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*November 1944*

# Fourth International

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**Review of the Month . . . . By The Editors**

*27th Anniversary of the Russian October*

*The Soviet Union -- Twenty-Seven Years After*

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**Coming Upsurge of American Labor . By William Simmons**

**Political Economy Under Stalin . . . By A. Roland**

**Observations on the Guerrillas . . . By G. Munis**

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**Problems of the European Revolution**

*By A Group of European Comrades*

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**The Arsenal of Marxism**

**How We Made the Russian October**

*By Leon Trotsky*

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*Twenty Cents*

## Manager's Column

Letters from our agents report that sales of FOURTH INTERNATIONAL have reached a new high. It is with elation that we pass this information on to our readers.

Our New York agent reported last month that the sale of the August F.I. (Trotsky Memorial Number) reached a new peak, that the increase in sales over the preceding month amounted to almost fifty percent.

Our Los Angeles agent writes: "I should have given you this information about ten days ago. We had the highest newsstand circulation of the F.I. in Los Angeles so far with the August issue. Our three main downtown stands sold a total of sixty-seven copies. This compares with an average of thirty-five copies for all stands six months ago. The other stands sold another fifteen copies. So, as you see, we have more than doubled the sales on stands as well as increased the total newsstands carrying FOURTH INTERNATIONAL from three to eleven."

Philadelphia requests that we increase their "F.I. bundle order beginning with the November issue to twenty copies."

\* \* \*

Two more newsstands have been added to the list of those already carrying FOURTH INTERNATIONAL:

St. Louis: "Please list in *Where You Can Buy The Fourth International* Fosters Book Store, 410 Washington Avenue, so our friends may know we have the F.I. and THE MILITANT on sale here in St. Louis."

San Francisco: "Please include the following address in your list of where to buy the F.I.—San Francisco School of Social Science, 305 Grant Ave., 4th floor."

\* \* \*

Two letters sent us by friends in other countries are very interesting and we quote from them at length.

England: "A copy of the July issue of the F.I. is just to hand. Lately I have received several other issues, including one I asked for of October last year.

"A package came safely containing the various pamphlets together with the two books. All this indicates much care and attention on your part and I am

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Editor: FELIX MORROW

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they are all well in health and that their confinement will be shortened before long.

"Over here you will know that the law acted differently and an attempt at a prosecution failed of its purpose.

"For those of us who live in what was at one time called 'Southern England' things have been really difficult. I am unable to describe in words which would convey my own feelings about this spell of bombing. One is thankful to have got through, and that is about all one can say. So many others were less fortunate.

"Some very big changes are taking place in the industrial sphere, as is inevitable as the war nears its closing stages. But a new Social Security plan is announced quite timely—perhaps the two things have some connection.

"The material which you have sent me will have my careful attention, in fact I am already going through some now, and needless to say the arguments will be made use of in circles where its message will lead to results which we have in common."

\* \* \*

Canada: "Enclosed is money towards renewal of my subs to FOURTH INTERNATIONAL and THE MILITANT. I receive them regularly and keep them circulating.

"The Stalinists have been strong in British Columbia, but their prestige is dropping. Their Labor Progressive Party is now advocating coalition with Mackenzie Kings Liberals to prepare for prosperity post-war. They say with Browder, 'we're not ready for socialism yet—the war has given capitalism a shot in the arm.' Reading what we do, we know better. The Old Man built well.

"I would not be without THE MILITANT and FOURTH INTERNATIONAL."

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# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 5

NOVEMBER 1944

NUMBER 11

## The Month in Review

By THE EDITORS

### On the 27th Anniversary of the Russian October

Twenty-seven years ago, in the fourth year  
**THE MEANING** of the first imperialist world war, occurred  
**OF OCTOBER** the October Revolution, the greatest and most significant event in world history. It ushered in an entirely new epoch of social development. Hitherto the march of events had been determined by the automatic and blind interplay of social laws, operating in the course of centuries and even thousands of years behind the backs of the masses and independently of their consciousness. Man was the object of history rather than its subject. The October Revolution demonstrated once and for all that mastery not only over nature but also over his own social destiny lies within man's grasp.

What was accomplished in October was achieved *consciously*. The architect of October was the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. This party, comprising the organized vanguard of the Russian working class, acted on the basis of the scientific method of Marxism and depended at every stage on the forces and the creative power of the only progressive class in modern society, *the proletariat*. There is no other method, no other means of social progress. This has been affirmed and reaffirmed by the entire course of events in the twenty seven years that have elapsed since October. Failure to follow the road first opened up by the Russian masses in 1917 will spell the destruction of civilization, which has already been gravely undermined by more than 10 years of world slaughter within the last three decades. Civilization will hardly withstand another world holocaust, another series of economic crises and the intrenchment everywhere of political and cultural reaction more bestial even than that of fascism. All of which is inescapable if capitalism is permitted to survive.

The economic foundation of society, as **WHAT MARX AND ENGELS TAUGHT** Marx and Engels proved long ago, constitutes the real and material base of all progress. Throughout the ages, however, economic development has occurred not freely but invariably within artificial frameworks imposed by the various ruling classes. The productive forces have been monopolized in one form or another by powerful minorities whose primary concern was the preservation of their class power and privileges and not the expansion of production for the benefit of society as a whole. Thus epochs have periodically arrived when the abolition of outworn modes of production and their replacement by new and higher forms became life-and-death questions. Otherwise, the given societies could only stagnate and rot. We are living precisely through the last of these revolutionary epochs. In its essence the proletarian revolution is economic. Its primary task is to discard the capitalist mode of production and replace it with a new and higher socialist form. This is the material essence of the October Revolution. The Russian workers and peasants abolished the rule of capitalists and

landlords in the former empire of the Czars and established the workers' state which introduced planned economy on the basis of socialized industry. This is the unpostponable task that still confronts all the peoples of the world, first and foremost the stricken millions in Europe.

Capitalism introduced the first system of world economy, only to set extremely narrow limits to the growth of the world market and the world-wide division of labor; because under capitalism the productive forces are of necessity strangled by the fetters of private ownership and the archaic, reactionary system of national states. Only world organization and planning can assure the indispensable arena of expansion for the modern productive forces, let alone harness them to prevent wars and other social convulsions. That is why the proletarian revolution is internationalist in its spirit and scope.

From its very inception Marxism set **LENINISM MEANS** as its task of tasks: to imbue the working class with *internationalism*. There is no poison more destructive than the poison of chauvinism. The October Revolution was the quintessence of internationalism. The Russian Bolsheviks, under Lenin and Trotsky, taught that the Russian proletariat was only the vanguard of the world army of the working class; they carried out the October Revolution as the first victorious battle for the establishment of the World Socialist Federation; they tied the fate of the Soviet Union to the fate of the world revolution; they invariably approached every major task confronting the USSR from this standpoint and no other. In the most critical days of October, Lenin reiterated time and again that he would unhesitatingly stake the existence of the Soviet regime in coming to the defense of the German and the European revolution. As a matter of fact this was implied in the very formation of the Third International which Lenin characterized as the "ante-chamber" of the Socialist United States of Europe and of the World.

Stalin long ago betrayed all this. His fraudulent and reactionary theory of "socialism in one country" has served to inject the poison of chauvinism into the USSR and the Communist International. That is why Trotsky waged his irreconcilable, historic fight against this "theory" from the day Stalin enunciated it in the autumn of 1924. As Trotsky correctly predicted the Third International has been destroyed by Stalino-chauvinism.

The Fourth International founded by **WE ARE THE TRUE HEIRS OF OCTOBER** Trotsky, is the true heir of October and of Lenin's Communist International. It alone has remained faithful to the internationalist banner and program of Leninism. Therein lies the secret of the unconquerable power of Trotskyism.

Stalin began by usurping the banner of October and ended by appropriating—and destroying—almost all of its great conquests. But the revolution was made neither by the Stalinist bureaucracy nor for its sake. It was made by the masses and was intended from the first to serve their interests and their interests only.

The October Revolution marked, as we have stated, the first conscious and triumphant intervention in favor of the dispossessed and the oppressed. It raised these masses to their feet in order through their own organizations and efforts to slash more deeply into the roots of exploitation and inequality than any other event in world history.

**LENIN ON THE SOVIET STATE** Lenin saw the essence of the Soviet state in this, that "it enables those who were oppressed to rise, and more and more to take into their own hands the entire direction of the state, the entire direction of economic life, the entire direction of production." (Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, page 201. Third Russian edition.)

In March 1921, on the occasion of the International Working Women's Day, Lenin characterized Bolshevism and the October Revolution as follows:

"The chief, the essential feature of Bolshevism and the Russian October is that they draw into politics precisely those who were most oppressed under capitalism (and) . . . through the abolition of the private ownership of land, mills and factories concentrate all state power in the hands of the toiling masses."

