

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Theoretical Organ of Workers' International League 4th International
Vol. 5. No. 6. FEBRUARY, 1944. THREEPENCE

In this Issue :

INTERNATIONALISM AND CENTRISM

*Ridley and Brockway
Exponents of
Confusion*

By Ted Grant

AFTER THOUGHTS ON DISSOLUTION OF THE COMINTERN

*By an Indian
Revolutionist
Hakim Mirza*

REPORT ON THE COMINTERN

By Leon Trotsky

Internationalism and Centrism

Ridley and Brockway Exponents of Confusion

By TED GRANT

The question of the International is the key question of our epoch. In it is involved the fate not only of the I.L.P. but of the working class throughout the world for many decades to come. That is why it is of decisive importance for revolutionaries to have complete clarity as to what we mean by rebuilding the International.

From this point of view the contributions of Ridley and Brockway to the I.L.P. Internal Bulletin reveal a deplorable lack of understanding of the problem. Ridley's contribution, which is so enthusiastically praised by Brockway, does not once really get down to the basis of the problem. He starts off on the wrong foot immediately by introducing entirely irrelevant and erroneous conceptions on the "internationalism" of the Mohammedans and of the bourgeois revolution. As a self styled Marxist Ridley should know better than that. Internationalism is not an idea which has its application at any period in

history. The material basis has to be prepared if the idea of internationalism is to assume any reality whatsoever. That was precisely the historic role of capitalism: the development of the entire globe into a single economic inter-dependent whole through the creation of a world market, to which every country's and even every continent's economy is indissolubly linked and bound. This is the material basis which links the interests of the workers of all lands and on which Marx built his conception of internationalism. The slogan: Workers of the World unite! was not put forward from a sentimental point of view—which was completely foreign to Marx—but as a scientific expression of the interests of the working class; an expression of the interests of the development of world economy. To talk about the possibilities of internationalism before the development of capitalism as a world economy, has laid the basis for it, is to deal with the question from a vulgar utopian point of view, and

to reject the very elementary basis of Marxism.

That this lapse is not an accidental one, is shown by Ridley's treatment of the problems of the rise and decline of the first three internationals and his light-minded attitude towards the problem of the Fourth International.

Even accepting the explanation given by Ridley that the conditions of imperialism led to the decline and degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals, not to speak of the first, what follows from this? To argue the inevitability of this decline from the objective conditions of capitalism alone, is to reason not as a Marxist but as a fatalist. Precisely on this question, more than any other, the "dialectical" approach—Ridley uses this expression while employing a crassly empirical method—is necessary. This can be seen by Ridley's references to the Bolshevik Party. He writes:

"The revolutionary character which Bolshevism alone among the parties of the Second Inter-

national, still retained, was due primarily to the still feudal-absolutist nature of the Russian state, which made reformism impossible."

As an explanation of the development of the Bolshevik Party and of its success, this falls rather short of the mark, to say the least. The "feudal absolutist nature of the Russian State" did not prevent the development of Menshevism which played the dominating role in the early stages of the Russian revolution. Nor did it prevent Zimoviev, Kamenev and Stalin from taking up a fundamentally false attitude during the course of the revolution; an attitude and policy which, if carried out, would have made the victory of the Russian revolution impossible. Had their fatal course been followed and the revolution been irretrievably wrecked, no doubt Ridley, with his erudite historical method, would have announced with his air of great profundity "Russia is a backward feudal country entirely unripe for socialism (which incidentally was the argument of the Mensheviks at the time). Given the immaturity of the proletariat and of social relations, the seizure of power by the workers was a fantastic dream."

This false conception of the development of world history is shown in the reason he gives for the failure of the Third International—which was conceived on Ridley's admission on the basis of a complete break with reformism and its policies.

"These can be reduced to two: the failure of International revolution in the first phase—1919-26, and the subsequent impossibility of combining an active policy of world revolution with the economic needs of the backward Russian State. We may add that the first of these two causes had itself a double root in: the corruption of the Western workers by Imperialism—(cp. section on International)—**and in the organisation of the Comintern, which, arising on the still mediaeval soil of Russia, adopted inevitably pre-democratic, pre-capitalist forms of organisation which unfitted it for victory in the more advanced Western world, which had already traversed its bourgeois democratic revolution.** E.g. To lead an anti-capitalist revolution from a pre-capitalist soil was to lead history from behind. Sooner or later, the world revolution had to be sacrificed to the needs of Russia or vice-versa. **This was the basis of the Trotsky versus Stalin controversy . . ."**

Ridley's reasons for the collapse of the International explain pre-

cisely nothing, in fact they reveal that Ridley has not the slightest understanding of the basic lessons of our epoch. In the first place why was it impossible to combine "an active policy of world revolution with the economic needs of the backward Russian state"? Far from being in conflict (this is a conception that, like much else, Ridley has borrowed from the Stalinists whom he professes to despise, and indeed, if correct could serve as a justification of the policies of the Russian Stalinists) the two were and even today, are indissolubly bound together. It is not an accident that the idea of Five Year Plans was developed by the internationalists and opposed in the initial stages by Stalin. It is not the economic interests of Russia which are in conflict with the international revolution, **but the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy;** and incidentally the latter are contradictory to the "economic needs" of the Soviet state as well.

This one point in itself is an example of Ridley's anti-Marxian and shallow method of analysis. The explanation for the failure of the international revolution is about on the same level. The "corruption" of the Western workers did not prevent them in the period 1919-26 from advancing on the road of revolution. The German revolution, Austrian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, etc.; the seizure of the factories by the Italian workers; the revolutionary possibilities in France and Britain during 1918-20; the revolutionary situation in Germany in 1923; the general strike in Britain in 1926—Ridley is completely blind to these. His petty bourgeois arrogance can only see corruption of the workers. In fact, no other period in history has witnessed so many heroic and selfless attempts on the part of the masses in the West to overthrow capitalism, to deal with Europe alone. Heroic efforts which were continued with the movements of the Belgian, Austrian, Spanish and French workers in the last decade. No more could possibly be asked of the workers than their insurrectionary replies to the crimes of imperialism since the last world war.

It is precisely on the basis of the lessons of these unsuccessful attempts, that the new international must be built. To these, the sectarian-centrist Ridley is completely blind, as his second reason discloses: "Sooner or later the world revolution had to be sacrificed to the needs of Russia, or vice-versa." Why? However, there is no need to dwell on this point. But Ridley makes an assertion with regard to "organ-

isation" of which he does not bother to give the slightest proof. **In fact precisely the opposite is the case.** The history of the last few decades is marked by many revolutions. Only one was victorious. Because of the absolutist-feudal regime which produced an absolutist-feudal organisation to combat it?—that is what Ridley is attempting to imply. Utter rubbish! The Russian Revolution was victorious because not only all the other conditions for a revolution were present—they have been present many times in other countries of the **East and West,** not only the objective conditions were present, but the **subjective** as well: **the existence of a Bolshevik Party and a Bolshevik leadership with Bolshevik organisational method—with a correct policy based on revolutionary Marxism.**

The great contribution of Lenin to Marxism was not only in theory but precisely on the question of organisation. The immaturity of the revolutionary vanguard and the mistakes which flowed from this was the cause of the failure of the Communist International in the early years; the absence precisely of Bolshevik Parties and Bolshevik methods of organisation ensured the doom of the revolutions after the war.

In Germany one of the reasons, if not the main reason for the failure of the Spartacists under Rosa Luxemburg to lead the German revolution to success was the fact that the German revolutionary left was not organised as a Bolshevik Party and with Bolshevik methods. Or perhaps Ridley, with his social revolutionary fatalism would argue that Luxemburg and the German revolutionaries were also corrupted by German imperialism?

Ridley asserts that the methods of the Bolsheviks pertained to "pre-capitalist" Russia; that is, they were good enough for barbarian and backward Russians but certainly not for cultured "intellectuals" of the Ridley stamp. Far from the method of organisation stemming from Russia's past, it was created by Lenin, as was Bolshevism itself, on the importation of Marxism, i.e. "German—English—French" socialism into Russia. However, exactly the opposite conclusions would flow from Ridley's argument if he had thought out the question clearly. According to his method of analysis the development of the Labour movement in the West was conditioned by the "corruption" of the workers, whereas the Russian absolutism produced Bolshevism. Consequently, the so-called "democratic" methods of organisation of the Socialist movement in the West are an expression

of the corruption of the working class, according to this logic. To put the problem thus is to demonstrate its absurdity. If the argument on organisational structure has any validity at all, it can only be that Bolshevik organisation has stood the test of history; all other methods have brought the proletariat to catastrophe.

If Ridley, and also the I.L.P., N.A.C., which has apparently endorsed Ridley's ideas in the main, can criticise in detail the alleged mistakes in the organisational structure of the Bolshevik Party, an eager and expectant public has yet to see these committed to paper. If they have a brand new and infallible set of organisational rules which can guarantee success, it would certainly be of interest and enlightenment to study them. Till then, Marxists will stick to the organisational method and principle of Bolshevism—a method which guarantees a greater measure of proletarian democracy through the method of democratic centralism than any other yet developed.

Having arrived at the conclusion—which has now penetrated even into the skulls of the N.A.C. centrists (at least in their formal statements) that the Second and Third Internationals have collapsed, Ridley proceeds to examine the problem of the Fourth.

"Trotsky was undoubtedly a revolutionary genius, but was too egotistic for a successful practical politician . . ."

Coming from Ridley, such a trite and frivolous remark could be ignored, except that it demonstrates the real narrowness of outlook which makes him attempt to ascribe his own limited outlook to those he criticises. Probably Ridley is still smarting at the memory of the just criticism levelled against him by Comrade Trotsky when he advocated in 1931 the idea of immediately proclaiming the Fourth International! Perhaps Ridley or Brockway or Maxton possess the qualities that make a successful "practical" politician? What makes a man a practical politician is, as usual, not explained. Perhaps Stalin defeated Trotsky and the Left Opposition because he was not "egotistic" and was a "successful practical politician"? In fact Stalin's personal success was due to his personal "egotistic" qualities and his "practical politics", but hardly served the interests of socialism. But the very raising of this question in the casual manner it is introduced, serves as an indictment of the impressionistic ideas of Ridley. When Trotsky led the October insurrection and organised the Red Armies, his

"egotistic" qualities apparently prevented him from being a "successful" practical politician! What an explanation of events! This is followed up by what is intended as a contemptuous dismissal of the theoretical basis of the Fourth International:

" . . . its (Fourth International's) ideology is little more than a continuation of the revolutionary phase of the Comintern."

He could have said that it was the continuation of the ideology dating back to Marx. What is intended as a sneer, in fact is a testimony to the continuity of revolutionary tradition which is embodied in the Fourth International.

Thus Ridley blindly dismisses the lessons of the last period in shallow personal criticisms, which in any case are false through and through. To expect from Ridley a criticism of or an answer to Trotsky's theories, methods and contributions to Marxism, would of course be naive. In this domain, like all centrists he would be lost. Thus, after dismissing the egotistic and unpractical Trotsky, he concludes his analysis of the development of the International founded by Trotsky:

"In my opinion, any chance of its becoming a mass movement was destroyed by the death of Trotsky, who left no successor of comparable calibre. To be sure, any movement which depends on the writings of a dead man, who is not there to interpret his meaning, must inevitably become scholastic—a worshipper of the dead letter—or sectarian—a permanent wrangle over the unknown meaning. (Bibliolatry is not confined to Churches). The "Trotskyist" movement, with its fierce disputes and endless splits, confirms the above dictum!"

