# Workers International News

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*Theoretical Organ of the Revolutionary Communist Party*

## Contents



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# WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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MOST of our readers will by this time have received copies of our two new pamphlets: "Imperialism in the Middle East" by T. Cliff and "The Russian Revolution" by Leon Trotsky. Since we published this material in "Workers' International News" we have had a constant demand for it in pamphlet form.

The pamphlets have now appeared. They are attractively produced, with coloured covers, and we trust that our comrades and sympathisers in Britain and in all English-speaking countries will see that they receive the widest possible sale. We were faced with a terrible dilemma in September. For months we have been waiting for these pamphlets but, due to the pressure on the printshops, it was impossible to produce them without foregoing an issue of the magazine, hence no separate issue appeared for September. We trust that the sales of these important pamphlets will justify our decision to print them at the expense of WIN.

A further point on the question of literature sales. As all comrades are aware, we will now be able to print more copies of WIN because of the extra paper allocation. We appeal to all our readers to go all out to increase the circulation of the magazine to enable us to take full advantage of the increased paper allocation. At the same time it will enable us to get the magazine on to a sounder financial basis. It can be assumed that this is only the first instalment of the paper increases. If we are to aim at a bigger magazine with clearer type, then we must establish a steady circulation which will make this financially possible. It all depends on regular sales. Are you getting new readers for the magazine?

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS
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## Editorial Notes

# TWO STEPS FORWARD

ONE of the most important functions of revolutionary organisations is to meet in conference and draw up a balance sheet of progress and setbacks, gains and losses in all spheres of activity; to make a critical analysis of the work of the past period, and chart the course ahead. The programme and perspectives of the revolutionary party are the products of the lessons of history, the theoretical prognoses and the collective experiences of the party members and the working class on a world scale. They cannot be invested with papal infallibility, but constitute a living guide to action which must constantly be subjected to the test of events, checked and verified at every stage, modified or developed as experience dictates. Theory and practice cannot be abstracted. They are inseparably interrelated. One is the touchstone of the other.

Measured by these standards the Trotskyist organisations in Britain and France have acquitted themselves with merit during this month. The test of seriousness of any organisation is the manner in which it treats and discusses questions and transforms words into deeds. Dilletantes discuss interminably. For them discussion is an end itself. For serious revolutionaries it is only a means to an end—action to further the cause of socialist revolution. Discussion gives place to decision and action. "Freedom of discussion, complete unity in action" is the axiom of democratic centralism, of Bolshevism, whose standard-bearer today is the international Trotskyist movement: the Fourth International.

The viability of the ideas and traditions of Trotskyism, was given a new expression in the gatherings of two Sections of the Fourth International which took place over the second week-end of September: the National Conferences of the French Parti Communiste Internationaliste and the British Revolutionary Communist Party, which were held in Paris and London respectively.

**REVOLUTIONARY ACCOUNTING.** The delegates came together and discussed the balance sheets of the operations, political and organisational, over the past period; and drew the conclusions concerning national and international problems and policies. The democratic character of the proceedings completely refutes the sneering cynics and demoralised "left" petty-bourgeois who attempt to equate Bolshevism with Stalinism. This lie was well and truly nailed in the French Conference where the erstwhile minority tendency gained a majority of the votes and took over the leadership of the Party. In Britain the Conference, after discussing the resolution of the International leadership presented for discussion prior to a World Congress, took a decision supporting "the main line of the international resolution which it considers to be as follows: that the character of our epoch, on a world scale, and particularly in Europe is fundamentally revolutionary; that increasingly favourable objective conditions exist for the building of the revolutionary parties of the Fourth International; and that the political work of all sections of the International, and especially those in Europe, must be concentrated around the transitional programme," but which went on to propose important amendments on the questions of economic tempo and short term perspectives in Europe; the relative strength of the Soviet Union; the importance of Stalinism and reformism in countries outside Europe; and the tactics of revolutionary parties in Europe in relation to the mass parties of Social-Democracy. These decisions alone suffice to demonstrate that Stalinist monolithism has no place in the Bolshevik Fourth International!

**THE PROGRESS OF THE PCI AND THE RCP.** The French PCI has made big strides forward in the past months. Outstanding landmarks of its successes are the 45,000 votes gained in the recent General Election, and the legalisation and development of a magnificent weekly paper **La Vérité** (The Truth) with a mass circulation. The reports show also a substantial gain in membership, particularly among the youth.

Political events in Britain have developed more slowly, and afforded less opportunities to the Revolutionary Communist Party for spectacular interventions in the class struggle. Nevertheless, the publicity and influence gained from the role which we played in the Dockers' struggle last autumn and the advantage taken of the Nuremberg trials to expose the Moscow frame-ups, have added to the Party's stature. Despite the political lull which has followed on the coming to power of the first majority Labour Government, the RCP made steady gains in active membership over the past year, especially in the London area where the strongest section of the Party is concentrated.

**BRITISH PERSPECTIVES.** The main resolution adopted by the RCP is concerned with the development of events in Britain and the rôle, tactics and possibilities for the building of the revolutionary party in this country. The text appears in September SOCIALIST APPEAL. This resolution is in part a self-criticism recognising that the tempo of development of the class struggle has been, and remains much slower than estimated by our last Party Conference. Thus the resolution declares:

> "This long term perspective (of certain catastrophe) of British imperialism is indisputable and has been long foreseen in the documents of the Fourth International and the Conference documents of the RCP. However, a mistake in conjuncture which was made by the Party was the telescoping of the inevitable long-term crisis with the immediate perspective for Britain. . . .
>
> "The inevitable crisis, however, will not be immediate. It will be delayed for a time. The orientation and strategy of the Revolutionary

Communist Party is firmly based on the long-term perspective of crisis and decline; but its eyes are also wide open to the immediate conjunctural upswing and its meaning. **For it is on the basis of the economic upswing and the political and industrial moods it will engender, that the immediate evolution of the proletariat will depend.** Before a new radicalisation takes place which will lift the workers onto new and higher levels of struggle, deep economic and political transformations will come into being. The growth and building of the revolutionary party, and the strengthening of its ties with the advanced sections of the working class will depend to a considerable extent, on a correct prognosis of this period."

Flowing from this are the political conclusions:

"In evaluating the orientation of the last Party Conference, it can be seen that we anticipated a development of events at a far more rapid tempo than has taken place. On this basis we overestimated the possibilities of growth. This error must be corrected, or it can have serious consequences for the Party by causing a sense of frustration among the cadres in face of a slower tempo of events. The Party must be prepared to face a period, not of rapid and spectacular gains, but of slow growth and entrenchment in the propaganda field and in the trade unions and industrial arena. . . .

"Without illusions, firmly directing the day to day work of the Party . . . we can take serious steps to penetrate the best sections of the working class and build the Revolutionary Communist Party which must be a serious force when the illusions of the working class in the Labour Party begin to collapse, and the great decisive struggles open out before us in Britain."

**ON THE USSR.** By an overwhelming majority the Conference carried a resolution, which appears in full elsewhere in this issue, reaffirming "the basic programmatic conceptions of the Fourth International as they relate to the Soviet Union, to the dual nature of the system of society in the USSR as a transitional regime between capitalism and socialism and which therefore has both capitalist and socialist forces at conflict with each other." With only one delegate voting in favour, a resolution defending the Schactmanite conceptions of "Bureaucratic Collectivism" and rejecting the defence of the USSR, was defeated. On the important question of the nature and development of the SU theoretical discussion continues throughout the International, and further documents of our Conference and pre-Conference discussion will appear in WIN as contributions to the national and International discussion.

Especially welcome at both the French and British Conferences were the interventions and active participation of the International leadership and the fraternal delegates from visiting Sections which gave the proceedings a truly international character.

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**POWER POLITICS IN PARIS.** The Paris "Peace" Conference seems to be transforming itself into something resembling a marathon "squat". Nobody any longer pretends that there can be any possibility of the United Nations reaching real agreement among themselves, let alone producing the recipe for an enduring peace. Nor can they; for the causes of war lie deep down in the economic base of the capitalist social system.

**STALINIST BUREAUCRACY DESIRES EXPANSION.** It comes as no surprise to Marxists that the Paris proceedings drag on as they do. The capitalist "allies" of the Kremlin cannot, even if they so wished, recognise juridically the de facto sphere of influence of the USSR without risking a series of further expansions. Stalin and Molotov employ consequent delaying tactics to avoid a settlement of European affairs which will not be in their favour. So long as things remain in the present state of flux, with nothing recognised as final, with no conclusive frontiers, Stalin can advance from stage to stage, economically and politically; can continue to present the United Nations with one fait accompli after another. But once things were finalised in the form of peace treaties and fixed frontiers, the difficulties of Stalin's crude methods of diplomacy would be even greater than at present. They would antagonise the masses in the capitalist countries incomparably more than they are now doing.

**BOURGEOISIE FEAR USSR.** There have been some quite revealing pronouncements from the capitalist spokesmen recently. The Stuttgart discourse of US Foreign Minister Byrnes, and the London statement of Smuts, indicate the lines being pursued by the dominant section of Anglo-American capitalism. Their idea is to rebuild once again a strong capitalist Germany as "a bulwark against Bolshevism", of course in the name of dollar humanitarianism. Moves have already been begun in this direction. For example the merger of the Anglo-American zones for economic purposes. And France has been offered certain concessions in the Saar in an attempt to bring her into line with this project. Also in line with this policy is the tendency of the American and British occupation authorities to Germanise their administrations. But there are still many barriers in the way of such an enterprise. There are still many conflicting interests in the ranks of the imperialist powers. The choice between a new German Frankenstein and a Soviet dominated Europe is by no means a happy one for the French ruling class to make, faced as they are with the Communist Party as a decisive force in French politics.

The ruling classes of the imperialist countries are not wholly agreed on how to face up to the problem of Soviet expansions. That is clear from the speeches of Henry Wallace, of Churchill and of Eden, all of whom proceed from the premise that Stalin has got half of Europe "for keeps". Henry Wallace apparently takes the view that US imperialism should face up to this, should accept the fact that half Europe has gone, and should, therefore, try and make a compromise with the Soviet bureaucracy on this basis.