In Lenin's lifetime these were no empty words. Every measure was taken to insure the self-action, intervention in and control of ever wider spheres of political, cultural and economic activity by the masses. The mass organizations—the Soviets, the party, the trade unions, cooperatives, etc.—seethed with vitality and exercised the actual power.

In the twenty years since Lenin died, all this has been destroyed. The masses have been politically expropriated. All power is wielded by Stalin, the personal dictator, at the head of a totalitarian bureaucracy.

The prime concern of Lenin's party and government was the welfare of the masses, the immediate and constant improvement of their working and living standards. It is impossible to cite a single piece of legislation or a single action in Lenin's day which was at variance with this policy.

Illustrative of the spirit and practice of **WITH AND FOR THE OPPRESSED** October is a letter of greeting that Lenin sent to the Bavarian Soviet Republic which existed from April 7 to May 1, 1919. The chief concern expressed in this letter is over the steps that had been taken for the immediate improvement of the conditions of Bavarian workers, agricultural laborers and small peasants. Lenin wrote:

"Have you utilized the stocks of clothing and other products in order to extend immediate aid to the workers, and especially the agricultural laborers and small peasants? Have you expropriated the factories and the wealth of the capitalists in Munich, along with the capitalist agricultural enterprises in the environs? Have you cancelled the mortgages and the rents of the small peasants? Have you doubled or tripled the wages of agricultural laborers and unskilled workers? Have you confiscated all the paper and newsprint and all the printing establishments in order to publish popular leaflets and newspapers for the masses? Have you introduced the 6-hour working day, with two or three hour daily exercises in the administrative affairs of the state? Have you squeezed the bourgeoisie in Munich in order to divide the apartments of the wealthy among the workers? Have you taken the banks into your hands? . . . Have you introduced bigger rations for the workers than for the bourgeoisie?" (Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, page 264. Third Russian edition.)

In these words is to be heard the genuine voice of October. Whereas Bolshevism never failed to range itself with the oppressed and the weak against the privileged and the mighty,

Stalinism has no less consistently pursued just the opposite course. The difference here is the difference between revolution and counter-revolution.

Whatever else Stalinism has been able to destroy, it cannot destroy the meaning, the lessons and the example of the first decisive victory scored by the oppressed and the dispossessed in the age-long liberationist struggle. The heritage of October has been preserved by the Trotskyist movement. The workers in Europe are already mobilizing their forces and welding their ranks. On the morrow they will march into battle and win the final victories under the same banner and program that brought the first triumph in Russia in October 1917.

## The Soviet Union -- Twenty-Seven Years After

**WHAT IS HAPPENING INSIDE THE USSR?** It is of course impossible to give a detailed picture of the USSR as it is emerging from the war. The Stalinist censorship, so skilled in hiding and distorting facts in peacetime, has sealed off the country from the rest of the world for years. The Kremlin stopped publishing all official data concerning industry and agriculture since 1939, the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact. Nevertheless the picture is quite clear in its main outlines.

The war has struck deeper and harder in the USSR than in any other major country of Europe. The destruction is incalculable. It will take years of unremitting toil and sacrifice to restore the ruined industrialized and agricultural sections to their pre-war levels. The remaining sectors of the Soviet economy, even those areas far behind the fronts, have been so completely geared to war production, with both equipment and personnel so strained that there can be no talk of a rapid reconversion to peace-time production. Here, too, the prospect is a long range one. Here, too, great obstacles must first be overcome.

The Soviet fiscal system has been shattered. The actual extent of inflation can only be approximated. But it appears to verge on runaway inflation. According to figures published in the American press, the prices on the Soviet "free market" are from 60 to 400 times the fixed state prices. Thus a pound of bread costs 60 rubles (state price: 1 to 2 rubles); one egg—20 rubles (state price: 65 to 75 kopeks); sugar—500 rubles a pound (state price: 3 to 4 rubles); butter—400 rubles a pound (state price: 1½ rubles); and so on.

Consumers goods have long ago become inaccessible to the mass of the population. Sufficient food, fuel and clothing likewise remain only within the reach of the military caste and the highest layers of the bureaucracy. The highest ration issued to workers provides a little over a pound of bread a day. It can be stated without any fear of exaggeration that even in such favored places as Moscow, the populace has been living below subsistence levels since the outbreak of war.

Military and civilian casualties run to **THOSE WHO NOW CARRY THE LOAD** astronomic figures. The loss of manpower admissions as that almost 2 million children have been drawn into plants and that both in industry and agriculture the overwhelming majority consists of women, adolescents and children.

In his speech on the occasion of the 27th Anniversary of October—in which even the stereotyped reference to Lenin was omitted—Stalin acknowledged that "the main burden of the labor in factories and plants, in the collective and state farms"

had fallen on the shoulders of "Soviet women and our glorious young people."

It is therefore not at all surprising that the productivity of labor, always extremely low in the USSR, has declined still further. In a leading editorial, June 8, *Pravda* singles out the crucial coal industry among those "where the productivity of labor remains below the pre-war level," and then goes on to add that in the sphere of raising the productivity of labor "we still have an untapped territory of work." Similar comments have become more and more frequent in the recent period.

These and other facts indicate that the prolongation of the war is straining the Soviet masses to the extreme limits. In the USSR, as throughout Europe, the winter of 1944 may well be the blackest winter in modern times.

While the Stalin gang seeks to usurp the credit and the prestige for the epic victories of the Red Army, the brunt of the war has been of course borne by the workers and the mass of the peasantry.

**THE SOVIET PROLETARIAT** How will the Soviet working class emerge from this war? We have already pointed out that a vast change has occurred in the composition of the industrial force. The extreme youth of a section of this new working class is a factor that is not at all negative from the revolutionary standpoint. The revolution has always drawn its heaviest forces from the youth. Nor are working class women, any more than the men, suitable as reserves for the open counter-revolution. Moreover, the change in composition means that in addition to millions who have already been killed or wounded, other millions of workers still remain under arms. The conditions they will return to after demobilization will be below those miserable levels that existed in 1939.

The process of the political expropriation of the proletariat has been completed by the Kremlin. The mass organizations—the Soviets, the trade unions, the cooperatives—have been stripped even of the functions that remained after these were reduced to mere bureaucratic shells. The factory administration—the director, the specialist, the engineer—today reigns supreme. They are now the "party." They are now the "law." They have contempt for the masses. Least of their concerns, is the improvement of the working and living conditions. Will all this be accepted by the worker-soldiers? Victorious soldiers have never before accepted docilely worse conditions than those which previously prevailed.

In addition to the sacrifices they have already made, the Soviet workers will have to bear the main burden of the transition from peace to war as well as of the entire reconstruction period. Neither of these periods will be brief. The Soviet workers, we repeat, will get no concessions from the bureaucracy; these will have to be wrested in an open struggle. In other words, the long-unfolding contradiction between the parasitic regime and the needs of the toiling masses must come to its breaking point in the next period. Although they have undoubtedly been drained by the war, there is little likelihood that the Soviet workers, steeled by their war experiences and imbued with a new confidence in themselves, will submit without a struggle to the perpetuation of the Stalinist regime. The outcome of this struggle is inextricably bound up with the revolutionary developments in Europe, above all in Germany. Every blow aimed by Stalin at the unfolding European revolution is at the same time a blow at the Soviet workers and at the Soviet Union. That the Kremlin is aligned with the counter-revolution can today

be denied only by the agents and dupes of Stalinism. But there is no ground whatever for pessimism concerning the role of the Soviet workers in the titanic events ahead. When the European revolution sounds its tocsin of liberation, they will be found in the front ranks.

**CLASS DIFFERENTIATION WITHIN THE PEASANTRY** What role will the Soviet peasantry play? Stalin long ago proclaimed that with the "irrevocable triumph of socialism" the peasants constitute a "new" class in the Soviet Union. Like all the other lies, the Stalinist lie that the Soviet peasantry is unlike any other in history will be exploded by the coming events.

The actual fact is that the heaviest reserves of the internal counter-revolution are now to be found among the Soviet peasantry. Prior to the war the class differentiation within the collectives had already produced a strong formation of "millionaire kolkhozniks" who can be scientifically designated as a nascent *rural bourgeoisie*. The processes in war-time, especially the growing scarcity of necessities, have tended to greatly strengthen this rural bourgeoisie. Just what portion of the national wealth they have accumulated may be roughly estimated by the "voluntary donations" which the Kremlin has been siphoning off from the collectives in 1944. For six days in June, *Pravda* reports the receipt—and Stalin's personal acknowledgment—of 165,912,748 rubles, along with several hundred grams of gold and "other valuables" from collectives, some even in the recently liberated areas. Sums like these can come only from one source—the "millionaire kolkhozniks." These sums are obtained in the guise of a spontaneously initiated campaign in which individuals and groups donate their *personal savings*, currency, state bonds, etc., to aid children of the veterans, to build tanks, planes, and so on. Needless to mention, the GPU has ample means of obtaining and expediting these "patriotic" donations. It is likewise self-evident that the rural bourgeoisie will not submit indefinitely to the continuation of this "bloodless" expropriation.