Ridley here shows about as much political perspicacity as Stalin (with apologies to Stalin). Stalin too had the illusion that by murdering Trotsky he could settle accounts once and for all with Trotskyism. True enough, the death of Trotsky constituted a terribly damaging blow against the international working class and against the young and weak forces of the Fourth International. But an International is not one man. An International as Trotsky had occasion to point out to the I.L.P. "is not at all a 'form' as flows from the utterly false formulation of the I.L.P. The International is first of all a programme, and a system of strategic tactical and organisational methods that flow from it." It is apparent that an International is not built by squabbles over petty trifles but on great principles. The basic

teachings of Trotsky derive from those of Marx, Engels, Lenin. It is on these solid foundations that the groundwork of the Fourth International has been laid. He who rejects the policy of the Fourth International, must show how or wherein they have departed from these basic principles or else wherein these principles have been proved false by experience. Of this, not a word from Ridley or the I.L.P. but instead this puerile argument which is not worthy of even a schoolboy.

However, while talking of the "New International" Ridley is prudently silent on the instructive history of the "international" organisation to which the I.L.P. gave its adherence, the London Bureau. Brockway comments on this significant omission, but attempts to explain it by the suggestion that the "Bureau" never considered itself an International. Certainly the history of the Bureau testifies to the fact that any international grouping of "socialist" parties in modern times, which are not bound together by common principles and a common programme—Marxism-Leninism, will be speedily shattered by the impact of events. There is hardly one of the brother parties of the I.L.P. which is associated with the Bureau today. Under the relentless pressure of the class struggle they have failed to stand the test and have been driven to the four corners of the political compass. The remnants of the Swedish party have gone back to the swamp of Stalinism. The American Lovestoneites have committed suicide by dissolving their organisation. Despite the experience of the war, the Norwegian Labour Party remains the loyal servant of His Majesty, King Haakon. The emigre S.A.P. of Germany has leaned towards the Stalinists and support of the Allies in the war. The Spanish P.O.U.M., despite the catastrophe its policy brought about in Spain, is flirting with the idea of an emigre Popular Front, thus providing a caricature of the policy it operated in the revolution. The rest of the parties, like all centrist organisations have collapsed in a similar inglorious fashion. The I.L.P. as the lone survivor of this debacle, has itself described a very weird evolution in its policies in the intervening period. If it remains, and can still prate of internationalism, it is not because it is made of sterner material and sticks rigidly to principles. But because it has not yet been put to the test. The P.O.U.M. at least was far more of a revolutionary organisation than the I.L.P. ever could be.

The problem of the "new" inter-

national can only be understood in relation to the experience of the international working class over the last few decades. It is on this basis that the principles and ideas of the Fourth International have been worked out, with the method of Marxism as the basis. What have the "theoreticians" of the I.L.P. learned. In "Stalinism and Bolshevism", Trotsky makes the proud boast:

"The Bolshevik Party was able to carry on such magnificent "practical" work only because it shed the light of theory on all its steps. Bolshevism did not create this theory: it was furnished by Marxism. But Marxism is the theory of movement and not of stagnation. Only events on a tremendous historical scale could enrich the theory itself. Bolshevism (Trotskyism) brought an invaluable contribution to Marxism in its analysis of the imperialist epoch as an epoch of wars and revolutions; of bourgeois democracy in the era of decaying capitalism; of the correlation between the general strike and the insurrection; of the role of party, soviets and trade unions in the epoch of proletarian revolutions; in its theory of the soviet state, of the economy of transition, of fascism and Bonapartism in the epoch of capitalist decline; finally in its analysis of the degeneration of the Bolshevik party itself and of the soviet state. Let any other tendency be named that has added anything essential to the conclusions and generalisations of Bolshevism."

In rejecting the programme of the Fourth International naturally enough, neither Ridley, Brockway or any other leader of the I.L.P. faces up to a criticism of these theoretical achievements. Ridley's thesis, if such it can be called, is composed of bits and pieces taken from the programmes and theories of a number of fundamentally opposed currents in the working class movement. Ideas lifted direct from the S.P.G.B. on the colonial question, from the anarchists on the State, from the Stalinists on Russia, a distorted idea here and there from the Trotskyists, and laid over with the confused conceptions of the Centrists withal! And he tries to palm off this horrible mess as Marxism with the benediction of Fenner Brockway and the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. It would require a volume to deal with the theoretical blunders and misconceptions which bristle in nearly every paragraph. Take this typical specimen of muddled thinking:

"Viewed from this angle, it is

obvious that no fully socialist society, in the sense indicated above, could possible have emerged from the activities of the earlier Internationals to which allusion was made in the preceding section. In the time of the First International only a small part of Europe and America was either capitalist or democratic. (Outside Europe and America both Capitalism and Democracy were unknown). In the time of the Second International, Imperialism and world capitalism had not yet exhausted their role; neither had yet "left off". Whilst both the Third and Fourth Internationals were based, in effect, upon the social conditions of a pre-capitalist-feudal-autocratic Russian society.

Thus, none of the aforementioned socialist "internationals" could have led to world socialism in the sense which Marxism exclusively attached to that conception. Their failure was, under the given conditions, inevitable. e.g. Had they succeeded, their victory would have been progressive but not socialist. At the most, they could only have led to regimes of state-capitalism."

What does this nonsense mean? That, had the Third or Fourth Internationals succeeded in conquering power in any of the major European countries they would have gone the way of Russia? But not even Ridley, far less the I.L.P. has in the past disputed, or even now disputes, that even the degenerate Soviet State remains today a **workers' state**, not a "state capitalist regime." Or is Ridley perhaps stealthily hinting that Russia has gone state capitalist? He certainly should have informed the world of this in a less casual way. But even when one admits the reactionary military-police superstructure which Stalinism has infamously imposed upon the Soviet Union, what does this prove in relation to the problem of a Soviet Germany? The measures of repression taken by the Bolsheviks were not a question of principle but imposed upon them by the hostile imperialist environment and the backwardness of Russia. A victory for a Socialist Germany after the last war, which was entirely possible, would have altered the whole relationship of forces throughout the world. Backward Russia in this war and in the years before it, has provided a wonderful example of the powers of socialist methods of production. A combination of the economy of mighty Germany and the resources of Russia would have been invincible both economically and militarily. It could but have been the prelude to the victory of the

revolution in Europe and throughout the world. Such a victory would have led not to "state capitalism" but to the abolition of the state within a generation or so throughout the globe. It is painful to have to repeat such elementary Marxian propositions to those proposing to lay down "new" and infallible prescriptions for a new International.

Ridley's explanation of the failure of the Internationals is certainly ingenious enough. They failed, therefore the time was not ripe for them! A wonderful scientific reading of history, which he improves upon by telling us that even if they succeeded they would still have failed. But this does not as yet provide us with an analysis of the reasons for the defeats any more than the man who explained heat by saying that it was hot!

As if to reduce his views to absurdity, Ridley goes on:

"The next International mounts on the shoulders of History. It can actually do what the others promised. It arises in a continent (Europe) now unified by History—using Hitler as its blind instrument!—and in rapid process of industrial development. Led by a socialist Germany, a socialist France, and a socialist England, the United Socialist States of Europe will for the first time in all history, fulfil the Marxist prerequisite for a genuine scientific socialist society."

As usual, everything is stood on its head. The job the Internationals failed to carry out is supposed to have been achieved by Hitler. As Trotsky would say Ridley confuses the brake with the locomotive of history, revolution with counter-revolution. In fact the position is precisely the opposite. Hitler's coming to power, the war, Hitler's victories in Europe are the result of the **failure** of the working class to carry out the tasks urgently posed by history, the failure of the working class (i.e. of its organisations) to abolish the contradiction between the development of the productive forces beyond national boundaries and the national state by progressive means, has led to an attempt at solution by reactionary means.

The formalistic, anti-Marxist outlook of Ridley and the I.L.P. is expressed in the "three main purposes" of Ridley's projected "fifth" (in reality 23) International:

"As it aims at the creation of a socialist society which **starts** on the basis of a **finished** capitalism it should confine itself to those parts of the world—primarily Europe, later, perhaps, the Amer-

icas—where the objective social conditions exist (e.g. In Asia and Africa the only kind of revolution possible is a predominantly agrarian anti-feudal revolution of the Russian type, which can, at best, only end in State capitalism and dictatorship, since the objective conditions for scientific socialism—viz. the abolition of economic scarcity and political democracy—do not exist. The European world has so long a start that, for the 20th century, a socialist Europe, no longer torn by civil war, must continue to lead the world.)”

It would be difficult to find in any revolutionary writings a paragraph which exposed such complete bankruptcy in the conception of world history and the method of historical materialism. Ridley once wittily referred to the S.P.G.B. as a Victorian survival. It would be hard for even this sect to produce a statement such as this, from whom of course it is derived. Brockway for sentimental reasons comes nearer the correct policy than the “Marxist” Ridley, when he rejects this section of the document relating to the colonial question. It is almost a century since Marx pointed out the interdependent character of world economy which it was capitalism’s historic task to develop. Since that time, particularly in the last few decades with the development of imperialism, and the emergence of new techniques, this position has been emphasised. Even Churchill, Roosevelt, Hitler and other bourgeois politicians understand this better than Ridley. The world has become a single economic unit and because of this, events in one continent immediately have political and economic repercussions in every other. Incredible that Ridley has not seen the social implications of the global war to which he so often refers. The sheer Victorian-European (“white”) arrogance with which Ridley divides those privileged advanced countries ready for Socialism, which his International will condescend to honour with a section from those benighted countries to be cast into the nether darkness till they are economically ready to have its attention is only matched by his ignorance of the world historical process in the past decades. Even the reformist Second International did not go so far as this. While in reality confined to Europe it paid lip service to the struggle for liberation of the colonial peoples and for the work in the colonies. Ridley is afraid that revolutions in colonies will end in state capitalism and dictatorship on the lines of the Revolution in

Russia. Even granting that this is so, would not this be a tremendous step forward in comparison with the slavery of the colonial peoples today? Ridley, the historical “authority” is apparently against “bourgeois” revolutions in the East today, though willing enough to accept completed revolutions from the past. We would remind him that neither the French nor British revolutions were achieved “democratically” or through “libertarian” means but through bourgeois dictatorship. In any event, by implication Ridley is condemning the Russian Revolution without stating this openly. He wishes to throw out the Soviet revolutionary baby with the dirty Stalinist bathwater. But far from being a reactionary event, the Russian revolution remains the greatest event in human history. And what alternative was there for Russia? A failure on the part of the Bolsheviks to seize power would have led to economic stagnation and the colonisation of Russia by the other great powers. Ridley overlooks one of the great progressive achievements of the Third International and its founders. It would appear that he has not read or understood the writings of either Lenin or Trotsky. While the problem of the revolution in the colonies was not developed by Marx (though in advance he riddled the Ridleyian conception by showing that a successful revolution in China would automatically lead to a revolution in the developed countries of the West) it received detailed attention and study from those revolutionary theorists who worked out its basic laws. On this never a word from the light minded Ridley. Even if we accept as correct, which broadly speaking is true, that revolution in Europe is coming in the next period, the fate of such revolutions will at least be partly determined by the explosions it will produce in Asia, Africa and other colonial and semi-colonial countries. One of the expressions of capitalism’s historic impasse is that social disturbances and revolutions in any part of the globe immediately react on the other continents as well; there is not one continent or country in which explosive material has not been accumulated. Lenin, in his analysis of imperialism showed that the road to revolution in the West lay in destroying the source of the super-profits for capitalism in the East, the means whereby “corruption” of the Western workers was maintained. Ridley talks about “corruption” of workers in the West but is apparently against destroying the basis of this.