Churchill recognises his own miscalculations of Soviet power and the effect that the war has had upon it. He dreads the increasing strength of the Soviet Union from a long-term point of view while Western Europe, split up and impotent, under the national capitalist states and rivalries, will be helpless in face of the Soviet colossus and of America. Churchill seeks to find some measure of holding the Soviet bloc in check by means of a counter bloc of Western European states, including Western Germany, under the benevolent leadership

of Great Britain. This is the meaning of Churchill's proposal for "a kind of United States of Europe" which is now being further advocated by Eden, and has apparently been accepted as a policy by an influential section of the Tories. The Stalinists set up a howl after Churchill's Zurich speech, declaring that it amounted to a call for atom bomb war against the Soviet Union. In fact it means no more than what is stated above. Eden's "tone" puts the project in its correct setting. Churchill takes comfort from the fact that America has the atom bomb which, though it cannot be used in an offensive way to destroy the power of the Soviet Union, he describes as a "shield" and "protection."

American imperialism is faced with a dilemma. Its enormously increased strength compels it to attempt the unrivalled domination of the globe. And this is the basis of US diplomacy. But the dollar imperialists are also faced with the unpleasant and unexpected fact that relations with Europe are on the one hand far different from those planned and expected by US imperialism when it entered the war, and on the other by the tremendous upsurge of the class struggle at home. They can dangle the atom bomb but they cannot drop it . . . in the period immediately ahead. The American imperialists are not able to bring their immense strength to bear immediately, despite the desires of the die-hards who favour a military showdown with the Soviet bureaucracy right away. That is why Wallace is criticising Byrnes' diplomacy as being bluff, and threats which cannot be carried out because of the mood of the masses, especially the proletariat in Europe, Asia and America. The "hard" line of Byrnes has not led to the expected retreat but to a stalemate at the Paris Conference.

Byrnes, and the section of the American bourgeoisie for whom he speaks, see that if they cannot "hold the line" now, US imperialism will be paralyzed by economic crises and the class struggle in the next few years, while Russia's strength will grow. The inevitable **dénouement** of war, within a decade or so, will find Russia immeasurably stronger and the capitalist world much weaker. On a different basis American imperialism finds itself in a similar position to which she found herself after World War I when the fruits of victory slipped through her grasp. She couldn't bring her power to bear because of events at home. Now the USA must, through the compulsion of her overwhelming economic and military might, intervene and establish spheres of influence on all continents. She has the power to dominate the globe, but before she can deploy it a very different relationship of national and class forces must come into being.

Hitler could only use the immense strength of German imperialism when the workers of Germany and of Europe were crushed. American imperialism, with an industrial and military might beside which the Nazi war machine would seem puny, cannot bring it into action against the Soviet Union without the workers of Europe and Asia being crushed in the titanic battles which loom ahead. But before this can happen all regimes will have been put to the test. The American working class will measure its forces with the capitalist class to decide who shall become the masters of the American continent. The babblings in Paris of the imperialists and the Stalinist bureaucracy take place against this background. In this context must be understood the ceaseless attempts of the diplomats of capitalism and Stalinism to find a basis for compromise which will avert the socialist revolution in Europe which threatens them all.

In Eastern Germany the Stalinist bureaucracy is digging in and consolidating its hold on the economy. So also in the Balkans, in Poland, and even farther afield. The new commercial treaty which the Soviet Union has negotiated with Sweden, in face of American opposition, gives a credit of £75,000,000

which alone ties Swedish economy to that of the Soviet Union. But Stalin is demanding goods the production of which involves a complete reorganisation of Swedish industry such as will render trade with the western capitalist countries completely subordinate to, and will bring her within, the Soviet industrial orbit.

While the present relationship of class forces lasts, time is on Stalin's side. The "tough" attitude of America towards the Soviet Union has a defensive as well as offensive nature. It is designed as much to stave off the ever-growing Russian demands and expansions as to make breaches in the Soviet sphere of influence. Stalinist diplomacy is crude but effective. All original demands exceed the target by far, and after a new "compromise", following on a stubborn stand, the Soviet bureaucracy generally comes out of the deal with bigger pickings than are originally aimed at. Alongside this goes the sponsoring of "national" and "democratic" movements as, for instance, in Persia and Turkey. Such policies on the part of the Stalinist bureaucracy show certain gains for the economic and political strength of the USSR in relation to the imperialist power. They have a dual motive force: the strategic necessity of the Soviet Union, and policy of the bureaucracy to expand its powers, its prestige and its income.

But such methods must not be confused with the Leninist policy of world revolution. The usurpers who have taken over Lenin's mantle have no desire to see the world proletariat overthrow the exploiters and establish socialist regimes. Having profited from the turn of history's wheel which has placed them in comfortable positions of power and privilege, in line with the reactionary, nationalistic theory of "building Socialism in one country", they seek to stay its course and dam the independent struggle of the masses. They utilise their instruments, the Communist Parties, to line up the masses for the purpose of putting pressure on their bourgeois governments, not overthrowing the capitalist regimes. For the spread of the socialist revolution on a world scale would have no less disastrous consequences for the gravediggers of Soviet democracy—the bureaucratic ruling caste—than for the ruling classes of the capitalist countries. The **social** revolution in the capitalist countries will be supplemented by a **political** revolution in the Soviet Union which will oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, restore Soviet democracy, and facilitate the transition to a world Communist society.

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**STALINISTS SELL OUT SQUATTERS.** The squatters' movement began, on a national scale, as a spontaneous action on the part of the homeless masses. The movement into empty Government property alarmed the authorities, but they were powerless to do anything in face of it. To evict all the squatters in army camps up and down the country would have been an operation of the magnitude of a minor civil war. Bevan made the best of the situation by declaring his "sympathy" for the homeless occupants of the vacant barracks. His sympathy evaporated, however, when the Stalinists organised a movement of homeless London workers into empty property belonging to the bourgeoisie. When the sacred rights of private property were in jeopardy, His Majesty's "socialists", with the erstwhile "left", Aneurin Bevan, at the head of the pack, hastened to show that in a struggle which had a class character they stood four-square by the rights of private property. There was

no longer any sympathy for the desperate, homeless workers; but on the contrary, arrests, court proceedings and a vicious circular directing local authorities to "deny all facilities" to the squatters.

**LEGAL STUNT NOT CLASS BATTLE.**

In the beginning the movement of the London squatters into luxury flats and mansions, although clearly organised by the Communist Party leadership, took on the colouration of a serious class struggle and created a measure of panic in Government circles. For a few days the Labour leaders hesitated not knowing what action to take. However, they were soon able to estimate its limited character, and, acting through the public prosecutor and the law courts, exposed the hollowness of the campaign and quickly called the bluff of the Stalinist leadership.

When the first squatters moved into the Duchess of Bedford flats Stalinist leader Henderson declared: **"We are not getting out. I shall be the last to go and tear gass will not move us."** Only a week later Henderson declared his intention to quit without any semblance of a battle. "Those who were ignorant of our plight now know and those who knew and ignored are now shamed into a sense of urgency that London's homeless shall be housed." Some definite gains have been made. It is true that the movement succeeded in "calling attention" to the plight of the homeless. It is true that it has provoked a few gestures from the authorities and even some minor ameliorations for those seeking homes. But it is nonsense to make the claims the Stalinists do. Are those who own the luxury flats from which the squatters have been evicted to make way for wealthy parasites who can afford ten and fifteen guineas a week "now shamed into a sense of urgency that London's homeless shall be housed"? And, what is much more important, **have the Labour leaders been forced to take action in the interests of the masses which conflict with the vested interests of the capitalists and landlords responsible for the housing position?** To this decisive class criterion again the answer is NO.

Under certain conditions, after a valiant struggle, it may be necessary to organise a retreat in order to keep the forces intact and capable of further struggles. But the crime of the Stalinist leadership consists of giving the impression of a real class operation to those whom they were leading when they never intended to wage a real class battle. Instead of mobilising mass support among the organised workers, they panicked when they saw it gathering momentum. They found themselves unable to restrain their own rank and file militants. In the London Trades Council, for example, leading Stalinists called for "sympathy" and vigorously **opposed a motion of support** for the squatters, clearly explaining the difference between sympathy and support in their speeches and thus showing the true character of the movement, or rather its leadership.

**STALINISTS HAVE REFORMIST PROGRAMME.**

The Communist Party leadership cannot lead a real struggle of the masses along class lines. Their policy is determined, not by the class needs of the workers of this country, but by the criterion of whether the foreign policy of Government merits their support or opposition. Basically the CP programme does not differ from that of the reformist Labour leaders. The taking over by the masses of empty mansions and flats is a fine move meriting the unqualified support of the Labour movement, **including the defence of the CP leaders undergoing prosecution for their participation.** But at most it is only a palliative measure. It can ease some of the pain—to that extent, and

to the extent that it sharpens the class consciousness and independent spirit of the workers we give it full support—but the real solution of the housing problem goes much deeper. It strikes at the very roots of private ownership.

During their short term of office Churchill's caretaker Tory Government announced a programme of building 200,000 houses in the first year after the war. Just what they would actually have achieved is another matter. The important point is that this absurdly inadequate programme was rightly denounced as "chicken feed" by the Labour leaders, at that time in opposition.

Some seven to ten million new workers' houses are required over the next 10-12 years. One million are needed immediately. But after one year the Labour Government has produced only 192,000 "homes". A claim which, when boiled down, reveals that only 20,000 permanent houses and 40,000 prefabs have been built in twelve months. The remaining "homes" consist of repaired or adapted property.

**THE REAL SOLUTION.** Certain strata of the ruling class have a vested interest in the housing shortage, just as the capitalists always have an interest in creating shortages in order to increase their profits. In the case of houses the real barriers to solving the problem are the private ownership of the land; the private ownership of the means of production; and the private finance houses, the banks and building societies. The bases of house production exist, i.e. manpower and raw materials. The barriers of private ownership must go.

The organised building workers and technicians must prepare and submit, through the trade unions, a four or five year plan of house building to meet the needs of the people and to be carried through under the control of the trade unions. Such action would clearly reveal to the masses the need to sweep aside the vested interests and produce the houses under workers' control.