The Soviet rural bourgeoisie possesses social support in the village in the person of another layer that has grown luxuriously in wartime—the well-to-do peasant, the speculator in the "free market," in short, none other than the kulak whose complete extinction had been fraudulently proclaimed long ago by the Kremlin.

**CONDITIONS WITHIN THE COLLECTIVES** The growth of individualistic tendencies in Soviet agriculture is reflected in Stalin's own press. *The collectives do not even bother to sign agreements with the Machine Tractor Stations*, agreements on which a large portion of grain deliveries to the state depend. A report from a district in Northern Caucasus states that:

"In the course of the last two years the Mamlyutsk regional Soviet has not reviewed nor registered a single agreement." And in conclusion, it is added: "The Mamlyutsk region is, unfortunately, not an exception." (*Pravda*, June 8. Our emphasis.)

*The collectives do not bother to fulfill the plan.* They prefer to raise and harvest those crops which are the most profitable. Hay and other fodder are apparently relatively cheap in the "free market" and are therefore neglected, with the resulting loss of horses and cattle. Thus a report from a single region in the autonomous Kazakh Republic affirms that

"Last year the collectives fulfilled the plan of hay-mowing only 68 percent. Fodder lasted only until January-February

[of this year] . . . During the winter the collectives found a deficit of thousands of sheep, cows, goats, horses." (*Pravda*, June 10. Our emphasis.)

Throughout May and June the Moscow press carried reports—carefully buried in the local correspondence—of similar “deficits” from one end of the country to the other. For example, during the first quarter of 1944 a single district in the Ural region suffered the loss of “165 heads of large horned cattle, 760 sheep and 195 horses” for lack of fodder (*Pravda*, June 15).

Such a wholesale destruction of cattle in the face of the already grave shortage portends a catastrophe in agriculture. *Pravda's* reports may very well indicate actual conditions of famine in the areas far behind the front. In any case, the situation cannot be improved without drastic measures, which, in turn, can only bring the bureaucracy into an open conflict with the peasantry.

Added to this chaotic situation is the monstrous dislocation of the relations between the city and the village. There exists a shortage not only of consumers goods produced by industry but also of the simplest agricultural implements. A communication from the Tambov *oblast*, one of the richest farm areas, informs that “last year many collective farmers had to travel 100 kilometers to get rakes.” They obtained 600 rakes from another collective (*Pravda*, June 11). The same report mentions an acute lack of scythes, which are likewise unobtainable through the normal trade channels.

In the face of a dire shortage of tools, draught animals, etc., whatever mechanized equipment still remains is abused and neglected:

“The collectives are showing little concern about the mechanized cadres. Time and again machines are entrusted to untrained people, while experienced tractor operators are employed in other work.” (*Pravda*, June 8.)

*Pravda* abstains from explaining what happens to the machines entrusted to unskilled hands.

Fragmentary as the information is, the conclusion is inescapable. The war has placed a huge question mark over the fate of the entire collective farm system which is now being pulled powerfully in the direction of capitalist restoration. This crisis in the collective directly involves the fate of nationalized industry and planned economy as a whole.

Meanwhile in the political sphere FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION the Stalinist bureaucracy has already accomplished everything in its power to clear the road for capitalist restoration. The capitalist, or more correctly, the restorationist wing of the bureaucracy, has been strengthened by the ascendancy of the military caste, by the restoration of the Greek Orthodox Church, by the injection of the poison of chauvinism into the Soviet masses, and all the other reactionary measures introduced in recent period. The strong agricultural base of the counter-revolution reinforces and is itself reinforced by the restorationist section of the bureaucracy. The “democratic” Anglo-American imperialists provide the forces moving toward capitalist restoration within the USSR with a powerful ally.

Finally, Soviet industry has been undermined not only by the war but also by the bureaucracy which has remained just as rapacious, arbitrary, wasteful and inefficient in war time as it was in peace. The war has freed the managers, engineers, and specialists even of the inadequate controls previously exercised. They remain, of course, completely free from any check or supervision by the masses. One of the first casualties of the

war was the system of cost-accounting in the plants. In some factories bookkeeping departments were virtually liquidated by the transfer of clerks, bookkeepers, etc., to other departments under the pretext of war emergency. Embezzling of state funds could now proceed with impunity. On June 2 *Pravda* printed the report of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of Medium-sized Machinery under the title: “FACTORIES IN WHICH THEY HAVE LEARNED TO COUNT NEITHER RUBLES NOR KOPEKS.” Among the plants singled out in this report is the key State Ballbearings Plant.

On June 8 *Pravda* in its leading editorial returned to this touchy subject:

“Some of our directors and party workers have become accustomed to look rarely into the balance sheet of the operations of their enterprises . . .”

In this context, “some enterprises” is Stalinist double-talk for most enterprises; and the “rare looks” signify complete unconcern on the part of the bureaucrats.

Side by side with embezzlements, so wide-spread even in peace-time, there continues unchecked the wastage of raw materials, fuel etc. Deficient products pile up. One recent report in the *Pravda* refers to the clearing away of thousands of tons of “rubbish” from a single plant. In the already cited editorial, it is stated:

“As is evident from a number of materials published by *Pravda* in the recent period, the losses of raw materials, fuel, electrical energy are very great in many enterprises. Damaged products are considerable.” (*Pravda*, June 8.)

STALINIST WRECKERS Listed among the “laggard” and “deficient” enterprises are those in “ferrous metallurgy, and in coal industry, and in the People's Commissariat of War Industry.” *Pravda* then continues its list:

“Especially noteworthy is the lag of a number of enterprises in the textile industry, heavy machine building, cellulose industry and structural materials. Facts of the unfulfillment of the plan continue to take place in an assorted number of fabrications.” (*Idem.*)

Let us observe that *Pravda's* “assorted number” amounts to a virtual roll-call of Soviet industries. In any case it is now officially admitted that a considerable section of Soviet industry has been consistently operating at a huge loss. If these losses, superimposed on the havoc directly caused by the war, do not spell bankruptcy, they most certainly foreshadow it. The Kremlin has brought Soviet industry to the verge of the abyss. For these disproportions between and within industry and agriculture are piled on top of the previously existing grave disproportions.

The war has postponed the crisis of Stalin's regime only to reproduce it in the sharpest form at the moment when the military hostilities approach their termination. Superficial observers, and this includes the Kremlin itself, are convinced that the military victories and the accruing prestige have definitively stabilized Stalin's rule. Just the contrary is true. The real test of Stalin's regime lies not in the past but in the period immediately ahead. The historical alternative forecast years ago by Leon Trotsky is becoming more and more the reality: *Either* Stalinism, as it falls, will drag down with it the workers state and capitalism will be restored in the USSR; or the Soviet masses will overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy, reestablish Soviet democracy, and resume their march to socialism shoulder to shoulder with the European masses.

# The Coming Upsurge of American Labor

By WILLIAM SIMMONS

Following the big push during 1934-37 we have witnessed a period of relative calm within the American labor movement. But it is the calm before the storm. Soon this movement will be surging toward another great advance. The prerequisite of numerical strength is at hand. And the logic of the labor movement's present position points toward changes in a progressive direction and of far reaching consequences for its future. The American labor movement is about to enter an entirely new cycle of development.

Viewing it superficially it may seem as if the labor movement passes through recurrent cycles. That, however, is not quite the case. These cycles are not *merely* recurrent. Each time they assume infinitely larger dimensions and occur on a higher level of development.

The whole history of American labor shows this to be a fundamental characteristic. At their inception trade unions were met with fire and sword. They had to fight fierce battles for their existence during the whole period of early and rapidly expanding capitalism. Especially was this the case in the years of expansion following the Civil War and up to the great upheaval of the 'eighties. Union leadership at that time was not as clearly defined as now, and by no means as separate and distinct from the rank and file membership. An official union position did not provide a financial career for its occupant. This turbulent period of necessity required militancy, and the turbulent conditions produced a measure of such leadership. In this sense the internal dynamic generated by the movement corresponded to the conditions under which it developed.

This early militancy, at times somewhat chaotic, somewhat disorganized, but magnificent nevertheless—found its negation in the era of Samuel Gompers. This era grew out of the period of more stable capitalist development with its more tranquil labor relations. Certain privileges and certain concessions given to the small, skilled, and organized section, with rich plums to its official leaders, all at the expense of the unskilled and unorganized labor majority, were the outstanding features of these relations. The relations were permeated by the spirit and method of partnership between capital and labor, from which the former always emerged the gainer, and the latter often suffered even outrageous sell-outs. It was this atmosphere that the Gompers' political creed of "rewarding friends and punishing enemies" held complete sway. In other words, class-collaboration reigned supreme.