However, Trotsky’s theory of

Permanent Revolution shows Ridley to be a crude scholastic of the worst type. (If Ridley had studied the works of “dead” revolutionaries, he would not derive his ideas from men who have been politically dead for years). Trotsky shows that the process of social evolution is not at all a mechanical and rigid one. Because of the intervention of imperialism in the colonial areas, the development of these countries proceeds on different lines to the history of Britain, France and the other advanced states. The imperialists attempt to maintain the old feudal relations and prevent a “normal” development along capitalist lines. The capitalists of backward countries, because of the belatedness of their development are inextricably entangled with the landlords, the semi-feudal regime and with the imperialists. Any movement of the masses which threatened the imperialists or the landlords would almost automatically assume anti-capitalist tendencies at the next stage, besides which the capitalists are economically integrated with the landlords and would be hard hit by any incursions on their property. Thus the bourgeoisie in backward and colonial countries is incapable of carrying through the bourgeois revolution. It is this development of world history which made the October Revolution in Russia possible. The fact that the bourgeoisie, having ceased to play a progressive role, the bourgeois-democratic revolution can only be carried out by a conquest of power by the proletariat. The tens and hundreds of millions of the peasantry, history has demonstrated conclusively, are incapable of playing an independent role. They can only support and follow the lead of some other class in the cities to achieve their aims. As the bourgeoisie cannot fulfil the revolutionary role they did in the past, the leadership of the peasantry now falls to the young and vigorous proletariat. But having attained power, the proletariat cannot stop at the democratic tasks, including the breaking up of the large estates and the division of the land among the peasantry, but will inevitably turn towards socialist measures, expropriation of the capitalists, etc. But this in its turn, will come up against the weak and backward character of the economy. The sole solution lies in the extension of the revolution to the more advanced countries. Hence the naming of the process the Permanent Revolution.

Trotsky was writing on this in 1903. The October Revolution and events in Spain, India and China

have completely confirmed the correctness of this theory. But all that the cowardly Centrist can see is that the state that issued from the Russian Revolution has degenerated. To draw the conclusion: not to extend the revolution and thus end the isolation—but to send the colonial masses—that is the greater part of humanity—to perdition . . . till they are economically ready for socialism. A position which the development of world imperialism has rendered impossible in any event. But as the revolutions in the West are at least partially dependent for success or failure on the movement of the masses in the East, this is tantamount to declaring Socialism impossible of realisation anywhere. Not for nothing did Lenin say that the road to the revolution in Britain lay through Delhi. The doctrine that the revolution must inevitably come in Europe first is not only false, but pedantic and utterly devoid of any dialectical content. Nowhere is it written that the proletariat of Germany must come to power before the proletariat of China, or the proletariat of Britain before that of India. True it is that a revolution in the East, though it would immediately purge society of the feudal rubbish accumulated over centuries, and if only for that reason would be completely justified, could nevertheless not stand on its own resources for a long period of time. But it would provide an enormous impetus to the revolution in Europe and America, to whose proletariat the Eastern peoples would look for assistance and succour. The revolution is as indivisible and inter-connected as the war itself. Revolution in Europe means revolution in Asia—and the Americas—and also vice-versa.

In an attempt to cover his false position, Ridley goes on to say:

"Hence, whilst encouraging and supporting all non-European progressive revolutions, we do not identify our socialist revolution with progressive non-socialist ones, as has been done so disastrously in the era of the Russian Revolution which ended with the dissolution of the Comintern and the assassination of Trotsky. The new International drops the vague and too ambiguous title—'World Revolution'—and concentrates on the 'United States of Europe. It is, actually, a distinction without a difference, for who wins Europe today wins the world tomorrow!"

The above analysis should have disposed of this artificial conception, which attempts to separate the fate of Europe from that of the rest of

the world and contains a sharp "distinction" and a sharp "difference" with Marxism on the problem of the colonial areas.

Having disdained to examine the programme and principles of the Fourth International, which represents the application of Marxism to the modern epoch, Ridley and the I.L.P. proceed to adopt ideas—in the name of "Marxism" at that—which date back not to the pre-Bolshevik epoch, but are even pre-Marxian. Says Ridley, and in this he has the warm support of Brockway and the N.A.C.:

"Our slogans must be suited to this so changed atmosphere (hated of totalitarian stateism and of war). As dialectics, Marxism has no use for outmoded thought-forms and outdated slogans. For example, to make a revolution against (bourgeois) dictatorship in the name of 'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat' would be worse than futile. Contrarily, it is necessary to borrow heavily from Anarchism and Syndicalism emphasising the slogans of 'workers' control' against bureaucracy, personal liberty against state regimentation, socialist ethics against the cynical amorality of Fascist and Stalinist gangsters. Full anarchism (or anarchist-communism) is, indeed, impossible whilst the State remains, but each form of society leans towards its successor, and socialism can immediately where once its scientific prerequisites already exist, begin, already, to lean towards its eventual anarchist-communist successor."

What this mass of confused and contradictory ideas means, not Ridley himself could explain. If he means that the State will be only a transitional one till socialism is realised, (what is this nonsense about Anarchist-communist successors?) that would merely be the orthodox Marxist way, or regarding the problem. If he believes that Socialism could immediately be introduced even in Europe or the United States, that is not economically possible. The State will continue to exist in the period after the seizure of power and only gradually "wither away" into Socialism. Ridley confusedly agrees that the State will remain in the first period after power has been achieved by the workers. But to repeat the A.B.C. of Marxian ideas which Ridley does not seem to understand, **the State is an instrument of oppression of one class over another.** It is the guardian of inequality, and its existence presupposes that the economic basis for the complete abolition of classes has not yet been

achieved. Under capitalism, the state is the instrument of the capitalist class and is used for the suppression of the workers. When the workers take power they must smash the bourgeois state and replace it with one of their own, based on the workers' Soviets. And such a State cannot but be a "dictatorship". Ridley cannot have it both ways. Either he supports the idea of a state which must mean some form of coercion (i.e. dictatorship) or rejects it completely and thus must embrace anarchist doctrine. In this case he should come out openly against Marxism. For the question of the nature of the state before and after the conquest of power is one of the decisive criterions which separates Marxism from all other tendencies in the Labour movement. Just as bourgeois democracy cannot be anything else but the dictatorship of the capitalist class so "dictatorship of the proletariat." If Ridley means that we should reject the Stalinist caricature, that has long been a tenet of Bolshevism. But the Bolsheviks put in its place the idea of "workers' democracy"—a democracy of the toilers as opposed to the democracy of the rich—as it was in the early days of the Soviet Union. There is no need to borrow half-baked anarchist ideas. Revolutionaries, if they are to be successful, must stick to the scientific method of Marxism. And whatever its form, which may vary from one country to another, the rule of the workers cannot be anything else but the dictatorship of the proletariat. With the victory of the workers in Europe such a dictatorship would be very light, guaranteeing full freedom of speech, press, etc., even possibly to the bourgeois parties, certainly to all parties accepting the Soviet system, as a return to capitalism would be almost out of the question. But this is purely a question of expediency, not of principle. The much slandered Bolsheviks, on whom Ridley by implication, pours his quota of slime, did not at all begin with ruthless measures. Even the liberal press was not suppressed. Only when the existence of the Soviet State was menaced by internal counter-revolution and world-wide capitalist intervention did the Bolsheviks reply with the Red Terror to the terror of the White Guards. We stand unreservedly with the Bolsheviks against the mawkish sentimentality of Ridley and Co. The Bolsheviks have provided the world working class with an example to be followed in the coming revolutions if they are not

to go under in a new wave of capitalist barbarism. The history of Europe since the last war is a warning of what happens to the working class if they stop half-way on the revolutionary road and do not take the necessary precautions and even reprisals against the capitalists and their henchmen. Hitler, Mussolini and Franco have shed rivers of workers' blood and left the flower of the working class to rot in jails and concentration camps throughout Europe. Against capitalist barbarism and with the future of civilisation itself at stake the working class will not stop short of the most ruthless steps if necessary to preserve their rule by workers' dictatorship.

To tie their hands in advance could only be the advice of a Centrist. There is no need to borrow from the Anarchists on the other points mentioned by Ridley either, they are all comprised in the philosophy of Marxism and can be found in the works of the "dead" Lenin and Trotsky.

Trotsky writing with infallible Marxian instinct had picked on this question long in advance in criticising the theoretical conceptions of centrism. He realised that the centrists had queazy stomachs easily upset by the slightest difficulties and would inevitably conclude from the Stalinist experience, not the correct lessons, but the abandonment of the idea of a firm holding of power by the proletariat. Without the Bolshevik conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat history has shown that it is impossible for the proletariat to seize power. Ridley pretends to be scared only of the term; in reality he has scuttled away from the problem instead of facing it and in so doing placed himself in the camp of Liberal-anarchism which bases itself on the rarefied air of "Libertarianism" without reference to sordid material questions such as time, place and conditions under which the struggle for power is waged.

In his book "Whither France", Trotsky, in criticising the "Left" member of the French Socialist Party, Zyromski who wished to "apologise" for being in favour of a "dictatorship" of the proletariat (Ridley unashamedly and with relief gives up the idea altogether without any apologies to Marxism whatsoever) wrote the following lines which constitute a complete refutation of Ridley's position:

"For some reason or other Zyromski, in a whole series of articles, repeats with especial insistence the idea (moreover pointing to Stalin as original source) that 'the dictatorship of the pro-

letariat can never be considered as an end in itself.' As if there were somewhere in the world insane theoreticians who thought that the dictatorship of the proletariat was an 'end in itself'! But in these odd repetitions there lurks an idea: Zyromski is making his excuses to the workers in advance for wanting a dictatorship. Unfortunately, it is difficult to establish the dictatorship if we begin by apologising for it.

Much worse, however, is the following idea: 'This dictatorship of the proletariat . . . must be relaxed and progressively transformed into workers' democracy in proportion to the extent of the development of socialist construction.' In these few lines there are two profound errors in principle. The dictatorship of the proletariat IS OPPOSED to workers' democracy. However, the dictatorship of the proletariat by its very essence can and should be the supreme expression of workers' democracy. In order to bring about a great social revolution, there must be for the proletariat a supreme manifestation of all its forces and all its capacities: The proletariat is organised democratically precisely in order to put an end to its enemies. The dictatorship, according to Lenin, should 'teach every cook to direct the State.' The heavy hand of the dictatorship is directed against the class enemies: the foundation of the dictatorship is constituted by the workers' democracy.

According to Zyromski, workers' democracy will replace the dictatorship in proportion to the extent of the development of socialist construction. This is an absolutely false perspective. In proportion to the extent that bourgeois society is transformed into a socialist society, the workers' democracy will dispense with the dictatorship, for the state itself will wither away. In a socialist society, there will be no working class; and secondly because there will be no need for State repression. This is why the development of socialist society must mean not the transformation of the dictatorship into a democracy, but their common dissolution into the economic and cultural organisation of the socialist society."

This quotation annihilates Ridley's utopian socialist conceptions. It answers not only the nonsense of Ridley on the question of workers' power but also the absurd idea that even in Europe Socialism could be immediately introduced. If this

were so then indeed the anarchists would be correct and the necessity for the State would disappear immediately capitalism was overthrown. Ridley accepts the anarchist criticism of the dictatorship of the proletariat yet wishes to introduce Socialism immediately and have a state in the transition period—not to Socialism then—but to Anarchism into the bargain! What lucidity! What historical understanding! What social analysis! Ridley has no need to consult the works of Trotsky to get the unknown meaning, the meaning of Marxism is entirely unknown to Ridley.

Ridley sums up his erroneous conceptions:

"Any new International must, to pull its weight in the present world, politically be (a) anti-capitalist and not merely anti-feudal, like its historic predecessors; (b) economically post-capitalist, based on the already solved problem of production (by capitalism) and aiming in its social and economic philosophy at the solution of the socialist problem of consumption rather than the already achieved capitalist problem of production; and (c) in opposition to all dictatorship must be libertarian, ethical and democratic."

... it cannot be repeated too often that 'Socialism in our Time', in this generation, is only possible in the post-capitalist, post-democratic soil already cultivated by Western (bourgeois) civilisation; and it is to the conquest of this that a new International must direct its primary energies."

"It cannot be repeated too often" that Ridley commits elementary errors that any green student of Marxist theory would not perpetrate. The three previous workers' Internationals were built on the basis of anti-capitalism. But to say that the new International must not be anti-feudalist is so much fantasy. In the greater part of the world, including the advanced countries of Europe, there are feudal survivals. Are we to wait for capitalism to abolish these before making the revolution? If so we would have to put off the revolution till doomsday. It should be obvious that all survivals from feudalism and even earlier periods will be finally destroyed by the workers' revolution. History does not wait till the last feudal custom has been abolished before imperatively demanding the preparation of a new stage.

