The first stage of the revolution has seen the whole of industrial Italy on the march. For the moment the peasants are quiet. It will take some time for the meaning of the events in the towns to penetrate into the villages. But once he begins to understand, the peasant will turn with implacable hatred against his enemies. The fall of fascism will be interpreted by him, not only as the fall of the fascist official but as the beginning of the end for the landlord whom the officials represent. The peasants will begin, in isolated areas, sporadically to seize the land. Against the taxes and the landlord! These will be the rallying cries of the peasants.

All the factors that make for the Socialist Revolution in Italy are crystallising out. The working class are forming their Soviets and Workers'

Militias. The soldiers (mostly peasants in uniform) are moving over to the side of the workers. The peasants will move forward. The middle class in the towns are turning towards the workers for a lead. All the objective conditions for a socialist revolution are present. And the taking of power by the Italian workers would instantly provoke the overthrow of Hitler and inaugurate the Socialist Revolution throughout Europe. All the conditions? No. The subjective conditions for the revolution are not yet present. Instinctively and almost automatically the Italian working class has taken the correct steps on the road to workers' power. But the Socialists and Stalinists are already preparing to betray the movement by turning it into the channels of bourgeois "democracy".

Meanwhile, the "Allies" regard with not unmixed feelings the developments in Italy. Churchill's speech is a revelation of the fears and forebodings of the ruling class in the face of the Revolution. His reference to the difficulty of conquering a country mile by mile and the necessity to avoid the rule through concentration camps and firing squads does not at all come from any tenderness towards the Italian workers, but of fear of such measures. The old fox of the ruling class remembers with dread the fiasco of intervention against the Russian Revolution after the last war. He wishes if possible, to avoid the same experience again. The ruling class is preparing a deal with the monarchy and the possessing classes in Italy. They hope, by a military occupation to nip the revolution in the bud before it has time to develop.

Whatever the developments in the next period, even if the military events should move more swiftly than the political developments in the Italian peninsula, Europe and the world will never be the same again. The fall of Mussolini is merely the rehearsal for the fall of Hitler. The news reports from Switzerland state that Mussolini's fall was greeted by demonstrations of the Italian workers in Berlin who burned pictures of Mussolini and all the symbols of fascism on bonfires. And what is important was the reaction of the German workers. In the factories which employed the Italians; they solidarised with them and joined the demonstrations, adding to the bonfires, portraits of Hitler and the Nazi flag. The police took no active steps against them. This is just a symptom of the situation in Germany which must break out in revolution.

But it is not only a question of Germany. The whole of European society has developed explosive potentialities during the war. The contradictions which have been piling up for more than two decades have reached their extreme limit; it requires merely one or two more sharp shocks to set the contradictions detonating in revolution. The news of Mussolini's fall

immediately had its repercussions throughout Europe. Tremendous strikes have been announced in Portugal. Franco held emergency meetings of his cabinet as he felt the ground under his feet shake. Boris of Bulgaria waited fearfully to see if the revolts would begin. The Balkan countries are rotten-ripe for revolution. But it is not a question of this or that country. It is the whole Continent of Europe that waits only for some beginning, to burst forth in revolt from end to end.

The swaying fortunes of the war have produced the fantastic situation when with the defeat of Germany, there will not be a single belligerent country in Europe which to all practical purposes, will not be defeated. In 1918 the ruling class precariously balanced the smaller powers in the Balkans against one another. Though shaky, the Italian army, and the French especially remained props of "law and order", which could offset the countries in which revolution broke out. Today Giraud in North Africa and the Turks are being built as armies of counter-revolution. But these are weak reeds to lean on. With the collapse of the Nazi armies, there will not be a single army in Europe upon which the imperialists can rely for the purposes of counter-revolution. It is out of the question that the Red Army could be used for this purpose. Indeed, the coming revolution in the West would be the beginning of the end for Stalin and the bureaucracy. It could mean the beginning of the political revolution in Russia as well. To smash the revolution the British army would not be a reliable instrument, but would be liable to crack in the process. Only American imperialism has a fairly stable base and a backward army on which to rely. But for how long in the red-hot atmosphere of Europe? The American army would also disintegrate and decompose. We are on the verge of a revolutionary wave in Europe which will last for years and which will affect the whole world by its grandiose sweep.

It is on this background that the situation in Italy must be viewed. Even in the worst event—that of defeat of the revolution and military occupation, this is but the first uprising in Europe. An Allied or a German occupation of Italy might temporarily smash the movement. But to invade in a war and to intervene against a revolution are two different tasks. Stalinists and Social-democrats will attempt to guide the movement into Popular Front channels in the interests of Allied imperialism. The Spanish tragedy is the warning of where such policies will lead the Italian working class.

The Italian masses have placed themselves at the head of the revolutionary upsurge of all Europe. The honour which fell to the Russian pro-

letariat in the last war falls to them today. But Russia had a Bolshevik Party and a Bolshevik leadership. This alone guaranteed victory. It will be the task of the advanced workers in Italy, of the Fourth International, to forge such a party in the fire of events. Their task will not be easy. But the Italian workers and peasants will learn swiftly in the atmosphere of revolution. They have been hardened in the fire of events. Tens of thousands of the heroic militants who continued the struggle against fascism despite every-

thing are really Trotskyists, though the majority may never have heard that name. They will find their way to the programme of International Socialism.

With the fresh breeze of the revolution blowing from across the Mediterranean, a new enthusiasm and a new resolve must pervade the activities of the advanced workers in Britain. Our tasks are complicated. But in Workers' International League, there is the nucleus of the Party round which all revolutionary workers must now rally.

Britain is one of the keys if not the key, to the revolution in Europe. The main task of the revolutionaries now consists in aiding the Italian workers by fighting against intervention, against the revolution in Italy. To read the press of vile Stalinism on the Italian situation or that of the Labour Party cannot but arouse a sense of disgust in any conscious Socialist worker. Against these traitors! For the revolution in Italy! No intervention by British Imperialism must be the rallying cry for the working class.