Of course, there were violent outbursts of the class struggle also during that period, but on the whole the changes that had taken place in economic conditions left their basic imprint. Organizationally the labor movement became adapted to these conditions by the ascendancy of the nationally coordinated union, based on craft, and engaged in the business of selling skill at a "fair" price. Politically the "rewards" and the "punishments" handed out were largely perfunctory and, while netting few gains, contributed more often to downright corruption of the officialdom. That era extended beyond Sam Gompers. It marked a cycle of development which is now approaching its end.

Basically, economic conditions furnish the key to an understanding of the evolution of organized labor. There is always a close relationship extending from the former to the latter. In the United States, for example, economic developments have

touched higher peaks and lower depths than elsewhere. By and large the labor movement has followed similar lines. At times it manifested great strength and resolution, at other times it was almost wiped out. For an illustration of this we need only refer to the last great depression. Insofar as organized strength and militancy is concerned the trade unions had dropped to their very lowest. But they rose quickly after the bottom of the depression had been hit. They passed through the sit-down strikes and the CIO development. And now, when American capitalism has reached the height of its wartime boom and is struggling for world mastery, the unions have reached unsurpassed heights of organizational strength.

But it is also the evolution of capitalism itself which brings this parallel to an end. Already now—that is in the sense of its political implication—the spirals of these cycles have left their junction point. Henceforth they will proceed in opposite directions. There will be ups and downs to be sure; but while the spiral of the capitalist business cycle is definitely downward, recording its decline and decay, that of the labor movement has begun to record its steady upward climb.

## The Gompers Era

During the whole of the Gompers' era the profits of expanding capitalism made sufficient concessions possible to the small stratum of organized skilled workers to assure the relative smoothness and tranquility of class-collaboration. With the stage of capitalist decline such concessions become much more limited. Correspondingly the room for such collaboration narrows. That it could be continued at all up to the present moment, and after the emergence of the CIO is due primarily to the exceptional circumstances created by the Roosevelt New Deal period and the war conditions that followed. To a certain extent it is also due to the fact that the form changed to one of collaboration between the higher union officials and the federal administration.

In this we have an example of certain features of one historical stage being carried over to another in spite of the disappearance of conditions for its existence. Of course, it is also a testimony to the still remaining backwardness of the labor movement. So while the relationship existing between the trade union hierarchy and the most authentic and the highest representative of the ruling class must be accepted as the very pinnacle of class collaboration it also definitely marks the beginning of its end. From now on this relationship will lead toward a head-on collision.

However, while these carry-overs have remained, this does not at all denote a static condition of the labor movement, or even anything approaching such a condition. Considerable changes have already added new and important characteristics that are antagonistic to the old basis. At the present moment the labor movement represents the opposites of both the old and the new. These opposites interpenetrate.

Insofar as official policy and practice is concerned, the old prevails. The trade unions are still held in the vise of class collaboration. Just now this is expressed most abjectly in the form of compulsory arbitration implemented by the no-strike pledge, which is most often enforced by joint punitive actions of the governments, the employers and the union officials against

striking militants. Wherever Stalinist influence has made inroads among the higher bureaucratic strata the latter has become only more abject, more debased, and more treacherous. On the whole the trade union leadership presents a sordid picture. It is, if anything, more servile, more subservient than ever before and more dependent upon the capitalist rulers. It is therefore also more devoid of actual ability of leadership for only men of mediocre stature can be made completely servile. Even the adroitness and dexterous skill in driving a bargain that was characteristic of Gompers and Lewis is entirely lacking in Green and Murray. While the former often exhibited an instinctive healthy distrust of government hand-outs, the latter have entrusted the welfare of their organizations entirely to the mercies of federal administrative agencies. Both were hoisted into their exalted positions by more cunning confederates because they were malleable. Both the former Baptist deacon of Conshohocken, Ohio, who remains today a parson, and the pious Scotchman, who speaks of conscience and independence of spirit as if to persuade himself, appear equally grotesque in the mantles of their predecessors.

Simultaneously, though it may seem paradoxical, the exact opposite also exists in vigorous and healthy proportions within this labor movement. A new militancy has already arisen. The emergence of the CIO marked its beginning. It became an entirely new experience for American labor: A venture into organization of mass production industry and the ascendancy of the industrial form of organization. In this alone is present a change of far reaching consequence. Moreover, the method and tactic of the sit-down strike became a modest mirror of the future taking over of industry. The labor movement began soaring to new heights. With the old, antiquated, and the decrepit still predominating in official policy, a new-found strength and a new confidence were nevertheless evolving within the shell of the old.

These opposites interpenetrate. Even the CIO is weighed down to this day by a leadership, by policies, and by methods of the past. This in spite of the fact that the leaders under modern economic conditions can no longer deliver any important results to the rank and file on the basis of the old policy and outlook. Consequently their leadership and control becomes further enfeebled.

## Revived Militancy

Within the ranks, however, there is again discernible the beginnings of a revived militancy. So much so that in disregard of the combination of war reaction, war restrictions, and the dangers of joint governmental and bureaucratic punitive actions to enforce the no-strike edicts, unofficial strikes mount and multiply. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in 1943, after the enactment of the Smith-Connally anti-strike law on June 25, there were, all told, 1,919 strikes of which only 34 were called in compliance with the law. In other words, less than 2 percent were legally sanctioned. This year has brought the tempo to a higher pitch. And there need be no doubt that, while the joint punitive actions will be intensified, we will likewise witness a crescendo of actions of revolt. This is taking shape primarily in the new industrial unions in mass production industry; but the AFL, as experience has already shown, is not immune from these developments, either.

The recent convention of the United Automobile Workers presents another side of the same process—a side that is even more significant. The overwhelming sentiment displayed there against the no-strike pledge is basically a revolt against the

still remaining class collaboration policy. As such it represents a great advance toward class consciousness.

A new leadership growing out of this renewed militancy exists so far only in an embryonic stage; and it is therefore still rather formless. But the important thing is that these new factors are in the making. They are a product both of the changes of internal circumstances as well as of the higher level of internal dynamics. These new factors in the making are decisive. For while the old and the sordid still exists alongside of the new developments the latter already carry impressive weight because they are destined to supersede the former.

The emergence of the CIO and the simultaneous growth of the AFL has brought the labor movement up to approximately 15 million members. This is a very impressive record. This in itself is an enormous quantitative change which has not failed to produce a qualitative difference: A new and higher quality is added. Millions of workers have become union conscious. And many of them have also learned that lasting benefits and permanent security can be gained only by their own solidarity and actions. Naturally, a greater and better organized labor force generates a far greater consciousness of strength and a readiness to make use of it. Every actual experience of effectiveness can only add to this consciousness. And the fact that labor organization now embraces the workers in practically all of the major basic industries—the decisive section for both industry and labor—has added a full measure to this potential effectiveness. This movement is now a much more complete expression of labor as a distinct and powerful social force. Moreover, the turbulent emergence of the CIO and the simultaneous growth of the AFL reintroduced into the ranks of organized labor the spirit and method of revolt.

## A New Cycle

It is now quite certain that the specific features of the Gompers' era of development will be negated. The forces for their destruction and change are already at work. That the new cycle of development will assume infinitely larger dimensions and occur on a higher level is equally certain.

The logic of present social relations leads inescapably to this conclusion. The decline and decay of capitalism already carries ample evidence of becoming much more stormy, dramatic, and even much more violent than its rise. The more desperate its position, the greater the fury of its attacks upon organized labor. But also, while at its inception the labor movement fought only for the right to bargain collectively and for the establishment of trade unions, it will now be fighting for its very life. Moreover to attain any success at all, it will have to take on the fight for a new social order.

The lines are being drawn for the conflicts to come. How well is the labor movement prepared to meet the test? Organizationally it is reaching its manhood. Politically, however, it is still an infant; "*mai c'est l'enfant terrible.*" Its political growth and maturity are now about to begin. And, remaining true to its recent past it will most likely progress in gigantic leaps. Thus history will once again record a change of far reaching consequences; for its coming political growth and maturity will have a terrific impact on all future social developments.

This turning point is linked up directly with the war's end and a return to a peace economy. Of course, we are not going to witness anything even approaching what is called a normal peace economy. Under declining and decaying capitalism this is no longer within the realms of possibility. On the contrary. Depressions, crises and wars—relieved only by temporary ebbs

and flows which in no way alter the basis—this is all that capitalism can offer. And this is also the fatal weakness of its economic structure.

Existing governmental regulations, restrictions and controls of the productive forces were established as a matter of necessity—the adaptation to total warfare. Because of the highly integrated and socialized organization of production there was no other way for capitalism to assure the colossal requirements of war and to secure the manpower needed for production. Nor was there any other way for it to make sure that labor be held in check while it reaped super-profits out of war. So, naturally, the restrictions were not applied to profits at all. Yet the employers were not entirely free to deal with labor in their own way. The government took charge of industrial and social relations.