Ridley's point (b) is also incorrect. Socialism, no more than any other system of society, is not a

question merely of consumption, but of production. The Socialist Revolution is historically necessary above all because capitalism hampers the growth of the productive forces which have reached their limit, comparatively, under the capitalist system. If it was a question of utilising only the productive resources created by capitalism, there would be no future for socialism. But on the contrary, the freeing of the productive forces from the fetters of capitalism would lay the basis for an increase in the productive capacity undreamed of in former societies. Only an enormous increase in production would lay the basis for the disappearance of the State. Apparently it is necessary to remind these utopians that it is necessary to **produce** before you can **consume**. An artificial separation on the lines suggested by Ridley is quite meaningless. Socialists are as much concerned with production as consumption.

Point (c) is just so much hot air but is positively dangerous insofar as it sows illusions as to the methods by which the workers can achieve their emancipation, in the usual petty bourgeois fashion placing on the same plane, workers' dictatorship and the dictatorship of Fascism.

Brockway, in his comments on Ridley's Memorandum betrays the same incapacity to face the problem as do all the centrists. When it comes to the question of the basis on which the new International is to be built, Ridley is nebulous. Brockway recognises the need to "prepare" for the new International at least in words. But his method of preparing is, to say the least, most peculiar. "First, we should continue to explore all possible contacts in all possible countries, with a view to preparing a nucleus to rally round the New International."

This sounds much like some Rotarian society, oozing good-will to all and attempting to maintain "International" connections. It should be obvious that before an International Party (or a national Party for that matter) can be built, there must be at least a basic agreement on policy and principles. The collapse of the London Bureau was determined by the fact that the Parties which composed it did not have a common principled position on the fundamental problems of our time. Now Brockway's method of issuing questionnaires much on the lines of an inquiry to decide which brand of beer is preferred by the public, might be a good test for the latter, but is certainly not a method of building an International. The I.L.P. here

faithfully continues in its centrist tradition. Nothing is laid down, nothing fixed in advance. Questions are addressed to all sorts of dubious individuals, grouplets and parties,—and what questions! There is not one that contains any real Marxist content which would help to demarcate reformists from revolutionists, muddle heads from those who know where they are going and how they intend getting there. Take a couple of examples:

"What do you regard as the reasons for the failure of the Second and Third Internationals? Why is it that the Second International was so ineffective in influencing political events whilst its industrial counter-parts, the International Federation of Trades Unions and perhaps particularly the International Trade Union Centres (like the International Transport Workers Federation, Textile Workers and Miners) appear to have been more effective? Do you think the first step towards international working class unity would be to concentrate on the strengthening of international Trade Union organisation (e.g. the formation of an all-in Federation, including the Russian Trade Unions, the C.I.O., etc.) and the extension of International Centres for Trade Unions in particular industries rather than on a Socialist International?"

What is meant by the Trade Union Internationals being more effective than the Second International and achieving more results, it is not given to ordinary mortals to understand. And how it can be suggested that the Russian "Trade Unions" which long ago ceased to be trade unions in any sense of the word and became mere appendages of the Stalinist bureaucratic regime would strengthen internationalism is more than a mystery. But it follows naturally from the unclear conceptions of centrism. They howl about the amoral dictatorship of Stalinism one day, only to prepare as in this case to embrace its tools disguised as trade union leaders, the next.

Another sample:

"What elements do you think should be invited to collaborate in preparation for a New International? Revolutionary Socialists only? Social Democrats? Communists? Trotskyists? Anarchists? Syndicalists? Reformist Trade Unionist Organisations? Co-operative Organisations."

It should have been clear to the merest political child that all these tendencies are mutually incompatible and fundamentally opposed to one another. To attempt to recon-

cile them is impossible. Anyone who has not learned the fundamental distinction between Bolshevism (Trotskyism) and the other tendencies in the last two decades, has learned nothing from history. This is emphasised by the next point:

"Do you think there should be a fundamental basis, defining both the socialist objective and policy? Is a statement of socialist objective necessary in view of the experiences of Nazism and of the developments in the Soviet Union? For example, do you think it necessary to emphasise the democratic, libertarian and equalitarian aspects of Socialism? Do you think the time is ripe for a synthesis of the Marxist and Anarchist conceptions of social structure?"

After the shameful betrayal of its so-called principles by anarchism in the Spanish revolution, one could expect the petty bourgeois utopianism of anarchism, would be exposed clearly for all claiming to be Marxist. To try to unite fire and water would be much more simple than the feat of uniting anarchist chimeras with Marxist science. All the other questions in this questionnaire are of similar character.

However, Brockway's comments, as does the questionnaire referred to, flow from the conceptions developed by Ridley. In dealing with his questionnaire, Brockway remarks with pride: "The responses which we have already had to our communications" (obviously on the lines of this questionnaire) are encouraging and the possibilities of this exploration have only been begun." Very likely. A document which says nothing and commits to nothing, is something which any reformist or opportunist can support. Presumably Brockway has received encouraging responses from the "brother party" in the U.S.A., Norman Thomas' Socialist Party which merely differs over the trifling question of the war—they support the Allies while Brockway claims to oppose the war. Or the new party in South Africa which has been so enthusiastically hailed by the "New Leader"—opportunist through and through, which not only supports the war but speaks for the white minority only, also a mere detail that the I.L.P. disagrees with. "It is important," says Brockway, "that during the period before the mass movement towards a New International arises, international socialists in all countries should be thinking out again their ideas of Socialism and the best organisational basis for a New International. We must not aspire to lay down any theoretical basis in its final form,

but it will be a valuable thing if Socialists in different countries are pooling their ideas so that out of this exchange of opinion a re-statement of Socialism can be contributed to the discussion when a New International comes 'on the map'."

An organisation that was seriously Marxist, if it wished to inaugurate an international discussion on the way the New International should be built, would lay down the principles and ideas which it considered the experience of the last period had demonstrated as valid. It would attempt to sharply differentiate the sheep from the goats; revolutionists from reformists and syndicalist confusionists. That is the method of Trotsky, and the method with which Lenin built the Communist International—when it was revolutionary. In predicting years in advance the debacle of the London Bureau, when a Marxist analysis of its principled or rather lack of principled basis, enabled him to discern its inevitable fate, Trotsky wrote:

"A 'revolutionary' resolution for which the opportunists could also vote was deemed by Lenin to be not a success but a fraud and a crime. To him, the task of all conferences consisted not in presenting a 'respectable' resolution, but in effecting the selection of militants and organisations that would not betray the proletariat in the hours of stress and storm."

And in this is summed up the only sound method of laying the basis for mass parties of the working class which can lead the toilers to victory.

After solemnly repeating most of Ridley's errors, Brockway attempts to tackle the question of the organisational basis of the International, and in doing so finds himself on the horns of a dilemma of peculiar Centrist construction.

"The Second International failed organisationally because it was not much more than a discussional body afraid to give a lead to any of its sections . . ."

"An International ought to be able to express the considered view of the international working class movement to its different sections, and different sections ought to pay very considerable regard to the lead given in this way."

" . . . The Communist International, on the other hand, failed because it was too rigid in organisation. Its policy and finance were dominated by the Communist Party of Russia and all other sections had to turn as it ordered. This is the other extreme which must be avoided.

We must think out a basis of organisation which is between these two, and which is realistically a reflection of the degree to which national sections in their present stage of development are likely to accept a lead from an International Centre."

Brockway has not realised that fundamental political questions must be reflected in organisational method. Fundamentally differing political tendencies cannot be reconciled within the framework of a single organisation either nationally or internationally, but sooner or later must be torn apart when the question of action arises. All tendencies are tested in the fires of the class struggle which brooks of no evasion or subterfuge. Thus a genuine proletarian International can only be built on the basis of agreement on the question of principles. This in itself presupposes that all questions of major political importance which vitally affect the policy of the national parties, should come up for international discussion and decision. While of course, a great amount of flexibility, especially on secondary questions, is desirable, this should not affect the basic issue. An International should not be a post-bag to which one politely sends reports of decisions. Nor an International Congress a fraternal meeting where the progress of the different sections is merely recorded. In Lenin's day the Comintern was a live body, where after full discussion of disputed questions throughout the sections, final decisions were referred for International discussion and decision to the World Conference, where important questions were fully discussed for days and sometimes weeks. The International was a live democratic organisation, and not at all "rigid in organisation" in the sense of being bureaucratically controlled. True it is that the Russian Party possessed an enormous and even predominant influence in the Councils of the International. But this was a political influence, due to the tremendous experience and authority of the Bolshevik Party. Lenin always insisted on thorough democratic discussion on all questions. And while inflexible on questions of principle, always preferred where possible to convince comrades by experience on questions of tactics.

The later degeneration of the Communist International began as a political degeneration which reflected itself in organisational method as well. Thus, from democratic discussion and decision, bureaucratic decisions were decided on in advance, and all voting decisions

became merely meaningless gestures, till the Communist International ended up with the totalitarian "unanimous" decision on all questions. But to compare the organisational methods of the Comintern in Lenin's day with those of decline under Stalin, or even Bukharin and Zinoviev, and to argue that they were the same could only be done by a centrist who wished to reject all international discipline. Or perhaps Brockway is still smarting with the recollection of the conditions for membership which the International proposed to apply to all parties proposing to affiliate? These principled conditions clearly laid it down for all to see those parties which really wished to take the road of revolution and those who refused to break once and for all with reformism. It is interesting to note after all these years, with their rich experience of vicissitudes and crises for the I.L.P., after wobbling many times in policy, sometimes moving right, sometimes moving left, that they have gone back to the position of the I.L.P. of 1920: rejecting one of the fundamental principles of Marxism, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Brockway wishes to have his cake and eat it, to be part of an International without accepting any responsibility for its decisions and to accept the results of the International's deliberations. Brockway's is a typical evasive and vague formulation of the question which ties any organisation accepting it to nothing. "An international ought to be able to express . . . different sections ought to pay very considerable regard . . ." How much is very considerable regard? What is it supposed to mean? Exactly nothing! Perhaps like the I.L.P. itself the international should explain its views to the national section which will listen with "considerable regard" and then proceed to carry on as usual with its own policy, much as the I.L.P. behaves in its internal working or as the London Bureau proceeded in the days when it pursued a fictional existence.

That this is what Brockway really means, is shown by his criticism of the Communist International. "We must think out a basis of organisation which is between these two . . ." Neither Brockway nor any other mortal could resolve the contradiction which is posed by this idea. Only Centrists who live in a world of make-believe, or cloudy phrases and ideas would even pretend to suggest that it is possible. Marxism-Leninism showed the method of building the party nationally and internationally on the basis of de-

mocratic centralism. Brockway puts the issue beyond doubt by leaving the back door open in advance: "... a basis of organisation (must be thought out) which is realistically a reflection of the degree to which national sections in their present stage of development are likely to accept a lead from an international Centre." If the individual sections have not developed into or as one international party, why pretend that an International exists? Far better to declare openly that there is no basis for an International at all than participate in a farce of this nature.

The Second International and its sections would gladly have accepted such an interpretation of "inter-

nationalism". It differs in nothing essential from the very practice which Brockway criticises. It leaves the door open to every sort of abuse. Who is to decide "realistically" anyway?

It is clear that the conceptions of the I.L.P. on revolutionary organisation are as vague and woolly as their ideas on revolutionary policy. The world situation poses more imperiously than ever before the necessity for a revolutionary vanguard on an international scale. An international which bases itself on the principles worked out by Marxism. It is not a question of a number, but to repeat the idea developed by Trotsky so long ago. The Inter-

national "is not at all a 'form' as flows from the utterly false formulation of the I.L.P. The International is first of all a programme, and a system of strategic, tactical and organisational methods that flow from it."