India—The Role of Congress Leaders

By AJIT ROY

After twelve months of anxiety and misgivings, the imperialist bondholders of India once more rest comfortably in their beds. For the revolutionary wave which swept through the country in the months following August last, has begun to decline.

The crisis, however, has only been postponed. The general economic position of the masses of the people shows no signs of improvement. Millions continue to suffer, from famine and starvation. Neither has the grip of totalitarian repression been relaxed. The number of political prisoners has reached the enormous total of 20,000, and new victims continue daily to be added to the list. But all this notwithstanding, since the beginning of the current year, the number of strikes and demonstrations in the industrial cities and peasant uprisings in the villages, have been steadily falling off. The period of mass revolutionary activity has for the time being, subsided.

There are those who are wont to explain every popular defeat with the easy formula: "The enemy was too powerful." Against such people, the enemy will always be too powerful. Marxism, on the other hand, demands the most honest and conscientious analysis of every aspect of defeat, as a fundamental prerequisite for final victory. Least of all does this fatalistic formula suffice as an explanation of the development of Indian events during the last 12 months. If British Imperialism has succeeded in weathering the first waves of the storm, it was not primarily because of the superior forces at its disposal.

Admittedly, one significant feature of the past year, was the use by the Viceroy's Government of force to an extent and character not previously known in India. For the first time, air power was systematically and ruth-

lessly employed against the peasant masses, armed with the most rudimentary weapons and often completely unarmed. But this was because the revolt, especially in the centres of the agrarian movement, had assumed such sweeping proportions that the old technique of suppression had proved to be entirely inadequate. Over large areas of Bihar, Orissa, Central Provinces and Bengal, the task which faced the "guardians of democracy" was no longer the suppression of sporadic and local uprisings, but the subjugation and reconquest of large territories in which British administration had been totally destroyed.

The basic cause of defeat lay in the fact that the Indian masses were faced with two enemies of which they saw only one. They were saddled with a leadership which looked upon their victory as the greatest possible disaster. When in August last year, Mr. Gandhi and his colleagues in the Congress Executive assented to the inauguration of a new mass movement, the last thing they had in mind was to carry through to a victorious conclusion, the revolutionary uprising which they knew was inevitable. They could not fail to see that a mass movement in India today, would not leave untouched the sacred property rights of the industrial and landed gentry whose interests they so zealously guard. The plebian masses in the villages hate British imperialism in degree only more than they hate their immediate oppressors — the landlords and the usurers. A popular revolt against imperialism would assume, from its first beginnings, a class character. Events in India have amply demonstrated this. An India freed from imperialism would mean an India freed from feudalism and capitalism as well. This, the Congress leaders are not pre-

pared to see. They who had consistently championed the rights of the landlords and the Princes, to the extent of throwing into prison hundreds of militant peasants during the period of Congress Ministries, had no heart for a struggle which would go beyond the boundaries of their own narrow bourgeois reformist interests. When, therefore, they sanctioned the third Civil Disobedience Movement, they were merely hoping to save their own political prestige and their hold over the Congress. The real attitude of the Congress leaders on the eve of the revolution, was well expressed by Pandit Nehru, at the moment of his arrest: "Thank God," he said. "They have come."

Nor did these leaders want to see a breach of industrial peace at a period when the native bourgeoisie, after the long and lean years of peace, had only begun to garner the golden harvest of war. The following figures of textile profits can throw more light on the policies pursued by the Congress leaders, than all their speeches put together.

	1937	1940	1941
Kohinoor Mills			
Rs.	1,171,175	10,836,700	44,205,140
Madura Mills			
"	2,037,110	14,988,950	30,020,110
Muir Mills			
"	9,089,960	13,937,420	35,776,620
New Victoria Mills			
"	2,169,350	3,697,180	10,988,750

Since the beginning of the war, the dominant note in the policy of Congress leadership was struck by their fear of the masses. This was made obvious in the course of the Individual Civil Disobedience movement which was inaugurated by Mr. Gandhi in the summer of 1941. Not only was Mr. Gandhi to choose each individual non-resister, he was also to choose every word of

his speech! Every loop-hole through which the masses could conceivably enter the political field, was carefully closed up. When the workers of Bombay suggested that the efforts of the individual crusaders might well be supplemented by mass demonstrations from the factories, they were curtly informed that there must be no interference with the normal functioning of the economic life of the country—**There must be no interference with profits!**

The transformation of the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement into a mass movement of the following year, was a continuation of the old policy. Certainly the Indian bourgeoisie did not think that their trusted lieutenants had suddenly taken the road of Revolution. There was hardly a representative body of native capitalism, which did not plead for the release of Mr. Gandhi at the time of his fast. And they did so not from any allegiance to democratic ideals, but because they looked upon his continued leadership of the National movement as the greatest safeguard against the dangers of Bolshevism in India.

Subsequent events go to show that right up to the moment of his arrest, the Mahatma was looking out for an opportunity which would enable him to stave off the evil day. At the moment when he was supposed to be preparing and perfecting the plan of campaign for the "last decisive struggle", around the slogan "Do or Die", the great leader was pacing his cottage in anxious expectation of a message from the Viceroy, which failed to arrive. This at least, is revealed in the Gandhi-Linlithgow correspondence released not so long ago. In his letter of August 12th, Mr. Gandhi writes:

"The Government of India should have waited at least till the time I inaugurated mass action. I have publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know, the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So I could have dealt with every difficulty if you had given me the opportunity."

Similarly, in his letter of September 23rd:

"I venture to assert that had the Government but awaited my contemplated letter to His Excellency, the Viceroy, and the result thereafter, no calamity would have befallen the country and the reported deplorable destruction would most certainly have been avoided."

Mr. Rajagopalachari, the ex-Congress Premier of Madras, who, in spite of his open desertion to the imperialist camp, remains on the best terms with Mr. Gandhi, has revealed that Mr. Gandhi never expected having to put the Congress Resolution into effect.