In order to provide a cover for the fiction of national unity the governmental regulatory and controlling agencies, from the War Labor Board, the War Manpower Commission, etc., to the Economic Stabilizer and the War Mobilization Director, had to appear as "impartial" arbiters. This complex of agencies supposedly represented equally capital and labor together with the so-called public. But, alas, in class society the government is always and exclusively the executive authority of the ruling class. In a society based upon capitalist production the government functions in the interests of capitalism and can function in no other way. No matter how deftly these agencies manipulated they turned out to be instruments of the employers against labor. Through repeated and bitter experiences the labor movement found them to be by and large one-sided affairs. The big corporations had little difficulty in securing ever mounting profits; labor however, was thwarted.

As a result of this the workers are now beginning to assimilate their first lesson. They are learning that the much touted impartiality is a hollow mockery; that the no-strike pledge defrauded them of their only real weapon.

## The Primacy of Politics

The labor movement had to deal directly with these governmental agencies and it found itself again and again in conflict with them. The conflict extended beyond the framework of the agencies. United States Congress became an anti-labor forum. So much so that trade unionists today pretty well accept the Smith-Connally Act as typical of the Congress attitude. What is less clear to them is the general relationship between these various branches of government and between the government and the employers of labor. Vaguely they understand that the monopoly concerns always get the best of bargains in Washington. Most often, however, they tend to absolve the President of any responsibility for the hostility or the actions of his officially appointed subordinates. Consequently they do not yet see the full implication of class government. But once the logic of this relationship makes itself sufficiently felt, which will not take long, the second important lesson will follow quickly. They will learn that labor has no friends among the political agents of privilege.

Nevertheless the labor movement cannot at all relapse into political indifference. Every problem that it faces becomes increasingly political in character. Not only is this the case with ordinary civil liberties but it applies ever more and more to questions of wages and working conditions, the union shop, the cost of living, and above all it applies to the rapidly approaching post-war problem of jobs. Workers are now restless, demanding higher wages and showing their fear of coming

unemployment. Promises made by the politicians for jobs are greeted with growing doubts and suspicion. Every struggle in which the workers now engage is elevated immediately into a political struggle. And it will be no less so in the post-war period of struggles for jobs and for bread.

Under such conditions organized labor will be compelled to acknowledge the futility of continuing to play the capitalist political shell game. For just as the no-strike pledge helps to preserve and increase capitalist profits so does the antiquated Gompers' political policy help to preserve capitalist rule.

The conclusion to be drawn from these lessons cannot be long delayed. In fact it lies immediately ahead. It points definitely and unfailingly toward independent labor political action —*the organization of a labor party*. That is the only possible conclusion that the labor movement can come to at its present stage of development. It is inevitable. The 1944 presidential election will be in all likelihood the last in which the traditional and exclusive two-party system is retained. If President Roosevelt, about whom many workers have illusions, is defeated in this election, which is not excluded, the process will be swifter. Nevertheless, regardless of the outcome of this election, a labor party is a certainty. Sheer necessity will compel the trade unions to supplement the inexorably severe industrial struggles that lie ahead with independent political action.

It is entirely possible that this may take on a somewhat emasculated form at first. Instead of a distinct labor party, based upon the trade unions, we may witness an initial beginning in the form of a third party of labor together with so-called liberal petty bourgeois elements, including diverse and frustrated politicians. But even this would be no serious deterrent. The labor movement will be sufficiently strong and cohesive to assert its undisputed preponderance. Besides, under the conditions of the impending events, labor alone can give leadership.

We are not unmindful of the fact that any suggestion of independent labor political action has so far remained a complete anathema to the patriarchs of the AFL. To them it appears entirely too revolutionary. And anything even mildly revolutionary has about as much chance before them as before a Vatican conclave. It is looked upon as the devil's own handiwork. But their opposition will be sure to prove much less formidable than that of the Roman hierarchs. The power and sweep of coming political developments will be even more irresistible than the great organization drive following the last great depression.

To speak of the cohesion of the labor movement may just now seem premature in view of the existing division into two almost equally powerful organizations. That, however, need not be counted as a serious obstacle. And it will prove less so in a field of political activity once the ties between the present labor leaders and Roosevelt's coattails are severed. The likelihood is that such activity will provide a strong impulse toward organizational unification.

Incidentally, the Political Action Committee, headed by Sidney Hillman, is itself an unwitting proof of present labor political trends. It has emerged at this time only as a stop-gap. It appeared in order to create the illusion of a political departure, of projecting new policies and methods, while in reality it is only a repetition of the futile past. One could apply to the PAC the terse sarcastic remark of Marx when he said, in reference to Hegel's statement about great events and personalities reappearing upon the stage of universal history in one fashion or another, that: "He forgot to add that, on the first occasion, they appear as tragedy; on the second as farce." William

Green carries the Gompers' credo to the point of endorsing Congressman Dies and receives in return a protest from the unions of Dies' own bailiwick in Texas. The Illinois AFL State Federation of Labor endorses Senator Lucas in spite of his vote for the Smith-Connally Act. And now comes Sidney Hillman. With the greatest bravado he claims credit for the defeat of some particularly odious legislators and proclaims his power to deliver the votes to Roosevelt while remaining in deadly fear of setting the masses into motion for his own professed aims.

The PAC started out with well attended conferences in many localities. Local unions were attracted in the expectation of some sort of political action. But the top leaders, ever mindful of the latent explosive dynamics of an aroused mass movement, quickly narrowed the whole affair to their own committee and added some "respectable" citizens. After that it was sustained only by the outcries of the fearful middle class and by the publicity of those who used the PAC deliberately as a punching bag to enlarge those fears for their own partisan purposes. While its ability to deliver the labor vote to Roosevelt is questionable, its service to the labor movement is nil.

## The Labor Party

Of course, the working class will not find the solution to its serious problems raised by the conditions of decay capitalism even in the emergence of a labor party. This is not a final answer. At best it is only a preliminary and partial answer. In its classic sense a labor party can do no more than fill an interim stage. In fact it will raise more problems than it solves. Naturally the existing interrelation of class forces in motion will determine its position, its attitude, and its actions.

However, it is not our purpose to go into this question now. That is the subject for a subsequent article. Suffice it to say at present that the formation of a national labor party will be a concrete expression of a higher level of political consciousness on the part of the working masses. As such it serves as an important step on the road leading toward workers power.

But the culmination of present political trends in the concrete form of a labor party still remains a short term perspective. If we examine the outlook for the labor movement from the long term point of view we will become only so much more certain of the impending deep-going changes of which the labor party stage is a part.

The war is now drawing toward its end. It would be idle to speculate at this time about the degree of governmental regulations and restrictions that are to be carried over into the peace economy. The salient fact is that as the decline of capitalism progresses alongside of its narrowing into fewer and greater monopoly combines, governmental regulations, restrictions and outright control will of necessity increase.

During the decades of the celebrated "rugged individualism," capitalism resented all direct governmental intervention into or control of economic enterprise. All that it expected from the government in a field of open economic expansion was the necessary stimulus and protection. Free and untrammeled competition was the slogan. But under that slogan the exact opposite, the process of monopolization took shape and grew to monstrous proportions. Not only have automatic processes and assembly line production, vastly accelerated by the war, created a condition of complete interdependence of manufacturing operations. But monopolization means an ever greater social organization of production, integrating all spheres of social life. And—once again a paradox—the more gigantic the monopoly con-

cerns the less they are able to stand on their own feet precisely because of this social integration. Their ups and downs affect the economic fabric. Their growth spells doom to the independent small business. The huge scope and the explosive nature of their labor relations become a threat to the whole structure. Therefore governmental regulations and controls, formerly an interference, now become a necessity to the capitalist system. This also has changed into its opposite owing to the interplay of economic and social relations.

This necessity was foreshadowed in the governmental plant seizures; but it will not be any less in the coming post-war depression. In the first place the government is confronted with the task, imposed by the capitalist system of production and distribution, of attempting to realize the profits of imperialist conquests, of attempting to keep some of the huge manufacturing plants in operation, finding outlets for the enormous surplus of finance in the hands of a few, attempting to create jobs and provide measures of relief. Above all the government is confronted with the task, also imposed by the capitalist system of production, of attempting to keep the masses of the disinherited in subjugation under conditions of stress and of class antagonisms sharpened to the point of a razor's edge. Obviously all of these tasks require extensive governmental regulations and control.

Both wars and depressions are after all manifestations as well as the direct outcome of the mounting social contradictions of decaying capitalism.

## Historical Alternative

The monopolists of finance and industry will be compelled to accept these extensive state interventions. But, with their lucrative war profits at an end, they will turn so much more savagely against any union restrictions, against any labor demands, and against the standard of living established by union organization. They will attack the labor unions to destroy them.