In the meantime the Labour Government must be forced to reverse its policy and requisition all empty luxury flats and mansions for the use of the workers. In an attempt to regain their waning prestige amongst the most militant sections of the working class, the Stalinists took the leadership of the London squatters movement and . . . led it up the garden. They had no real intentions of waging a struggle which would develop revolutionary implications and force the Labour leadership to take action against the vested interests of capitalism. Nevertheless the squatters movement is the beginning of a serious movement along class lines. This sell-out of the Stalinists must not be permitted to hold back the initiative and movement towards independent class struggle on the part of the masses.

# RESOLUTION OF THE R.C.P. CONFERENCE ON THE SOVIET UNION

Conference reaffirms the basic programmatic conceptions of the Fourth International as they relate to the Soviet Union, to the dual nature of the system of society in the USSR as a transitional regime between capitalism and socialism and which therefore has both capitalist and socialist forces at conflict with each other.*

It declares that the payment of wage labour, the production of commodities, the circulation of money, and the differentiations which exist on the basis of these capitalistic social relations, give a capitalist character to the state (which occupies the same position in relation to the national economy as the capitalist occupies in relation to a single enterprise) in the first stages of even a healthy proletarian revolution. In this sense, the capitalist state exists but without a capitalist class. Insofar as the state in Russia is bureaucratic, degenerated and totalitarian, which encourages the tendency towards capitalist differentiation, the capitalist characteristics of this state assume tremendous and growing proportions. Nevertheless, on the basis of these features it is erroneous to draw the conclusion that Russian economy is a state capitalist economy.

The fundamental class nature of the USSR as a workers' state that has degenerated in the direction of capitalism is established for us on the basis of the nationalisation of land, of the basic means of production, transport and exchange, the planned system of economy, and monopoly of foreign trade centred in the hands of the state. These remain the fundamental gains of the October Revolution of 1917, and are the economic premise for our class characterisation.

Among many other factors established by Leon Trotsky, the backwardness of Russian economy in 1917 and the isolation and encirclement by imperialist capitalist states resulted in the political expropriation of the proletariat and the entrenchment of the totalitarian Stalinist bureaucracy in complete control of the state apparatus, of the economic means of life of the Russian people, and thus gave rise to the economic exploitation of the Russian workers and peasants by the state bureaucracy. Meanwhile, there has developed the growth of rouble millionaires on the basis of capitalist forms of degeneration. These transformations testify that the dual nature of the Russian state can lead back to capitalism if the workers of Russia fail to take political control and the direction of economy which this entails, out of the hands of the bureaucracy, no less than the statification can lead to the further development of the socialist economy if the working class, as in the early days of the Russian Revolution, take control once again into their own hands.

The defence of state property from the encroachments of private individuals, from the encroachments of the bureaucracy and from the economic penetration and eventual military attack of world imperialism, is a progressive historical task which the Fourth International has set itself by means of revolutionary communist politics. Conference reaffirms its complete solidarity with the necessity for this defence and by the methods established in the programme of the Fourth International as hitherto propagated by the RCP.

Conference rejects the conception that Russian society is a new form of class exploitive society, socialogically defined as managerial society or bureaucratic collectivism. It declares that these theories are essentially revisionist as they relate to Marxian economics, that they substitute the philosophy of pragmatism in place of historical materialism, and must inevitably lead —as they have already done on the part of those who adopted these theories in the past, to a complete break with communism and to further theoretical revisionism and mistaken policies in the class struggle. Conference rejects the conception of this revisionist tendency that we are defeatists in relation to Russia during war in the same way as we are defeatists in relation to the capitalist powers.

The transitional character of the USSR requires that we constantly check our theories in the light of changing social conditions. The further entrenchment of the bureaucracy, the widening differentiation in the social conditions of the Russian population, and the extended legislation of capitalist inheritance rights, are processes which necessitate that the sociological nature of Russian society be constantly re-examined by the organisations of the Fourth International. Such a re-examination is especially necessary in view of the social transformations that have already taken place and are in the process of evolution in the countries of Eastern Europe that are under Russian occupation and control.

Conference notes that our own organisation, and especially the leading comrades, have failed as have all other sections of the Fourth International, to examine and explain the social transformations taking place in these Eastern European countries, to establish the class character of the process, and especially to establish **the class nature of the states that have come into being.** This is an indication of theoretical hesitation and indecision on the part of our International movement as a whole in the light of new and amazingly complicated social phenomena.

In Czechslovakia, as in the other countries where, primarily as the result of the war and the effects of the Russian occupation and of the uprising of workers and peasants which the approach of the Red Army engendered, the land has been confiscated from the large landowners and nationalised or broken up, or where the means of production, transport and exchange have been nationalised, the RCP defends these measures of statification and reforms from the counter-revolution and seeks to extend these new property forms on the basis of workers' control and the seizure of state power by the proletariat. Despite the large-scale measures taken against private ownership of the land and means of production, the working class parties share the power with the capitalists in these countries, incorporating the Liberal and even more reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie into the state political machine and economic organisation. The precise nature of the regimes in Czechoslovakia and Eastern Europe, which are essentially transitional regimes, must be established on the basis of a thorough analysis of the economic and political transformation (which requires comprehensive data) in an international political discussion.

In view of the confusion which undoubtedly exists in the ranks of the Fourth International and of the urgency for clarification of this problem for the whole future of the International, Conference requests that the IS issue a declaration establishing its position and with the purpose of initiating an international discussion. Conference instructs the PB to open a discussion in the theoretical journal of the British Party.

* "The capitalist forces within the Soviet Union have undoubtedly been strengthened during the war, but the following definition of the dual nature of the Soviet Union given by Trotsky in 1935 remains essentially correct:—

'The Soviet Union is a contradictory society half-way between capitalism and socialism, in which: (a) the productive forces are still far from adequate to give the state property a socialist character; (b) the tendency toward primitive accumulation

created by want breaks out through innumerable pores of the planned economy; (c) norms of distribution preserving a bourgeois character lie at the basis of a new differentiation of society; (d) the economic growth, while slowly bettering the situation of the toilers, promotes a swift formation of privileged strata; (e) exploiting the social antagonisms, a bureaucracy has converted itself into an uncontrolled caste alien to socialism; (f) the social revolution, betrayed by the ruling party, still exists in property relations and in the consciousness of the toiling masses; (g) a further development of the accumulating contradictions can as well lead to socialism as back to capitalism; (h) on the road to capitalism the counter-revolution would have to break the resistance of the workers; (i) on the road to socialism the workers would have to overthrow the bureaucracy. In the last analysis, the question will be decided by a struggle of living social forces, both on the national and the world arena.'

(Revolution Betrayed. p.255)"

# RESOLUTION of the R.C.P. CONFERENCE on the NATURE of the REGIMES in EUROPE

This Conference reaffirms the basic conclusions of the last year's Conference document on the nature of the regimes in Europe. The developments in Europe have confirmed the correctness of Trotsky's analysis in 1931, when he wrote in connection with the regimes which would issue after the fall of Fascism:

**"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 bourgeois counter-revolution nevertheless found itself obliged to adapt itself to the circumstances resulting from this crushing of the proletarian revolution which resulted in the constitution of a republic in the 'democratic' parliamentary form. Is the same—or about the same—eventually excluded for Italy? No, it is not excluded.** The enthronement of fascism was the result of the incompletion 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, maneouvres 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 on the ruins of its power in a fascist form, could be nothing else than a parliamentary and democratic state."**

In Italy, France, Holland, Belgium and the countries of Western Europe, unstable bourgeois democratic regimes have been established. The proletariat and its organisations have increased their strength and the bourgeoisie is compelled at this stage to rule through the bourgeois democratic parliament

and not through an arbiter standing "above the parties" and ruling by decree.

These regimes prove irrefutably the Marxist contention that the political regime is not immediately determined by, or a direct reflection of, the economic base. The economic basis of bourgeois democracy disappeared decades ago. Yet bourgeois democracy lingered on. The nature of the regime is determined by the economic base only in the long run. The nature of the regime is immediately determined by the course of the class struggle and the relations between the classes—bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and proletariat. It is the resultant, not of a simple, but of a complex working out of these forces.

The method of Marxism indicated, in advance, that it would be impossible for the bourgeoisie immediately to impose Bonapartist, Franco-type, military-police dictatorships in Europe in the present period. The upsurge of the masses announcing the developing processes of the proletarian revolution, could be stemmed and diverted into safe channels for the bourgeoisie only by the method of the "democratic counter-revolution."

The mass basis of reaction disappeared throughout the continent of Europe with the disappearance of Hitler and Mussolini. The real power rested in the hands of the Social Democrats and Stalinists. Their counter-revolutionary policies prevented the workers from taking power. But when the bourgeoisie has to rest on Social Democratic and Stalinist agents for the purpose of destroying the revolution, they cannot do so with bonapartist or fascist methods, but only by the method of bourgeois democracy. Thus, the regimes that emerged in Western Europe were bourgeois democratic regimes.

The **essence** of Bonapartism is: 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 ruling class, 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 the 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.

Despite their diverse histories, which explain their different national peculiarities, the regimes of bourgeois democracy **all possess certain specific common traits.** These are the traits which are decisive in determining the Marxist classification. On the one hand, all have independent workers' organisations, Trade Unions, Parties, Clubs, etc., with the rights which go with them. The right to strike, to 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 for our analysis of a regime. It is the totality of the relations which is the determining factor.) On the other hand, the regime would be based on an elected parliamentary government, and not absolute governments ruling by decree.

At this stage, the bourgeoisie have been compelled to organise a counterweight against the proletarian organisations by relying on parties of the petty bourgeoisie basing themselves on "Christian democracy." At a later stage, when the revolutionary wave has subsided, and if the bourgeoisie can smash the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, differentiation in these parties can prepare the way for reaction, for new bonapartist formations and for neo-fascist gangs.

But at the present time in Europe we have coalition, or Popular Front Governments, in which the leaderships of the workers' organisations collaborate with, and prop up, the bourgeois state. It is on this basis that the shattered state machine has been recreated in these countries, on however shaky a basis.