He hoped by means of the resolution, to persuade the Viceroy to open negotiations. **"The Congress leaders were arrested before they issued instructions to the people."** This is fully corroborated by Mr. Gandhi's letter of August 12th to the Viceroy: **"The Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measures of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention."**

But the masses of India had no desire to be used merely as a pawn in the hands of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress leadership. They had interpreted the Congress flag as the symbol of a revolutionary struggle against the imperialist oppressors. The arrest of the Congress leadership became the signal for the independent revolutionary action of the masses. But the bourgeois leaders could never forgive the masses for such abjuration of the eternal principles of non-violence and non-resistance. They needed no inducement from the Viceroy to disown and disclaim all responsibility for the actions of the revolutionary "Canaille". They regretted and "deplored" the terror by which the authorities hoped to stamp out the revolt; but they did not even deny to imperialism the right to use violence against the masses.

From behind their comfortable prison chambers, the bourgeois leaders wistfully looked towards the day when strikes and peasant revolt would give way to conferences and negotiations. The whole philosophy of the Gandhian leadership is summed up in the following passage in Mr. Gandhi's letter of 3rd September:

"The only right course for the Government seems to me to be the release of the Congress leaders, withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of reconciliation. Surely, the Government has ample resources to deal with any overt acts of violence."

There can be no doubt that as the experiences of the last 12 months have seeped through the consciousness of the vanguard of the anti-imperialist movement, a deep cleavage has developed between the rank and file and the leadership. The militant rank and file, and particularly the socialist youth, is awakening to an understanding of the political and class issues underlying the present situation. This is well revealed in the recent document issued under the name of Jai Prakash Narain, the fugitive leader of the Congress Socialist Party.

"Our Revolution is at present going through a period of low water, not because the superior forces of the imperialist power intervened but because of two important factors: the lack of efficient organisation and a complete programme of National Revolution. After the first phase of the rising was over there was no further programme placed before the people. Having accomplished over

large territories, the negative task of destruction—our revolution called for a positive programme. The people who destroyed the objects and means of administration of the foreign power and drove away its agents, should have set up in their areas, their own units of Revolutionary Government and created their own police and militia. Had this been one, it would have released such an unprecedented volume of energy and opened up such a vast field for constructive work, that the waves of the Revolution would have mounted higher till the people had seized supreme authority throughout the land."

It is as an indication of the prevailing trend of thought among the lower ranks of the Congress and Socialist vanguard that the main significance of the document is to be found. While raising the basic issues, it makes no serious attempt to solve them. **"Had there been a programme things would have been different."** And again, **"the people should have set up their own units of revolutionary government."** Quite true! But why was not this done? Was it not the duty of those who claimed to be the leaders of the struggle, to formulate a correct programme? If Soviets should have been set up as organs of struggle then why had no mention been made of these by the Congress either in the past or in the course of the struggle itself? The only attempt which this document makes towards answering these basic questions, shows that Congress Socialism has not changed its role as the left cover for the bourgeois leadership. **"The earnestness, the urgency, the determination,"** writes Narain, **"that marked the attitude of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Prasad and Sardar Patel, failed to reflect in the minds and hearts of all Congress leaders."**

Such blindness as to the realities of events, represents either the acme of stupidity or a deliberate deception of the masses. It represents the complete bankruptcy of petit-bourgeois socialism as an independent force in the Indian struggle. The masses need a programme, but such a programme can only be based on their fundamental economic needs. Only a programme which links the actual struggle in the villages and in the factories with the general struggle against imperialism. Such a programme must include the long overdue agrarian revolution and for the most radical measures in the interests of the industrial proletariat.

Had there been a revolutionary party in India which had an understanding of the problem and was implacably opposed not only to the imperialists, but could counterpose a clear class lead to the workers and peasants in opposition to the treacherous bourgeois programme of Congress, the situation in India would have been com-

pletely transformed. A revolutionary party, standing for the setting up of workers' committees in the towns and peasant committees in the countryside, waging a struggle to get rid of the imperialists and the landowners, would have received powerful support. At it was, as Narain has indicated, for lack of such a lead the revolt of the peasants in the countryside was isolated and scattered, without aim and perspective, and easily destroyed piecemeal by the centralised force of the imperialist state which moved from one area to the next methodically, without any hindrance being placed in their way. In this helplessness of the peasants, is summed up the necessity for leadership from the cities. As the bourgeoisie is incapable of leading, and is even hostile to the movement of the peasants, the leadership of the democratic movement automatically falls on the shoulders of the proletariat. It is this that the petit bourgeois radicals of the Congress Socialist Party cannot understand. Instead of boldly proclaiming this, they confuse the issue by resting the responsibility for the failure on the shoulders of some of the leaders of Congress. Instead of a political analysis, the blame is laid on organisational defects. As if the organisational basis of organs of struggle and of Governments, do not flow from the political position of the participants and organisers! And as though it would be possible for the bourgeois leaders of Congress to "rectify" their "mistake".

After 12 months of struggle, the Indian Revolution has come to a standstill. History, however, provides its own compensation. By its very im-

mobility, the Revolution has set in motion unseen forces which will prepare for it a new period of rising ascendancy and under more favourable conditions. It was necessary for the masses to come to a halt before any further progress could be made. The contradiction between their ideological and organisational equipment, and the requirements of the struggle, had to be felt in the bitter experiences of defeat, before the necessary adjustments could be made.

From this point of view, the experiences of the last few months will contribute more towards the political education of the vanguard of the Indian masses, than any other period in recent history. The coming period will witness the revival of Marxism on an unprecedented scale, and its development will take place under conditions much more favourable than those surrounding its birth. The foundation of the Third International by Lenin and Trotsky led to the emergence of Marxism as a distinct current in India's political life and the formation of the first Communist Groups among the Indian workers. Thousands of workers and students disillusioned and disoriented by the treacherous role of the Gandhian leadership, rallied under the banner of revolutionary Marxism with renewed hopes and devotion. Their struggles and self-sacrifice will constitute one of the most glorious pages in the history of the Indian working class.