Comrades of the I.L.P. study our documents in the light of events, examine again the ephemeral and contradictory ideas developed by the I.L.P. leadership in Conference documents in the last few years. A thorough and honest analysis will convince you that only under the banner and with the programme and methods of the Fourth International can victory be obtained.

After Thoughts on Dissolution of the Comintern

By an Indian Revolutionist (Hakim Mirza)

Ed. Note. This article is by an Indian revolutionist who participated in the founding of the Comintern at its first World Congress.

On the 15th March 1919, the Communist International was established by Comrade Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, with the object of helping and developing International Socialism. At its inception, Lenin declared that the fulfilment of the cause of the International would only be realised when Capitalism was overthrown and Socialism established throughout the world. Thus, to the colonial and oppressed people, the Soviet Union, as the citadel of the October revolution and the Communist International, was an object, not only of admiration, but of hope and guidance for their own struggle for independence.

The people of India are inherently anti-Fascist, and anti-Imperialist. When Spain was attacked by the Fascists, the Indian people's sympathy was with the workers and peasants of Spain. They gave all the material and moral help possible. When China was attacked by

Japan, the Indian people declared their solidarity with the Chinese Republic and gave every possible help. During Mussolini's rape of Abyssinia, Indian sympathy with our Negro comrades was pronounced and unequivocal. During the period of Hitler's accession to power, Indian leaders were the first to condemn it in no uncertain terms.

During the last 25 years, the struggles and successes of the Soviet Union have fired the imagination and revolutionary zeal of Indian youth, workers and peasants. Right from the beginning, hundreds of Indians tried to get into direct touch with the Soviet Union and its leaders. The Indian Communist Party had to work through the British Party. In spite of many hitches, the Indian comrades always put their faith in the Communist International and accepted its guidance and help. There had been many misunderstandings between the British Communist Party and the Indian Comrades, and there has been much disillusionment; but in spite of all this, the Indian comrades stood by their loyalty to the

Communist International and the Soviet Union.

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE COMINTERN

When the Communist International was suddenly dissolved, it confused and shocked most of the genuine revolutionaries. We then did not subscribe to the line put forward by the Trotskyists who declared that the C.I. had already been dead and the declaration of the 22nd May 1943 was only its final burial. After overcoming the initial shock and watching the subsequent events, we were anxious to find out the causes for these developments. The purpose of this article is to clarify the situation and to place before Indian and colonial Communists a series of facts, in order to help them to review their ideas and views on the basis of current events.

On the 22nd May 1943, the E.C.C.I. recommended the dissolution of the Communist International. The E.C.C.I. gave several reasons. Let us discuss some of them. Firstly, that the fundamental aims of the Third Inter-

national have now been achieved. According to the Constitution and Rules of the Communist International, Section I—Names and Objects—Clause 1:—

"The Communist International—the International Workers' Association—is a union of Communist Parties in various countries; it is a World Communist Party. As the leader and organiser of the world revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the upholder of the principles and aims of Communism, the Communist International strives to win over the majority of the working class and the broad strata of the propertyless peasantry, and fights for the establishment of the world dictatorship of the proletariat, for the establishment of a World Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, for the complete abolition of classes and for the achievement of socialism—the first stage of Communist society."

Again, to quote Section II—The World Congress of the Communist International—Clause 8:—"The supreme body of the Communist International is the World Congress of representatives of all Parties (Sections) and organisations affiliated to the Communist International. The World Congress discusses and decides the programme, and tactical and organisational questions connected with the activities of the Communist International and of its various Sections. Power to alter the programme and rules of the Communist International lies exclusively with the World Congress of the Communist International. The World Congress shall be convened once every two years." It must be evident to everybody that the power of dissolution must also exclusively lie with the World Congress and not the E.C.C.I. who in fact dissolved it.

Here we also quote Stalin's vow on Comrade Lenin's death: "Lenin never regarded the Republic of Soviets as an end in itself. He always regarded it as a necessary link for strengthening the revolutionary movements in the lands of the West and the East, as a necessary link for facilitating the victory of the toilers of the whole world over Capital. Lenin knew that only such an interpretation is the correct one, NOT ONLY FROM THE INTERNATIONAL POINT OF VIEW, BUT ALSO FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF PRESERVING THE REPUBLIC OF SOVIETS ITSELF. Lenin knew that only in this way is it possible to inflame the hearts of the toilers of all countries for the decisive battles of emancipation. That is why this genius among the great leaders of the proletariat, on

the very morrow of the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship, laid the foundation of the Workers' International. That is why he never tired of expanding and strengthening the league of the toilers of the whole world, the Communist International. In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of remaining loyal to the principles of the Communist International. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will not spare our lives to strengthen and expand the league of the toilers of the whole world—the Communist International." (Stalin, writing on the death of Lenin in "Pravda", No. 23, 30.1.24.)

We ask ourselves, had the Comintern become "the necessary link for strengthening the revolutionary movements in the lands of the West and the East"? If so, the other reason given by Stalin, that it is difficult to call congresses in war time is incorrect. The International was started in March 1919, when the Soviet Union was in the throes of civil war and attacked by 13 invading armies, and only a few hundred square miles around Moscow was left in the hands of the Bolsheviks. The Soviet Union was a backward country, hardly at all industrially developed. The situation was far more critical even than when Hitler's forces had advanced as far as Stalingrad. The workers of the world were just beginning to understand the value of International solidarity. In spite of far more adverse circumstances between 1919 and 1924, five international congresses were held, and these built up the Communist Parties in various countries, thus strengthening the position of the Soviet Union. Comrade Lenin and the Bolsheviks, at that period, had full confidence in the class instinct of the working class of the world. They rather put their faith in the workers and peasants of all lands than in the Churchills, Roosevelts and other class enemies. Hence, we saw incidents like the stopping of the "Jolly George" and other ships; mutiny in the French ships in the Black Sea, fraternisation of invading soldiers with the Bolsheviks, etc., which saved the Soviet Union. If under the war conditions it is difficult to call an international congress, then why during the period between 1924-1939, which was a peace period, only two International Congresses were called—which was against the constitution of the C.I.? The Fifth Congress of 1924 did not instruct the E.C.C.I. to wait for four years before calling the sixth Congress in 1928.

We are told that the various

Communist Parties are now matured. From our association with the British Party, we can say that this is definitely not so. We know the events in India—also various sectarian lines taken by some of the British members re Indian organisations—the starting of sectarian Trade Unions, the Sectarian Workers' and Peasants' Parties, the attitude towards the National Movements—there are many such examples of the British Party misleading the Indian revolutionary movement, which have been admitted by Ben Bradley and others in their books. Also, the British Party's history up to the present period shows one blunder after another—at one time, a sectarian deviation to the right, at another, a left-wing deviation. No wonder that, apart from a few thousand workers, the British Party is not trusted by the militant section of the working class. Moreover, it is a fact that at least twice the number of members have left the British Party than the total membership of the Party, at the present time. If the British Party had become matured, the situation would have been different. The British Party would have been a mass Party and would have led the struggle—perhaps the war would have been avoided, and humanity would have been well on the path to Socialism, peace and plenty. The American Party would not find itself in a position of dissolving itself and advocating co-operation between "labour, farmer and Capital." Surely that is not the fulfilment of the aims of the Communist International!

While the C.I. has been dissolved, Capital still reigns supreme and the toilers of the world are far more under the bondage of Imperialism and Fascism. According to the pronouncements of Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, there is full understanding for co-operation for at least 20 years. The American Communist Party dissolves itself in order to avoid "civil war" in the post war period, supports free enterprise, i.e. the exploitation of man by man, accepts Capitalist democracy as an end in itself. (Lenin stood for Workers' democracy—Lenin believed in class war and partisan interest, i.e. the interest of the working class at the expense of the capitalist class.) All these are accepted by a so-called "mature" party, as a result of the Moscow, Cairo and Teheran conferences! Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders pointed out that the attempts by the capitalists to forcibly repress the working class and its rights in any movement they

would take to overthrow capitalism, would inevitably lead to civil war. The task of genuine leaders of the working class was to explain this to the workers and prepare them for the inevitable struggle; not sow illusions in the possibilities of achieving their aims peacefully, as did the reformist renegades such as MacDonald and Kautsky., while the capitalist reaction prepared a bloody trap for them. The British Party, in its "Daily Worker" editorial, fully supports the policy of the American Party.

CHANGES WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION

The dissolution of the Communist International is concurrent with other fundamental changes in the Soviet Union, such as:

1. Reorganising the Red Army on Capitalist lines, creating an officer caste. The difference between the pay of an ordinary soldier and officer is much greater than in Capitalist countries such as Great Britain and the U.S.A. Revival of Czarist uniform and creation of Orders and Decorations in the names of old Czarist soldiers, rather than revolutionary leaders who gave their lives for the revolution. Introduction of Prussian discipline; "Nowadays, privates and N.C.O.'s travelling in a bus, tube or tram, must give up their seats to men of senior ranks, should they be standing" (Daily Worker 9/7/43). Even in Capitalist countries, an ordinary soldier has not to undergo such insults. This is just as bad as the worst type of caste distinction. Perhaps such measures and changes were necessary to counter the discontent of the Red Army men!

2. We find in the "Daily Worker", as well as in a special pamphlet by Reg. Bishop, the support of "Soviet Millionaires". This is the result of acute differences in wages and privileges between various sections of the workers in a "Socialist country"!

3. Recognition by the State of the Greek Orthodox Church—the excuse is that now "Religion" is a friend of Socialism! The opium of the people has now become its balm. Marxists always recognised the right of religious freedom, and under Lenin this was certainly so in the Soviet Union. But the new attitude represents a definite departure from the militant and uncompromising stand taken up by Bolshevism towards religion.

4. Abolition of co-education and introduction of paid higher education in place of free education and opportunities for all.

5. Replacement of the "Inter-

nationale"—which was the anthem of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party by a national anthem, such as "Sing to our Motherland, Glory Undying" in the same vein as "Land of Hope and Glory".

Those of us who have up to now, supported the line of "Socialism in one Country" will no doubt get a shock, and be forced to review the situation on Marxian lines. Instead of regarding it "not as an end in itself, but as a necessary link for facilitating the victory of the toilers of the world over Capital", the present rulers consider the Soviet Union as a specific country (not as part of the world struggle for Socialism and the citadel of the world revolution) and, following a Nationalist line, are prepared to subordinate the cause of Socialism for their immediate gain; are prepared to overturn the whole ideology of the October Revolution.

EFFECTS ON THE COLONIAL STRUGGLE

The series of changes mentioned above, force one to conclude that it is the present policy of the Russian Government which has deviated from the ideology of the October Revolution, which has led the Communist Parties to such a sorry pass. The attitude of Soviet Government towards the colonial struggles has undergone simultaneous changes with its foreign policy. As a result of the Soviet Union deciding to join the League of Nations and forming peace alliances with France, England and other Capitalist states (dabbling in Power politics), the Colonial struggles all over the world were watered down and subordinated to the interest of the Stalinist bureaucracy. A few examples will suffice.

"It was in 1927 that the Indian National Congress took part in the foundation of, and affiliated to, the International League of oppressed people against Imperialism"—Page 488, "India Today", R. P. Dutt. Again: "The National Congress affiliated to the L.A.I. in 1928". All these steps were endorsed by the E.C.C.I. the British Party and R. P. Dutt personally. In the middle of the thirties, the League against Imperialism was dissolved and simultaneously the anti-imperialist struggles were watered down. The anti-war movement, which gained a footing in India and other colonies, was simultaneously wound up. The workers of India manifested their anti-war attitude at the beginning of the second world war—for example, 80,000 workers of Bombay took part in a political anti-war strike.