Taking advantage of all the facilities presented by the conditions of bourgeois democracy, the parties of the Fourth International must warn the working class that such conditions cannot last indefinitely. As history has demonstrated, the petty bourgeoisie, disappointed by the failure of the proletariat can swing again in a different direction. Economic crises, the further decline of capitalism, the disillusionment of the proletariat can prepare the way for new movements in the direction of reaction. However, even here, there will be an interaction on the proletariat. The attempt of the bourgeoisie to move towards bonapartism and fascism, will provoke countermovements on the part of the proletariat. Over a longer or shorter period, the decisive issue will be posed.

The treachery of the Social Democrats and Stalinists has given the bourgeoisie a breathing space by their paralysing the movement of the masses. This in its turn, was possible only because of the weakness of the revolutionary party. The decisive role which the revolutionary party plays in the development of the proletarian revolution and the seizure of power by the proletariat, has been underlined by the events in Europe since the end of World War II.

Despite the strengthening of the bourgeois apparatus the development of the contradictions in this epoch of the death agony of capitalism presages an extreme instability for the bourgeois democratic governments. The ebbing of the movement of the proletariat, or even sharp clashes with the bourgeoisie which fail to result in victory as a result of the betrayal of the Stalinists and Social Democrats; the despair of the petty bourgeoisie; the violent fluctuations in the governments due to the crisis: all these will result in a new balance of forces and can prepare the conditions whereby bonapartist regimes will arise. The rise of reactionary bands would give the possibility for the state once again to raise itself as "mediator" between the classes.

Such bonapartist regimes under modern conditions, could only be very unstable and of short duration. They would be a transition for the bourgeoisie for the passing over to fascism —i.e., the complete obliteration and extermination of the organisations of the working class.

The final decision which is posed for the next epoch can only be: victory of the Socialist Revolution or a neo-Fascism and black reaction on a scale unprecedented in history. In clearly posing this alternative before the masses, the Party of the proletariat will pursue a flexible policy: defending and extending the rights which the working class possess, as a necessary step in mobilising the proletariat for the conquest of power.

* * *

# THE INDIAN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

THE Constituent Assembly conceived by the Cabinet Mission has created a crop of misunderstanding. No one need doubt that the Cabinet Mission's India plan concedes what can be called the ghost, or at least the phantom, of the real constituent. If it deserves its name, it must needs be a sovereign body, which feature, without a doubt, the Cabinet Mission's Constituent wholly lacks. By no stretch of the imagination can one treat it as an instrument of the transfer of power.

## CABINET'S CUSSEDNESS

The authors of the constitutional document are altogether forgetful of the all-important attribute of a Constituent Assembly in its correct signification. This can be ascribed to the cussedness of the Cabinet Mission rather than to their ignorance. Even the Dominion Constitutions have exemplified the workings of the Constituent Assemblies in a manner fundamentally different from the one offered to India.

The Dominion Constituents have enjoyed a measure of sovereignty, which, it may be assumed, is not quite unknown to the Cabinet Ministers. But strictly speaking even such Assemblies as came into being in the various British dependencies, did not conform to the pattern of classic Constituents. In so far as the Dominion autonomy receives its final seal of sanction from Acts of British Parliament, it is an important qualification of the attribute of sovereignty. If an Act of Parliament is needed to ratify the Constitutions of the Dominions overseas, it is not difficult to see where the real sovereignty lies.

Besides, it lies within Parliament to revoke or rescind any such constitution, as it has done at least in one instance. The Statute of Westminster recognises Dominion autonomy. But it must not be forgotten that Parliament possesses the power to abrogate it at will.

## TRIAL OF STRENGTH

Yet, the Indian variant of the Constituent is more circumscribed than those of the Dominions which, at least, devised the Constitutions without extraneous assistance. The powers in the case of the Dominions were much less fettered, for which reasons are not far to seek. In every case, it was the result of a trial of strength between the colonies and the Mother Country.

## AUTONOMY—OUTCOME OF CIVIL WAR

The British North American Act (1867) was the outcome of a civil war, and as such, was wrested from unwilling hands. It was not a prize won for good behaviour. Nor was it obtained on the sufferance of the British. Without violent disturbance Canada could never have won what it did, even though it did not amount to full sovereignty. But the Constituent which comes as a gift from the British Cabinet Mission is of necessary ineffective inasmuch as it cannot possess a vestige of sovereignty.

## THE UNION RESULTED FROM WAR

The Union of South Africa is really the product of the Boer War, which, of course, the South Africans lost. But they won the Peace. The result is that the Autonomy of the Union, as it exists today, is the upshot of struggle, without which nothing has been achieved even by the Colonies, who have so much in common with the Mother Country. Even the limited sovereignty of the Union Constituent could not have been won without violent efforts.

## CONSTITUENT FORGED FROM BELOW

In so far as the transfer of power in the Dominions is contingent on parliamentary sanction, the constitution making bodies did not have sovereign rights and powers. In so far as they held such powers, however limited, this was the result of bitter struggle. Constitutions in every such case were forged from below although ratified from above, and such ratification as came, was in a considerable measure the outcome of mass upsurge.

## COMMONWEALTH FROM CIVIL DISORDER

The Commonwealth of Australia was the creation of the British Parliamentary Act of 1900 under the stress of civil disorder which in no time would have reached the stage of civil war. It was this danger which accounts for the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia, and as such the sovereignty it possessed was the fruit of an impending civil war.

## SOVEREIGNTY OF THE IRISH CONSTITUENT

The Irish Free State was established after a long struggle from 1916 to 1921. The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922 had transferred power to an Irish Constituent even nullified very many terms of the Treaty. The Constituent Assembly in Ireland was subsequent to the Anglo-Irish Treaty and as such it possessed sovereign rights not enjoyed by other Dominion Constituents. In fact, the Irish Constituent made the Anglo-Irish Treaty a dead letter. The transference of power was effected by the Treaty to the Irish Constituent. But in the Dominions the Constitutions were framed before the transfer of power had taken place, and depended for their validity on the sanction of parliament.

## CONSTITUTION DECREED FROM ABOVE

The Cabinet Mission in India decrees a Constituent from above without any reference to the people. Any Constitution which is framed can be nullified by Treaty, whereas in Ireland the Constituent nullified the Treaty. Moreover, the Constituent has not been a rallying cry for the masses of the people. It has never been on the order of the day. It is not the result of a trial of strength or violent struggle between opposing forces struggling for mastery. It does not possess sovereign powers, because the Treaty that follows is the most decisive thing. This has no analogy to the Dominion Constitutions, for the simple reason that it can at will be set at naught by the Treaty stipulations, backed by an army of occupation in India.

## ACADEMIC CONSTITUENT

The Constituent is hopelessly unreal. It is not in fulfilment of an urge of the people. It is virtually decided over their heads. It has never been an issue. It has not even been advanced as a slogan to the masses. The heroic struggle of the masses in other countries centred round the Constituent. But the people of India have so long steered clear of the Constituent. It has a very academic value so far as India is concerned.

## CLASSIC CONSTITUENT OF FRANCE

In the Great French Revolution of

1789, the Constituent Assembly was a part of the heroic struggle of the masses. It had not merely sovereign rights but it ushered in the French Republic. It was the result of a victorious and successful revolution and as such enjoyed rights which were unfettered. It is a mockery and a delusion to present the Cabinet plan as involving anything which even remotely approximates to the classic Constituent of France.

### RUSSIAN CONSTITUENT

In Russia, the Constituent was a rallying cry for the masses on the morrow of one revolution and on the eve of another. It was dissolved because it was out-dated by the revolution and replaced by full-blooded democratic organs of power. The revolutionists supported it so long as it was a progressive slogan, but by the time the convocation of the Constituent had taken place it had become reactionary and counter-revolutionary through and through. It had to be liquidated in the interest of the revolution.

### INEFFECTIVE CONSTITUENT

The Constituent Assembly envisaged by the Cabinet Mission resembles the Russian only in its name. It is singularly impotent and singularly ineffective. It is a side-show, utterly irrelevant to the question of independence, which comes, if at all, by virtue of the Treaty between the Union "Constituent Assembly" and the United Kingdom.

### PAPER CONSTITUENT

It is a strange phenomenon. It is an ingenious invention. It has no analogy to any Constituent Assembly known to history. It can only frame a paper constitution, which will remain a scrap of paper. It is a device to cloak the real imperialist designs and intentions of our rulers. It is novel and unique in history, in so far as it is calculated to perpetuate imperialist exploitation rather than end it.

### SILENCE INTERESTED PARTIES

The Constituent Assembly of the conception of the Cabinet Mission is absurd on the very face of it. There is nothing more deceitful in so far as it appropriates a name—of course, only a name and nothing more—that has summoned millions to heroic self-sacrifice. But all the silence of the interested parties will not obscure the fact that it is a poor caricature of the Constituent in other lands. It will not be taken seriously by anyone except a camp follower of the imperialists.

From "SPARK",
Indian Trotskyist Journal.

# THE U.S.S.R.: Non-Proletarian and Non-Bourgeois State

## By LEON TROTSKY

### POLITICAL FORM AND SOCIAL CONTENT

Comrades B and C once more put a question mark against the class character of the Soviet State. The answer that they suggest is, in my estimation, absolutely incorrect. However, as these comrades do not, like certain ultra-lefts, seek to replace scientific analysis by noisy shouting, we can and must once more discuss in detail with them this exceedingly important question.

B and C have not forgotten that the chief difference between the USSR and the modern bourgeois state manifests itself in a powerful development of the productive forces, a result of the altered forms of property. They admit further that "the economic structure, created by the October Revolution, remains fundamentally unchanged". From this they draw the conclusion that it is the duty of the Soviet proletariat and the world proletariat to protect the USSR against imperialism. Within these limits there is complete agreement between us and B & C. Yet, however important these limits may be, they do not cover the whole question. Without solidarising themselves with the ultra-lefts, B & C are nevertheless of the opinion that the USSR is, "in the traditional (?) sense given to this expression by Marxism", no longer a workers' state. As, however, the "economic structure remains fundamentally unchanged", the USSR has not become a bourgeois state, either. B & C do not—and in this one cannot but congratulate them— characterise the bureaucracy as an independent class. It follows from these contradictory theses that, just as the Stalinists say, the Soviet State is not at all an organisation of class rule. But what then is it?