But even before the elementary organisational tasks could be accomplished, the epigones of the Soviet bureaucracy had succeeded in establishing their withering hold over the International. Along with the other sec-

tions of the Communist International, the Communist Party of India was transformed into a mere border-guard for the Soviet bureaucracy, and the interests of the masses were sacrificed to the narrow and nationalistic interests of the Kremlin's traps. Today, Indian Stalinism has reached its nemesis as the most universally detested political organisation in India. These new hirelings of Churchill need not complain when as their paper "World News and Views" admits, their offices are razed to the ground and their persons attacked by bodies of enraged workers. Like the Quislings of Hitler, these traitors subsist entirely on the benevolence and support of the alien conquerors. The coming months will witness the complete disintegration and disappearance of Stalinism as a factor in Indian politics.

With the decline of Stalinism and its fast approaching death, Marxism is once again coming to life in the young and growing cadres of the Fourth International in India. In the months to come, as the vanguard of the anti-imperialist masses of India turns away in disgust from the bankrupt policies of the bourgeois nationalists and their "socialist" allies, they will find in the programme and principles of the Fourth International, the only guarantee for the ultimate freedom of India. The task which faces them is the task which faces the working class throughout the world: to build the mass party of the Indian proletariat, which alone can transform the halting and scattered character of the movement and the plebian masses into a concerted national effort against imperialism and for freedom.

Trotsky Assassinated Three Years Ago

Three years ago the greatest brain of our time was shattered at the hands of one of Stalin's professional assassins. Even today, after this lapse of time, realising what the death of Leon Trotsky meant to Socialism, we cannot think of this tragedy without almost a physical pain clutching at the heart. Trotsky's brain was in effect, a laboratory for world revolution.

The name of Trotsky will, in future history, always be indissolubly linked with the names of Lenin, Marx and Engels as the greatest figures in working class history. Marx and Engels, as the universal geniuses who created the theoretical basis for the understanding of history; of the laws of the development of society; the laws of

motion of capitalism and the historic role of the working class. They placed the theory and practice of Socialism on a firm foundation by developing the science of Marxism.

Lenin's role was not as an innovator, but as an orthodox pupil of Marx. While deepening and enriching his teaching, he carried Marxism into action by creating and organising the Bolshevik Party. With this indispensable instrument, together with Trotsky he led the Russian workers to the victorious setting up of the first Workers' State. The name of Trotsky will always be associated with the successful October insurrection in Petrograd which was carried out under his direct inspiration and leadership.

Trotsky developed in the years before the first World War the theory of the Permanent Revolution which based itself on the conception that in the modern epoch, it is impossible for the belated and reactionary bourgeoisie in the backward countries to carry to completion the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Consequently, the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia could only be solved by the coming to power of the proletariat, which would not stop short at the democratic tasks, but would have to pass on to Socialist ones. On this analysis, he forecast that the proletariat of Russia would be the first to take power, they would arrive at the conquest of power in backward

Russia sooner than the advanced countries of the West. The enunciation of the theory of the Permanent Revolution together with the carrying into action of this theory in October 1917, would be sufficient in themselves to inscribe the name of Trotsky forever among the great leaders and fighters of the proletariat.

But this was not the only service for the October Revolution which Trotsky contributed. Today, when the Red Army is covering itself with glory by the heroism and determination with which it defends the land of the October Revolution, it pays fitting tribute to the granite foundation on which the Red Army was built. And the Red Army was the creation of Comrade Trotsky. As Lenin exultantly exclaimed of him:

"Could anyone point out to me another man who could organise an almost model army in a year and even win the respect of military experts? We have such a man! We have everything, and there will be miracles."

All these achievements: the foundation of the Soviet state, the foundation of the Red Army, the foundation of the Communist International, were the joint work of Lenin and Trotsky. Of these not the least stress was laid by them on the foundation of the Communist International. Because, as they taught, durable success for the Soviet Union, durable success for the proletarian revolution, could only be obtained on a world scale and the Comintern was the instrument of the world revolution. In this they remained faithful to the teaching of the founders of scientific socialism.

The years from 1917 to 1923 were glorious ones of revolutionary upsurge in Russia and throughout the world. Coming after the black years of reaction, in which the official organisations of the proletariat had covered themselves with chauvinism and social patriotism and in which capitalism and reaction seemed all-powerful, these years marked a new stage in the decay of world imperialism. In the dark years of the imperialist war, a mere handful of revolutionary internationalists still kept the ideas of international socialism untainted with the blood of the imperialist slaughter. Foremost in this select vanguard were the Russian revolutionists, Lenin and Trotsky. On the revolutionary upsurge which began with the victorious Russian Revolution, and extended in a wave of revolutions throughout Europe and Asia, their faith and confidence in the inevitable reaction of the world proletariat in a series of revolts and uprisings against the butchery and those responsible for it, was vindicated.

But the crisis of world capitalism, a crisis reflected in the world war and the heroic attempts of the proletariat to take the fate of society into its own

hands, was sabotaged by the leadership of the old organisations, which saved capitalism from destruction.

The years of revolutionary flood-tide were followed by the years of reactionary ebb-tide. In the Soviet Union the bureaucratic reaction against the October revolution under the influence of the defeats of the world proletariat was just beginning to rear its head. Lenin in the last year of his life had made a bloc with Trotsky to prepare for a struggle against the alarming bureaucratisation of the Bolshevik Party and of the Soviet State. Recognising that Stalin incarnated the petit-bourgeois reaction of the officialdom, Lenin prepared to strike a blow against Stalin by removing him from his position as general secretary.

Alas! the forces of world history are stronger than the best subjective intentions, even of those who have mastered an understanding of the historical process. They can take advantage of a favourable historical tide but not even a Marx, a Lenin or a Trotsky can stand opposed to an unfavourable relationship of forces. The German revolution of 1923 should have ushered in the beginning of the socialist revolution throughout Europe. Its defeat ushered in the period of reaction in the Soviet Union and throughout the world.

Engels once pointed out that decades of preparation sometimes culminate in a revolutionary situation, which lasts two or three days, and which if the opportunity is missed by the revolutionary party, may not recur again for many years.

