

Workers

6^D

International



News

*Theoretical
Organ of the
Revolutionary
Communist
Party*

Contents

ARTICLES ON :

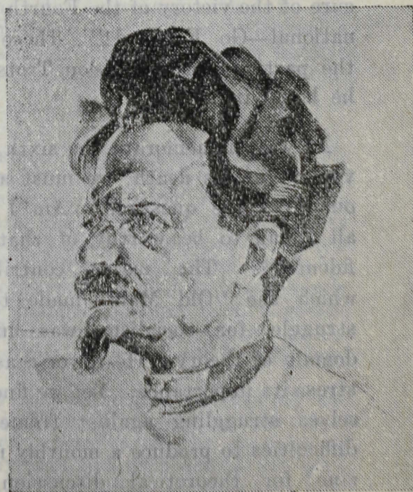
PALESTINE

**DEMOCRACY
AND**

BONAPARTISM

MALAYA

LEON TROTSKY



1879-1940

August, 1946

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

256 HARROW ROAD, LONDON, W.2.

Telephone: CUNningham 2526.

EDITOR - - - HAROLD ATKINSON.
BUSINESS MANAGER - - - ANGUS MAXEY.

Contents

	Page
EDITORIAL NOTES	227
PALESTINE	232
NOTES ON MALAYA	By SEAC Soldier 236
DEMOCRACY OR BONAPARTISM?	By E. Grant 241

Manager's Column

"Please tell my friends that I am sure of the victory of the Fourth International—Go Forward!" These were the parting words of Leon Trotsky as he lay dying.

As we commemorate the sixth anniversary of his death, we must all ask ourselves the question: "Am I doing all I can to be worthy of that confidence?" The major contribution which the "Old Man" made to the struggle for socialism was in the domain of theory. He never ceased to stress its importance. Yet we find ourselves struggling against tremendous difficulties to produce a monthly magazine for theoretical discussion and education.

Our main difficulties are, of course, financial. We need donations towards the cost of W.I.N., but we also need more regular readers. Are you doing all you can in this direction, comrade reader?

The Government has indicated that paper allocations are likely to be increased now that the American loan is through. We hope to be able to take advantage of this to lift the circulation of W.I.N. on to a paying basis. **BUT THAT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU.**

To get extra funds and more regular readers for our magazine, and to help us enlarge and improve it, that is one of the ways in which we can help to assure the victory of the Fourth International, that is the immediate way in which we can "Go Forward!"

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

VOLUME 6.

AUGUST, 1946.

NUMBER 8.

Editorial Notes

LEON TROTSKY : 1879 - 1940

SIX years ago, on the 21st of this month, Leon Trotsky succumbed to the fatal and dastardly blow of a Stalinist assassin. Momentous events have changed the face of our planet in the intervening years but the ideas of the great revolutionist still cast their shadow across the entire vista of the political developments of our time. In an editorial comment on Trotsky's death that pillar of British bourgeois journalism, the *TIMES*, fearfully recognising the power of the ideas personified by Leon Trotsky, apprehensively posed the question which dominated the thoughts of all opponents of socialism: "Will his school survive?"

Parenthetically it is interesting to note that this same journal, which expressed such immense relief at the passing of Trotsky, produced an editorial on the first anniversary of the Labour Government singing the praises of British social-democracy and expressing confidence in it.

But let the *TIMES* and those for whom it speaks take what comfort they can from the degree of social harmony achieved by the efforts of the Labour Government. For they long since received the answer to their question: Will Trotsky's "school" survive . . . in the form of a positive affirmative. In the turbulence of imperialist war every struggle of the oppressed either in the metropolitan or colonial countries with any measure of political colouration was labelled "Trotskyism". So it is in the aftermath. Trotskyism has become an established synonym for revolutionary struggle against capitalist exploitation.

THE POWER OF IDEAS.

It is now nearly a century since the founders of scientific socialism—of which Trotskyism is the continuation—penned the immortal words: "A spectre is haunting Europe. The spectre of Communism." The estimation of Marx and Engels of the proximity of the revolution proved to be much too optimistic. But this did not invalidate the correctness of their general conceptions and their method. And today we can say that the spectre of Communism—or Trotskyism as it is now commonly called—haunts not only Europe but the entire planet. Lenin, who, together with Trotsky in the Russian Revolution applied the science of Marxism to the living events, aptly characterised our epoch as one of wars, revolutions and colonial uprisings.

Only those without any understanding of the historical process of the development of human society could regard physical annihilation of an individual thinker as a method of eliminating ideas which accord with the realities of development. The assassination of Leon Trotsky was not an isolated act perpetrated by the Stalinist bureaucracy. They have introduced gangsterism, lies, terror and murder into the world labour movement **as a method**. The level

of Stalinism can be measured by this, its contribution to the degeneration of capitalist society.

But such tactics have long been proved futile by the test of events. It is not possible to arrest the whole progressive development of society, nor to destroy the power of ideas by killing this or that individual no matter how great is his contribution. The viability of Trotsky's "school" has never been in doubt despite the questionings of the bourgeois editorial writers. For it is essentially a movement of the future. Marx and Engels have long been dead but Marxism today assumes growing importance. Lenin, who translated Marxism into the language of practical politics, has been dead already for more than two decades, but the Bolshevik method developed by him, Leninism, is still the foundation stone of the revolutionary communist movement. Likewise Trotskyism, which embraces and continues the entirety of Marxism-Leninism, lives and grows for Trotsky lived and generated his ideas for the future. Assessed in his own words:

"The struggle which is in the offing transcends by far the importance of individuals, factions and parties. It is the struggle for the future of all mankind. It will be severe. It will be lengthy. Whoever seeks physical comfort and spiritual calm, let him step aside. In time of reaction it is more convenient to lean on the bureaucracy than on truth. But all those for whom the word 'socialism' is not a hollow sound but the content of their moral life—forward! Neither threats, nor persecutions, nor violations can stop us! Be it over our bleaching bones, the truth will triumph! We will blaze the trail for it. It will conquer! Under all the severe blows of fate, I shall be as happy as in the days of my youth! Because my friends, the highest human happiness is not the exploitation of the present but the preparation for the future."

TROTSKY'S CONTRIBUTIONS.

The contributions of Leon Trotsky to the struggle for socialism are so extensive and manifold as to defy assessment in terms of relative merit or value. His theoretical contributions to political thought, his practical participation in the development of the Russian Labour movement and in the Russian Revolution, his role in the establishment of the Communist International, and finally his struggle against thermidorian and bonapartist reaction, in total place Trotsky's life and work on equal plane with that of his mentors, Marx and Engels and his great contemporary, Lenin.

Trotsky's first major contribution was in the domain of theory. In the early years of the present century he developed the conception of the "permanent revolution". This important theoretical contribution, which has dominated political theory in the struggle for socialism since the first Russian Revolution of 1905, was summarised by its author in the following words:

"In accordance with its immediate tasks, the Russian Revolution is a bourgeois revolution. But the Russian bourgeoisie is anti-revolutionary. The victory of the Revolution is therefore possible only as a victory of the proletariat. But the victorious proletariat will not stop at the programme of bourgeois democracy; it will go on to the programme of Socialism. The Russian Revolution will become the first stage of the Socialist world revolution.

"This was the theory of the permanent revolution formulated by me in 1905 and since then exposed to the severest criticism under the name of 'Trotskyism.'

"To be more exact, it is only a part of this theory. The other part, which is particularly timely now, states:

"The present productive forces have long outgrown their national limits. A socialist society is not feasible within national boundaries. Significant as the economic successes of an isolated workers' State may be, the pro-

gramme of 'Socialism in one country' is a petty-bourgeois Utopia. Only a European and then a world federation of Socialist republics can be the real arena for a harmonious Socialist society."

They returned from exile to Russia after the February Revolution and from then on Lenin and Trotsky worked as one until the time of Lenin's death. The world press and the political writers of the time seldom referred to the great leaders of the Revolution separately, but rather tended to treat them almost as a single entity. It occurred to no one, until the advent of the Stalin school of falsification, to deny the role of Trotsky as co-leader, with Lenin, of the Russian Revolution.

Trotsky was successively Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Commissar for War (and founder and Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army), and concurrently with the latter, Commissar of Transport. (Incidentally it was in this latter capacity that he made the first serious attempt to introduce long-term planning into Soviet economy through the introduction of "Order 1042" the first of a series of measures which succeeded in restoring a large measure of order into the previously chaotic transport system.)

His best-known role was undoubtedly his creation of the Red Army and its leadership in the years of civil war. Lenin praised Trotsky's achievements highly. To Maxim Gorky he said: "**Show me another man who would be able in a year to organise a model army, yes, and win the esteem of the military specialists.**"

Despite all the burdens of practical administration which fell to Trotsky's lot in the first years of the Soviet Government, he played a prominent role in the political activities of the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International. In fact he was responsible for many of the major reports and basic documents adopted by the first four Congresses of the Comintern.

THE LEFT OPPOSITION. The ebb of the post-war revolutionary wave in Europe and especially the defeats suffered by the German proletariat, had a profound effect on developments inside the Soviet Union. The conservatism of the peasantry, an important force in the social composition of Russia, began to influence the masses generally. With the best forces of the proletariat burnt out in the revolutionary struggle and subsequent civil war, the resistance of the revolution to the pressure of the wealthier peasants and middle-men of the towns created by the introduction of the market, was weakened and these elements, or rather the interests of the stratum which they comprised, found expression in the development of a right-wing in the Bolshevik Party. After the death of Lenin in 1924 the situation began to deteriorate sharply. First came a campaign against "Trotskyism" which was launched by the triumvirate—Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, then the infamous Stalin-Bukharin conception of Socialism in a Single Country. This reactionary formula was counterposed to the theory of Permanent Revolution.

This represented a sharp break with Leninism, in essence a shift from the politics of Bolshevism to those of Menshevism. No longer did the Stalinist faction regard the existence of the Soviet Union as being bound up directly with the world proletarian revolution. Stalinism assumed an insular character and transformed the conception of the Russian Revolution from that of being an integral part and forerunner of the World Revolution into that of a self-sufficing entity. The Comintern, sponsored and developed by Lenin as an instrument for the extension of the Revolution, became more and more transformed into an appendage of the Kremlin Foreign Office. Under Stalinist leadership it misled or betrayed every struggle of the workers in country after country. During the war it sunk to the lowest depths of poisonous chauvinism and was traded out of formal existence by Stalin in return for American Lend-

Lease equipment. Today the parties of the ex-Comintern—and their influence in many countries is decisive—are canalizing and betraying the revolutionary struggles of the toilers into the blind alley of bourgeois reformism. The consummation of Socialism in one Country is the present conception of the “peaceful cohabitation of Socialism and Capitalism” to which the socialist revolution has been sacrificed by Stalinism.

NATIONALISM v. INTERNATIONALISM the direction in which the ideas of the Stalin school Trotsky was the first to raise the alarm and point to would lead. And it is perhaps in this struggle to maintain intact and unsullied the principles of Marx and Lenin against the most colossal odds that Leon Trotsky has made his greatest contribution to the struggle for Communism. The struggle between Trotskyism and Stalinism, which was treated so light-mindedly by the Centrists of all countries (“personal struggle for power”, “abstract theorising”, etc.) can now be clearly seen as a struggle between **internationalism and nationalism**, no less.