Thus we are faced with a new attempt to revise the class theory of the state. It goes without saying that we are not fetishists: if new historical facts demand a revision of the theory, we shall not be deterred from this. But the lamentable experience of the old revisions warns us to be circumspect. We shall reconsider the old theory and the new facts ten times before we advance a new doctrine.

B & C observe, incidentally, that the rule of the proletariat "can, according to objective and subjective conditions, be expressed in a considerable number of varying government-forms". Let us add, for clarity's sake; in the free conflict of various parties within the Soviets, just as in the monopoly of a single party, as also in the factual concentration of the power in the hands of one man. Of course the personal dictatorship is a symptom of extreme danger for the regime. But at the same time it is on occasions the only means of saving the regime. Consequently the class nature of the state is not determined through its political forms, but through the social content, i.e. through the character of the forms of property and the production relations, that the state concerned protects and defends.

B & C do not query this in principle. If, nevertheless, they do not look upon the USSR as a workers' state, then it is for two reasons, one economic and the other political. "In the course of the last year" they write "the bureaucracy has finally entered upon the road of the destruction of the planned nationalised economy". (Only "entered

upon the road'?) Further we hear that the direction of development "is leading the bureaucracy to a constantly growing and ever deeper conflict with the demands and interests of the national economy." (Only "is leading"?) The contradiction between bureaucracy and economy could already be observed earlier, yet for a year now "the actions of the bureaucracy have been actively sabotaging the Plan, and destroying the state monopoly." (Only "are destroying!!? Consequently it is not destroyed yet?).

The second argument is, as we have said, a political one. "The conception of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is in the first place not economic, but above all a political category . . . All forms, organs, institutions of the class rule of the proletariat are today destroyed; but this means that the class rule of the proletariat is destroyed." This second argument, taken in isolation, comes as a surprise to us after we have heard about the "various forms" of the proletarian regime. Of course the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is not only "above all" but fully and completely a "political category". Yet politics itself is only concentrated economy. The rule of the Social Democracy in the state and in the councils (Germany 1918-19) had nothing in common with proletarian dictatorship, inasmuch as it left bourgeois property untouched. On the other hand a regime that defends expropriated and nationalised property against imperialism is, independent of the political forms, a dictatorship of the proletariat.

B & C apparently recognise this "in general". Hence they have recourse to a connection of the economic argument with the political argument. The bureaucracy, they say, not only finally deprived the proletariat of its political powers, but also drove the economy into a cul-de-sac. If the bureaucracy in the preceding period, with all its reactionary traits nevertheless played a comparatively progressive role, it has recently become a definitely reactionary factor. In this sequence of thought there is a sound kernel that is in complete harmony with the earlier assessments and prognoses of the Fourth International.

We have more than once pointed out how "enlightened absolutism" plays a progressive role in the development of the bourgeoisie to become in its turn a brake upon this development: the conflict ended, as is known, in revolution. In the preparation of socialist economy we wrote, "enlightened absolutism" can, during a much shorter period of time, play a progressive role. This prognosis is being clearly corroborated before our eyes. Led astray by its own successes, the bureaucracy thought to attain ever higher coefficients of economic growth. Meantime it found itself suddenly in the midst of a sharp economic crisis, which is one of the sources of its present panic and fierce repressions. Does that mean that the development of the productive forces in the USSR has already come to a standstill? We would not venture such a hypothesis. The productive capabilities of nationalised economy are so great that the productive forces are still able to develop for a number of years in spite of the bureaucratic brake even if in a much more moderate progression than heretofore. It is hardly possible to make exact prophecies in this connection at the present time. In any case the political crisis that is rending the bureaucracy is today much more dangerous for that bureaucracy than the perspective of a standstill in the development of the productive forces. To simplify the question we can nevertheless concede that the bureaucracy has already become a complete hindrance for the economic development. Yet does this fact of itself mean that the class nature of the USSR has changed, or that the USSR has lost every class characteristic? Here lies in my opinion the chief mistake of our comrades.

Bourgeois society developed the productive forces before the world war. Only during the last twenty-five years did the bourgeoisie become an absolute hindrance to development. Yet does that mean that bourgeois society is no longer bourgeois? No, as far as fascism, with it barbarous methods, maintains the private ownership of the means of production the state remains bourgeois under fascism.

We do not intend in any way to give exhaustive importance to our analogy. But it shows that the concentration of power in the hands of the bureaucracy and even the encroachment upon the development of the productive forces does not of itself alter the class nature of the society and of its state. This nature can only be altered by the intrenchment of revolutionary or counter-revolutionary force in connection with property.

Perhaps history knows no case of a class contradiction between state and economy? Oh yes! When the Third Estate seized power and society remained feudal for the first few months. During the first months of the Soviet regime the proletariat administered a bourgeois economy. As regards agriculture the dictatorship of the proletariat supported itself upon a petty bourgeois economy (to a perceptible degree even today). In the case of a successful bourgeois counter-revolution in the USSR the new government would have to rest for a long period upon the nationalised economy. But what is the meaning of this kind of temporary contradiction between state and economy? It means REVOLUTION or COUNTER-REVOLUTION. The victory of one class over another is gained precisely in order to transform the economy in the interest of the victory. But such a dual state of affairs, a necessary moment of every social revolution, has nothing in common with the theory of a classless state that through the lack of a real master is being exploited by a clerk, i.e. by the bureaucracy.

## CRITERION AND FACT.

What makes a correct sociological judgment of the USSR difficult for many comrades is that they approach the question, not objectively and dialectically, but subjectively and according to a criterion. It is not by chance that B & C say that one cannot regard the Soviet Union as a workers' state "in the traditional sense that has been given to the expression of Marxism". That means simply that the USSR does not correspond to the criterion of a workers' state that is advanced in our programme. In this connection there can be no argument. Our programme supposes a progressive development of the workers' state, and hence its gradual disappearance. History, however, which does not always proceed "according to programme", gave us the process of the degeneration of the workers' state. Does that mean, though, that the workers' state that has reached a stage where it is in contradiction to the postulations of our programme, thereby ceases to be a workers' state? A malaria-infected liver does not correspond to the normal type of liver any more. Yet it does not cease to be a liver because of this. Anatomy and physiology is necessary in addition. Naturally it is much easier, at the sight of an infected liver, to say, "This thing displeases me" and to turn away from it. But a doctor cannot permit himself this luxury. He has, in the condition of the illness itself and in the deformations of the organ, brought about by the sickness, to discover the means of therapeutic healing ("reform") or of sugical measures ("revolution"). For this, however, it must be clear to him that the abnormal organ is an infected liver and nothing else.

But let us take a closer comparison, that between the workers' state and a trade union. Regarded from the viewpoint of our programme, the trade union should be an organisation of class struggle. But what of the American Federation of Labour? At its head stand arrant agents of the bourgeoisie. In all essential questions Messrs. Green, Wall & Co. carry on a policy directly opposed to the interests of the proletariat. We may carry the analogy further and say: even though the AF of L performed, before the coming into being of the CIO, a task which, to a certain degree, was still progressive, yet today Green's apparatus, where the main content of the A.F. of L's activity in the battle against the progressive (or less reactionary tendencies of the CIO is displayed), has become finally a reactionary factor. This would be quite correct. But the AF of L does not cease because of this to be a trade union organisation.

The class character of the state is

determined by its relation to the forms of ownership of property in the means of production. The character of workers' organisations like trade unions is determined by their relation to the distribution of the national income. The circumstance that Green & Co. defend the private ownership of the means of production characterises them as bourgeois. If these gentlemen defended above all the receipts of the bourgeoisie against all attacks from the workers, i.e. if they carried on a fight against strikes, against wage increases, against unemployment benefit, we should have an organisation of "yellows" to deal with, and not a trade union. Meantime Green & Co., in order not to be cut adrift from the ground they stand on, are compelled within certain limits to take on the leadership of the struggle of the workers for increases, or at least against decreases of their share in the national income. This objective characteristic is sufficient to enable us in all important cases to draw a line of division between the most reactionary union and the yellow organisations. We are therefore bound not only to work in the AF of L, but also to defend it against yellows, the Klu-Klux-Klan, etc.

Stalin's function is a double one, just as Green's. Stalin serves the bureaucracy and thereby the world bourgeoisie; but he cannot serve the bureaucracy without maintaining the social foundations that the bureaucracy is exploiting in its own interest. To this extent Stalin is defending nationalised property against imperialism and even against the most intolerant and greedy sections of the bureaucracy. This defence, however, he carries on with methods that make for a general collapse of Soviet society. For this reason particularly it is necessary to bring about the downfall of the Stalin clique. But this downfall must be only the work of the revolutionary proletariat, who cannot entrust this work to the imperialists. The proletariat defends the USSR against imperialism in spite of Stalin.

Historical development acquainted us with various types of trade unions: militant, reformist, revolutionary, reactionary, liberal, catholic. It is different with the workers' state. We are going through this experience for the first time. Hence the tendency to approach the USSR exclusively from the angle of the CRITERIONS of the revolutionary programme. Meanwhile, the workers' state is an objective historical FACT, that is undergoing the effect of various historical forces, and we see can come into complete contradiction with the "traditional" criterions.

Comrades B & C say quite rightly Stalin & Co. serve the international bourgeoisie with their policy. Yet it is necessary to place this correct idea in the definite circumstances of time and space. Hitler serves the bourgeoisie likewise. But there is a difference between the functions of Stalin and Hitler. Hitler defends bourgeois forms. Stalin makes the interests of the bureaucracy conform to proletarian property forms. The same Stalin fulfils in Spain, i.e. on the territory of the bourgeois regime, the function of Hitler (in political methods they differ on the whole only slightly). The juxtaposition of the various social roles of one and the same Stalin in the USSR and in Spain makes it to an equal degree recognisable both that the bureaucracy is not an independent class, and that one cannot determine the social nature of the state from the excellence or the vileness of the bureaucracy.