As always with the Marxists, Trotsky made a thorough analysis of the reasons for the defeat in his book, "The Lessons of 'October'", the better to prepare for victory on the morrow. The defeat he pointed out was due entirely to the leadership of the Comintern who were in control at the time, (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin) and to the leadership of the German Party which temporised, vacillated and missed completely the revolutionary opportunity which had been posed by the situation in Germany.

The publication of the "Lesson of October" precipitated the struggle within the Bolshevik party in Russia. The defeat of the German working class opened out the period of reaction against the October revolution within the Soviet Union. Revisionist doctrines against the teachings of Marxism-Leninism began to be propagated as a reflection of the petit-bourgeois pessimism and despair engendered by the victory of reaction and reached their culmination in the nationalist and reactionary utopia now propounded for the first time by Stalin of the "theory" of "Socialism in One Country". The struggle against this reaction, for workers democracy in Russia, for the industrialisation of the Soviet Union, for an international orientation of the Bolshevik party; will be ranked by

future historians as a struggle, which while unable to prevent its degeneration nevertheless saved the Soviet State from complete collapse. It was Trotsky who led the Left Opposition within the Bolshevik Party on this programme of internal revival of the Bolshevik Party and of the Soviet State. Today the victories of the Soviet Union (collective ownership) the on the morale of the population due to the survival of the social basis of the Soviet Union (collective ownership) the strength of the Red Army, and the planned industrialisation of Russia's resources. All these achievements were the result of the struggle of the Opposition, under Trotsky's guidance and inspiration, which developed the famous "Platform of the Opposition". Despite "defeat" the Opposition programme of industrialisation, in a mangled and caricatured form was forced on the short-sighted Stalin and the bureaucracy. They were compelled by the development of events, to adopt it despite their protracted resistance to it in the initial stages. These achievements from the view point of the Red Army and of industry are indelibly linked with the name of the Old Man. Without the struggle of the Left Opposition the Soviet Union would not be in existence today, but would have perished from the earth, and had it succeeded in surviving with the reactionary policies of Stalinism could never have withstood the onslaught of the armoured juggernaut of German imperialism with the resources of the whole of Europe at its disposal, without the Five Year plans, first developed and put forward by Trotsky.

But without doubt the greatest contribution of all which Trotsky has made to the enrichment of Marxism, to the theory and development of the struggle of the working class for liberation, has been the long struggle against the terrible Stalinist reaction within the Soviet Union, and the ranks of the international working class. With prophetic insight and understanding he deduced the degeneration and collapse of the Communist International if the revisionist theory of Socialism in One Country were to be adopted.

Trotsky's mastery of the dialectical method, his understanding of the theory and application of Marxism-Leninism enabled him to separate himself from the bureaucratic reaction in the Soviet Union and provided him with the indispensable means of analysing and explaining all the problems and all the events of the modern epoch. As an orthodox pupil he carried on the work of the great architects of the future, Marx and Lenin. The last seventeen years of his life were spent as the leader of a small, hunted and persecuted minority of the international labour movement. This did not affect him in the least. To be the head of the Red Army and in power, to be in exile as the leader of a small sect, it was all one to the Old Man; it was

not the possession of power as such he sought but as he once explained the role of the party, "to fight for the full social, material and moral regeneration of mankind." Those words exactly fit and describe the life and activities of Leon Trotsky. They describe perfectly his whole attitude towards men and towards events. And this aim derived from a perfect understanding of history and of society. That is from whence came his poise and his power.

Trotsky had nothing but contempt and revulsion for the petit-bourgeois and bourgeois philistines who judge everything from the "practical" viewpoint of "success". Success of the moment meant nothing to Trotsky. The careers of Stalin and of Trotsky provide the exact antithesis of the difference between bureaucratism and bolshevism, between coarse disloyalty and an unshakeable devotion to the interests of the toilers, between blind empiricism and Marxist theory. The present reverent kow-towing of the Centrist jackasses towards the Kremlin's ruler because of "his" successes would arouse only laughter and derision from Trotsky. How his pen would have scorched them at the present time with his acid wit!

It was an understanding of the epoch and of its tasks which constituted the true greatness of Trotsky. His life and work are inseparably inter-twined with the history of the world labour movement over a period of more than four decades. Characteristically his stature was increased by the struggle against the world wide reaction which followed the rise of Stalinism. His works on the revolution and counter-revolution in Germany, on France, Spain, Britain, China, on the rise and nature of fascism, the meaning and social nature of the degeneration of the Soviet Union, war and militarism, tactics and strategy of the revolutionary party, constitute an imperishable addition to the theory and practise of Marxism. In the light of these works, the writings and teachings of Marx and Lenin acquire a new significance, the understanding of Marxism and of social problems becomes deepened and receives a new content. Without them the history of the past two decades becomes a meaningless and bloody blur of defeat after defeat for the world proletariat, culminating in the present criminal and insane slaughter of the peoples.

When we turn to any other tendency within the world Labour movement or to the bourgeois theorists the stench of decay, of utter bewilderment in the face of events, arises from the pages of their works. Who has explained the history of the past decades? The heroes of the Second International who led the proletariat to defeat time after time till they could find no other way except to support the world slaughter on the side of the "democratic" imperialists; the degenerate and putre-

fyng "school" of Stalinism which has long since thrown all pretence of Marxist theory overboard? Or perhaps the Centrists who in the words of Trotsky steal bits and pieces from the programme of Marxism while capitulating to opportunism at every great test? To speak of the utopian programmes of the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois theorists whether of the fascist, or the democrats would be superfluous.

Alone of all currents in the Labour movement the "Trotskyists" have an understanding of the epoch, and a programme with which to face it. That is Trotsky's greatest achievement which will rank with the achievements of the men of genius for all time. It is this immortal achievement which will place him on the same pedestal as Lenin, perhaps with an even greater warmth and affection in the hearts and memory of mankind in the future society, which he laboured so tirelessly and self-sacrificing to create.