In his speech on India, Wang Ming, at the 7th World Congress (Aug. 7, 1935) said: "The Indian Communists are able to lead these masses to victorious anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution in India", and that the Communists are really the vanguard of the people of India in the struggle for national emancipation—"this is now the main task of the Indian comrades". He ended up: "Raise high the banner of the Communist International—Forward to the victory of the world Socialist Revolution". R. P. Dutt ends up his "India To-day" (Page 536): "The decisive battles of India for freedom are in the near future. Whether the transition to freedom will be stormy and achieved at the cost of heavy sacrifices, or whether it will be relatively smooth and rapid depends, not only on the strength of the Indian National Movements, but also on the co-operation of the British working class and of the British Democratic movement. The war only accelerated the issues which are already maturing in India—the issues of the decisive struggle for national liberation, and eventually of the struggle for social liberation". To contrast the above—in the "World News & Views", April 25th, 1942, Ben Bradley writes: "The Congress proposal, that a National Government be set up which commands the confidence of the people, was rejected by the British Government, but is receiving widespread support in India, even from such British semi-official newspapers as the Calcutta "Statesman". All sections are agreed on the postponement of major issues until after the war." What are the major issues?—No doubt the struggle for national independence and the overthrow of British Imperialism's bloody rule, which was the line laid down by the last world congress and put forward by his immediate leader, R. P. Dutt! "All sections", of course, includes the C.P.I. members who support the policy of a so-called "National Government" (not Constituent Assembly on the basis of Universal Franchise—which was the line laid down by the Leninist Bolshevik Party), no doubt a popular front policy including semi-official imperialist organs! Moreover, they do not state that such a coalition Government of Princes, Congress, Moslem League, Liberal, Hindu, Mahasabha, Communists and others has been put forward to deceive the masses and cover up the continued rule of the oppressors. Even if such a Government is formed, it will not achieve National Independence, as, due to conflicting class interests within it, it is bound to remain de-

pendent on the foreign Imperialist power. Perhaps it is intended to be the same policy as now being followed by the American C.P., i.e. unity of labour, capital and farmers, and free enterprise.

The change of line promulgated by the British "Communist" Party (no longer C.P.G.B.) for India, their protegee—is supposed to help Russia against the Nazis. Even from that angle this policy is futile and treacherous—firstly, it has not alleviated the discontent of the masses, hence Britain and U.S.A. have been forced to keep a large army of occupation in India—secondly, it is the deliberate policy of Great Britain to isolate the Indian National emancipation struggles from the progressive forces of the outside world, they would rather allow the whole of India to fall under the temporary subjugation of the Axis powers (as in Burma, Siam and occupied Europe) than relax their grip over the masses of India.

The British C.P. knows that it was this stranglehold, and the policy of British Imperialism, which prevented the Indian people from taking part in the common struggle for Socialism, peace and plenty. By enforcing the policy of a "People's War" on the C.P.I., they are but serving their new master, British Imperialism. This notorious thesis of R. P. Dutt, which demands unity with the Moslim League and a National Government of all classes, is nothing but a deliberately dishonest and treacherous sell-out. Dutt has scores of times mentioned in "India To-day", that the Muslim League is nothing but an organisation set up at the instigation and with the blessing of British Imperialism in order to

divide the National Front. Such a policy only leads some of the Indian C.P.ers to form so-called "People's Volunteers" with the Muslim Leaguers, in order to sabotage the struggle for independence and act as the S.S. of local Muslim League ministries, as in Dacca. When this double crossing policy was at first put forward by Dutt & Co., our comrades thought that it was a genuine mistake. But subsequent events show that they are only echoing Stalin, who has adopted full co-operation with Capital in order to prevent "disorder" and civil war after this war. Thus, the policy of a People's War" in India is the precursor of the policies laid down in the three conferences at Moscow, Cairo and Teheran (and Harry Pollitt praises these conferences in the "World News & Views" for being a greater event than the October Revolution!). This is the outcome of the right-wing nationalist line adopted by the present rulers of the Soviet Union.

To a genuine Marxist and revolutionary there are only two tests by which to judge all political ideas and personalities, namely: (1) Loyalty to the interests of the working class, and (2) Belief in the continuance of the Class Struggle until the whole world is Socialist. The Party which advocates co-operation in making Capitalism work effectively in the post war period and subscribing to the idea that "Capitalism and Socialism have begun to find the way to peaceful co-existence and collaboration in the same world"—such a party is acting as a traitor to the working class and betraying the world revolution.

Stalin may cling to the illusion of 20 years of uninterrupted peace relations with Capital to serve his purpose. He may refuse to respond to the appeal of the Indian National movement against his newly made friends, Churchill & Co., but the workers of the world, who have seen the success of the October revolution under the leadership of the Bolsheviks will not forget anything, nor will they forgive anything. The masses of the Soviet Union, who made the Soviet Republic, will never forget this betrayal. The time of reckoning and judgment will come, and the class enemies will be justly dealt with by the workers of the world under the banner of the "International Workers' Association", which lives and fights, though the Communist International is dissolved.

The true Communist International created by Comrade Lenin under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, lives and fights for world Socialism, peace and the happiness of mankind—the Fourth International.

THE INTERNATIONAL STILL LIVES

Stalin has deliberately broken his vow on Lenin's death that "Lenin never regarded the republic of Soviets as an end in itself," and is prepared to sacrifice future social revolutions and civil wars to please his present friends, Churchill and Roosevelt. No wonder the American Party dissolves itself and is wholeheartedly prepared to support the policy of coalition between Labour, Farmer and Capital, and free enterprise—no doubt other Communist Parties will follow suit and return to the fold of Capital as prodigal sons.



TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL - - -	6d.	A.B.C. OF TROTSKYISM Cannon's Testimony in U.S. Labour Trial	6d.
TRADE UNIONS, Trotsky - - -	2d.	ON SOME CRITICS OF TROTSKYISM By Marc Loris - - -	2d.
PREPARING FOR POWER (Thesis of British Trotskyists) - - -	3d.	DOES RUSSIA'S ENTRY ALTER BRITAIN'S WAR? By A. Scott - - -	2d.
THE ROAD TO INDIA'S FREEDOM by A. Scott and E. Grant - - -	3d.	WAR AND WORLD REVOLUTION By Leon Trotsky - - -	2d.
THE C.P. AND THE WAR - - -	1d.		

Look at their Record!

Report on the Comintern

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following speech by Trotsky was delivered in Moscow on December 28th, 1922, to a session of the Communist fraction of the Tenth All-Union Congress of the Soviets, with non-party delegates participating. The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International had just taken place from November 5th to December 3rd—the last of the congresses led by Lenin and Trotsky.

As Trotsky obliquely indicates in his opening remarks, there was already to be noticed in the Soviet press a turning away from the international scene—one of the first signs of the reaction on which Stalin rode to power. This reaction, in turn, was primarily the result of the failure of the revolution in Western Europe, the causes of which Trotsky deals with in this speech. During the next year—1923—came a new revolutionary opportunity in Germany; but it was missed precisely because of the immaturity of the Communist Party of Germany with which Trotsky deals here. This failure, in turn, deepened the reaction in the Soviet Union, enabling Stalin to seize control of the Comintern and pervert it into an agency of Kremlin foreign policy.

Translation by John G. Wright.

Comrades:

You have invited me to make a report on the recent Congress of the Communist International. I take this to mean that what you want is not a factual review of the work of the last Congress, since if that were the case it would be much more expedient to turn to the minutes of the proceedings, already available in printed bulletins, rather than listen to a report. My task, as I understand it, is to try to give you an evaluation of the general situation of the revolutionary movement and its perspectives in the light of those facts and questions that faced us at the Fourth World Congress.

Naturally this presupposes a greater or lesser degree of acquaintance with the condition of the international revolutionary movement. Let me remark parenthetically that our press, unfortunately, does far from everything it should in order to acquaint us as intimately with facts of the world labour movement, especially the Communist movement, as it does, say, with facts relating to our economic life, to our

By **LEON TROTSKY**

Soviet construction. But to us these are manifestations of equal importance. For my part, I have resorted more than once (contrary to my custom) to partisan actions in order to get our press to utilise the exceptional opportunities at our disposal and to provide our party with a complete, concrete and precise picture of what is taking place in the sphere of revolutionary struggle, doing this from day to day without commentaries, directives or generalisations (for we need generalisations only from time to time), but simply supplying facts and material from the internal life of the communist parties.

I think that on this point the pressure of the party public opinion ought to be brought to bear on the press, whose editorial boards read the foreign press, proferring on the basis of this press generalisations from time to time, but almost no factual material. But inasmuch as gathered here is the fraction of the Soviet Congress and, consequently, highly qualified party elements, I shall assume for the purpose of my report a general acquaintance with the actual condition of the communist parties and the other parties which still wield influence in the workers' movement. My task is to submit to verification our general criteria, our views on the conditions for and the tempos of the development of the proletarian revolution from the standpoint of new facts, and in particular those facts which were supplied us by the Fourth Congress of the Comintern.

Comrades, I wish to say at the very outset that if we aim not to become confused and not to lose our perspective, then in evaluating the labour movement and its revolutionary possibilities we ought to bear in mind that there are three major spheres which, although inter-connected, differ profoundly from one another. First, there is Europe; second—America; and third—the colonial countries, that is, primarily Asia and Africa. The need of analysing the world labour movement in terms of these three spheres flows from the essence of our revolutionary criteria.

THE PRE-REQUISITES FOR REVOLUTION

Marxism teaches us that in order for the proletarian revolution to

become possible there must be given, schematically speaking, three premises or conditions. In the first place the conditions of production. The technology of production must have attained such heights as to provide economic gains from the replacement of capitalism by socialism. Secondly, there must be a class interested in effecting this change and sufficiently strong to achieve it, that is, a class numerically large enough and playing a sufficiently important role in economy to introduce this change. The reference here, is of course, to the working class. And thirdly, this class must be prepared to carry through the revolution. It must have the will to carry it out, and must be sufficiently organised and conscious to be capable of carrying it out. We pass here into the field of the so-called subjective conditions and pre-requisites for the proletarian revolution. If with these three criteria—productive-technological, social-class and subjective-political—we approach the three spheres indicated by me, then the difference between them becomes strikingly apparent. True enough, we used to view the question of mankind's readiness for socialism from the productive-technological standpoint much more abstractly than we do now. If you consult our old books, even those not yet out-dated, you will find in them an absolutely correct estimate that capitalism had already outlived itself 15, 20, 25 and 30 years ago.

In what sense was this intended? In the sense that 25 years ago, and more, the replacement of the capitalist method of production by socialist methods would have already represented objective economic gains, that is, mankind would have produced more under socialism than under capitalism. But 25-30 years ago this still did not signify that productive forces were no longer capable of development under capitalism. We know that throughout the whole world, including Europe and especially in Europe which has until comparatively recent times played the leading economic and financial role in the world, the productive forces still continued to develop. And we are now able to point out the year up to which they continued to develop in Europe: the year 1913. This means that up to that year capitalism represented not an absolute but a relative obstacle to the development of the

productive forces. In the technological sense, Europe developed with unprecedented speed and power from 1894 to 1913, that is to say, Europe became economically enriched during the 20 years which preceded the imperialist war. Beginning with 1913—and we can say this with complete certainty—the development of capitalism, of its productive forces, came to a halt one year before the outbreak of the war because the productive forces ran up against the limits fixed for them by capitalist property and the capitalist form of appropriation. The market was divided, competition was brought to its intensest pitch, and henceforth capitalist countries could seek to remove one another from the market only by mechanical means.

It is not the war that put a stop to the development of productive forces in Europe, but rather the war itself arose from the impossibility of the productive forces to develop further in Europe under the conditions of capitalist economy. The year 1913 marks the great turning point in the evolution of European economy. The war acted only to deepen and sharpen this crisis which flowed from the fact that further economic development within the conditions of capitalism was absolutely impossible. This applies to Europe as a whole. Consequently, if before 1913 we were conditionally correct in saying that socialism is more advantageous than capitalism, then since 1913 capitalism already signifies a condition of absolute stagnation and disintegration for Europe, while socialism provides the only economic salvation. This renders more precise our views with respect to the first pre-requisite for the proletarian revolution.