## BOURGEOIS BUREAUCRACY IN A WORKERS' STATE?

The assertion that the bureaucracy of a worker's state is of the bourgeois character must seem not only incomprehensible but quite senseless to people who think formally. Only, chemically pure state types never existed and do not exist. The semi-feudal Prussian monarchy fulfilled the most important political tasks of the bourgeoisie, but in their own style, i.e. feudal not Jacobin. In Japan we may observe even today an analogous relation between the bourgeois character of the state and the semi-feudal character of the ruling caste. But all that does not prevent us from clearly dis-

tinguishing between the feudal and the bourgeois society. Certainly one might object that the collaboration of feudal and bourgeois forces is by far and away easier to bring about than bourgeois and proletarian forces, for in the first case it is a question of two forms of class exploitation, that is absolutely true. Yet the workers' state cannot create the new society in a day. Marx wrote that in the workers' state BOURGEOIS norms of distribution continued in the first period chapter "Socialism and State"). It is necessary to think over this idea carefully and fully. The workers' state as a STATE is necessary precisely because bourgeois norms of distribution still remain in effect. The bureaucracy is the organ of this distribution. This means that even the most revolutionary bureaucracy is to a certain extent a BOURGEOIS ORGAN in the workers' state. Of course, of decisive importance is the DEGREE to which the bureaucracy is bourgeois and the general tendency of development. If the workers' state slowly de-bureaucratises itself and gradually dissolves into nothing, then the development is moving in the direction of socialism. If on the other hand the bureaucracy becomes ever more powerful, more desirous of power, more privileged and more conservative, then bourgeois tendencies are growing in the workers' state at the cost of socialist tendencies: in other words, the inner contradiction that is found IN A CERTAIN MEASURE in the workers' state from the day it is set up, does not wane, as our "criterion" demands, but grows. Yet as long as this contradiction is not taken out of the sphere of distribution into the sphere of production, and has not broken up the nationalised property and planned economy, so long the state remains proletarian.

Lenin said already fifteen years ago, "Our state is proletarian but with a bureaucratic distortion". The bureaucratic distortion represented at that time a direct inheritance from the bourgeois regime and appeared in this sense a simple survival. Under the influence of unfavourable historical conditions, however, the bureaucratic survival found new sources of nourishment and became a colossal historical factor. Precisely for that reason we speak of the DEGENERATION of the workers' state. This degeneration, as the present bacchanel of bonapartist terror shows, has come very near its critical point. What was only a "bureaucratic distortion" is preparing to swallow up the workers' state, skin, hair and all, and on the ruins of nationalised economy to build up a new possessing class. This possibility has come very close. Yet it is still only a possibility, and we do not intend to be bent down by it in advance.

## FOR THE DIALECTIC!

The USSR as a workers' state does not correspond to the "traditional" norm. That still does not mean that it is not a workers' state. But also it does not mean that the norm has shown itself to be incorrect. The "norm" assumes the complete victory of the international proletarian revolution. The USSR is only the partial and deformed expression of a backward isolated workers' state.

"Purely" normative, idealistic, ultimatistic thought, wants to create the world after its own image and simply turn away from phenomena that displeases it. Sectarians allow themselves to be led by ideal norms, i.e. people who are only revolutionaries in their own imagination. They say: these trade unions displease us, we will not enter them; this workers' state displeases us, we will not defend it. Every time they promise to begin history again from the beginning. They will indeed build an ideal workers' state, when the Lord God presents them with an ideal party and an ideal trade union. And until that happy moment they can do nothing more than make a wry face over reality. Vehement, wry faces are indeed the highest expression of sectarian "revolutionism".

Purely "historical", reformist, menshevist, passive, conservative thought is, according to an expression of Marx, concerned with justifying the swinery of today with the swinery of yesterday. The representatives of this type enter mass organisations in order

to get to the top of them. The despicable "friends" of the USSR settle amicably with the vileness of the bureaucracy by pointing to the historical conditions.

In contradistinction to both these types, dialectic-marxist bolshevik thought takes phenomena in their objective development and finds in the inner contradiction of this development support for the realisation of its "norms". In this connection it must not be forgotten that programmatic criterions can only reckon on being realised if they are the general expression of the PROGRESSIVE tendencies of the objective process.

The programmatic definition of a trade union would sound something like this: an organisation of the workers of a progression or industry with these aims: (1) the fight against capital in order to improve the standard of living of the workers; (2) participation in the revolutionary struggle to bring about the downfall of the bourgeoisie; (3) participation in the organisation of ecdnomy on a socialist basis. If we juxtapose this "normative" definition to actual reality we shall have to say: in the whole world there is no such thing as a trade union. But, such a juxtaposition of criterion and fact, i.e. of the GENERALISED expression of development and of the PART-appearance of the same development—this formal, ultimatistic, undialectical juxtaposition of programme and reality is quite meaningless and does not provide the revolutionary party with any way of dealing with actuality. Meantime the trade unions, today opportunistic, CAN under the influence of the collapse of capitalism—and, a correct policy on our part inside them presupposed, MUST—approach our programmatic criterions and play a historically progressive role. That naturally supposes a complete change in leadership. The workers of the United States, of England, of France, must understand the necessity of removing Green, Citrine, Jouhaux & Co. The workers of the USSR must understand the necessity of removing Stalin and Co. If the proletariat removes the Soviet bureaucracy in time, it will still have after its victory the nationalised means of production and the basic elements of planned economy. That means, that it does not need to start afresh from the beginning. A great advantage. Only radical snobs, used to jumping carelessly from bough to bough, can disregard this possibility. The socialist revolution is a far too grandiose and difficult task for one to renounce all its priceless material achievements and begin again from the beginning.

It is a good thing that comrades B & C, in contradistinction to our French comrade C and a number of others, do not forget the factor of the productive forces and do not deny the necessity to defend the Soviet Union. But that is not nearly enough. And what if the criminal bureaucracy brings the growth of economy to a standstill? Will comrades B & C. passively allow imperialism to destroy the social bases of the USSR? We are convinced that the contrary is true. That their unmarxist conception of the USSR as of a non-proletarian and non-bourgeois state opens the door to ALL POSSIBLE consequent conclusions. For this reason their conception must be categorically rejected.

## RULING AND YET OPPRESSED CLASS

"How can our political conscience help being roused to indigation" say the ultra-lefts "if people want to make us believe that in the USSR under Stalin's regime the 'ruling' class is the proletariat?" In such an abstract form this assertion can indeed rouse one to indignation. But the fact is that abstract categories, necessary in the process of the analysis, are of no use for the synthesis, which demands much greater concreteness. The proletariat of the USSR rules in a land that contains only one-twelfth of humanity; imperialism rules the other eleven-twelfths. The rule of the proletariat, already isolated by the backwardness and poverty of the country, is two and threefold deformed by the pressure of world imperialism. The organ of the rule of the proletariat—the state—is becoming an organ of imperialist pressure (diplomacy, army, foreign trade, ideas and customs).

Viewed historically the fight for supremacy goes on not between proletariat and bureaucracy, but between proletariat and world bourgeoisie. The bureaucracy is only the transmission mechanism if this struggle is not at an end. In spite of all efforts of the Moscow clique to demonstrate their conservative reliability (Stalin's counter-revolutionary policy in Spain!), world imperialism does not trust Stalin, does not spare him degrading raps on the nose, and is ready to bring about his downfall at the first favourable opportunity. Hitler expresses—and therein lies his strength—only more consistently and logically the attitude of the world bourgeoisie to the Soviet bureaucracy. For the fascist, just as for the democratic bourgeoisie, Stalin's single counter-revolutionary deeds are too few: what the bourgeoisie needs is a complete counter-revolution in the property relations and the opening of the Russian market. As long as that is not the case it will regard the Soviet state as an enemy. And it is right.

The regime in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is bourgeois. Yet the pressure of foreign imperialism alters and deforms the economic and political structure of these countries so greatly that the national bourgeoisie (even in the politically independent countries of South America) only partially find themselves in the position of a ruling class. The pressure of imperialism on other countries certainly alters nothing of their BASIC social character, for here the oppressor and the object of the oppression only present different levels of development of one and the same bourgeois society. Nevertheless the difference between England and India, Japan and China, the USA and Mexico is so great that we strictly distinguish between oppressing and oppressed bourgeois lands and hold it to be our duty to defend the latter from the former. The bourgeoisie of the colonial and semi-colonial countries is a half ruling, half oppressed class.

The pressure of imperialism on the Soviet Union has as its task to change the nature of Soviet society itself. The struggle—today peaceful, tomorrow military—revolves around the forms of property. In its capacity as transmission-mechanism of this struggle, the bureaucracy supports itself upon the proletariat against imperialism and upon imperialism against the proletariat in order to extend its own power. At the same time it heedlessly makes use of its role as distributor of the necessary means of life in order to assure its own well-being and power. In this way the rule of the proletariat takes on a confined, crushed, warped character. With full justification one can say: the RULING proletariat in a backward and isolated country remain still an OPPRESSED class. The source of oppression is world imperialism, the transmission-machinery is the bureaucracy. If there is a contradiction in the words "ruling and yet oppressed class" this arises not from a mistake in reasoning but from a contradiction in the position of the USSR itself. Precisely for this reason we reject the theory of socialism in one country.

The recognition of the USSR as a workers' state not as its prototype but as a deformation of this prototype, does not in any way signify any theoretical or political amnesty for the Soviet bureaucracy. On the contrary, its reactionary nature only becomes thoroughly apparent in the light of the contradiction between its anti-proletarian policy and the requirements of the workers' state. Only if the question is put thus does our exposition of the crimes committed by the Stalin clique attain an effective force. The defence of the USSR includes not only unconditional struggle against imperialism, but also the preparation of the downfall of the bonapartist bureaucracy.

The experience of the USSR proves how great are the possibilities inherent in the workers' state, and how great its power of resistance. Yet this experience shows too how powerful is the pressure of capital and of its bureaucratic agency, how difficult it is for the proletariat to attain its complete emancipation, and how important it is to train and steel the new international in the spirit of this irreconcilable struggle.

Coyoacan
25th November 1937.