Without the work of the Old Man in the last seventeen years of his life the vanguard of the proletariat would be blind and incapable of understanding the events of the epoch. They would have floundered helplessly on the tide of events. It would perhaps have taken decades to create anew the banner of Bolshevism. Many years of horrible suffering and needless reaction for the realisation by the vanguard, of the tasks of the proletariat. Stalinism and reformism would have succeeded for a long period in completely wiping out the programme of Socialism by bringing on a bloody chaos and bloody barbarism, before society could have found a new road.

But Trotsky handed on the search-light which lights up the darkness of the complicated development of society in our epoch. The epoch of wars and revolution, of Stalinism and Fascism. He explained the dialectic of social development, of the waves of reaction and of revolution. Trotsky explained the basic contradiction of the epoch in the development of the productive forces beyond the framework of the national state and of private ownership of the means of production. It was this which was and is causing the convulsions of our epoch. Surely the most disturbed epoch in the history of mankind!

Trotsky showed the crisis of human culture and of civilisation as a crisis of the leadership of the working class. That was the key to the situation! He educated the cadres of the Fourth International so that they would be able to play their part in the building of a leadership which would lead the toilers on a world scale out of the horrors which capitalism perpetrates in its death agony.

Comparing Marx and Lenin, Trotsky wrote: "Whenever we want to give a concise answer to the question: Who

is Marx? we say 'Marx . . . is the author of Capital.' And when we ask ourselves—who is Lenin? we say 'Lenin is the author of the October Revolution!'"

And we can in adding Trotsky's name among the greatest teachers of the working class say in reply to the question—who was Trotsky? Trotsky was the creator of the Fourth International. That was his greatest work.

Trotsky not only analysed and explained the terrible defeats of the working class as a product of reaction which would culminate and has culminated in the second world war. He also showed that the reaction which doomed the revolutionary internationalists to a position of being a mere handful of advanced workers and fighters isolated from the masses, would pass away. It would be succeeded by a new revolutionary wave on a world scale which would dwarf into insignificance the revolutionary wave of 1917-1921. He conceived the years of reaction as years of preparation and education of the cadres.

Lesser thinkers and sceptics regarded this prognosis with scepticism. But the events of the war are already confirming this. The fall of fascism in Italy is a confirmation of his analysis and of his prediction. It is but the beginning of the terrific shocks and convulsions of the coming period.

Trotsky, like all the great Marxists, was imbued with the optimism of progress. His understanding gave him faith and confidence in the future of the working class. He foresaw their victory in the next decades, if not the next period ahead. He lived by preparing for the future. All his thoughts, his aspirations, his strivings, every act was dominated by the conscious desire to assist in the liberation of mankind from the shackles of capitalist slavery. Stalinism and Fascism he merely regarded as the foul and decaying emanations of the old society. Personal ambition and selfish considerations were completely alien to him. He lived only for the revolution.

His death at the hands of one of Stalin's tools was a terrible blow to the world working class. How invaluable would be his analysis of the Italian situation, of the situation in the Soviet Union, of the coming revolutions and the task of the vanguard. But Stalin made sure that Trotsky is not here. But while killing Trotsky he could not destroy his programme. In spite of Stalin and of the bourgeoisie the old mole of the revolution burrows well. And the mole is given sight by the programme developed by Trotsky. With this it will be invincible!

The last hour of the Old Man was typical of the sweep of his personality

which looked beyond petty things to those which were great and significant in the human horizon. He thought while on his death-bed of the necessity for a message for the world movement which embraced the future of man:

"Go forward. I am sure of the victory of the Fourth International". Trotsky by his life and work has made a certainty of his last message. As we salute his memory, and while feeling the first breeze of the coming

revolutionary storm, we remember with gratitude that he gave the theoretical understanding, on the basis of which the Fourth International will overthrow capitalism in the coming epoch.

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

By LEON TROTSKY

(The manuscript of the following article was found in Trotsky's desk. Obviously, it was by no means a complete article, but rather the rough notes for an article on the subject indicated by his title. He had been writing them shortly before his death.—The Editors.)

There is one common feature in the development, or more correctly the degeneration, of modern trade union organisations in the entire world: it is their drawing closely to and growing together with the state power. This process is equally characteristic of the neutral, the Social-Democratic, the Communist and "anarchist" trade unions. This fact alone shows that the tendency towards "growing together" is intrinsic not in this or that doctrine as such but derives from social conditions common for all unions.

Monopoly capitalism does not rest on competition and free private initiative but on centralised command. The capitalist cliques at the head of mighty trusts, syndicates, banking consortiums, etcetera, view economic life from the very same heights as does state power; and they require at every step the collaboration of the latter. In their turn the trade unions in the most important branches of industry find themselves deprived of the possibility of profiting by the competition between the different enterprises. They have to confront a centralised capitalist adversary, intimately bound up with state power. Hence flows the need of the trade unions—insofar as they remain on reformist positions, i.e., on positions of adapting themselves to private property—to adapt themselves to the capitalist state and to contend for its co-operation. In the eyes of the bureaucracy of the trade union movement the chief task lies in "freeing" the state from the embrace of capitalism, in weakening its dependence on trusts, in pulling it over to their side. This position is in complete harmony with the social position of the labour aristocracy and the labour bureaucracy, who fight for a crumb in the share of super-profits of imperialist capitalism. The labour bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds to demonstrate to the "democratic" state how reliable and indispensable they are in peace-time and especially in time of war. By transforming the trade unions into organs of the state, fascism invents nothing new; it merely draws to their ultimate conclusion the tendencies inherent in imperialism.

Colonial and semi-colonial countries are under the sway not of native capitalism but of foreign imperialism. However, this does not weaken but on the contrary, strengthens the need of direct, daily, practical ties between the magnates of capitalism and the governments which are in essence subject to them—the governments of colonial or semi-colonial countries. Inasmuch as imperialist capitalism creates both in colonies and semi-colonies a stratum of labour aristocracy and bureaucracy, the latter requires the support of colonial and semi-colonial governments, as protectors, patrons and, sometimes, as arbitrators. This constitutes the most important social basis for the Bonapartist and semi-Bonapartist character of governments in the

colonies and in backward countries generally. This likewise constitutes the basis for the dependence of reformist unions upon the state.