In its formative stages the Left-Opposition, formed and led by Trotsky, was faced with a two-fold struggle: to transform the economy of the young Soviet State into a centralised and planned economy; and to carry its general conceptions of world political development and the tasks of the parties into the Communist International. The five year plans which ultimately emerged and played such an important role in the development of Soviet economy, were the **direct outcome** of a four-year struggle by the Trotskyist Opposition for such plans. The Stalinists after struggling against the plans advanced by Trotsky for four years were compelled finally to adopt the plagerised version of the Trotskyist five year plan in 1928.

On the international arena the Left-Opposition, despite the torrents of slander and calumny directed against it, despite expulsions, deportations and assassinations, continued to struggle as a faction of the Comintern. In this period probably more than at any other time Trotsky revealed his greatness and strength, showed his complete objectivity and rejection of all subjective ideas and methods. The Left-Opposition strove to apply the theory of **permanent revolution** and correct the gross errors of the Stalinist-led Communist Party of China which led the struggles of 1925-27 to such bloody defeats at the hands of the butcher Chiang-kai-Shek whom Stalin made an “honorary” member of the Comintern. Similarly Trotsky and his followers sought to change the policy of collaboration with the treacherous bureaucrats of the TUC General Council who sold out the British General Strike in 1926. But one of Trotsky’s greatest political interventions in the international movement was after his deportation, in the struggle against Hitler’s coming to power in Germany. Trotsky’s writings on the German events, his analysis of fascism, his brilliant exposition and advocacy of the United Front tactic, are among his greatest contributions to Marxist-Leninist politics.

The German defeat of 1933, the handing over of the power to Hitler and his hangmen’s crew without a semblance of resistance on the part of the workers’ parties enabled the vanguard of the working class to see that the Comintern was finished as an instrument of revolutionary struggle. It was then and only then that Trotsky turned the helm towards the founding of a new International.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

In the years of black reaction which followed the triumph of Hitler, the defeats of the French workers, the Spanish catastrophe, Trotsky tirelessly and with inexhaustible patience fought to rebuild, the international communist movement, and in 1938 the Fourth International was formally founded.

It is in this struggle to build the bridge between the Russian and the World "October" that Leon Trotsky has made one of his greatest and most important contributions to the struggle. Alone among the co-thinkers and co-workers of Lenin, alone among those who led the Russian Revolution and sat in the highest seats of power, he was able to swim against the stream, to resist the tremendous moral and physical pressure, to continue to dominate events, and not to adapt himself to them as did the epigones. It is one thing to struggle against the repressive apparatus of an outmoded exploiting class and to know that one enjoys the sympathy of at least the progressive forces among the broad masses in so doing. It is a different thing, and a much greater test, to endure the slanders and calumny and to resist the moral pressure of a thermidorian regime clothed in the glory of the Revolution and thereby maintaining the support of large sections of the progressive workers and intelligentsia.

Leon Trotsky proved capable of this task which destiny thrust upon him. And in his writings and teachings of this latter period we, his followers and collaborators, have received the benefit of his whole life's experiences and his maturest thoughts. Trotsky's analysis of the degeneration of the first Workers' State is invaluable for an understanding of the nature of the whole social developments now taking place on the Continent of Europe. His methods in building the International, his meticulous honesty in all things, his methods of approaching problems, all constitute a rich heritage for those who are left to carry on his task.

HIS TASK UNFINISHED.

The final phase of Leon Trotsky's lifetime of struggle was concentrated on the creation of the bridge, the instrument of struggle between the Russian Revolution—the first break in the chain of capitalism—and the world revolution, the complete destruction of capitalism: The task of regrouping the vanguard of the vanguard. He did not live to see his work completed. He died in fact before the reaction reached its apogee, before the engulfment in the maelstrom of military conflict of the Soviet Union which he helped to bring into being and so zealously defended to the time of his death.

He did not live to see the turn of the tide; the destruction of fascism; the radicalisation of the toiling masses on a world scale; the emergence of the masses from the war endowed with new confidence and vigour; the mass swing towards the parties claiming allegiance to socialism and communism. In his last words he expressed confidence in the victory of the Fourth International. It falls to our lot to prove worthy of that confidence. The International which Trotsky founded has survived the war and emerged strengthened and hardened by the ordeal. That in itself is a great portent for the future. In regrouping its forces, building a centre and thrashing out a programme of action, the International is responding to its founder's last command: Go Forward!

With Leon Trotsky—the "Old Man" as we fondly called him—we, too, confidently proclaim that the "highest human happiness is the preparation for the future." We live in a revolutionary epoch. Mighty events confront us. It is incumbent upon us to prepare for those events in the manner of Comrade Trotsky. For no less than the successful conclusion of the coming revolutionary struggles is worthy of constituting a monument to the founder of our movement, our teacher, our friend and guide, Leon Trotsky.

PALESTINE:

THE ANGLO - AMERICAN COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY

(Translated by D. Tamary from "Kol-Hamaamad" — Organ of
the Fourth International in Palestine — April, 1946.)

WHY is it that little Palestine managed to occupy the minds of the public, to fill up the news on the radio and to take such a prominent position on the front pages of all the newspapers in the Arab East? Why has she been 'honoured' by so many commissions which 'investigated', heard witnesses, drew up reports, sat at long sessions, and, at last, issued 'practical' recommendations, which have not been accepted? Why has little Palestine been given more attention than the larger countries with their more acute problems which deserve no less attention? Is imperialism so anxious about the fate of the remnants of European Jewry? Does imperialism need to base its policy on 'scientific' study of the conditions so as to send so many commissions (17 up to now) all of which have been so much publicised? It appears that precisely the publicity given to the commissions is the important thing while the scientific investigation is just a window dressing.

Let us understand the issue: the hatred of imperialism is growing in the Arab East. The more the proletariat takes active part in the struggle the more acute it becomes. The anti-imperialist struggle of the masses in Java, India and Greece found an echo in the Arab East. The unintentioned support given by British imperialism to the Syrian independence movement—with the purpose of weakening French imperialism—has turned out to be a double-edged sword. British imperialism was forced to evacuate its troops from Syria. In Egypt the students and workers demonstrated demanding, "Out with the imperialist

army", and a general strike has been declared. The ferment is increasing daily. One bright day twelve million peasants and plantation workers are liable to rise under the leadership of the proletariat. This is a serious danger which threatens the existence of the British Empire in this part of the world.

Under these conditions imperialism falls back on its old tactic which appears to it to be safer and more effective than the force of the bayonet; the policy of "divide and rule"—a policy which created a Jewish Zionist body with the aims of expansion and conquest in the midst of the Arab countries. Their aim is simple: to turn the question of the establishment of a "Jewish State" and further immigration of Jews to Palestine into the central question in the Arab East: to turn the ire of the masses from anti-imperialist struggle, so that the demand for its withdrawal will be removed from the order of the day. And behind all this Great Britain fortifies her position and declares: "Prove who is more loyal to me, the Zionist movement or the Arab people."

The Race of the Supporters of Imperialism.

And indeed a strange scene takes place: the one who intrigues, incites and stirs up conflicts between nations sends his paid agents, to become the judges—Palestinian Jewry which pretends to represent the interests of the inhabitants comes to ask for 'justice' at the hands of this robber and criminal.

Each side has its own reasons and 'just' demands: Ben-Gurion (chairman of the Jewish agency) maintains—"we are already forty years connected with the same political line of collaboration with Britain. Already in the years before the Balfour declaration . . . A collaboration must be reciprocal and not one-sided." But the reward for the loyal service of the Zionist is indeed niggardly and insulting.

At the same time Jamal Husseinie (leading member of the Arab higher committee) maintained: "the Arabs have a long tradition of friendship with Britain and America and if, on the question of Palestine, there is no improvement everything is liable to be changed."

Both of them see in the imperialist robber the "defender of peace". Their only complaint is that he supports their rivals.

Jamal Husseinie: "We extend a friendly hand to Britain and America but our hand is being rejected . . . We do not want to fight the British but we fight them because of their Zionist policy in Palestine."

Weizman (President of the Zionist movement) demands only a change in administration: "We shall require an administration which will be sympathetic to the ultimate aim of creating a Jewish state." And Ben-Gurion emphasises clearly "I have not asked for the withdrawal of the British forces." Does Ben-Gurion think that the troops are kept in Palestine in the interests of defending the Jews? Ben-Gurion replies: "I believe that there are other interests in existence. And maybe these are legitimate (?) interests because of which British troops are held here." What are these 'legitimate' (?) or 'other' interests? because of which Ben-Gurion is interested in keeping here the British troops? These are the interests of British imperialism in safe-guarding strategical bases and oil centres, and the subjugation of the Arab people.

In spite of some hard phrases against the British policy which were said in the heat of the debate, a short summary of the arguments of the rival parties brings out what is common to both of them. The Zionists complain

at the meagre reward that they receive in exchange for the loyal service they render to the Empire. The Arab feudalists complain that their service is being rejected; that their extended hand is being spat upon. Both sides distinguish themselves in their reactionary nationalism. Both are prepared to serve imperialism. But in spite of all this there is a basic difference between the two. This difference would have been difficult to observe unless we leave the hall where the commission sits and walk into the world of reality. The difference is between the assailant and the one being assaulted, between the invader and the one being invaded. The evidence of the Zionist leaders was more moderate, more 'cleverly' presented and more 'Westernised' than that of the representatives of the Arab Higher Committee, but behind their honeyed words about "extending the hand of peace" there exists a rather different reality. A long tradition of boycott, conquest of labour, programmes for the transfer of Arabs—all these under British protection—this aggressive Zionist programme is presented by "workers representatives", while the demand to put an end to Zionist penetration and the building of a bridgehead in the midst of Arab countries, which is the real interest of the subjugated masses in the Arab East, is brought up by the feudalists themselves, surely enough in a most reactionary nationalist form.

Jamal Husseinie says to the British members of the commission: "Why do you come to this homogeneous body, the Arab people, to force upon it—to push a wedge—of a new nation in the midst of the Arab people?" But at once he adds servilely: "But surely this is against your principles and traditions. You are doing just the opposite in every part of the world (!). Is this your interest? I say it is not." And Auni Abdul Hadi declares pathetically that "the Arabs prefer to die from British bayonets than at the hands of the Jews."

The same confusion is noticeable in the evidence of Semi Haha, representative of the right wing Arab Trade Unions who appeared in the name of

the Arab Higher Committee. On the one hand he completely ignores the problem of the Jewish refugees: "All the talk about persecution of the Jews in Europe is an imperialist lie." On the other hand he attacks imperialism: "We look to the workers of the world, to UNO, with the demand to free us from imperialism . . . We demand nothing but justice . . . Zionism is a reactionary bourgeois movement, racial like the Nazis."

The only correct line which really represented the interests of the population of Palestine was that of the Left wing Arab Trade Unions which refused to appear before the commission. Had this boycott been a general one it would have turned the 'commission of enquiry' into a complete defeat for imperialist policies.

But how miserable is the position of the 'Socialists' who present the Zionist workers as "The pioneer of progress in the field of Arab feudalism". While they have no connection whatsoever with the anti-imperialist struggle in the Arab East; while they uphold race discrimination they sell themselves to imperialist interests with the futile hope of being rewarded, and pretend to be 'revolutionary' when they are 'cross' because the 'co-operation is not reciprocal.'