All the virulent forerunners of this attack are plainly visible in newspaper columns and clearly audible from radio commentators. With the specter of unemployment a grim reality for millions of war workers and for other millions of service men and women, the attempt to strike a crippling blow, if not a death blow to the labor movement, will not be long delayed. Capitalism will seek to repeat the methods derived from its decades of early and aggressive expansion. At that time, during depressions and panics, it more than once succeeded in striking crippling blows to a youthful labor movement. Now again it will attack with all the means at its disposal. It will utilize particularly its political power—its control of the state. All state restrictions and controls will be enforced particularly in the field of relations of production, i.e., in the interest of the employers and against labor. In that capacity the state becomes more directly and more openly the armed institution of force at the disposal of the capitalist class.

Therefore, from the long range perspective, even more surely does the labor movement become compelled to take a political class position. It will turn leftward. It will become rapidly radicalized. There will be no lack of determination as the labor movement meets the attack blow for blow; and every strike it engages in, even over the most ordinary industrial disputes, will become much more directly a part of an openly acknowledged class warfare.

Facing a struggle of life and death it cannot take long before the labor movement will be obliged to accept the revolutionary way out. It will enter the struggle for socialization of

the means of production and for all power to the workers. That, of course, is a political struggle of the highest order.

Every step in this direction the labor movement will tread on the road opposite to that of its past: the exact opposite of the Gompers' type of political neutrality. That policy was not only futile but devoid of class content. In its essence it was and it remains reactionary, thoroughly conforming to the spirit and the method of class collaboration. The fundamental change will begin. From seeking the means of preserving capitalist rule labor will henceforth seek the means of its destruction. From a political policy of helping to maintain the capitalist system labor will turn to the political struggle to overthrow it.

Changing economic conditions leave the labor movement no other alternative. The labor movement is no longer a mere bargaining representative of a narrow strata of skilled workers; it is the organized, articulate, expression of the American masses. Its growth and change began in earnest after the capitalist system had already reached its downward curve. And for the latter, the conditions of constant expansion have also turned to the opposite. Each depression and crisis becomes more deadly to its social system. It is this situation which poses the alternative of a decaying capitalist world or a rising workers world.

And let us remember that it was the labor movement which from its very inception proceeded to write some of the most glorious pages of American history. During the 'thirties of the last century this young virile body was the outstanding single force which contributed so much to basic social reforms and marked out the lines along which progress was to be made for the next generation and more. To mention only a few: the establishment of a public school system, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, the abolition of property qualifications for voting, the abolition of legal property qualifications

for holding political office, and so on. Later, this same labor movement proved, in the struggles leading up to and during the crusade for the eight-hour workday, that its spirit and actions were thoroughly filled with the revolutionary tendency of the times.

The antithesis which under Gompers and his successors replaced this early grandeur is now about to pass into limbo. The class actions, born of a revolutionary spirit once prevailing, will again be restored. But the movement will assume infinitely larger dimensions and occur on a much higher level than before.

The American labor movement is reaching the turn of the road. Will it measure up to its tasks? Will it fight? To those who might have doubts I want to quote from a simple but earnest message.

It was in 1937 during the sit-down strikes in Flint, Mich. General Motors had declared its readiness for a last ditch fight. The National Guard had been brought in. Its officers were coldly discussing the methods of clearing the plants: Should it be by shooting the strikers out or pouring gas through the ventilating system? A court order set three o'clock on February 3 as the deadline. The final decision for action was in the hands of Governor Murphy. The strikers remained grimly in the plants and wired Murphy their decision:

"Unarmed as we are, the introduction of the militia, sheriffs or police with murderous weapons will mean a bloodbath of unarmed workers. . . . We have decided to stay in the plant. We have no illusions about the sacrifices which this decision will entail. We fully expect that if a violent effort is made to oust us many of us will be killed, and we take this means to make it known to our wives, to our children, to the people of the State of Michigan and the country, that if this result follows from an attempt to eject us, you are the one who must be held responsible for our deaths."

## Problems of the European Revolution

By A GROUP OF EUROPEAN COMRADES

The article which appears below is the abridged first part of a document written in July 1944 by a group of European comrades in London in answer to the questions raised in the "Three Theses" and in the bulletin, "Europe Under the Iron Heel" recently published in England. The second and concluding section of this work will appear in a subsequent issue of *Fourth International*, which has already carried a number of articles on the same question.

The "Three Theses" referred to in the text appeared in the December 1942 issue of our magazine. The official position of the Socialist Workers Party on the issues involved is embodied in the political resolution adopted at the 1942 Convention; the pertinent section of this resolution appeared in the October 1942 number of *Fourth International*.

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The collapse of Italian fascism, the strikes in Britain, the mass movements in the Balkans and in the rest of occupied Europe are heralding the coming European Revolution. All Europe has become a powder barrel, filled with the explosives of class contradictions. No one can predict, with watch in hand, when the grand denouement will take place. New imperialist slaughters in the West may for a time retard the revolutionary development and may give rise to a period of chauvinist reaction. But the revolution will re-emerge with fresh vigor. The sufferings of the masses will only be intensified—the illusions, the expectations they have in one or another imperialist power

will soon be gone—there will remain the one and only way out from the agony: revolution. The struggles of the past months and years which have so vividly demonstrated the trend of development will break out again with increased intensity. There cannot be any doubt. Europe now stands on the eve of revolution.

Our world party is faced with the obligation of reviewing its forces—their theoretical clarity and their ability to give to the revolutionary class—the proletariat—what only the Fourth International can give: *program and leadership*. This is why the dispute with the group of European comrades who published the "Three Theses" (See December 1942 *Fourth International*) has become one of the most important problems of the International. It requires the attention and active intervention of all sections of the International. . . .

This group of European comrades attempts to waive aside as ridiculous the criticism of various responsible comrades in the Fourth International while continuing their false policy. For reasons not wholly comprehensible, these comrades consider their theories and conceptions as superior to those of the rest of the International. They themselves are therein their own judges—nobody else in the International has up to now confirmed this judgment. It is necessary to consider their theoretical venture critically.

Before dealing with our main subject, we wish to make in connection with the Russian questions, some remarks about the bulletin "Europe under the Iron Heel," issued by these comrades. . . .

This bulletin contains an article by Comrade Held written in September 1940. These comrades considered Held's 1940 article so important that they reprint it now, presumably as an authoritative presentation of their position. That Comrade Held, at the time of the Russo-Finnish war, and at the time of the controversy in the Socialist Workers Party, openly advocated "revolutionary defeatism" for Russia in *Unser Wort*—would be of relatively small significance, viz., would be of interest only for the "record," inasmuch as the present tendency assures us it agrees with Trotsky on this question. Until now we thought this statement to be sincere. But what can we think of it when these comrades now publish an article which contains the following:

"After a year of war, the regime of the iron heel has subjected almost the entire European continent. Finland, Sweden and Switzerland have still a remnant of independence and democratic form of government—however, all these countries lie under the shadow of the iron heel. All signs foreshadow that Finland will also share the fate of the Baltic countries." (Our emphasis.)

It was the fate of the Baltic countries to be occupied by Russia. The regime of the iron heel, is thus not only German imperialism—fascism—but also the Soviet Union.

Shachtman thought it superfluous to distinguish between an annexation in the interest of imperialism and an annexation for the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism. The renegade Burnham later developed on this basis his theory of the "Managerial Society"—he could just as well have called it the "Iron Heel."

The claim of these comrades that they base themselves on the program of the Fourth International loses in our eyes much of its value when they print and solidarize themselves with statements which are exactly the contrary of the position of Trotsky and the Fourth International.

### Comrade Held's Views

For a long time we did not pay special attention to the article of Comrade Held—it is brimming with literary superficialities, it is bare of any scientific exactness. It has now been published, however, together with two similar articles, in the name of a section of the Fourth International.

The above quotation is not the only blow which these European comrades aim against our position on the Soviet Union. On page 3 of this bulletin, it is said that the English Tories have understood relatively late "that the SU has ceased to constitute a danger for the European bourgeoisie" on the grounds of internal transformations within the Soviet Union.

As opposed to this, the Manifesto of the Fourth International, "The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution" quotes from the theses on "War and the Fourth International" as follows: "Taken on the historical scale the contradiction between world imperialism and the Soviet Union is infinitely more profound than the antagonisms which set the individual countries in opposition to each other."

What the English Tories have understood relatively late, the Fourth International, according to Held, has not understood to this day. Then, why not say so openly? The Fourth International has always been of the opinion that the existence of the Soviet Union represents a danger to imperialism, that the socialist economy of Russia, i.e. the workers' state, is

an important part of the world contradiction—Proletariat-Bourgeoisie—a point that Shachtman did not understand, but which is very well understood by the English Tories as well as by all other imperialists.