# RESOLUTION of the INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE on the WITHDRAWAL of the RED ARMY FROM EUROPE

HELD one year after the end of the second world war, the Big Four conference at Paris in May 1946 has again clearly shown the inability of the victors of this war to establish a stable peace and to enable Europe to rise up again from its ruins, to make progress and to live in freedom.

The complexity of the antagonisms between the American and British imperialist interests and the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy, as well as the opposition between these interests and the elementary needs of the masses, are such that the victors fear public discussion before world opinion and prefer to engage in the greatest secrecy in sordid deals made arbitrarily and cynically concerning the fate of millions of human beings in ruined Europe and the oppressed colonial countries.

The first Paris Conference was not able to solve any of the principal questions concerning the peace treaty with Italy and the other satellite countries nor above all the essential questions of Austria and Germany. Its failure has just brought about the breaking of the Potsdam agreements concluded between the defeat of Germany and that of Japan. More than ever the partitioning of Germany and Austria into zones continues with disastrous results for the workers of all Europe.

At the first Paris Conference American diplomacy for the first time undertook a strong offensive against Soviet diplomacy and declared itself ready to call the latter before the United Nations Oragnization.

If the servants of American imperialism have once again been able to pose as the champions of peace, of the right of self-determination of peoples, etc. . . despite their policy of looting both in Europe and in the Far East, it is because the spokesmen of the Soviet bureaucracy have been seen not only to abstain from taking positions, even platonically, for the right of free self-determination of peoples, but on the contrary, become the "realistic" defenders of reparations, annexations, of the military occupation of Europe and the imperialist guardianship over the colonial countries and engage in bartering among the claims of the different powers at the expense of the vanquished.

If the champions of Wall Street have been able to brandish the threat of calling on the U.N.O. it is because, the Soviet bureaucracy is in practice unable to win over to its cause, as the foreign policy of the October revolution did, the sympathy of the oppressed masses of the imperialist nations, and the small nations victims of the imperialists.

In this period of tension, in which compromises ensuing from the recent world war are adjusted, the military occupation of spheres of influence in Europe and in the world serves the imperialists and the Soviet bureaucracy as pledges in their current policy of a trial of strength. Meanwhile, the reactionary effects of this occupation are becoming more and more obvious.

The military occupied countries, already ruined by the war, are growing even more exhausted, crushed under the weight of the occupation costs and of foreign control over their resources and their economy; at the same time the free development of the mass movement is fettered by the reactionary military apparatus of the imperialists and the the Soviet bureaucracy.

The continuation of military occupation entails an accentuation of the economic decomposition of Europe and the colonial countries and the strangling of their revolutionary movements.

Moreover, prolonged military occupation results, within the victor countries themselves, in the maintenance

of a burdensome and costly military apparatus and permits the building and selection of cadres and troops designed to be used eventually against the workers of these countries.

The maintenance of important military forces, the occupation of territories in Europe and throughout the world and the holding of millions of Japanese and German workers as prisoners of war, utilized as an extra-cheap labour force, are the direct continuation of the war. Consequently the continuation of the struggle which the Fourth International and its sections have carried on throughout the war for the disintegration of the armed forces of capitalism, for the fraternization of the workers of all countries, "Allied" or "Enemy", in uniform or out of uniform, must find its expression in a struggle against the maintenance of the military apparatus, against military occupation, for the liberation of all prisoners of war, and for the international solidarity of the proletariat.

In this struggle the Fourth International denounces any and all pretexts which cover up this reactionary policy of the imperialists and of the Soviet bureaucracy. In opposition to the machinations of their secret diplomacy, it sets up the slogan of the right to self-determination of the peoples of the European and colonial countries.

The Fourth International demands the withdrawal of all foreign armies, including the Red Army, from all occupied territories. It opposes all annexations, reparations, forced transfers of populations and the detention of millions of German and Japanese workers as prisoners of war, either by the imperialists or by the Soviet bureaucracy. The Fourth International recognizes no other frontiers than those drawn by the culture and freely expressed preferences of the populations concerned.

To the impasse into which the policy of the imperialists and of the Stalinist bureaucracy has led, to the bankruptcy of the peace conference and of the U.N.O. and to the threat of the Third World War, the Fourth International counterposes the revolutionary struggle of the exploited masses of all countries for the triumph of the world socialist revolution and the Federation of the Socialist United States of Europe and of the world.

In demanding the withdrawal of the Red Army from the territories it occupies, the Fourth International nowise abandons its slogan of unconditional defence of the U.S.S.R. The Fourth International, likewise defends the progressive economic measures carried out in the territories occupied by the Red Army. But the defence of the planned state economy of the U.S.S.R. as well as that of the progressive reforms carried out in Eastern Europe cannot be assured by purely military means, and especially not by the occupation of territories for a strategical purpose. Real defence is based first of all on the free revolutionary activity of the masses which must assure the total victory of the proletarian revolution. The masses of the countries at present must feel absolutely free, without any pressure, to determine their own fate. The occupation of these countries by the Red Army, the burdens imposed upon them, their treatment as defeated countries, can only harm the fundamental interests of the world socialist revolution and dangerously compromise in the eyes of the masses the defence of the U.S.S.R. against imperialist attacks. Examples in this sense are already numerous (elections in Hungary, Austria, Germany).

Consequently, the unconditional defence of the U.S.S.R. cannot, in the zone occupied by the Red Army lead to any policy of support even provisional or temporary, with this or that bourgeois or petty bourgeois clique or organisation which banks on the bureaucracy, as against bourgeois or petty bourgeois parties which bank on imperialism. It can be applied only by an energetic carrying out of uncompromising class struggle of the proletariat against its own bourgeoisie. That is why the slogan "immediate departure of the occupation troops" and an energetic campaign against the barbarous methods of the bureaucracy are alone capable of rehabilitating the policy of the defence of the U.S.S.R. by clearly indicating that the defence of the U.S.S.R. nowise justifies the crimes of Stalin.

Where, however, reactionary movements arise which, with the backing of the imperialists, attempt to overthrow the more or less statified economy and restore landlordism in order to establish a base for attack against the Soviet Union, we oppose such a movement and fight alongside the Red Army for the defeat of the imperialists and their agents, until the workers in that country are able to stand alone against the bourgeois counter-revolution.

In the application of this general policy, the sections of the Fourth International will emphasize it differently according to the position of their own country.

The British and French sections as well as the American Trotskyists put forward the slogan of the withdrawal of the troops of their own imperialism from all the countries which they occupy (Europe, India, Indonesia etc. for England; Europe and colonies, for France; Europe, Philippines, China etc. for the U.S.A.). The Bolshevik-Leninists of the U.S.S.R. denounce the anti-working class policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the occupied countries and demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops, but the sections in the occupied countries will emphasize especially internationalist and revolutionary fraternization with the soldiers of the occupying armies, fraternizations to which they will subordinate the campaign for the withdrawal of these troops Our comrades in all zones of occupation must present the policy in such a way that it cannot be used against the Soviet Union to the advantage of the imperialists.

**Resolution adopted unanimously by the I.E.C.—June 1946.**

# TWO BALANCE SHEETS

## A FURTHER CONTRIBUTION TO THE EUROPEAN DISCUSSION BY SOME COMRADES OF THE I.K.D.

THE publication of the "Three Theses on the National Question in Europe" fell into the political existence of the Fourth International like a stone thrown into a stagnant pool. We, the London group of the I.K.D., came out in full support of this document which, published by the leading committee (A.K.) of our section, expressed our opinions better than we had been able to do. We encountered hostile attacks from the majority of the Fourth International who considered themselves "orthodox" Trotskyists. Which of the two camps has been proved right by events? Our article "Questions of the European Revolution" in W.I.N. of July/August 1945 endeavoured to find this out, to give the balance sheet of the adherents of the "Three Theses". The balance was struck was, in short, this:

### OUR BALANCE SHEET— AND A " REPLY ".

Capitalist retrogression destroyed the national independence and the democratic liberties of the most important European nations. The counter-measures of the peoples were movements in which all layers of the population took part; although the proletariat supplied the bulk of the fighting masses, these movements did not go beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy. The revisionist "workers" parties, particularly the Stalinists,

recognised the importance of the national movements, and made themselves their standard bearers, in order the better to strangle them. The revolutionary wing lacked the strength and the correct orientiation to influence the turn of events and thus the Three Theses were confirmed only in the negative sense. However, just because this happened, the only possible solution to the crisis of decaying capitalism—the transition from fascism to socialism through the intermediate stage which is "**basically** equivalent to a democratic revolution", to use the much-misquoted expression of the Three Theses—could not be reached. The "liberating" imperialists have thrown the masses of Europe into starvation and misery still more appalling than under Hitler's "New Order"; the situation, in its fundamental traits, is still unchanged; and the Three Theses retain full validity.

To this article of ours, a reply was published in W.I.N. of October 1945. Its author, Comrade Grant, spoke here for the whole "orthodox" camp of the Fourth International. Not only did nobody differ from him, but his article was also reprinted in the "Fourth International" of March 1946. This leading theoretical organ of the revolutionary world party did not, however, consider it necessary to publish our article which had given rise to Grant's.

Our ideas about full discussion of theoretical questions are different, and we therefore wrote a detailed refutation of Grant's "reply". However, the editor of W.I.N. informed us that this could not be published because of its length. We sympathize with this view, for Grant's article is hardly worth a detailed answer. He did not "reply" to our balance sheet at all; he covered pages with fighting windmills. (For instance the democratic revolution which we are alleged to substitute for the proletarian revolution whereas, in reality, we said that the democratic revolution in our epoch, "can be realised only by the smashing of the framework of capitalism".) The remainder of Grant's article was filled with the worst type of label-sticking, cumulating in the cry for the expulsion machine, this last resort of the frightened bureaucrat. And, to crown it all: Where there really was a mistake in our article, Grant attacked it for precisely the wrong reasons.

## WHERE WE WENT WRONG.

We said about France and other "liberated" countries: "The national oppression has remained, only the uniforms of the oppressors have changed." Grant sees in this "an indication of how far from reality" we have strayed, and explains reality to us thus: "It would have been quite impossible for the Anglo-American Imperialists to rule France and the other liberated countries with the methods of the Gestapo and S.S., if only because of the resistance of their own soldiers to the playing of such a role." If Grant enquires in Greece and elsewhere about the impossibility of using British or American soldiers in the role of the S.S., he will find that he has strayed a bit farther from reality than we have; for us, it is important that we actually have gone wrong.