Hypocrisy.

The Zionist movement has a peculiar character. On the one hand it bases itself on vast layers of Jews who learnt to hate Fascism, and on the other on acts of conquest and racial discrimination. This explains the hypocritical position revealed by the Jewish agency in its evidence before the commission. Hoffen (the director of the Anglo-Palestine Bank) explains what attention is given to the Arab population when he states that it is in the interests of Zionism to raise the standard of living of the Arabs (but for some reason or other the Arabs have not yet noticed it). Horwitz (from the economic department of the Jewish Agency) drew attention to the great benefit the Arab quarries derived from the building industry in Tel Aviv: "Direct employment of Arabs is found in Jewish settlements." (Really? Have they not yet been removed?).

What amount of seriousness can be attributed to Dr. Magnes' talk about Jewish-Arab agreement is evident from the answer he gave to Mr. Leggett, a member of the commission. Mr. Leggett pointed out, that there are many young Jews in Europe who come to Palestine to fight and asked: "Would it be correct to bring them here if it would cause a war?" Dr. Magnes, the champion of peace with the Arabs answered: "Let it be so!" Even Ben Gurion, who stands for the transfer of the Arabs, appeared as their friend: "You (the Arabs) have no greater or more loyal friend in the whole world than the people of Israel." "That is politics" say the Zionist leaders but simple people call it hypocrisy.

The representatives of the Arab Higher Committee were less discreet. They did not hide their reactionary longing and dreams for the Turkish rule as a tolerant one. They did not hide their sympathies with the Mufti who collaborated with the German fascists and imperialists. But at the same time they did not lose the opportunity to appear as the defenders of the peasants and blame the Zionists for their intolerable conditions: "An Arab family cultivates forty dunmas while the necessary amount of land is a hundred and forty dunmas. The denseness," said Jamal Husseinie in his evidence, "is the result of Jewish immigration."

The Vicious Circle.

From a social point of view a wide gulf separates the Zionist leadership from the Arab feudal leaders. A wide gulf separates their respective political aims, but at the same time there is a strong resemblance in their political approach. Both have a narrow nationalistic approach. Both try to blur the class struggle. Both offer their services to imperialism on condition that they will be chosen as its chief agents. These similarities are by no means accidental. Both positions spring from **one common ground**. Both positions reciprocate and strengthen each other.

Feudal reaction dominates the Arab masses because of Zionism. The Zionist policy of boycott based on racial discrimination prevents the crystallis-

ation of class consciousness among the Arab workers and turns all the accumulated hate against Arab feudalism into a different channel. This is how the feudal class in Palestine was able to maintain its dominating and leading role, while in Syria, Lebanon and Egypt it is rapidly on the decline. On the other hand the dominating position of the Arab reactionaries helped the Zionist leaders in preventing the Jewish worker from uniting with his class brother—the Arab worker.

This is the vicious circle which saves the British Empire in Palestine. There is no place for talk about anti-imperialist struggle while the powers of Zionism and Feudalism are unbroken.

Evidence by the Communist Party.

The C.P. which pretends to be the party representing the interests of the Palestinian masses does not even raise in its evidence the necessity to fight Zionism and feudalism, the strongholds of reaction. It must be pointed out that among all other evidence that of the C.P. was the least nationalistic. Imperialism was called by its simple name: imperialism. This is a great advance forward from those days not in the very far past when imperialism was characterised under the title of "progressive humanity" or "anti-fascist democracy". But there is no place here for false pretences. The C.P. has not advanced one inch in the understanding of what imperialism is and how to fight against it. The only thing that brought about the change is the worsening of relations between the Soviet government and the Anglo-American world. A hint in the Moscow papers, a change in the Stalinist line in England (Stalin demands oil in Persia)—and they have already changed the line. In its contribution "to lessen the strain between Jews and Arabs" the C.P. condemns the imperialist policy . . . **In words.** But it avoids adopting a position on the crux of the problem. According to the C.P. every Jewish-Arab conflict is nothing but the "fruit of British imperialist incitement and intrigue." There is not a word in their evidence about the class contradiction on which this incitement is based and without which

British imperialism could never have succeeded in its disgraceful work. There is no sign of the term 'class'. The word 'Zionism' was not even mentioned! And the solution?—very simple: "We are convinced that a Jewish-Arab agreement is essential and possible (an agreement with whom, Ben Gurion, with the Husseines?) All the problems of our country can and must be solved with Jewish-Arab agreements . . ." A member of the commission asked: "Why is it that the Communists in Palestine do not appear in a United Front . . . ?" (There is an exclusive Jewish and exclusive Arab Communist Party—trans.) Mayer Villner a leading Stalinist answers: "The Jewish and Arab Communists in Palestine agree on all fundamental issues but the organisational question is their own internal problem." Was the split between the Arab and Jewish Stalinists an internal question only? Is the attitude towards immigration and a Jewish homeland, which is the bone of contention, a mere internal organisational question? This is a lie and a miserable evasion which the Stalinists offer as a "Communist" solution to the problem. And in what way does the C.P. think of reaching a solution? Will it be through a class war of the masses against imperialism? God forbid! "The abolition of the British mandate and the immediate transfer of the Palestine problem to the security council of UNO—this is the only road under the present conditions to ensure the independence of our country and prevent the disturbance of peace in it."

What is the meaning of this? To put UNO instead of Britain—this is nothing less than to divert the anti-imperialist struggle and cause confusion. England has in Palestine very important economic and strategic positions and she will not withdraw out of her own good will. Freedom from the imperialist yoke can come only through the struggle of the subjugated masses themselves.

How to Combat Imperialist Schemes.

It is not yet known what will be the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry. It is not yet known what

His Majesty's Government will decide. But one thing is known in advance; the decision will not serve the interests of the local inhabitants but that of imperialism. It will not calm the national tension but only further inflame it. There will be no end to Jewish-Arab complications as long as imperialism is allowed to intervene.

The masses of Palestine must take their fate in their own hands. Through the class struggle international solidarity will be achieved.

The solution for Palestine like the solution of the Jewish problem will not come "from above". It will come only

with the rising of the revolutionary wave in Europe and in the Arab East. But even then only a Revolutionary Communist Party will know how to stand and face imperialist provocations which are aimed at undermining the rising of the masses through a Jewish-Arab conflict, and to turn Palestine into a second Maidenak (one of the extermination camps—Trans.) Only an internationalist party which bases itself on the class interests of the masses, on the necessity of a war of national and social liberation will save Palestine from a blind alley of national hatred.

SOME NOTES ON MALAYA

By a S.E.A.C. Soldier

THE imperialist rulers must be feeling quite satisfied with the Labour Government's rule in the Colonies. The whizzing of bullets and the thudding of batons on the heads of hungry colonial workers are sweet music in the ears of the Blimps. And all this continues in good measure. Insofar as they can be enforced, the old pre-war policies are in full swing in the Colonies. They may be making compulsory retreats in India and Egypt, but Churchill need have no fears that His Majesty's "Socialist" Government will voluntarily liquidate the British Empire.

In September 1945, the British and allied troops were welcomed as liberators. But the illusions of the masses in this connection were dispelled a few weeks later when they began to demand cheap food, a living wage and elementary democratic freedoms. That was the turning point. Since that time Malaya has been involved in a deep struggle between the representatives of British imperialism and the downtrodden population.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION.

The natives of this country—the Malays—are a minority and number a little more than two million. There are 2,000,000 Chinese (30 per cent Malayan born); 750,000 Indians; 19,000 Europeans and 30,000 Eurasians. These are, of course, pre-war figures. Up-to-date statistics are not available.

Malaya has always been a gold mine for the imperialist investors. Capital investments in rubber alone total £55,000,000. Tin and rubber are the two main raw materials produced by Malaya. Before the war she produced 40 per cent of the world's tin and half its rubber. The importance of this Colony to British imperialism can be deduced from the fact that Malaya's output in 1926 totalled as much as that of the rest of the Colonies put together.

The Malays are mainly farmers of small holdings. The Chinese and Indians are hindered by legal enactments from holding agricultural land. The

Malays are very poor. It is their unfortunate lot to have been squeezed flat economically by the Sultans and the wealthy traders.

Food production was not encouraged before the war, but the Japanese sponsored this and cleared large tracts of jungle for cultivation. Previously Malaya had to import rice from Burma on a colossal scale. Food imported amounted to over 60 per cent of the total consumption.

As was the case with India, before imperialism overran it, there was food self-sufficiency, even though on a very low level. But the foreign rulers have forged a new economy and led the people into starvation.

HUNGER.

The cost of living is sky high. Sugar is over thirty times its pre-war price, pork twelve times, eggs twelve times, bread five times, and so on. Rice rations (this is the staple food) were cut again in May. It is noticeable that the police receive extra allocations!

In the towns, mainly Singapore, hunger is deeply felt. In this city alone 63 persons died in April from beri-beri, a nutritional deficiency disease. Thousands more throughout the country are on the verge of death from the same cause. And this is no new phenomenon engendered by the world food shortage. Hungry bellies were commonplace before the war despite, or more precisely because of, the immense plunder exacted from the toil of the masses.

Apart from actual deaths there is the sickness toll of malnutrition. A doctor in the Singapore Advisory Council pointed out that out of the population of this city, which numbers just over half a million, there are no less than 100,000 suffering from tuberculosis.

The results of British rule are an undernourished population without a vestige of security.

REPRESSION.

So far as the political and democratic rights of the masses are concerned, there is little to choose between fascist and "democratic" colon-

ial rule if Malaya is typical. Before the war working class parties and even trade unions were banned. Left-wing literature was not allowed inside the Colony. Deportations of militant workers for attempting the formation of a trade union, or in any way furthering the struggle of the toilers against the oppressors, were commonplace.

Here are some ordinances which were regularly employed:

"Banishment Ordinance and Banishment Enactment".

Section 4 (1) provides that whenever it appears to the Governor in Council, after such enquiry as he deems necessary, that the removal from the Colony of any person not being a natural-born subject of the King, is conducive to the public good, the Governor in Council may issue an order banishing such person from the Colony for such a period, and generally in such a manner, as the Governor in Council deems expedient. N.B. A banishment order can be made against a person who has become naturalised in the Colony.

"Sedition". Section 3 (1) makes it a crime to bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against the person of His Majesty, or the Government established by law in the Colony or in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, or in British India or in any British Possession, or the Ruler of any Malay State under His Majesty's protection or the Government or Governments established by law therein."

By means of such laws any words critical of the rule of the authorities can be construed as sedition. And it was. From this it can be seen how easy it was for the Governor to intimidate the working class movement. Simply to go into the plantations to help the natives in a minor struggle resulted often in deportation.

Since the war Britain has found it impossible to re-impose her rule to the same degree as before. But even today open-air meetings result in police and military intervention and baton charges. In Singapore the police are Malays under European leadership whereas the working class are mostly Straits Chinese.

TRADE UNION STRUGGLES.

Despite the degree of repression which still exists, the militancy of the masses cannot be stifled. In the period from October to May last strike

struggles numbered 127. From this movement a trade union organisation has emerged. A general strike took place in Singapore last December and good gains were made for the trade union movement. The dockers had previously engaged in a political strike—in support of the national struggle of the Indonesians. The Indian workers fight hard in the unions, and as a direct result of union action they now receive the same wages as the local nationalities.