The second pre-requisite: the working class. It must become sufficiently powerful in the economic sense in order to gain power and rebuild society. Does this fact obtain today? After the experience of our Russian revolution it is no longer possible to raise this issue, inasmuch as the October revolution became possible in our backward country. But we have learned in recent years to evaluate the social power of the proletariat on the world scale in a somewhat new way and much more precisely and concretely. Those naive, pseudo-Marxist views which demanded that the proletariat comprise 75 or 90 per cent of the population before taking power—these views now appear as absolutely infantile. Even in countries where the peasantry comprises the majority of the population the proletariat can and must find a road to the peasantry in order to achieve the conquest of

power. Absolutely alien to us is any sort of reformist opportunism in relation to the peasantry. But at the same time, no less alien to us is dogmatism. The working class in all countries plays a sufficiently great social and economic role in order to be able to find a road to the peasant masses and to the oppressed nationalities and the colonial peoples, and in this way assures itself of the majority. After the experience of the Russian revolution this is not a presumption, nor a hypothesis, nor a conclusion, but an incontestable fact.

And, finally, the third pre-requisite: the working class must be ready for the overturn and capable of achieving it. The working class not only must be sufficiently powerful for it, but must be conscious of its power and must be able to apply this power. Today we can and must analyse and render more precise this subjective factor: We have witnessed in the political life of Europe, during the post war years, that the working class is ready for the overturn, ready in the sense of subjectively striving for it, ready in terms of will, mood, self-sacrifice but still lacking the necessary organisational leadership. Consequently, the mood of the class and its organisational consciousness do not always coincide. Our revolution, thanks to an exceptional combination of historical factors, gave our backward country the possibility of bringing about the transfer of power into the hands of the working class, in a direct alliance with the peasant masses. The role of the party is only too clear to us and, fortunately, it is today already clear to the Western-European communist parties. Not to take the role of the party into account is to fall into pseudo-Marxist objectivism which presupposes some sort of purely objective and automatic preparation of the revolution, and thereby postpones the latter to an indefinite future. This automatism is alien to us. This is a Menshevik, a social-democratic world outlook. We know, we have learned in practice, and we are teaching others to understand the enormous role of the subjective, conscious factor that the revolutionary party of the working class represents.

Without our party the 1917 overturn would not, of course, have taken place and the entire fate of the country would have been different. It would have been thrown back to vegetate as a colonial country; it would have been plundered by and divided among the imperialist countries of the world. That this did not happen was guaranteed historically by the arming of

the working class with the incomparable sword, our communist party. This did not obtain in post-war Europe.

Two of the three necessary pre-requisites were given: long before the war the relative advantages of socialism, and since 1913 and all the more so after the war, the absolute necessity of socialism. Europe is decaying and disintegrating economically without it. This is a fact. The working class in Europe no longer continues to grow. Its destiny, its class destiny, corresponds and runs parallel to the development of economy. To the extent that European economy, with inevitable fluctuations, suffers stagnation and even disintegration, to that extent the working class, as a class, fails to grow socially, ceases to increase numerically but suffers from unemployment, the terrible oscillations of the reserve army of labour, etc., etc. The war roused the working class to its feet in the revolutionary sense. Was it capable of carrying out the revolution before the war? What did it lack? It lacked the consciousness of its own power. Its power grew in Europe automatically, almost imperceptibly, with the growth of industry. The war shook up the working class. Because of this terrible bloody upheaval, the entire working class in Europe was imbued with the revolutionary mood on the very next day after the war. Consequently, one of the subjective factors—the striving to change this world—was on hand. What was lacking? The party was lacking, the party capable of leading the working class to victory.

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAVE 1917-1921

This is how the events of the revolution unfolded within our country and abroad. In 1917, the February-March revolution; within nine months—October: the revolutionary party guarantees victory to the working class and peasant poor. In 1918 revolution in Germany, accompanied by changes at the top; the working class tries to forge ahead but is smashed time and again. The proletarian revolution in Germany does not lead to victory. In 1919, the eruption of the Hungarian proletarian revolution: the base is too narrow and the party too weak. The revolution is crushed in a few months in 1919. By 1920, the situation has already changed and it continues to change more and more sharply.

There is a historical date in France—May 1st, 1920—when a sharp turn took place in the relation of forces between the proletariat

and the bourgeoisie. The mood of the French proletariat was on the whole revolutionary but it took too light a view of victory: it was lured by that party and those organisations which had grown up in the preceding period of peaceful and organic development of capitalism. On May 1st, 1920 the French proletariat declared a general strike. This should have been the first major clash with the French bourgeoisie.

The entire bourgeois France trembled. The proletariat which had just emerged from the trenches struck terror into its heart. But the old Socialist Party, the old Social-democrats who dared not oppose the revolutionary working class and who declared the general strike simultaneously did everything in their power to blow it up; while the revolutionary elements, the Communists, were too weak, too dispersed and too lacking in experience. The May 1st strike failed. And if you consult the French newspapers for 1920 you will see in the editorials and news stories already a swift and decisive growth of the strength of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie at once sensed its own stability, gathered the state apparatus into its hands and began to take less and less into account the demands of the proletariat and the threats of revolution.

In that same year, in August 1920 we experienced an event closer to home which likewise brought about a change in the relation of forces, not in favour of the revolution. This was our defeat below Warsaw, a defeat which from the international standpoint is most intimately bound up with the fact that in Germany and in Poland at that moment the revolutionary movement was unable to gain victory because there was lacking a strong revolutionary party having the confidence of the majority of the working class.

A month later, in September 1920, we live through the great movement in Italy. Precisely at that moment in the autumn of 1920 the Italian proletariat reaches its highest point of ferment after the war. Mills, plants, railways, mines are seized. The state is disorganised; the bourgeoisie is almost prostrate with its spine broken. It seems that only another step forward is needed and the Italian working class will conquer power. But at this moment, its party, that same Socialist party which had emerged from the previous epoch, although formally adhering to the Third International but with its spirit and roots still in the previous epoch, i.e., in the Second International—this party springs back in

terror from the seizure of power, from the civil war, leaving the proletariat exposed. An attack is launched upon the proletariat by the most resolute wing of the bourgeoisie in the shape of Fascism, in the shape of whatever still remains strong in the police and the army. The proletariat was smashed.

After the defeat of the proletariat in September, we observe in Italy a still more radical shift in the relationship of forces. The bourgeoisie said to itself: "So that's the kind of people you are. You urge the proletariat forward but you lack the spirit to take power." And it pushed the fascist detachments to the fore.


Within a few months, by March 1921, we witness the most important recent event in the life of Germany, the famous March event. Here we have the lack of correspondence between the class and the party developing from an opposite direction. In Italy, in September, the working class was driving battle. The party shied back in terror. In Germany the working class was driving to battle; it fought in 1918, in the course of 1919 and in the course of 1920, but its efforts and sacrifices were not crowned by victory because it did not have at its head a sufficiently strong, experienced and cohesive party; instead there was another party at its head which saved the bourgeoisie for the second time, after saving it during the war. And now in 1921 the Communist Party of Germany, seeing how the bourgeoisie was strengthening its positions, wanted

to make a heroic attempt to cut off the bourgeoisie's road by an offensive, by a blow, and it rushed ahead. But the working class did not support it. Why? Because it had not yet learned to have confidence in the party. It did not yet fully know this party while its own experience in the civil war had brought it only defeats in the course of 1919-1920.

THE IMMATURITY OF OUR PARTIES

And so in March 1921 the fact occurred which impelled the Communist International to say: The relations between the parties and the classes, between the communist parties and the working classes in all countries of Europe are still not mature for an immediate offensive, for an immediate battle for the conquest of power. It is necessary to proceed with a painstaking preparation of the communist ranks in a two-fold sense: First, in the sense of fusing them together and tempering them; and second, in the sense of their conquering the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the working class. Such was the slogan advanced by the Third International when the March events in Germany were still fresh.

And then, Comrades, after the month of March, throughout the year 1921 and during 1922 we observed the process at any rate externally, of the strengthening of the bourgeois government in Europe; we observed the strengthening of the extreme right wing. In France the national bloc headed by Poincaré still remains in power. But Poincaré is considered in France, that is within the national bloc, as a leftist and looming on the horizon is a new and more reactionary, more imperialist ministry of Tardieu. In England, the government of Lloyd George, this imperialist with fascist preachments and labels, has been supplanted by the purely conservative, openly imperialist ministry of Bonar Law. In Germany, the coalition ministry, i.e., one with an admixture of social democrats, has been replaced by an openly bourgeois ministry of Kuno; and finally in Italy we see the coming to power of Mussolini, the open rule of the counter-revolutionary fist. In the economic field, capitalism is on the offensive against the proletariat. In all the countries of Europe the workers have to defend, and not always successfully, the scale of wages they had yesterday and the eight-hour working day in those countries where it had been gained legally during the last period of the war or after the war. Such is the general situation. It is clear that



**I stake
my life!**

BY LEON TROTSKY

**DEWEY REPORT on the
Moscow Trials**

6

the revolutionary development, that is, the struggle of the proletariat for power beginning with the year 1917, does not represent a uniform and steadily rising curve.

There has been a break in the curve. Comrades, in order to picture more clearly the situation which the working class is now living through it might not be unuseful to resort to an analogy. Analogy—historical comparison and juxtaposition—is a dangerous method because time and again people try to extract more from an analogy than it can give. But within certain limits, when used for the purpose of illustration, an analogy is useful. We began our revolution in 1905, after the Russo-Japanese War. Already at that time we were drawn toward power by the logic of things. 1905 and 1906 brought stagnation, and the two Dumas; 1907 brought the 3rd of June and the government coup, the first victories of reaction which met almost no resistance—and then the revolution rolled back. 1908 and 1909 were already the black years of reaction; and then only gradually beginning with 1910-1911 was there an upswing, intersected by the war. In March, 1917, came the victory of bourgeois democracy; in October—the victory of workers and peasants. We have therefore two main points: 1905 and 1917, separated by an interval of 12 years. These twelve years represent in a revolutionary sense a broken curve, first dropping and then rising.

In an international sense, first and foremost in relation to Europe we now have something similar. Victory was possible in 1917 and in 1918 but we did not gain it—the last condition was lacking, the powerful communist parties. The bourgeoisie succeeded in re-establishing many of its political and military-police positions but not the economic ones, while the proletariat began building the communist parties brick by brick. In the initial stages this communist party tried to make up for the lost opportunity by a single audacious leap forward, in March 1921 in Germany. It burned its fingers. The International issued a warning: "You must conquer the confidence of the majority of the working class before you dare summon the latter to an open revolutionary attack." This was the lesson of the Third Congress. A year and a half later the Fourth World Congress convened.

In making the most general appraisal it is necessary to say that at the time the Fourth Congress convened, a turning point had not yet been reached in the sense that

the International could say: "The hour of open attack has already been sounded." The Fourth Congress developed, deepened, verified and rendered more precise the work of the Third Congress, and was convinced that this was basically correct.

AN ANALOGY WITH 1905-1917

I have said that in 1908-09 we lived through in Russia, on a much narrower basis at the time, the moment of the lowest decline of the revolutionary wave in the sense of the prevailing moods among the working class as well as in the sense of the then triumphant Stolypinism and Rasputinism, as well as in the sense of the disintegration of the advanced ranks of the working class. What remained as illegal nuclei were frightfully small in comparison to the working class as a whole. The best elements were in jails, in hard-labour penitentiaries, in exile. 1908-09—this was the lowest point of the revolutionary movement. Then came a gradual upswing. For the past two years and, in part, right now we have been living through a period undoubtedly analogous to 1908 and 1909, i.e., the lowest point in the direct and open revolutionary struggle.

There is still another point of similarity. On June 3rd, 1907 the counter-revolution gained a victory (Stolypin's coup) on the parliamentary arena almost without meeting any resistance in the country. And toward the end of 1907 another terrible blow descended—the industrial crisis. What influence did this have on the working class? Did it impel it to struggle? No. In 1905, in 1906 and the first half of 1907 the working class had already given its energy and its best elements to the open struggle. It suffered defeat, and on the heels of defeat came the commercial-industrial crisis which weakened the productive and economic role of the proletariat, rendering its position even less stable. This crisis weakened it both in the revolutionary and political sense. Only the commercial and industrial upswing which began in 1909-1910 and which re-assembled the workers in factories and plants again imbued the workers with assurance, provided a major basis of support for our party and gave the revolution an impulsion forward.