And finally we read in the bulletin:

"Originally endowed with the dynamic idea of world revolution, the Soviet Union is transformed into a bureaucratic-conservative aim-in-itself and finally into a totalitarian police-State, a stifling parasite on the foundation of October, without any historical perspective." (Our emphasis.)

Let us consider the "dynamics" of this sentence in order the better to see its senselessness. The Soviet Union is here transformed into a bureaucratic conservative "aim-in-itself," "a totalitarian police-State," "a stifling parasite on the foundations of October". . . "without any historical perspective."

Not a trace of dialectic! Any bourgeois writer could have said this. It is true that this is not the first time that the comrades maintain that the Soviet Union is without historical perspective. Neither is it the first time that we have criticized them for this. More than six years ago they maintained this position in an article, "*Program Einer Bilanz*." . . .

Actually, it is the Stalinist bureaucracy which has no historical perspective—the parasite on the foundation of October, the abscess on the body of the Soviet Union which does not base itself on and does not serve that class to which the future belongs—the proletariat—but becomes the agent of the world bourgeoisie and will perish with it. . . .

Let us now proceed to discuss the "Three Theses" and the articles of Held and Brink, i.e. their position on the European situation.

### Character of Our Epoch

I. *The present epoch—an epoch of national insurrections and wars of national liberation? Or the epoch of the death agony of capitalism?*

One of the main mistakes which the supporters of the "Three Theses" make is their estimate of the present epoch. Fascism has often been compared to a political regime similar to absolutism. Such a comparison, with the necessary qualifications and delimitations, is justified. If one, however, omits the necessary delimitation, one comes to the completely incorrect conclusions. . . .

The victory of Hitler over Europe threw a few comrades into a mood of pessimism. It was then that Trotsky wrote: "The victories of Fascism are important, but the death agony of capitalism is much more important." It would have been well for these comrades to have heeded these words.

Unfortunately, they did not heed this advice. Enumerating the victories of German imperialism, Held says: "No illusion is possible any more. Europe will remain fascist for the next historical period." Jack London, who never pretended to be a politician, is presented as a witness. The rule of the "Iron Heel" lasted, as is known, about 300 years in London's novel—this appears too pessimistic to Held, just as he deems a short term too optimistic. However, these comrades are politicians. For them it is important to know in what age they live. The thesis of Comrade Held and therewith of the others thus reads: "An epoch which the progressive thinkers in Europe for long thought to be overcome, now is to be repeated, that of the national insurrections and wars of liberation."

To corroborate this thesis they give a quotation from Lenin which is in reality an argument against the conception that, in the very course of the imperialist world war, although it

already enslaved peoples, the epoch is one of national wars of liberation.

"If the European proletariat were to remain impotent for another 20 years—if the present war were to end in victories similar to those achieved by Napoleon, in the subjugation of a number of virile national states; if imperialism outside of Europe (primarily American and Japanese) were to remain in power for another 20 years without a transition to socialism . . . then a great national war in Europe would be possible." (*Lenin's Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, pp. 203-204. English edition.)

Such a development Lenin deems improbable but not impossible:

"For to picture world history as advancing smoothly and steadily . . . is undialectical, unscientific and theoretically wrong." (*Idem*)

Whereupon, Comrade Held hurries to add: "If these coming insurrections and wars of national liberation are not to lead anew to a state of fascist barbarism, etc., etc." Comrade Held and the others could not wait for these "ifs" specified by Lenin to come true—they prefer to ignore them. How otherwise could Held prove that we live in an epoch of national insurrections and wars of liberation? . . .

None of the "ifs" posited by Lenin has thus far been realized, and we dare to contradict the prophetic pessimism of Jack London and the prophecy of our opponents. We hold such a development to be quite improbable.

The proletariat is not impotent, it is stirring mightily. In Italy it has already overthrown fascism; powerful strikes preceded this overthrow. The rulers in Berlin clearly recognized the significance of this event, as their counter-measures showed. Soon the day will come when Himmler will no longer have hooligans enough to hold down the German proletariat. The proletariat of Russia is dealing blows to German imperialism from which the latter will scarcely recover. Mass strikes have occurred in England, etc., etc. Does this resemble an epoch of national insurrections and wars of national liberation?

The war is not finished . . . On the contrary, the unspeakable sufferings this war brings to the oppressed masses can only hasten the revolution which has so mightily announced itself. The thesis of Held is neither proven, nor has it the authority of Lenin.

Fascism, imperialist wars, national oppression, foreign occupation, all these are victories of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat, especially over the oppressed masses of the small nations. It is the bloody victory of imperialism over the forces of socialism. The unconscious historical process, the instinctive elementary striving of the proletariat to reconstruct society on a Communist basis, remains a fact so long as the proletariat, the most decisive, potentially most powerful class of capitalist society, exists. There can be no other orientation, especially for Europe. These comrades are improvising. They lost their head when French imperialism lost its empire. It is time they correct themselves. The military misfortunes of an imperialist bandit cannot alter our orientation. Our policy never based itself on the changes of the military map, but on the basic, objective conditions of capitalist society.

From the standpoint of international Socialism, the national oppression caused by the occupation of Europe is a secondary factor which cannot alter the strategical aim of the Socialist United States of Europe. It is the role of scientific socialism, therewith of our International, to give conscious expression to the unconscious striving of the proletariat.

The present epoch is that of imperialism, i.e. wars and revolutions. On this the entire policy of the Fourth International

is based. It is a thoroughly revolutionary epoch. The deep and frequent changes on an international scale, the shifting of frontiers and trenches on the national scale, the sudden changes from a revolutionary situation (i.e. a situation where the seizure of power by the proletariat is on the order of the day) into a counter-revolutionary situation, or the change to a provisional or coalition government are nothing else than the manifestation of the basic antagonism between the productive forces and the capitalist fetters: national and social. Each of these changes deeply shakes the decaying capitalist edifice. Every revolutionary crisis reproduced anew by this antagonism poses the question of power in all its sharpness. The national orientation of the proletariat can only be determined by this world orientation and not the other way round.

## Our Prognosis

Trotsky wrote his last, important document, "The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution," after the occupation of Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and part of France. In the section, "This is not our war," he stated:

"The Fourth International builds its policy not on the military fortunes of the capitalist states but on the transformation of the imperialist war into a war of the workers against the capitalists, . . . on the world socialist revolution. The shifts in the battle lines at the front, the destruction of national capitals, the occupation of territories, the downfall of individual states, represent from this standpoint only tragic episodes on the road to the reconstruction of modern society.

"Independently of the course of the war, we fulfill our basic task: we explain to the workers the irreconcilability between their interests and the interests of bloodthirsty capitalism; we mobilize the toilers against imperialism; . . . we call for the fraternization of the workers and soldiers within each country; and of soldiers with the soldiers of the opposite side of the battle front; we mobilize the women and the youth against the war; we carry on consistent, persistent, tireless preparation of the revolution—in the factories, in the mills, in the villages, in the barracks, at the front and in the fleet. This is our program. Proletarians of the world, there is no other way out except to unite under the banner of the Fourth International!"

This is our program. These comrades have another one. In the past, they recognized at least Trotsky's authority. But it seems to us that they did so only in words, just as on the Russian question. Trotsky lived to see the fall of France, the Nazi occupation of Europe. These comrades should name a single example where he failed to take a position towards an important political event, whether in Russia or in China, in Germany or in France, in Austria, Spain, England, America, or anywhere else in the world. Would he have overlooked the fact that the wheel of history had turned back for approximately 100 years?

II.—*The transition from fascist dictatorship to the proletarian dictatorship: Democratic Revolution or Proletarian Revolution?*

It is necessary to give clear answers to the two following questions if we are to intervene in the political events in Europe:

(1) The character of the coming European revolution and the strategy flowing from it:

(2) The tactical utilization of revolutionary possibilities, the use of democratic slogans, etc., in order to gain the leadership of the proletariat.

How do the proponents of the "Three Theses" answer these questions? Comrade Held has postponed the proletarian revolution to an indefinite future; the "Three Theses" make a

hopeless attempt at introducing the idea of a democratic revolution—hopeless because the Trotskyist movement has behind it many years of struggle against this very conception, and our cadres have been educated and trained through this struggle.

The defeat of the German proletariat, and finally the triumph of reaction throughout the continent, have sown demoralization and confusion among the proletariat, and have unfortunately not left these comrades unscathed. There is no other explanation for their political evolution, for their skepticism, despair, pessimism and confusion.

Through fascism the bourgeoisie had hoped to rid itself of the threat of social revolution. Parties—the highest political expression of classes—were annihilated, society was atomized and class collaboration was imposed, for a time at least. Thus the bourgeoisie actually succeeded in throwing back the political development of the proletariat; the achievements which had taken long decades of struggle to conquer, were lost. But history does not merely repeat itself. Fascism did not abolish classes, nor did it divide up society into Fascists and "anti-fascists." The comrades stress the absence of political parties, and believe that this relieves them of the duty of upholding our class position. To the question of the character of the coming European revolution, they answer with the neutral word "democratic," i.e., they introduce between the fall of fascism and the coming of socialism an intermediary stage "which is basically equivalent to a democratic revolution."