In Mexico the trade unions have been transformed by law into semi-state institutions and have, in the nature of things, assumed a semi-totalitarian character. The constitution of the trade unions was, according to the constitution of the legislators, introduced in the interests of the workers in order to assure them an influence upon the governmental and economic life. But insofar as foreign imperialist capitalism dominates the national state and insofar as it is able, with the assistance of internal reactionary forces, to overthrow the unstable democracy and replace it with outright fascist dictatorship, to that extent the legislation relating to the trade unions can easily become a weapon in the hands of imperialist dictatorship.

SLOGANS FOR FREEING THE UNIONS

From the foregoing it seems, at first sight, easy to draw the conclusion that the trade unions cease to be trade unions in the imperialist epoch. They leave almost no room at all for workers' democracy which, in the good old days, when free trade ruled on the economic arena, constituted the content of the inner life of labour organisations. In the absence of workers' democracy there cannot be any free struggle for the influence over the trade union membership. And because of this, the chief arena of work for revolutionists within the trade unions disappears. Such a position, however, would be false to the core. We cannot select the arena and the conditions for our activity to suit our own likes and dislikes. It is infinitely more difficult to fight in a totalitarian or a semi-totalitarian state for influence over the working masses than in democracy. The very same thing likewise applies to trade unions whose fate reflects the change in the destiny of capitalist states. We cannot renounce the struggle for influence over workers in Germany merely because the totalitarian regime makes such work extremely difficult there. We cannot, in precisely the same way, renounce the struggle within the compulsory labour organisations created by Fascism. All the less so can we renounce internal systematic work in trade unions of totalitarian and semi-totalitarian type merely because they depend directly or indirectly on the workers' state or because the bureaucracy deprives the revolutionists of the possibility of working freely within these trade unions. It is necessary to conduct a struggle under all those concrete conditions which have been created by the preceding developments, including therein the mistakes of the working class and the crimes of its leaders. In the fascist and semi-fascist countries it is impossible to carry on revolutionary work that is not underground, illegal, conspiratorial. Within the totalitarian and semi-totalitarian union it is impossible or well-nigh impossible to carry on any except conspiratorial work. It is necessary to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of every given country in order to mobilise the masses not only against the bourgeoisie but also against the totalitarian regime within the trade unions themselves.

and against the leaders enforcing this regime. The primary slogan for this struggle is: **complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state.** This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labour aristocracy.

The second slogan is: **trade union democracy.** This second slogan flows directly from the first and presupposes for its realisation the complete freedom of the trade unions from the imperialist or colonial state.

In other words, the trade unions in the present epoch cannot simply be the organs of democracy as they were in the epoch of free capitalism and they cannot any longer remain politically neutral, that is, limit themselves to serving the daily needs of the working class. They cannot any longer be anarchistic, i.e. ignore the decisive influence of the state on the life of peoples and classes. They can no longer be reformist, because the objective conditions leave no room for any serious and lasting reforms. The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.

The neutrality of trade unions is completely and irretrievably a thing of the past, gone together with the free bourgeois democracy.

From what has been said it follows quite clearly that, in spite of the progressive degeneration of trade unions and their growing together with the imperialist state, the work within the trade unions not only does not lose any of its importance but remains as before and becomes in a certain sense even more important work than ever for every revolutionary party. The matter at issue is essentially the struggle for influence over the working class. Every organisation, every party, every faction which permits itself an ultimatic position in relation to the trade union, i.e., in essence turns its back upon the working class, merely because of displeasure with its organisations, every such organisation is destined to perish. And it must be said it deserves to perish.

Inasmuch as the chief role in backward countries is not played by national but by foreign capitalism, the national bourgeoisie occupies, in the sense of its social position, a much more minor position than corresponds with the development of industry. Inasmuch as foreign capital does not import workers but proletarianises the native population, the national proletariat soon begins playing the most important role in the life of the country. In these conditions the national government, to the extent that it tries to show resistance to foreign capital, is compelled to a greater or lesser degree to lean on the proletariat. On the other hand, the governments of those backward countries which consider inescapable or more profitable for themselves to march shoulder to shoulder with foreign capital, destroy the labour organisations and institute a more or less totalitarian regime. Thus, the feebleness of the national bourgeoisie, the absence of traditions of municipal self-government, the pressure of foreign capitalism and the relatively rapid growth of the proletariat, cut the ground from under any kind of stable democratic regime. The governments of backward, i.e., colonial and semi-colonial countries, by and large assume a Bonapartist or semi-Bonapartist character; and differ from one another in this, that some try to orient in a democratic direction, seeking support among workers and peasants, while others install a form close to military-police dictatorship. This likewise determines the fate of the trade unions. They either stand under the special patronage of the state or they are subjected to cruel persecution. Patronage on the part of the state is dictated

by two tasks which confront it: first, to draw the working class closer thus gaining a support for resistance against excessive pretensions on the part of imperialism; and, at the same time, to discipline the workers themselves by placing them under the control of a bureaucracy.

MONOPOLY CAPITALISM AND THE UNIONS

Monopoly capitalism is less and less willing to reconcile itself to the independence of trade unions. It demands of the reformist bureaucracy and the labour aristocracy who pick the crumbs from its banquet table, that they become transformed into its political police before the eyes of the working class. If that is not achieved, the labour bureaucracy is driven away and replaced by the fascists. Incidentally, all the efforts of the labour aristocracy in the service of imperialism cannot in the long run save them from destruction.

The intensification of class contradictions within each country, the intensification of antagonisms between one country and another, produce a situation in which imperialist capitalism can tolerate (i.e., up to a certain time) a reformist bureaucracy only if the latter serves directly as a petty but active stockholder of its imperialist enterprises, of its plans and programmes within the country as well as on the world arena. Social-reformism must become transformed into social-imperialism in order to prolong its existence, but only prolong it, and nothing more. Because along this road there is no way out in general.