More than one political strike has been engaged in. The Stalinists dominate the trade unions and their activities on more than one occasion have been of an adventurist nature, tying the struggle to demonstrations in support of Stalin's policies, and neglecting the economic demands of the workers in the process.

A successful general strike was called in January to demand the release of a C.P. leader sentenced to four years rigorous imprisonment for alleged extortion. After three days the strike was victorious, and Soon Kwong was released. In all, ten trade union leaders have been arrested and deported without trial. In many cases the Stalinists have canalised the protests of the masses into such useless demonstrations as appeals to the Chinese Consul-General for support.

SOLIDARITY OF BRITISH SOLDIERS.

One important point to be noted is the way in which the British soldiers have assisted their coloured brothers in the struggle. During the strikes leaflets were issued asking the soldiers to maintain class solidarity. **Money was collected in the barrack room for the strikes.** Feeling is so strong in favour of the unions that the military authorities would not allow the servicemen to listen to the May Day speeches. It was made a punishable offence, chargeable before court-martial, even to enter the Stadium where the May Day meeting was held in Singapore.

A committee of British soldiers in fact helped the Malayan trade unionists to organise the affair, and one

Cameronian was scheduled to bring May Day greetings from the British workers. But before the meeting he was warned by the civil police against taking part in the proceedings or even entering the trade union offices in the future.

STALINISM IN MALAYA.

The Malayan Communist Party was formed in 1925. In line with the Comintern's instructions it expelled from its ranks all those who defended Trotsky's defence of Bolshevism. It has always been a pliable tool of the Kremlin.

The Stalinists here have formed a variety of organisations. They sponsored the Malay National Party, Malayan Democratic Union, New Democratic Youth League, Ex-Servicemen's Association, women's societies and a myriad of other groupings.

It was the Stalinists who plastered Malaya with posters calling upon the people to welcome the armies of British imperialism as liberators. Stalinists collaborated with the military authorities on food councils instead of calling on the masses to struggle for workers' control. And this whilst the military authorities were deporting members of the C.P. for trade union activity and firing on unarmed workers. Whilst the C.P. is being hounded by British imperialism's agents, their premises and those of the unions whom they control, sport the union jack and the stars and stripes!

The Stalinists fight for a "new democracy". This has no other meaning than to sidetrack the struggle for workers' power. In a manifesto they state: "**Only a united front of all parties in the State can serve the Nation in the fight for reforms that will make Malaya the land we all desire.**" This clearly shows that the C.P. struggles not for socialism but for bourgeois democracy as an end in itself.

The weaknesses shown by the British rulers in face of the Japanese in 1942, and the experiences gained by the Malayan masses in struggle during the occupation, have transformed their attitude and aroused them. A great

opportunity existed for a Marxist Party to tear away the Malayan peasantry from the grip of the Sultans. In the absence of such a party the Stalinists confused the political struggle and canalised it by forming the Malayan National Party in November, 1945. This organisation was not openly sponsored by the Stalinists. Its programme did not clash too much with reaction. At the beginning of the movement even one or two Sultans were drawn to support it. In a resolution three points are made: (1) Malaya is a part of Indonesia; (2) The MNP hails the formation of a Malayan Union; and (3) MNP resolves to be at peace with all nationalities living in Malaya and to co-operate with them.

At first the military authorities found it tactical to give this movement their blessing, but only for a short time.

Some idea of the nature of this party's programme can be got from the following. According to the "**Malayan Standard**", part of the ninth principle of the MNP reads: "**To co-operate with Britain, United States of America, Soviet Union, China and all countries where freedom is enjoyed.**" The report adds "**The Congress also made a decision to unite with all Sultans and Royal Families in order to achieve mutual understanding between the parties. Moreover the Malayan National Party decided that if the people and the Sultans were disunited, such disunity would provide a great weapon for a third party to use to the detriment of the Malays.**" This is the hallmark of Stalinist opportunism. One or two progressive items are engulfed in a welter of capitulation to the Sultans and the "democratic" imperialisms allied to the Soviet Union.

REACTION REARS ITS HEAD.

The MNP developed more and more as an agency of Stalin's foreign policy and as a consequence soon earned the disapproval of the Sultans and British military administration. Together they set up a rival organisation, the United Malays National Organisation. Their object was, of course, to under-

mine the MNP.; to prevent the rise of popular leaders inside the country opposed both to the CP and the Sultans; and to hold firmly a movement of Malayans on a racial basis for the purpose of dividing the oppressed in the towns and countryside.

The gloves came off at the inaugural congress of UMNO. A reactionary bureaucracy ruled the congress from the platform. Despite the (reported) strength of the MNP little representation was given to it. Groupings almost unknown had more delegates than MNP.

The servile and reactionary character of this set-up is revealed in the attitude of the President of the Congress. The Singapore "**Sunday Times**" reports that he called upon the organisation "to stand united as Malays of the Peninsular and not as pawns in the hands of Chinese Communists or Indonesian-cum-Malay nationalists." He further declared: "We recognise the fact that at the moment we are not ready for self-government let alone complete independence."

The majority of the Congress opposed giving citizenship rights to Chinese and Indians. One effect of this foul racial policy which is thus being encouraged by British imperialism for its own ends is racial rioting. One disturbance has already resulted in thirty deaths.

THE BRITISH WHITE PAPER.

The White Paper on Malayan Union has aroused a measure of interest, especially among the middle classes. The proposals contained in it, however, do not constitute a renunciation of imperialist rule, merely a slight variation in method. The British rulers realise that Malaya is on the move for independence, so they hope to buy support among a section of the middle class by offering them a few seats in assemblies. At the same time Whitehall is concentrating its hold over Malaya for the continuation of imperialist exploitation and for military purposes.

Let it be understood that the British Government is giving nothing away. Instead of a tripartite group-

ing—the Federated States, Unfederated States and Straits Settlements—which was in any case unwieldy, the White Paper proposes a dual structure comprising the Malayan Union, and Singapore together with the islands of military value. The official line claims that the mainland (Malayan Union) is approaching some form of self-government, but Singapore, etc. must remain close to direct rule. In practice both areas will be controlled as before, by British imperialism.

Before 1942 the Sultans possessed certain very restricted "powers" designed to blunt the nationalist aspirations of the masses. The White Paper proposes to restrict the precept of the Sultans to religious matters. At first they agreed to this. But this did not suit the book of some British planters and capitalists who fear an anti-imperialist uprising and believe the best way to stave off the nationalist struggle is by giving an appearance at least of some measure of power residing in the hands of the Sultans. Consequently the Sultans were pushed into opposition; to make mild demands for reforms along these lines in the White Paper proposals.

Great play has been made by the press on the number of seats to be given the elected nominees in the legislative and assembly councils. In Singapore, for instance, there will be parity between the elected and nominated members of the Legislative Council. This body will consist of 22 members: 4 ex-officers, 7 nominated officials 2 nominated non-officials and 9 elected members. The middle class opportunists nurture illusions about winning the nominated non-officials to their side. But it matters little which side has the formal majority. The real power resides with the British Governor who can veto any legislation not to the liking of British imperialism. To make matters worse only that small section of the population which can be categorised as "educated" will have the vote. In Singapore a successful candidate must be able to speak competent English.

For the advisory councils in the Malayan Union and Singapore, the

White Paper mentions the election of 9 members "in a manner to be prescribed." Universal adult suffrage is not even mentioned, but for the British inhabitants voting rights are automatic.

THE STRUGGLE GOES ON.

The struggle between capital and labour has not toned down since the Japanese surrender. The efforts of a certain Transport House official, Mr. Brazier, M.B.E., to keep the unions out of politics and to tame the movement has failed.

Unemployment is still high. All in all the outlook for this outpost of Empire is not a rosy one.

The Economic Adviser to Singapore and Malayan Union, C. J. Pyke is quite pessimistic about the economic future of Malaya. He stated recently: "In the course of the next two years or so production of rubber in the world—both natural and synthetic—will probably be twice the consumption . . . There is a deficiency of tin in the world at the moment, but in long-term view there is probably more tin than the world can absorb." The tin trade, it is estimated, will take five years for rehabilitation. Of the 120 dredges in operation before the war none are working today. Out of more than 100 open-cast tin mines about 50 are working at present.

The lot of the workers is terrible. It amounts to little more than slavery in the plantations. These areas are literally cut off from the outside world. A stranger is suspected of being an agitator and is invariably sent on his way by the police. The workers are triply exploited—by the employers and property owners and by the retail traders. They are worked hard and long for low wages; they live in hovels owned by the employers; and they are forced to buy from shops inside the compounds thereby becoming the prey of the profiteers in the distributive trades.

Labour is imported from poor areas in Southern India. These illiterate and semi-literate workers are lured with the promise of decent jobs, made

to sign long-term contracts, and thus converted into virtual slaves of the planters.

Such conditions can only constitute fertile soil for struggle between the oppressed masses and the exploiters. The development of trade unions is a

tremendous step forward, but the political development of the masses has still some distance to travel. What Malaya lacks is a strong and virile working class party with a militant policy, a revolutionary communist party.

DEMOCRACY OR BONAPARTISM IN EUROPE? By E. GRANT (A Reply to Pierre Frank)

Lenin's aphorism that we live in an epoch of wars and revolutions—to which Trotsky added "and counter-revolutions"—has been amply demonstrated by the history of the last three decades. Few periods in history have been filled with such terrific convulsions and clashes between the nations and classes, and such kaleidoscopic changes and manipulations of the political regimes whereby finance capital maintains its domination over the peoples. Thus, it becomes doubly important for those who carry on the scientific teachings of Marxism, and who alone can lay claim to make a theoretical analysis of events, to keep a scrupulous and careful check on the changes which are taking place if they are correctly to orientate the advance guard and give guidance to the masses.

In criticising the barren conceptions of Stalinism which identified all regimes to fascism at the time of the "Third Period", Trotsky brilliantly characterised the essence of the epoch as one of **change and fluctuations**, in which generalisations would not suffice. Each stage must be **examined concretely** by the vanguard, who could thus understand and interpret events and draw the **correct practical conclusions for activity therefrom**. He wrote:

"The vast importance of a correct theoretical orientation is most strikingly manifested in a period of acute social conflict, of rapid political shifts, of abrupt changes in the situ-

ation. In such periods, political **conceptions and generalisations** are rapidly used up and require either a complete replacement (which is easier) or their concretisation, precision and partial rectification (which is harder.) It is in just such periods that all sorts of **transitional, intermediate** situations and combinations arise, as a matter of necessity, which upset the customary patterns and doubly require a sustained theoretical attention. In a word, if in the pacific and 'organic' period (before the war) one could still live on the revenue from a few ready-made abstractions, in our time each new event forcefully brings home the most important law of the dialectic: **The truth is always concrete.**"

"Bonapartism and Fascism."

Among the cadres of the Fourth International, there are comrades who have not sufficiently understood this lesson. They continue to live on the "revenue from a few ready-made abstractions" instead of concretising or partially rectifying previous generalisations. An outstanding example of this is the article of Pierre Frank.

Frank attempts to equate all regimes in Western Europe to "bonapartism." His generalisations go even further: he argues that there have been bonapartist regimes in France since 1934; that it is impossible to have any but bonapartist or fascist regimes until the coming to power of

the proletariat in Europe. This, if you please, in the name of "the continuity of our political analysis for more than ten years of French history"! Such complacency reduces theory to formless abstractions and conceals inevitable and episodic errors, thus making them into a system. It has no place in the Fourth International.