Here too, I say, we have a certain analogy. In the Spring of 1921 a terrible commercial crisis broke out in America and in Japan after the proletariat had suffered a defeat: in France on May 1st, 1920;

in Italy, in September, 1920; in Germany, throughout 1919 and 1920 and especially in the March days of 1921. But precisely at this moment in the Spring of 1921 there ensues the crisis in Japan and in America and in the latter part of 1921 it passes over to Europe. Unemployment grows to unprecedented proportions, especially, as you know, in England. The stability of the proletariat's position drops still lower, after the losses and disillusionments already suffered. And this does not strengthen, but on the contrary in the given conditions of crisis weakens it. During the current year and since the end of last year there have been signs of a certain industrial awakening. In America it reaches the proportions of a real upswing while in Europe it remains a small, uneven ripple. Thus here, too, the first impulse for the revival of an open mass movement came, especially in France, from a certain improvement in the economic conjuncture.

THE NEW SITUATION IN EUROPE

But here, Comrades, the analogy ceases. The industrial upswing of 1909 and 1910 in our country and in the entire pre-war world was a full-blooded, powerful upswing which lasted until 1913 and came at a time when the productive forces had not yet run up against the limits of capitalism, giving rise to the greatest imperialist slaughter.

The industrial improvement which began at the end of last year denotes only a change in the temperature of the tubercular organism of European economy. European economy is not growing but disintegrating; it remains on the same levels only in a few countries. The richest of European countries, insular England, has a national income at least one-third or one-quarter smaller than before the war. They engaged in war, as you know, in order to conquer markets. They ended by becoming poorer at least by one-fourth or one-third. The improvements this year have been minimal. The decline in the influence of the social democracy and the growth of the communist parties at the expense of the former is a sure symptom of this. As is well known, social reformism grew thanks to the fact that the bourgeoisie had the possibility of improving the position of the most highly skilled layers of the working class. In the nature of things, Scheidemann and everything else connected with him would have been impossible without this, for after all it is not simply an ideological tendency but one growing out of economic and social pre-

mises. This is a labour aristocracy which profits from the fact that capitalism is full-blooded and powerful and has the possibility of improving the condition at least of the upper layers of the working class. That is precisely why we witness in the years preceding the war, from 1909 to 1913, the most powerful growth of the bureaucracy in the trade unions and in the social democracy, and the strongest entrenchment of reformism and nationalism among the summits of the working class which resulted in the terrible catastrophe of the Second International at the outbreak of the war.

And now, Comrades, the gist of the situation in Europe is characterised by the fact that the bourgeoisie has no longer the possibility of fattening up the summits of the working class because it hasn't the possibility of feeding the entire working class normally, in the capitalist sense of "normal." The lowering of the living standards of the working class is today the same kind of law as the decline of the European economy. This process began in 1913, the war introduced superficial changes into it; after the war it has become revealed with special cruelty. The superficial fluctuations of the conjuncture do not alter this fact. This is the first and basic difference between our epoch and the pre-war one.

But there is a second difference and this is the existence of Soviet Russia as a revolutionary factor. There is a third difference and this is: the existence of a centralised international communist party.

And we observe, Comrades, that at the very time when the bourgeoisie is scoring one superficial victory after another over the proletariat, the growth, strengthening and planful development of the communist party is not being checked but advances forward. And in this is the most important and fundamental difference between our epoch and the one from 1905 to 1917.

A DIFFERENT TEMPO IN THE U.S.

What I have said touches, as you see, primarily Europe. It would be incorrect to apply this wholly to America. In America, too, socialism is more advantageous than capitalism and it would be even more correct to say that especially in America socialism would be more advantageous than capitalism. In other words, were the present American productive forces organised along the principles of collectivism a fabulous flowering of economy would ensue.

But in relation to America it would be incorrect to say, as we say in relation to Europe, that capitalism represents already today the cessation of economic development. Europe is rotting, America is thriving. In the initial years or more correctly in the initial months, in the first twenty months after the war it might have seemed that America would be immediately undermined by the economic collapse of Europe inasmuch as America made use of and exploited the European market in general and the war market in particular. This market shrivelled and dried up, and having been deprived of one of its props, the monstrous Babylonian tower of American industry threatened to lean over and to fall down altogether. But America, while having lost the European market of the previous scope (in addition to exploiting its own rich internal market with a population of 100 millions), is seizing and has seized all the more surely the markets of certain European countries—Germany and to a considerable measure, England. And we see, in 1921-1922, American economy passing through a genuine commercial and industrial upswing at a time when Europe is experiencing only a distant and feeble reflection of this upswing.

Consequently, the productive forces in America are still developing under capitalism, much more slowly, of course, than they would develop under socialism but developing nevertheless. How long they will continue to do so is another question. The American working class in its economic and social power has, of course, fully matured for the conquest of state power, but in its political and organisational traditions it is incomparably further removed from the conquest of power than the European working class. Our power—the power of the Communist International—is still very weak in America. And if one were to ask (naturally this is only a hypothetical posing of the question) which will take place first: the victorious proletarian revolution in Europe or the creation of a powerful communist party in America, then on the basis of all the facts now available (naturally all sorts of new facts are possible such as, say, a war between America and Japan; and war, Comrades, is a great locomotive of history)—if one were to take the present situation in its further logical development, then I would venture to say that there are infinitely more chances that the proletariat will conquer in Europe before a powerful communist party

rises and develops in America. In other words, just as the victory of the revolutionary working class in October 1917 was the pre-condition for the creation of the Communist International and for the growth of the communist parties in Europe, so, in all probability, the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe will be the pre-condition for the swift revolutionary development in America. The difference between these two spheres lies in this, that in Europe the economy decays and declines with the proletariat no longer growing productively (because there is no room for growth) but awaiting the development of the communist party; while in America the economic advancement is still proceeding.

THE COLONIAL REVOLUTION

The third sphere is constituted by the colonies. It is self-understood that the colonies—Asia, Africa (I speak of them as a whole), despite the fact that they, like Europe, contain the greatest gradations—the colonies, if taken independently and isolatedly, are absolutely not ready for the proletarian revolution. If they are taken isolatedly, then capitalism still has a long possibility of economic development in them. But the colonies belong to the metropolitan centres and their fate is intimately bound up with the fate of their European metropolitan centres.

In the colonies we observe the growing national revolutionary movement. Communists represent there only small nuclei imbedded in the peasantry. So that in the colonies we have primarily petty-bourgeois and bourgeois national movements. If you were to ask concerning the prospects of the socialist and communist development of the colonies then I would say that this question cannot be posed in an isolated manner. Of course, after the victory of the proletariat in Europe, these colonies will become the arena for the cultural, economic and every other kind of influence exercised by Europe, but for this they must first of all play their revolutionary role parallel with the role of the European proletariat. In this connection the European proletariat and in particular that of France and especially that of England are doing far too little. The growth of the influence of the ideas of socialism and communism, the emancipation of the toiling masses of the colonies, the weakening of the influence of the nationalist parties can be assured not only by and not so much by

(Continued at foot of next page.)

Lenin on Spontaneity and Leadership

Subservience to the spontaneity of the labour movement, the belittling of the role of "the conscious element," of the role of Social-Democracy, means, **whether one likes it or not, growth of influence of bourgeois ideology among the workers.** All those who talk about "exaggerating the importance of ideology," "about exaggerating the role of the conscious elements,"† etc., imagine that the pure and simple labour movement can work out an independent ideology for itself, if only the workers "take their fate out of the hands of the leaders."‡ But in this they are profoundly mistaken. To supplement what has been said above, we shall quote the following profoundly true and important utterances by Karl Kautsky on the new programme of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party.‡

"Many of our revisionist critics believe that Marx asserted that economic development and the class struggle create, not only the conditions for socialist production, but also, and directly, the **consciousness** (K.K.'s emphasis) of its necessity. And these critics advance the argument that the most highly capitalistically developed country, England, is more remote than any other from this consciousness. Judging from the draft (of the programme —Ed.) one must come to the conclusion that the committee which drafted the Austrian Programme shared this alleged orthodox-Marxian view which is thus refuted. In the draft programme it is stated: 'The more capitalist development increases the numbers of the proletariat, the more the proletariat is compelled, and obtains the opportunity to fight against capitalism.' The proletariat become 'conscious' of the possibility and necessity for socialism. In this connection socialist consciousness is represented as a necessary and direct result of the proletarian class struggle. But this is absolutely untrue. Of course, socialism, as a theory, has its roots the same way as the class struggle of the proletariat has, and in the same way as the latter, it emerges from the struggle against the capitalist-created poverty and misery of the masses. But socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other;

each arises out of different premises. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production, as say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicles of science are not the proletariat, but the bourgeois **intelligentsia** (K.K.'s emphasis); It was out of the heads of members of this stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians, who, in their turn, inject it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, socialist consciousness is something that is injected into the proletarian class struggle from without (von Aussen Hineingetragen), and not something that arose within it spontaneously (unwuchsig). Accordingly, the old Hainfeld programme quite rightly stated that the task of Social-Democracy is to imbue the proletariat with the **consciousness** of its position and the consciousness of its tasks. There would be no need for this if consciousness emerged from the class struggle. The new draft copied this postulate from the old programme, and attached it to the postulate mentioned above. But this completely broke the line of thought . . ."

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology being developed by the masses of the workers in the process of their movement* then **the only choice is:** either bourgeois, or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for humanity in modern economic relationships in has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle socialist ideology **in any way, to deviate from it in the slightest degree** means strengthening bourgeois ideology. There is a lot of talk about spontaneity, but the **spontaneous** development of the labour movement leads to bourgeois ideology, it means developing **according to the pro-**

gramme of the Credo, for the spontaneous labour movement is pure and simple trade unionism, is *Nur-Gewerkschafterei*, and pure and simple trade unionism means the ideological subordination of the workers to the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is to **combat spontaneity, to divert** the labour movement, with its spontaneous trade-unionist striving, from under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social-Democracy.

*Letter by the Economists, in "Iskra" No. 12.

†"Rabochoye Dyelo", No. 12.

‡"Neue Zeit", 1901-102, XX, I, No. 3, p. 79. The committee's draft to which Kautsky refers was passed by the Vienna Congress at the end of last year in a slightly amended form.

§This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. But they take part not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians, as Proudhons and Weitlings, in other words, they take part only to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and advance that knowledge. And in order that working men may be able to do this more often, efforts must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers generally; care must be taken that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of literature for workers but that they study general literature to an increasing degree. It would even be more true to say "were not confined," instead of "not confine themselves," because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia and it is only a few (bad) intellectuals who believe that it is sufficient "for the workers" to tell them a few things about factory conditions, and to repeat over and over again what has long been known.

Continued from page 18

the role of the native communist nuclei as by the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat of the metropolitan centres for the emancipation of the colonies. Only by this will the proletariat of the metropolitan centres demonstrate to the colonies that there are two European nations, one the oppressor, the other the friend; only by this will it provide a further impulse to the colonies which will topple down the structure of imperialism and thereby perform a revolutionary service for the cause of the proletariat.

JUST OFF THE PRESS!

THE WORLD REVOLUTION

*and the tasks of the
British Working Class*

**WORLD REVOLUTION AND THE TASKS
OF BRITISH SOCIALISTS.**

THE TASKS OF INDUSTRIAL MILITANTS.

THESES ON THE INDIAN REVOLUTION.

**SOLIDARITY WITH CEYLON AND
INDIAN REVOLUTION.**

**SOLIDARITY WITH ITALIAN
REVOLUTION.**

**GREETINGS TO THE FOURTH
INTERNATIONAL.**

**PRICE
6d.**