We visualize that the Anglo-American imperialists in western Europe would "not lift a finger to put on its feet again . . . industry and, with it . . . national independence." So far, we have proved quite correct, and there seems to be nobody who doubts this fact which is only too plainly visible in the misery that still prevails in the "liberated" countries. We further expected that the Allied imperialists, in order to keep their former competitors economically crippled and politically dependent, would have to exert pressure in the same way as the Nazis did before them, including the use of the armed forces which they kept in the "liberated" countries for that purpose. Here the facts proved us wrong. In the beginning, there were some minor clashes, particularly in Belgium where British troops disarmed Belgian workers and shots were fired at demonstrators in Brussels. While these clashes are sufficient to make Grant with his pious hopes in the Anglo-Saxon soldiers look rather silly, they do not suffice to confirm our expectations.

We had been quite right in the aims we attributed to the Anglo-American

imperialists; why then were we wrong in the way these aims are being attained? It is necessary to look at the "liberated" countries as part of the continent of Europe, the heart of which is Germany; if the heart is paralysed—if Germany is plundered, de-industrialised, eliminated—then all Europe will automatically become disorganised and impotent industrially, economically and politically. This is one of the salient facts of capitalist retrogression, but we must say, with much contrition, that we failed to apply our principles correctly in this instance. We also failed to apply the "Three Theses" which say that, if revolutionary socialism lets the national liberation movement pass by, it thereby permits imperialists, "democrats" and reformists to give it a **bourgeois** instead of a socialist character. This is precisely what happened; lacking the participation of conscious revolutionists, the national movements came under the domination of various de Gaulle's who, with the help of reformists and Stalinists, do the biddings of Anglo-American imperialism in a much cheaper and less noisy way than the "liberating" armies could have done. The resistance movements, embracing practically the whole people, are only potentially strong; they are actually weak because they have no revolutionary leadership and, as long as they lack this, they are not a danger to the ruling class or the imperialists. This we failed to foresee in our article; but our very mistake is a further confirmation—"in a negative sense"—of the validity of the "Three Theses".

Contrary to our expectations there is, in the "liberated" countries of western Europe, not national oppression, but rather a "rebirth of democracy", consisting not only of nice phrases, but of actual facts—elections, party politics, cabinet crises. But the decaying and retrogressive capitalist system cannot constitute a basis for democracy in a ravaged and declining Europe; not even for the most elementary democratic right of national self-determination. All over Europe, the imperialist plans will, in the long run, meet popular resistance to such a degree as to force the imperialists either to drop their plans or to resort to forcible oppression of whole nations. At present, however, this feature of capitalist retrogression has to be studied in Germany.

## GERMANY—FACTS AND FANCIES.

About our position on Germany, Comrade Grant is very annoyed, and he shows it by an avalanche of uncomplimentary labels. We read that our "shift away from the ideas of the proletarian revolution" and our "petty-bourgeois capitulation to nationalism" are proved by our appeal to the tradition of 1813-15 and 1848; "the great tradition of the proletarian revolution (in bold type) of 1918; the tradition of Liebknecht and Luxemburg; this is not even thought worthy of mention!" By thus venting his indignation, Grant shows the devastating results of the habit of label-sticking; he really seems to imagine that our task is to select a label, and he complains about our lack of taste in not choosing the most attractive one. But we are concerned with political reality.

This reality, our "orthodox" cannot see. Grant realises that Germany "will suffer national oppression and dismemberment", yet he consoles himself: "But after the last war, Germany was also reduced to the status of a State oppressed by her imperialist rivals." What has happened, however, is precisely that, this time, Germany is not a state any more! Quantity has turned into quality indeed, but Grant, engrossed in lecturing us about dialectics, has failed to notice it. He has not realised that conditions in Germany are different and, for the proletarian, incomparably worse than in 1918. The German proletariat has been delivered into the hands of fascism by its misleaders without a struggle; decapitated and disorganised by 12 years of Nazi rule; bled white by five years of war; handed over, without a break, from the hands of the Gestapo into the care of the occupation authorities whose policy of abolishing manufacturing industry in Germany abolishes the German proletariat as a class. Yet our "orthodox" compare this with the revolutionary situation of 1918!

Firmly based upon the situation of 30 years ago, Grant lays down the law for today. "The German capitalists called Hitler to power, they bear the responsibility for the catastrophe Germany has suffered. That should be the axis around which the propaganda of the German Marxists will revolve." It has become the axis around which revolves the propaganda of—the German reformists and their "liberal" backers in the whole world. Surely this must be gratifying for our "orthodox" purists.

Slogans, however, do not become wrong simply by being taken up by reformists; Marxists must be able to advance these slogans just as we did with the national liberation, beloved by all reformists, during the war. But we did not confine ourselves to shouting for national freedom; the "Three Theses" point out that the struggle "**basically** equivalent to a democratic revolution" must be the first stage in the transition from fascism to socialism. What, then, have Marxists to add to the slogan which Ted Grant and the German Social-Democrats turn out to have in common? Obviously, the support of the movement for national liberation which grows up within the people that is nationally oppressed, politically disfranchised and economically plundered and starved by foreign imperialism. It is by the support of this movement that we will distinguish ourselves from the reformists; for while these, in Germany, may cautiously play with national demands in words, they will carefully avoid supporting them actively. For this would mean struggling against Germany's imperialist oppressors, whose lackeys and puppets the reformists of all shades are. Unless the Fourth International makes the support of all movements for national liberation according to the "Three Theses" the main point in its programme for Germany, it will not be able to offer the masses anything beyond the programme of the reformists —nor even beyond the performance of the occupation authorities; for these have expropriated German capitalists (without compensation!) and clapped them in jail into the bargain—witness the action of British Military government against the coal owners of the Ruhr.

## THE MISSING BALANCE SHEET

We have reviewed a few of the misfortunes that befell Comrade Grant in what purported to be a critque of our balance sheet. The whole "orthodox" camp of the Fourth International share these misfortunes of Grant's, as they have indicated by their silence or even by their applause. By the same token, they share Grant's omission: that he did not oppose to our balance sheet that of his own, the "orthodox" faction. We will help them in a comradely way and draw it up for them.

The "orthodox" Fourth International believed that the war was bound to end with the proletarian revolution, achieved by the working-class movement under the leadership of the Fourth International. Now the war is over, there is no working-class movement (in the sense of a political movement independent of the bourgeoisie, not counting the Social-Democrats and Stalinists who work for and on behalf of the bourgeoisie), there is no revolution, and there is no leadership of the Fourth International. This, in short, is the triple deficit in the accounts of the "orthodox".

A revision of these accounts is therefore urgently needed. But the comrades are no "revisionists"—they do not openly admit and discuss their mistakes in order to learn from them; when their expectations are too manifestly proved wrong by reality, they just shuffle around without much ado. Thus they hailed the overthrow of Mussolini as the proletarian revolution. Italy became the promised land of all adversaries of the "Three Theses"—the land where the transition from fascism to socialism was to be achieved without the objectionable intermediate stage "**basically** equivalent to a democratic revolution." It did not come off. We have dealt with the reasons in our article "Questions of the European Revolution". Here we are only concerned with the attitude of our comrades. They never investigated the

movement in Italy, whether it had been what they expected and, if so, why it had not developed according to expectations. There was no lack of well-reasoned accusations against reformists and Stalinists for their betrayals; but surely the treachery of those whom we had called traitors for years on end should have been provided for in our accounts?

Mistakes, if they are not investigated openly and corrected, must of necessity be repeated and become graver with repetition. Witness the British section and the fighting in Greece. This broke out just after the R.C.P. had drawn up a resolution on the National Question, point 5 of which declares all national resistance movements to be "agencies of one or other group of imperialist powers". This goes for E.A.M. as well, therefore the R.C.P. would have had to take its stand against E.A.M. with Churchill, if he was so blind as not to know his own agency. This was not done; the "Socialist Appeal" came out in full support of E.A.M., and could hardly have done otherwise. But what about the resolution which had proved to clash with reality; was it revised? No; it was reality that had to undergo revision. The revolt in Greece was promoted to the rank of the proletarian revolution. This valuable support, unfortunately, could not prevent the defeat of the revolt; upon which—again without any investigation—it was discovered that E.A.M., after all, was only a resistance movement, and Greece is paraded as an example what devastating results follow from supporting a national movement. If it is "supported" as here, by ignoring it until the point of uprising is reached and then hailing it as the proletarian revolution, this is certainly correct.

We have already said something about the attitude towards Germany, where proletarian revolution was confidently expected until the middle of 1945 and then quietly dropped, and where now there is talk about "a second Versailles" etc. Here again, we see how traditional conceptions are being upheld unthinkingly until they begin to look too silly, when they are quietly dropped without any attempt at analysis or clarification. Instead, we have the blaming of scapegoats, labelling of inconvenient things and persons, bureaucratic expulsions on grounds of "discipline", misrepresentations and amalgams.

This is the balance sheet of Comrade Grant and those whose mouthpiece he was. We have put it besides our own, and we leave the comparison to the reader. We have admitted that we have made mistakes, as everybody else does; but we are eager to find them out, to correct them and to learn from them. In this case, our virtue has had its reward: we have seen that our mistakes did not affect our fundamental conception, and we can repeat today in the light of fuller information: "The 'Three Theses' have not only been confirmed, but their practical proposals retain full validity".

However, we are very far from gloating over our opponents who are, first of all, our comrades. If our so-called "revisionism" has stood the test so much better than their "orthodoxy", this only shows that they have been not orthodox Marxists but—the exact opposite—orthodox believers in unexplained dogmas. Marxism, the doctrine of constant change and continuous development, is the very opposite of sterile orthodoxy. To introduce unthinking belief in unexplained formulas into the revolutionary movement, is the worst revisionism; continually to revise one's own assessment of reality is—orthodox Marxism. We hope that this dispute will help both ourselves and the comrades of the other side to get nearer to orthodox Marxism in theory and practice.

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