Comrade Frank indiscriminately mixes the terms bourgeois democracy with bonapartism, not explaining the specific traits of either. He interchangeably speaks of "bonapartism", "elements of bonapartism", "a regime which one can correctly define as democratic." Yet the reader has to seek in vain for a definition of his ideal "democratic regime", as distinguished from the very real bourgeois democracy. He denies the existence of democratic regimes in Europe today because "there is literally no place for them."

ECONOMIC BASIS AND POLITICAL SUPERSTRUCTURE.

We will here repeat some elementary ideas of Marxism in order to arrive at the necessary clarity and understanding of the shifting processes and changes taking place in the regimes in Europe at the present time—at least in Western Europe. The Eastern half dominated directly by the Stalinist bureaucracy develops in a different direction and under different conditions.

The political character of a regime (bonapartist, fascist, democratic) is basically determined by the relations between the classes in the nation, which vary at different stages. Its fundamental nature is determined, in the last analysis, by its mode of production and property relations, by its class character. Thus the regimes of Hitler and Roosevelt, of Attlee and Mussolini, of Franco and Gouin, of Peron and Salazar, of De Valera and Chiang Kai Shek are all governments of the capitalist class, for they rest upon the economy of capitalist exploitation.

However, the class nature of these regimes does not exhaust the problem. We have to classify the instrument—

which differs in each case—by which the bourgeoisie ensures its dominance and rule. The character of this rule is decided not only by the subjective wishes and needs of the finance-capitalists, which remains but one factor in the process, but precisely by the objective-subjective inter-relations between the classes at a given stage, which has been predicated by the previous history and the development of the class struggle of the given country.

It is a vulgarisation of Marxism—vulgar materialism of the worst sort—to argue that the superstructure of a society is determined immediately by the development of its economy.

The disappearance of the economic basis on which the "democracy" of the imperialists is based, does not immediately lead to the disappearance of bourgeois democracy. It only prepares its collapse in the long run. Properly speaking, the development of capitalism into imperialism by the beginning of this century had already rendered outmoded the existence of bourgeois democracy. Yet we see that bourgeois democracy managed to maintain itself for decades after its economic base had disappeared.

That capitalism had outlived its historic functions was attested already by the first imperialist world war. But this did not, and could not by itself, lead to the overthrow of the capitalist system. The first world war led to favourable conditions for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie on a world scale. But the proletariat was prevented from carrying out its mission by the organisations of its own creation. The Social Democracy betrayed the revolution and saved the capitalist system from destruction. In the revolutionary epoch following World War I, the bourgeoisie was compelled to lean on the Social Democracy for support, the only reliable prop they had to maintain their rule. Where the bourgeoisie relied on such regimes based on Social Democracy, uniting repression against the revolutionary workers with reforms and half-reforms, these could only be characterised as regimes of "bourgeois democracy." Thus, Lenin and Trotsky characterised the counter-revolutionary

regime in Germany in 1918, which was organised by Social Democracy, as a bourgeois democratic regime.

It is A.B.C. that the democratic liberties were gained in the struggle against the bourgeoisie over a period of a century; the right to vote had to be fought for and wrested from the bourgeoisie at a period of **ascending capitalism**, at the time of the blossoming of bourgeois democracy. Even in its heyday there was never an idyllic democratic state without police intervention and without brute force.

Yet even at this stage when capitalism was still an ascending economy, there were not only democratic regimes, but bonapartist regimes as well. In the classic land of bonapartism, both Louis Napoleon, and Bonaparte himself came to power at a time when there was a veritable boom which lasted in the one case for two decades. According to Comrade Frank's conception there was no basis for bonapartism: there should have only been bourgeois democracy. But we see the problem is not so simple.

And after Louis Napoleon, bourgeois democracy (with one or two threats of dictatorship—Boulangierism) lasted for decades in France. According to Frank's mysterious conceptions, after bonapartism—which means that the economic basis for democracy is gone—it is no longer possible for the bourgeoisie to have democracy, but . . . only bonapartism.¹ It is difficult to understand why Comrade Frank stops at 1934 to trace bonapartist regimes in France. If we follow his method logically we have had bonapartism since the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon in 1851, or perhaps since the first Bonaparte!

If there is a grain of sense in his case that the economic basis for reforms has disappeared, all that it proves is not automatically and con-

1.—Comrade Frank gives the example of the Bismarck regime in Germany as Bonapartist, quite unconscious of the fact that this is in entire contradiction with his thesis that bonapartism appears on the scene when the economy can no longer allow bourgeois democracy. As we know the Bismarck regime was the height of the period of the development of German capitalist economy.

sequently a regime of bonapartism is posed; but that the democratic regime under such conditions will be of an extremely unstable character, afflicted with convulsions and crises, which must make way either for the revolutionary proletarian dictatorship or the open dictatorship of finance capital through bonapartism or fascism.

Comrade Frank says the existence of democratic liberties does not suffice to make a democratic regime. A profound observation! What follows? The existence of bonapartist measures does not make a regime bonapartist either, Comrade Frank! This argument is about as profound as those of the "bureaucratic collectivists" who argued that we had the intervention of the state in economy in Germany under Hitler, in France under Blum, in America under Roosevelt (NRA), in Russia under Stalin . . . consequently all those regimes were the same. It is not the points of similarity only—all human societies have points of similarity, particularly different types of capitalist societies—it is the **decisive traits** which determine our definition of regimes.

COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN A DEMOCRATIC FORM.

The British R.C.P. has characterised the regimes in Western Europe (France, Belgium, Holland, Italy) as regimes of counter-revolution in a democratic form. Comrade Pierre Frank claims that the idea of a "democratic counter-revolution" is "**devoid of all content.**"² He would then be hard put to explain what was the Weimar Republic organised by Social Democracy in Germany. He would be compelled to argue that what took place in Germany in 1918, was **not** the proletarian revolution which was betrayed by the "counter-revolution in a democratic form" (by the undemo-

2.—If our characterisation of these regimes as counter-revolution in a democratic form is false, then what have we had in these countries? Perhaps the democratic revolution, as put forward by the IKD? This can only prove grist to the mill of the opportunist tendencies in our movement. Ultra-leftism, as always, provides the basis for opportunism.

cratic and bloody suppression of the January 1919 uprisings), but was a democratic revolution which overthrew the Kaiser and replaced his regime by one of "pure" bourgeois democracy! The fact that this regime was ushered in by martial law and the conspiracy of the Social Democratic leaders with the General Staff of the Reichswehr, the Junkers and the bourgeoisie, validates entirely the conclusion of Lenin and Trotsky that there was a "democratic" counter-revolution, with the bourgeoisie using the Social Democrats as their agents.

In advance Trotsky foresaw and prepared theoretically for a similar situation with the collapse of fascism in Italy, when he wrote in a letter to the Italian comrades in 1931:

"The Transitional Period in Italy

"Following the above comes the question of the 'transitional' period in Italy. At the very outset it is necessary to establish very clearly: transition from what to what? Period of transition from the bourgeois (or 'popular') revolution to the proletarian revolution—is one thing. Period of transition from the fascist dictatorship to the proletarian dictatorship—is another. If the first conception is envisaged, the question of the bourgeois revolution is posed in the first place, and it is then a question of establishing the role of the proletariat in it, only after which will the question of the transitional period toward a proletarian revolution be posed. If the second conception is envisaged, the question is then posed of a series of battles, disturbances, upsets in the situation, abrupt turns, constituting in their ensemble the different stages of the proletarian revolution. These stages may be many in number. But in no case can they contain within them a bourgeois revolution or its mysterious abortion: the 'popular' revolution.

Does this mean that Italy cannot for a certain time, again become a parliamentary state or become a 'democratic republic'? I consider—in perfect agreement with you, I think—that this eventuality is not

excluded. But then it will not be the fruit of a bourgeois revolution, but the preterminal foetus of an insufficiently matured and premature proletarian revolution. **In case of a profound revolutionary crisis and of mass battles in the course of which the proletarian vanguard will not have been in a position to take power, it may be that the bourgeoisie will reconstruct its power on "democratic" bases.** Can it be said, for example, that the present German Republic constitutes a conquest of the bourgeois revolution? Such an assertion would be absurd. There was, in Germany, in 1918-19 a proletarian revolution which, deprived of leadership, was deceived, betrayed and crushed. **But the bourgeoisie counter-revolution nevertheless found itself obliged to adapt itself to the circumstances resulting from this crushing of the proletarian revolution which resulted in the substitution of a republic in the 'democratic' parliamentary form. Is the same—or about the same—eventuality excluded from Italy? No, it is not excluded.** The enthronement of fascism was the result of the incompleteness of the proletarian revolution in 1920. Only a new proletarian revolution can overturn fascism. If it should not be destined to triumph this time either (weakness of the Communist Party, manoeuvres and betrayals of the social democrats, the Freemasons, the Catholics), **the 'transitional' state that the bourgeois counter-revolution would then be forced to set up in the ruins of its power in a fascist form, could be nothing else than a parliamentary and democratic state."**

Events in Italy have demonstrated the remarkable foresight of Trotsky. The bourgeoisie has been compelled to allow the jettisoning of the King, and the Stalinist-Socialist traitors have headed off the developing proletarian revolution into the channels of a "parliamentary and democratic state." This of course, will not attain a stable base, but will be subject to crises and upheavals, movements on the part of the proletariat, and counter-movements of Monarchists and Fascists.

Would Pierre Frank now deny the correctness of Trotsky's conceptions and assert that we have had a bonapartist state since the fall of Mussolini?

It is incomprehensible that Frank, in his argumentation, should refer to this very article of Trotsky's which puts forward precisely the opposite point of view. After fascism, what? asks the Old Man, and answers that as a means of preventing the revolution in face of mass upsurge, the bourgeoisie will undoubtedly turn towards the establishment of a bourgeois democratic republic. We note in this connection that the immediate introduction of bonapartism (allegedly because democracy has no economic base) was not even considered by Trotsky.

From this can be seen that what is really "devoid of content" is the mechanical conception that counter-revolution can only manifest itself in the form of fascism or bonapartism, i.e. military police dictatorships. The experience of history has shown, and events now unfolding in Europe demonstrate irrefutably, that the methods of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the proletarian revolution vary widely and are not determined *a priori*. The bourgeoisie makes use of different methods, relies on different strata, depending on the class relation of forces in order to re-enforce or re-establish its rule.

Whether they can manoeuvre the Stalinists or manipulate their Social Democratic, bonapartist, or fascist agencies, or as sometimes happens, **use all forces simultaneously**, does not depend only on the subjective intentions of the ruling class, or of this or that adventurer, but on the objective conditions and the inter-relations between all the classes in the nation—bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, and proletariat, at any given time. To repeat mechanically the conclusion that the existence of finance capital is incompatible with bourgeois democracy in the contemporary period (which is indubitably correct within certain limits), and thus that all regimes must be bonapartist, is to substitute abstract categories formulated on the basis of partial and insufficient historical experience, or a narrow and in-

complete view of the process as a whole, for a dialectical analysis of events.