Does this mean that in the epoch of imperialism independent trade unions are generally impossible? It would be fundamentally incorrect to pose the question this way. Impossible are the independent or semi-independent reformist trade unions. Wholly possible are revolutionary trade unions which not only are not stockholders of imperialist policy but which set as their task the direct overthrow of the rule of capitalism. In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution. In this sense, the programme of transitional demands adopted by the last congress of the Fourth International is not only the programme for the activity of the party but in its fundamental features it is the programme for the activity of the trade unions.

(Translator's note: At this point Trotsky left room on the page, to expound further the connection between trade union activity and the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. It is obvious that implied here is a very powerful argument in favour of military training under trade union control. The following idea is implied: Either the trade unions serve as the obedient recruiting sergeants for the imperialist army and imperialist war or they train workers for self-defence and revolution.)

The development of backward countries is characterised by its combined character. In other words, the last word of imperialist technology, economics, and politics is combined in these countries with traditional backwardness and primitiveness. This law can be observed in the most diverse spheres of the development of colonial and semi-colonial countries, including the sphere of the trade union movement. Imperialist capitalism operates here in its most cynical and naked form. It transports to virgin soil the most perfected methods of its tyrannical rule.

In the trade union movement throughout the world there is to be observed in the last period a swing to the right and the suppression of internal democracy. In England, the Minority Movement in the trade unions has been crushed (not without the assistance of Moscow); the leaders of the trade union movement are today, especially in the field of foreign policy, the obedient agents of the Conservative party. In France there was no room for an independent existence for Stalinist trade unions; they united with the so-called anarcho-syndicalist trade unions under the leadership of Jouhaux and as a result of this unification there was a general shift of the trade union movement not to the left but to the right. The leadership of the C.G.T.

is the most direct and open agency of French imperialist capitalism.

In the United States the trade union movement has passed through the most stormy history in recent years. The rise of the C.I.O. is incontrovertible evidence of the revolutionary tendencies within the working masses. Indicative and noteworthy in the highest degree, however, is the fact that the new "leftist" trade union organisation was no sooner founded than it fell into the steel embrace of the imperialist state. The struggle among the tops between the old federation and the new is reducible in large measure to the struggle for the sympathy and support of Roosevelt and his cabinet.

No less graphic, although in a different sense, is the picture of the development or the degeneration of the trade union movement in Spain. In the socialist trade unions all those leading elements which to any degree represented the independence of the trade union movement were pushed out. As regards the anarcho-syndicalist unions, they were transformed into the instrument of the bourgeois republicans; the anarcho-syndicalist leaders became conservative bourgeois ministers. The fact that this metamorphosis took place in conditions of civil war does not weaken its significance. War is the continuation of the self-same policies. It speeds up processes, exposes their basic features, destroys all that is rotten, false, equivocal and lays bare all that is essential. The shift of the trade unions to the right was due to the sharpening of class and international contradictions. The leaders of the trade union movement sensed or understood, or were given to understand, that now was no time to play the game of opposition. Every oppositional movement within the trade union movement, especially among the tops, threatens to provoke a stormy movement of the masses and to create difficulties for national imperialism. Hence flows the swing of the trade unions to the right, and the suppression of workers' democracy within the unions. The basic feature, the swing towards the totalitarian regime, passes through the labour movement of the whole world.

We should also recall Holland, where the reformist and the trade union movement was not only a reliable prop of imperialist capitalism, but where the so-called anarcho-syndicalist organisation also was actually under the control of the imperialist government. The secretary of this organisation, Sneevliet, in spite of his Platonic sympathies for the Fourth International was as deputy in the Dutch Parliament most concerned lest the wrath of the government descend upon his trade union organisation.

In the United States the Department of Labour with its leftist bureaucracy has as its task the subordination of the trade union movement to the democratic state and it must be said that this task has up to now been served with some success.

The nationalisation of railways and oil fields in Mexico has of course nothing in common with socialism. It is a measure of state capitalism in a backward country which in this way seeks to defend itself on the one hand against foreign imperialism and on the other against its own proletariat. The management of railways, oil fields, etc., through labour organisations has nothing in common with workers' control over industry, for in the essence of the matter the management is effected through the labour bureaucracy which is independent of the workers, but in return, completely dependent on the bourgeois state. This measure on the part of the ruling class pursues the aim of disciplining the working class, making it more industrious in the service of the common interests of the state, which appear on the surface to merge with the interests of the working class itself. As a matter of fact, the whole task of the bourgeoisie consists in liquidating the trade unions as organs of the class struggle and substituting in their place the trade union bureaucracy as the organ of the leadership over the workers by the bourgeois state. In these conditions, the task of the revolutionary vanguard is to conduct a struggle for the complete independence of the trade unions and for the introduction of actual workers' control over the present union bureaucracy, which has been turned into the administration of railways, oil enterprises and so on.

Events of the last period (before the war) have revealed with especial clarity that anarchism, which in point of theory is always only liberalism drawn to its extremes, was, in practice, peaceful propaganda within the democratic republic, the protection of which it required. If we leave aside individual terrorist acts, etc., anarchism, as a system of mass movement and politics, presented only propaganda material under the peaceful protection of the laws. In conditions of crisis the anarchists always did the opposite of what they taught in peace times. This was pointed out by Marx himself in connection with the Paris Commune. And it was repeated on a far more colossal scale in the experience of the Spanish revolution.

Democratic unions in the old sense of the term, bodies where in the framework of one and the same mass organisation different tendencies struggled more or less freely, can no longer exist. Just as it is impossible to bring back the bourgeois-democratic state, so it is impossible to bring back the old workers' democracy. The fate of the one reflects the fate of the other. As a matter of fact, the independence of trade unions in the class sense, in their relations to the bourgeois state can, in the present conditions, be assured only by a completely revolutionary leadership, that is, the leadership of the Fourth International. This leadership, naturally, must and can be rational and assure the unions the maximum of democracy conceivable under the present concrete conditions. But without the political leadership of the Fourth International the independence of the trade unions is impossible.

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