To understand the nature of the regimes in Western Europe today, we must know the background on which they evolved. The revolutionary movement of the masses following World War I was paralysed and betrayed by the Social Democrats, **who alone were able to save capitalism from destruction under the banner of bourgeois democracy**. The bourgeoisie was compelled to rely on its Social Democratic agencies for mere survival.

The failure of the proletariat to take power could lead only to the further degeneration and decay of capitalism. The ruin of the petty bourgeoisie, which was shown no way out by the mass organisations of the proletariat, led to them becoming a tool of fascist reaction. Trapped by the intolerable crisis of their system in one country after another, through many transitions, the bourgeoisie turned in the direction of open and unbridled dictatorship.

The wave of revolution was followed by a wave of counter-revolution. In Italy, Germany and other countries, the bourgeoisie used the forces of the frenzied petty bourgeoisie to destroy the organisations of the proletariat. They were compelled at a later stage to turn on the petty bourgeoisie and transform themselves into bonapartist regimes, **i.e. regimes resting directly on the support of the military-police apparatus rather than regimes with a mass basis**.

This could not solve the contradictions of the capitalist system on a national or international scale, but inevitably led to the Second World War, in a frantic endeavour by the bourgeoisie to find a way out by a repartition of the world. But the Second World War, even more than the first, put at stake the whole existence of capitalism as a system. The bourgeoisie realised, with dread, that the unleashing of the war would release tremendous revolutionary energy from the depths of the masses and recreate the conditions favourable to the overthrow of capitalism on a continental scale.

The victories of the Nazis and the conquest of practically the whole of the Continent of Europe had, as a by-product, the effect of **temporarily** destroying the mass basis of reaction throughout Europe. Reaction and the capitalist system rested directly on the bayonets of the Nazi fascist armies. The hated quislings played a purely auxiliary role. With the victories of the Red Army and the collapse of Hitler-Mussolini, the problem of the socialist revolution was posed on the order of the day throughout Europe. Reaction was without a strong base in the populations, **and without a strong stable military-police apparatus.** The allied armies could not be a stable prop for reaction and open military dictatorship for long. In most of the European countries the bourgeoisie was faced with mass upsurge, **which they could not bridle with their own forces.** Greece was the exception. Only after a civil war and a bloody war of intervention was it possible to install a semi-bonapartist or bonapartist regime which is step by step attempting to impose a totalitarian regime in that country. The imperialists are aware of the impossibility of using such methods on a continental scale. In addition, in Greece the power of reaction had to be maintained at all costs for fear that this last outpost of British imperialism in the Balkan peninsula should, in common with the rest of the Balkans, fall under the sway of the Stalinist bureaucracy. But even here it was not possible to destroy completely the mass organisations of the proletariat.

Nothing saved the capitalist system in Western Europe except the betrayal of Social Democracy and Stalinism. When the bourgeoisie leans on its Social Democratic and Stalinist agencies **for the purpose of counter-revolution**, what is the "content" of that counter-revolution? Bonapartist, fascist, authoritarian? Of course not! Its content is that of a "counter revolution in a democratic form."

Of course, the bourgeoisie cannot stabilise itself for any length of time on the basis of the democratic counter-revolution. Where the revolution is stemmed by the lackeys of the bour-

geoisie, the class forces do not stay suspended. After a period, which can be more or less protracted, according to the economic and political developments internationally and within the given country, the bourgeoisie shifts to bonapartist or fascist counter-revolution. That is how events manifested themselves in Italy within two years of the ebbing of the revolutionary tide provoked by World War I, and in Germany over a period of fifteen years. The change in class relationships reflected itself in the change in regimes through democracy, preventative bonapartism, to fascism, pure bonapartist military dictatorship.

Despite the further degeneration of its economic and political base, the failure of the workers once again to take power, destroy capitalist relations, and organise society anew, has resulted in the establishment of bourgeois democratic governments in Italy, France and other countries, based upon the manipulation of the Stalinists and Social Democrats. To argue that counter-revolution or the rule of the bourgeoisie in the present period can only manifest itself in bonapartism, fascism, or Franco-type governments, is to abandon the Marxist appreciation of the processes in modern society. Taking into account the many factors involved in the history of the period, including the weakness of the Marxist current, it could have been, and was, predicted in advance what the developments in Western Europe would be. But the process can only be understood if one takes into account the real nature of democracy, bonapartism, fascism, and not merely their outward forms.

DIFFERING REGIMES IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY

The classic bonapartism of the first Napoleon rose out of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the period of the youth and vigour of capitalism. Bonapartism, "**the rule of the sword over society**" represented a position where the state assumed a relative independence of the classes, balancing between the hostile classes and "arbitrating" between them. It remained, nevertheless, an instrument above all,

of the big capitalists. Napoleon, by leaning on the support of the peasants, could maintain himself for a whole historical period because of the development of the productive forces in France at this period.

So with Napoleon the Little, who established his power in France in the coup d'etat of 1851. Marx, in the Eighteenth Brumaire, described the position thus: "**the State has gone back to its earliest form, in which the sword rules without shame and club law prevails.** (Hardly a mirror of the regime of De Gaulle in France after the liberation!). **This is the coup-de-main of February 1848 answered by the coup-de-tete of December 1851.**"

That is the essence of bonapartism: naked, military-police dictatorship, the "arbiter" with a sword. A regime which indicates that the antagonisms within society have become so great that the state machine, "regulating" and "ordering" these antagonisms, while remaining an instrument of the property owners, assumes a certain independence of all the classes. A "national judge" concentrating power in his hands, personally "arbitrates" the conflicts within the nation, playing off one class against another, nevertheless remaining a tool of the property owners. At the same time, we characterise as bonapartist, a regime where the basic class forces of bourgeoisie and proletariat more or less balance one another, thus allowing the state power to manoeuvre and balance the contending camps, and again giving the state power a certain independence in relation to society as a whole.

However, there is a big difference between the role of bonapartism in the period of capitalism's ascending phase and the period of its decline. We give two quotations from Trotsky explaining this difference with the utmost clarity, in "Germany What Next?":—

"In its time, we designated the Bruening government as **Bonapartism** ('caricature of Bonapartism'), that is, as a regime of the military police dictatorship. As soon as the struggle of two social strata—the haves and the have-nots, the ex-

plaiter and the exploited—reaches its highest tension, the conditions are given for the domination of bureaucracy, police, soldiery. The government becomes 'independent' of society. Let us once more recall: if two forks are stuck symmetrically into a cork, the latter can stand even on the head of a pin. That is precisely the schema of Bonapartism. To be sure, such a government does not cease being the clerk of the property-owners. Yet the clerk sits on the back of the boss, rubs his neck raw and does not hesitate at times to dig his boots into his face.

It might have been assumed that Bruening would hold on until the final solution. Yet, in the course of events, another link inserted itself: the Papen government. Were we to be exact, we should have to make a rectification of our old designation: the Bruening government was a pre-Bonapartist government. Bruening was only a precursor. In a perfected form, Bonapartism came upon the scene in the Papen-Schleicher government."

And further on:

"Only, in spite of the appearance of concentrated forces, the Papen government 'as such' is weaker yet than its predecessor. The Bonapartist regime can attain a comparatively stable and durable character only in the event that it brings a revolutionary epoch to a close; when the relationship of forces has already been tested in battles; when the revolutionary classes are already spent; while the possessing classes have not yet freed themselves from the fear: will not the morrow bring new convulsions? Without this basic condition, that is, without a preceding exhaustion of the mass energies in battles, a Bonapartist regime is in no position to develop."

The bonapartism at the stage of capitalism's rise, raising itself above society, suppressing and "arbitrating" the open conflicts within it, and regulating the class antagonisms, is strong and confident. Under the conditions of a powerful development of the productive forces, it attains a certain stability. But the bonapartism of cap-

italism's decline is affected by senility. Rising out of the crisis of capitalist society, it cannot solve any of the problems with which it is faced. The main crisis of society, the conflict between the productive forces and private ownership and the national state has become so great, the class antagonisms which it engenders, so tense, that this which alone allows the rise of senile bonapartism, at the same time, as a consequence, makes it so weak and feeble that its whole structure is shaky and likely to be overthrown in the series of crises which confront it. It is this weakness of bonapartism which leads to the bourgeoisie and military clique surrendering the power to fascism and unleashing the greedy bands of maddened petty bourgeoisie and lumpen proletariat against the proletariat and its class organisations.

The differing categories of regimes, though of vital importance for Marxist theory and practice, are not metaphysical abstractions, indicating a rigid, fixed and eternal differentiation between them. There are so many factors involved that it is necessary to examine each regime concretely before categorically defining its position.

It is only necessary to point out that even within each rough category, widely differing regimes can be comprised. England with her feudal remnants (House of Lords and monarchy) and barbarous oppression of colonial peoples, is a democracy. The Federal Republic of Switzerland, and France with its laws based on the Code Napoleon, the United States, Weimar Germany and Eire—despite their wide differences, remain "democracies". What then, is the dominating thread which places these regimes under one head?

Despite their diverse histories, which explains their different national peculiarities, **they all possess certain specific traits in common.** These are the traits which are decisive in determining the Marxist classification. All have independent workers' organisations, trade unions, parties, clubs, etc., with the rights which go with them. The right to strike, organise, the right to vote, free speech, press, etc., and the other

rights which have been the by-product of the class struggle of the proletariat in the past. (Here we might add that the loss of this or that right would not, in itself, be decisive in our analysis of a regime. It is the totality of the relations which is the determining factor.) In one sense, the existence, **within capitalism,** of elements of the new society. Or, as explained by Trotsky in "Germany, What Next" in answering the Stalinist ultra-lefts—**under the regime of the bourgeoisie there already exists the embryo of the rule of the working class in the form of the workers' organisations.** Where these organisations exist and play a powerful role (in France and Italy they are stronger than they have ever been) the bourgeoisie rules through the leaders and top layers of these organisations. It is not without interest, as Lenin pointed out, that at a certain stage, the bourgeoisie even ruled through the Soviets, or more correctly, the Menshevik leadership of the Soviets.

Fascism too, has its peculiarities. The regimes of Franco, Mussolini, Hitler and Pilsudsky, all are comprised within this conception. Yet there are wide differences between them. What fundamentally unites the conception is the **complete destruction of all working class organisations.** Yet even here we see that right up to the outbreak of the war, Polish fascism, far weaker than that of Germany and Italy, had not completely succeeded in destroying the workers' organisations and may have been overthrown before it finally succeeded in doing so.

Bonapartism too, shows a similar variety. Napoleon, Louis Napoleon, Von Schleicher and Papen, Petain, and the fascist-regimes-become-bonapartist—all were bonapartist regimes. What is it that they have in common? The independence of the state, the concentration of power "personally", resting directly and openly on the domination of the state machine **through the naked power of the military police apparatus. "Rule by the sword."**

Whatever differences there may be between the regimes, the existence of workers' organisations with attenuated or limited rights in certain cases, they

all have the above mentioned features in common. The specific peculiarities in each case would again be determined by the history of the country, the development of the social contradictions which made the development of bonapartism possible, etc., etc. Thus the weak and sterile bonapartism of Pétain and Von Schleicher in the epoch of capitalist decline resembled only as a caricature the vigorous and powerful regime established by Napoleon in its period of ascent. In the change from democracy to fascism, there must be one, perhaps many, transitional phases. Thus the path for bonapartism is prepared by the division of the nation into two hostile camps—that of the fascist petit bourgeoisie and that of the organised working class. Nominally, the state power assumes an independence of both, and the military-police regime established prepares the way for the handing of power to fascism. (The bourgeoisie prefers to rule through democratic means. Under the impact of crisis however, they utilise the fascist gangs as a terrorist agency for pressure on the proletariat so that they can push through bonapartist dictatorial measures. Only as a last resort do they reluctantly surrender power to the fascists.) At least that was the process in Italy and Germany. Depending on many factors, including the policy of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, events in Europe and elsewhere may develop on somewhat different lines, should reaction succeed in temporarily stabilising itself.

However, it is important to note that the regimes of Schleicher and Papen, of Pétain and General Sirovy in Czechoslovakia after Munich, **all developed directly** (through intermediate stages perhaps) **out of the regimes of bourgeois democracy.** The pre-bonapartist, or even bonapartist regimes, of Doumergue, Laval and Flandin prepared the way for the Popular Front in France which in turn paved the way again for a development towards bonapartism. To call the Popular Front under Blum "bonapartism", as does Comrade Frank in the citation which follows, can only cause immeasurable confusion in the ranks of the Fourth International.

"... But the bonapartism of declining capitalism can cloak itself in other costumes. In certain cases it is fairly difficult to recognise it, for example in the case of governments of the left, even very much to the left, notably of the Popular Front type. There bonapartism is so outrageously varnished with a democratic sheen that many allow themselves to be taken in by it . . ."

In those words of Comrade Frank is the key to the confusion in the characterisation of regimes. It is easy to slip into such errors because in the same way as the embryo of a new form of society exists in the workers' organisations, so the possibility of bonapartism is rooted in the structure of society under bourgeois democracy. Within every state there is reflected the antagonisms within society, even in the freest bourgeois democratic society. As Engels wrote in his book "**The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State**":

"The state is therefore by no means a power imposed on society from the outside; just as little is it 'the reality of the moral idea', 'the image and reality of reason', as Hegel asserted. Rather it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction within itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, may not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power apparently standing above society becomes necessary, whose purpose is to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power arising out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly separating itself from it, is the state."

In the last analysis every state is based on naked force. The army officers, the general staff clique, the police and civil service bureaucracy, trained and selected to serve the interests of capitalism, provide the soil on which military plots and conspiracies

thrive, given conditions of crisis and social ferment. Pierre Frank confuses here the role of the state with bonapartism. A democracy that was not based on force, that did not have an apparatus placing itself above society, has never existed and never will exist. But this does not make bonapartism.

But because every state is based on armed bodies of men with its appendages in the form of prisons, courts, etc., and thus even under the fullest democratic regime we have the hidden dictatorship of capitalism, it does not follow that every repressive regime is necessarily bonapartist. Repression and suppression of the rights of the workers under conditions of "emergency" take place under every regime, including the democratic, when the basic interests of capital are threatened and till "normal" conditions are restored—i.e., till the masses accept without active rebellion, the yoke of capital. The bourgeoisie preserves an extreme flexibility, manipulating the regimes according to the resistance of the masses, the class forces, etc. Thanks to the betrayals of the workers' leaderships they are enabled to do this.

PROGNOSIS IN THE LIGHT OF EVENTS

Whatever their original desires or wishes to impose bonapartist regimes in Europe, Anglo-American imperialism soon saw the impossibility of this (apart from Greece) in the incalculable dangers which it would bring, and in Western Europe swung over to democratic regimes, based on a disarmed proletariat.

Events in France and Western Europe have confirmed the incorrectness of the method of Pierre Frank. Everywhere in Western Europe since the "liberation" the tendency has been for a steady movement **towards bourgeois democracy, and not towards greater and greater dictatorial regimes; towards an increase in democratic rights, not towards their limitation. AT A LATER STAGE THIS TENDENCY WILL BE REVERSED**, but at present the **motion** in Western Europe is towards bourgeois democratic regimes. Thus in Italy we have the

establishment of the bourgeois democratic republic, trade unions, etc.; in France we have elections, parties, trade unions, etc.; in Belgium and Holland we have democratic elections. The swing of the masses towards socialism-communism is reflected in the fact that these parties have secured a greater percentage of the votes than at any time in history. In order to mobilise the petty bourgeois reaction as a counterpoise against them, the bourgeoisie **at this stage**, is leaning not on fascist reaction (that is still well in reserve), **but on the Catholic and Christian Parties basing themselves on parliamentary democracy**. This gives the bourgeoisie a breathing space to prepare at a later stage and under the necessary favourable conditions for a transition through bonapartist regimes to totalitarian dictatorship.

It is clear that the position today is entirely different from the position in Germany and Italy before the victory of fascism, where mass parties of fascism were organised and the possibility of the state manoeuvring between the two mortally hostile camps, was posed by the whole situation. Far from this, in Italy and France the Christian Democratic Parties are collaborating with the workers' organisations in a typical coalition cabinet of bourgeois democracy. The bourgeoisie cannot do otherwise because of the danger of revolutionary disturbances on the part of the masses.

The situation is similar to that in Germany in the Weimar Republic. In order to stem the revolution the bourgeoisie organised a coalition government of Social Democracy and the Catholic Centre. Was this Bonapartism? Obviously not. But as a result of the policy of Social Democracy they were punished by the petty bourgeois swinging to reaction and a Bonapartist-monarchist attempt at a coup d'état in the Kapp Putsch in 1920. As is well known, this attempted bonapartist coup was defeated by the masses, where the Communists and Socialists participated in a general strike. The indignation of the workers, **owing to the correct propaganda of the Communist Party** in warning of this danger and forming a united front

to beat it off, led to the workers in the Ruhr attempting the seizure of power. The reaction then joined together with the Social Democrats to crush this movement of the masses. This in its turn, paved the way for an uneasy and unstable regime of bourgeois democracy.

The false position on the nature of the regimes in Europe flows from an incorrect perspective. The American comrades argued that only Franco-type military dictatorships were possible in Europe after the victory of the Allied imperialists. Pierre Frank approvingly quotes a wrong position taken by the IS in 1940:

"If England should install De Gaulle in France tomorrow, his regime would not in the least be distinguished from that of the Bonapartist government of Petain."

A trifle different, Comrade Frank! For the workers a decisive difference! It is true that the capitalist class continued to rule under De Gaulle as they did under Petain. But to argue in 1946 that the regimes could not be distinguished, is to fall into the sectarian stupidity of the Stalinists in Germany who couldn't distinguish between a capitalist regime leaning on the workers' organisations and the abolition of these organisations by fascism.

Pierre Frank's confusion is further exposed by his triumphant declaration that the Petain regime was bonapartist. Trotsky said that the Petain regime was bonapartist. But Frank just does not understand what Trotsky was driving at. In their period of decay and decline, Trotsky referred to the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini as bonapartist regimes. The only difference between these regimes and that of Petain, was that **Petain never had a mass base in the petty bourgeoisie**, like Hitler and Mussolini, and in that sense could not be called Fascist, but bonapartist. For this reason his regime was much weaker and could be more easily overthrown by a movement of the masses. Petain had to lean on foreign bayonets for his rule. Otherwise there is no difference between the regimes of Franco, Mussolini, and Hitler in their decaying phases, and that of Petain.

Comrade Frank declares:

"... our most responsible International body has predicted that a simple substitution of gangs following a victory of the Allies would not signify a change in the nature of the political regime. We find ourselves in the presence of an evaluation on the historical scale based on positions which were defended for many years by the Fourth International against all other theories and cheap labels spread by the other tendencies and formations of the Labour movement. If an error was committed it would be truly a considerable one and we would be urgently obliged to seek the reasons for it and correct it. As for ourselves, we don't believe that our organisation was in error on this point . . ."

The statement of the IS made in 1940 was incorrect. We made the same mistake. Under the circumstances it was excusable. But to repeat in 1946 a mistake that was already clear by 1943 is inexcusable. A British Trotskyist resolution written in 1943 in which we corrected ourselves, analysed the coming situation in Europe as follows:

"In the absence of experienced Trotskyist parties with roots and traditions among the masses, the first stages of the revolutionary struggles in Europe will most likely result in a period of Kerenskyism or Popular Frontism. This is already presaged by the initial struggles of the Italian workers and the repeated betrayals of Social Democracy and Stalinism."

Events have demonstrated the correctness of this analysis.

Instead of frankly facing up to an error in perspective, Frank flies in the face of reality and attempts to convert an error into a virtue.

Frank takes France as the keystone of his thesis. He surely must be lamenting this by now. Because it is France above all, which has mirrored the process very clearly. France is the key to Europe and any mistakes on the nature of the French regime could be fatal for the young cadres of Trot-

skyism. Let us examine the situation. Pierre Frank visualises the development as follows: Bonapartism since 1934, because, you see, the bourgeoisie could not afford bourgeois democracy; Pétain was Bonaparte; De Gaulle was Bonaparte; the Popular Front (Blum!) was Bonapartism; in fact, as the metaphysicians would say, "in the twilight all cats are grey." The thesis is that all were Bonaparte. It follows that Gouin is Bonaparte, and the government which will follow also will be bonapartist. If this madness should infect the French, our French Party would be in a sorry state. Happily, this danger apparently does not exist.

A Marxist appreciation would be somewhat dicierent from that of Pierre Frank. What was the development of the regime—from what to what is it evolving? What is the position of the classes? What are the relations between the classes? A sober appreciation of the last two years will tell us that (a) here we have an unachieved proletarian revolution; result (b) unstable bourgeois democracy, assembly, elections, constituent, bourgeois-democratic constitution; (c) in this setting a candidate bonaparte. The real power resides in the principal working class parties. A would-be Hitler striving for power and a Hitler in power are not one and the same thing. A would-be bonaparte like De Gaulle, and a real Bonaparte wielding real personal power with the sword, are two different things. De Gaulle may yet be a French Franco, **but one does not declare the enemy victorious before the decisive battle has begun.**

Bonapartism in the modern epoch, by its very nature, must be a regime of transition—transition to fascism, transition to democracy, or even to proletarian revolution; a period of manœuvring between the classes. That there are **elements of bonapartism in the situation in Europe, goes without saying.** These elements can be transformed into the dominant ones, but only under certain conditions. If one declares a regime bonapartist, then the specific features of the regime must be brought out. In spite of Pierre Frank's zealous endeavours to elevate De

Gaulle into a position to which he only aspired, the "Bonaparte" De Gaulle, measuring the relation of forces, was forced to sadly retire from the scene to await a more propitious moment. There precisely is the nub of the question: it is necessary to answer Stalinist and Socialist propaganda by warning that their policies inevitably bring the dangers of counter-revolution and bonapartism. To warn of the threat of military-police dictatorship which hangs over the proletariat if it does not disperse the bonapartist nests composed of the cadres of the general staff, police and civil bureaucracy, and take power into its own hands.

Comrades must not make the mistake of the German communists who declared every regime in turn "fascist" till in the end, by their lulling and confusing the advance guard, the real Hitler arrived. Of course, if Pierre Frank continues to repeat it long enough, no doubt reality will in the end, coincide with his definition, and we will have a bonapartist regime in France and other countries in Europe. But for Marxists this is not good enough. We must painstakingly analyse and explain every change in government. In that way we can prepare for the events to come.

WAS THE KERENSKY REGIME "BONAPARTIST"?

Scattered through his article, Frank refers to "**bonapartist a-la-Kerensky**", the bonapartism of Kerensky, thus assuming that bonapartism had in fact been established under the Kerensky regime. This is entirely unwarranted by a knowledge of the period.

Frank takes one or two conditional formulations of Lenin and Trotsky in relation to the Kerensky regime in Russia and tries to convert them into hard and fast definitions. In reality, the record speaks against him. It is significant to note that the chapter in the History of the Russian Revolution to which he refers, is headed, not "Bonapartism", but "**Kerensky and Kornilov—Elements of Bonapartism in the Russian Revolution.**"

Trotsky was always particularly careful on definitions, and thus when he

says "elements", he does not mean the thing itself. And for very good reason. No doubt Kerensky would have liked to play the role of bonaparte. The possibilities of bonapartism were rooted in the situation. But bonapartism was never achieved because the Bolshevik Party was strong and achieved the proletarian revolution, leaving no avenue for adventurers to take control. Many citations could be given to show the conditional nature of the characterisation of the Kerensky regime as bonapartist. In the very section quoted by Comrade Frank, from which he abstracts the single sentence characterising Kerensky as "the mathematical centre of Russian bonapartism", Trotsky wrote:

"The two hostile camps invoked Kerensky, each seeing in him a part of itself, and both swearing fealty to him. Trotsky wrote while in prison: 'Led by politicians who are afraid of their own shadow, the Soviet did not dare take the power. The Kadet Party, representing all the propertied cliques, could not yet seize the power. It remained to find a great conciliator, a mediator, a court of arbitration.'

In a manifesto to the people issued by Kerensky in his own name, he declared: 'I, as head of the government . . . consider that I have no right to hesitate if the changes (in the structure of the government) . . . increase my responsibility in the matters of supreme administration.' **That is the unadulterated phraseology of Bonapartism. But nevertheless, although supported from both right and left it never got beyond phraseology.**" (Our emphasis—EG).

Trotsky wrote this as a historian, soberly evaluating and weighing every word. And if one studies the works of Lenin conscientiously, even though written in the heat of events, one cannot but see the falsity of Frank's position in confusing the germs with the disease. Lenin writes, for example, in his work "Towards the Seizure of Power":

"Kerensky's cabinet is indubitably the first step towards Bonapartism."
(*"The Beginning of Bonapartism."*)

Here can be seen the **conditional** character of what Lenin and Trotsky were talking about. In the very section of "State and Revolution" quoted by Frank, in which Lenin refers to the Kerensky government as bonapartist, the conditional character of this is shown by the paragraphs immediately following. In dealing with the state and all its forms "An instrument for the Exploitation of the Oppressed Class" (that is what the chapter is headed in which these references to bonapartism occur, and that is what Lenin is dealing with), he goes on to say:

"In a democratic republic, Engels continues, 'wealth wields its power indirectly, but all the more effectively', first, by means of 'direct corruption of officials' (America); second, by means of 'the alliance of the government with the stock exchange' (France and America).

At the present time, imperialism and the domination of the banks have 'developed' to an unusually fine art both these methods of defending and asserting the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all descriptions. **If, for instance, in the very first months of the Russian democratic republic, one might say during the honeymoon union of the 'Socialists' — Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks—with the bourgeoisie . . .**"

To clinch the matter, in a later section of the same pamphlet dealing with the same period, in contrasting a soviet to a parliamentary body, Lenin goes on to say:

"A working, and not a parliamentary body"—this hits the vital spot of present-day parliamentarians and the parliamentary Social-Democratic 'lap-dogs'! Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to England, Norway and so forth—the actual work of the 'state' there is done behind the scenes and is carried out by the departments, the offices and the staffs. Parliament itself is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the 'common people'. **This**

is so true that even in the Russian Republic, a bourgeois democratic republic, all these aims of parliamentarism were immediately revealed, even before a real parliament was created . . . ”

We would have to reduce Lenin to a mass of stupid contradictions if we used the method of P. Frank. For him there is no real contradiction because he makes no real distinction between bourgeois democracy and bonapartism. If he carried this through he would have to argue that we had **both** bourgeois democracy and bonapartism in France, and his objection to the term “bourgeois democratic regime” becomes entirely incomprehensible.

Frank points to the fact that the British comrades have referred to the Labour Government in Britain as a Kerensky regime, and then proceeds to argue that this is incorrect because we have not a bonapartist regime in this country.

“Since we here speak of the resolution of our English comrades let us note that it defines the new Labour Government as ‘Kerenskyism’. The Bonapartism, that they ignored, has found the means to insinuate itself into their document under a very special name. But we do not think the present Attlee government is bonapartist a-la-Kerensky . . . ”

(P. Frank.)

This merely serves to demonstrate that Frank has not understood the meaning of the Kerenskiad or of Bonapartism. The Kerenskiad is the last, or “one before the last” left government before the proletarian revolution, or, we may add, the bourgeois counter-revolution. Under given conditions, the social tensions and sharp conflicts of the classes in such a period would tend to give rise to bonapartist conspiracies and plots. That is precisely what happened in the Russian revolution, and that is why Lenin and Trotsky referred to the Bonapartist tendencies within the Kerensky regime. However, for Comrade Frank’s benefit, this does not make a Kerensky regime a bonapartist regime. Here perhaps we had better make haste to add, that

in referring to the Labour Government as a Kerensky government, this was not at all a finished evaluation, but an analogy which we invested with appropriate and necessary safeguards. To put the question beyond dispute, we quote from our resolution:

At a later stage the most resolute section of the bourgeoisie will begin to seek a solution in a Royalist or military dictatorship on the lines of the Spanish Primo de Rivera, or some similar solution. Royalist or fascist bands under the guise of ex-servicemen’s or ‘patriotic’ association will begin to spring up.

Events may speed up or slow down the processes, but what is certain is the heightening of social tension and class hatreds. **The period of triumphant reaction has drawn to a close, a new revolutionary epoch opens up in Britain. With many ebbs and flows, with a greater or lesser speed, the revolution is beginning.** The Labour Government is a Kerensky government. That does not mean that the tempo of development will match that of the events in Russia after March 1917. on the contrary, the revolution will probably assume a long drawn out character, but it provides the background against which the mass revolutionary party will be built.”

Fortunately, to put the position in its proper perspective, Trotsky gave a definition of Kerenskyism—(he didn’t call it bonapartism!) when he dealt with the false positions of the Comintern in relation to the Spanish revolution of 1931:

“ . . . We see that Fascism (we may add bonapartism—EG) does not at all represent the only means of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the revolutionary masses. The regime existing in Spain today* corresponds best to the conception of the Kerenskiad, that is, the last, (or ‘one before the last’) ‘left’ government which the bourgeoisie can only set up in its struggle against the

* A coalition government of the bourgeois republicans and Socialist Party similar to that in Italy and France today. EG.

revolution. But this kind of government does not necessarily signify weakness and prostration. In the absence of a strong revolutionary party of the proletariat, a combination of semi-reforms, left phrases and gestures still more to the left, and of reprisals can prove to be of much more effective service to the bourgeoisie than fascism." (We may add, naked military dictatorship.—E.G.)

Frank's hazy notions of democracy and bonapartism can be seen in his references scattered throughout his article. To take a few examples:

" . . . The use of democratic slogans—combined with transitional slogans is justified more precisely, **because the possibilities of a democratic regime are non-existent . . .**"

" . . . Precisely because **we do not generally have in Europe at the present time democratic regimes, because there is literally no place for them . . .**"

" . . . One must no more confuse the bonapartism 'of the right' with fascism than the bonapartism 'of the left' with democracy. We have seen that bonapartism takes very different forms according to the conditions in which the two mortally opposed camps find themselves; **we maintain also that the existence of democratic liberties, even of very great democratic liberties, does not suffice to make a regime democratic. The Bonapartists a-la-Kerensky, Popular Front . . . are even notorious for their flood of democratic liberty up to the point where capitalist society thereby even risks its balance and is in danger of capsizing. Democratic liberties do not proceed, AS IN A REGIME WHICH ONE CAN CORRECTLY DEFINE AS DEMOCRATIC, from the existence of a margin for reform within capitalism, but on the contrary, from a situation of acute crisis, the result of the absence of all margin or reforms.**"

" . . . The regime of the Popular Front was not a democratic regime;† it contained within itself numerous elements of Bonapartism as we shall see further on."

The conception of democracy which is put forward by Comrade Frank never existed in heaven or earth. It exists only in the idealistic norms of liberalism. **Always, democracy, i.e. bourgeois democracy has been built on the framework of repression.** Every bourgeois constitution or regime contains its Article 48 as in the Weimar Constitution. The very existence of class society presupposes a regime of oppression. But only one who has abandoned Marxist discipline of thought and operates on the basis of metaphysical categories can equate democracy with bonapartism, or for that matter with fascism. Though there are many points of similarity between these regimes, and elements of naked military rule in all these regimes in one degree or another. But quantity changes into quality. What dictates the nature of the regime is not this or that **element**, but its **basic features**. Democracy today can become bonapartism tomorrow and be changed into fascism the next day. Fascism, as we have seen can be transformed into democracy and the process repeated.

The Marxist method is not to lump all regimes indiscriminately together. That is the easy way, but it will lead to blunders and confusion. The Marxist method is to examine things in their process of change and evolution. To examine each government in turn, to establish its specific features and tendencies. To prepare for abrupt changes and transitions, which is the basic characteristic of our epoch, and thus to rectify and delimit, if necessary, our characterisations at each successive stage. The painful limitations of Pierre Frank's method (which he labels Marxism but is in reality impressionism) is summed up in his own words:

" . . . The term 'bonapartism' does not completely exhaust the

† Every capitalist regime contains within it elements of Bonapartism—some more pronounced than others. This assertion therefore serves to further confuse.

characterisation of the regime, but it is indispensable to employ it in present day Europe, if one wishes to go forward with the least possible chance of error. Let us add finally that Marxism is not alone in the possession of such important general ideas: all the sciences do likewise. Thus chemists call bodies carbides which differ more widely from one another than the bonapartism of Schliecher and that of Kerensky. And chemistry doesn't get along so badly either on that account. The contrary is true."

The Stalinists used the same method during the Third Period with lamentable results in Germany. Starting with a correct generalisation that all the parties from social democracy to fascism were agents of the capitalist class

. . . they ended up by saying that, therefore . . . there was no difference between them—all were fascists of different varieties. For the scientist, as for the Marxist, the problem begins where, for Frank, it ends. A chemist can classify certain bodies under a general heading of carbides. But a chemist who stopped at this definition would not get along so well! If, for example, on the basis that a chemist had defined silicon carbide (carborundum) and calcium carbide—all under the same heading of "carbides"—one attempted to work an acetylene lamp on a bicycle with the former instead of the latter, some very sad results would accrue. It would not be possible to light the path ahead. No more with Frank's method can we cast light on the nature of the regimes in Europe.

FOR THE DOCUMENTS OF THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
In the French Language

Read

QUATRIEME INTERNATIONALE

1s. per copy from Business Manager

Published for the Revolutionary Communist Party by H. Atkinson,
256, Harrow Road, London, W.2.

Printed by C. A. Brock & Co. Ltd., (T.U.), 79 Southern Row, London, W.10.