## Character of the Transition

We do not deny the necessity of a transitional period, but we demand clarity, even at the risk of frightening off some progressive bourgeois and radical intellectuals; what we mean here, is a transitional period from the fascist dictatorship to proletarian dictatorship, i.e., *a phase of the proletarian revolution* during which the revolutionary leadership cannot by any means restrict itself to democratic slogans. In fact, there may occur several phases between the fascist dictatorship and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It has always been the tactic of the revolutionary party to mobilize the proletariat and the masses around democratic slogans in retrograde phases of the revolution. No one can predict all the phases, nor draw up in advance all the appropriate slogans. These are only general guiding lines: the state of consciousness of the masses and our strategic goal—the proletarian dictatorship—these are the factors determining our slogans. It is the task of the revolutionary leadership to influence in this direction every struggle, and through every single event to show the proletariat the nature of capitalist society, its parties, its classes and institutions and to make the workers conscious of their historic tasks.

Only a hopeless schematist can say: *first* a democratic revolution, and *then* socialism. The proletariat awakes from its apathy, rises through strikes and demonstrations, draws new layers and sections of the working classes into the struggle, thereby learns to know its own strength and appears as a powerful force to all the oppressed classes which it draws into the struggle. The revolutionist does not only participate in this struggle, but stands in the foremost rank. He will not restrict himself to democratic slogans, but in these struggles he will propagate the idea of Soviets, and at the first favorable opportunity he will organize them. In Italy factory committees appeared before there was freedom of the press or freedom of association, and the revolution in other countries will pass through a similar development.

This transitional period consists of convulsions, mass actions, demonstrations, strikes, clashes with the police, etc., during which the revolutionary party will be strengthened and built up, and during which the proletariat will organize itself and prepare to take power. At the same time, these struggles may lead to democratic changes in the bourgeois government. The Russian Revolution offers numerous examples of this. We repeat: we have to do, here, with phases of the proletarian revolution during which democratic possibilities are exhausted, the revolutionary leadership wins over the working class, and the proletariat establishes its own organs of power, appears and acts as a class, as a unity, grouping around itself all oppressed layers of society. Democratic demands, such as freedom of the press, the right to strike, freedom of assembly and association, municipal elections, constituent assembly (democratic representation in parliament), will be of enormous importance, and, together with our transitional demands, such as workers' militia, factory committees, control of production, Soviets, will open the way for the proletarian dictatorship.

## A False Approach

Instead of approaching the question from the class point of view, instead of giving a revolutionary strategy based upon a correct appreciation of the historic epoch, instead of developing a revolutionary tactic that takes into account the state of consciousness of the proletariat and of the masses whilst remaining subordinate to the revolutionary strategy; the revisionist tendency begins by describing movements in a manner which is nothing but a meaningless enumeration of classes and layers of society: workers, agricultural laborers, peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie, civil servants, priests, intellectuals, shopkeepers, manufacturers and generals, all combine to form an anti-fascist aggregate or a national movement. Opposing them, we have the fascists or foreign oppressors. What is the conclusion?

"So strong is the common enemy and so great the common need that separate interests can be pushed into the background for a time," says Brink in a variation upon the arithmetical logic of the People's Front. (Not once in his article does Brink mention class interests.) Following the same order of ideas, the "Three Theses" state: "Everything will be levelled to a desire for the overthrow of this enemy [German fascism] and, in fact, it must be recognized that without it there can be no question of change in existing conditions."

If one cannot conceive of a modification of the existing, i.e. capitalist conditions, as long as there is fascism, who then will overthrow fascism? Certainly not the generals, manufacturers, shopkeepers and priests! These were precisely the gentry who put fascism in power in Italy, in Germany, in Austria and in Spain, and who in Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France concluded a compromise with German imperialism and who are now going over to the camp of Anglo-American imperialism—acting every time to guard and guarantee against the proletarian revolution.

There is only one possibility left, if we consider the revisionist tendency as capable of properly formulating its ideas: they demand that the proletariat and the oppressed classes fight against fascism and renounce their own class interests. They must do so—"for some time," says Brink; until "Socialism", say the "Three Theses" . . .

In China, a similar policy cost the lives of tens of thousands of Communists, and it did not bring socialism, but Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorship. Half a million of Spain's best sons had to bleed to death because their leaders said: first throw over

the enemy No. 1, the main obstacle, and then change "the existing conditions": this paved the way for Franco. While the "Popular Front" "postponed" the fight against the "existing conditions," the masses of Spanish Morocco remained colonial slaves and fell prey to Franco's demagogery. Under the "existing conditions," peasants remained landless and saw no reason for fighting for the Republican camp. The capitalists, who were themselves fighting openly in the camp of the counter-revolution, left behind their advocates who saw to it that "existing conditions" remained inviolate and if possible profits should continue to roll in.

It is true that, at the time, the comrades of the revisionist tendency were with us, denouncing these "People's Front" traitors. But that does not excuse their present position. On the contrary. Actually, there can be no real mass movement in the European countries unless the masses know what they are fighting for and fight for their own class interests . . .

The "Three Theses" are rendering a bad service to the inexperienced younger generation by talking of a democratic intermediary stage and maintaining that democratic demands alone can constitute a "complete transitional program," by considering it unnecessary to explain the role of the various classes, by concealing the fact that the bourgeoisie of all European countries is either collaborating with German imperialism or with Anglo-American imperialism; by speaking of socialism when they should refer to the dictatorship of the proletariat; by failing to take into account the role of the Soviet Union, by failing to denounce the Stalinist diplomacy and the character of the political concentration in Algiers, London and Washington and in the "liberated" countries; and finally by inspiring this generation with pessimism instead of revolutionary optimism, and confidence in the proletariat, its revolutionary cause and the Fourth International.

## Repeating Old Mistakes

But it is obvious that the revisionist tendency has nothing to teach the inexperienced generations. It even proves incapable of learning itself. The revisionist tendency following the Menshevik example, is hunting for radical intellectuals in order to prove the blossoming of bourgeois democracy or of the democratic revolution.

A bourgeois "democratic", "people's" revolution is inconceivable without a progressive bourgeoisie. But the progressive days of the bourgeoisie are a thing of the past, and hysterical crying about the setbacks suffered by the working class movement will not alter anything.

What Trotsky wrote about the role of the Chinese bourgeoisie is truer still for the bourgeoisie in the occupied countries, i.e. for the generals, manufacturers, professors, shopkeepers, and priests.

"To present matters as if there must inevitably flow from the fact of colonial oppression the revolutionary character of a national bourgeoisie, is to produce inside out the fundamental error of Menshevism, which holds that the nature of the Russian bourgeoisie must flow from the oppression of feudalism and the autocracy" (Trotsky, "Problems of the Chinese Revolution," *The Third International after Lenin*.)

The revisionist tendency believes that under fascism the generals, merchants, manufacturers, professors and bishops have undergone a change, and that their role as a class has been modified because they "stumble on the main obstacle . . ."

But let us once again turn to Trotsky:

"The question of the nature and the policy of the bourgeoisie is settled by the entire internal class structure of a nation waging the revolutionary struggle, by the historical epoch in which that struggle develops, by the degree of economic, political and military dependency of the national bourgeoisie upon world-imperialism as a whole or a particular section of it, finally, and this is most important, by the degree of class activity of the native proletariat, and by the state of its connections with the international revolutionary movement." (*Idem.*)

Has the revisionist tendency learned anything from Trotsky? Have they, for instance, considered the class structure of France? Undoubtedly, no. In their short-sightedness they can only see the heap of ruins which the war has erected on the continent. But this is far too little a basis for revolutionary politics.

The historical setback which fascism and the war have inflicted upon the labor movement, has thrown the revisionist tendency still further back. They did not land, however, in an epoch of "national insurrections and wars of liberation," but in the swamp of petty-bourgeois ideology.

## A Revisionist Tendency

With a wave of the hand they brush aside the economic, military and political dependence on world imperialism. "The real mass movement of the European continent has nothing to do with the miserable agency of Anglo-American imperialism," says Brink hopefully, and thereby believes to have exhausted the question. Meanwhile, imperialism proceeds to strangle the progressive part of the Greek movement; is threatening Yugoslavia with the same fate, and is preparing in France all the premises for similar action.

"The degree of class activity of the native proletariat" is a thing of the past in which the revisionist tendency has ceased to believe; they seek salvation in a dialogue with priests, merchants, manufacturers and such . . .

Finally, to quote Trotsky once more:

"A democratic or national liberation movement may offer the bourgeoisie an opportunity to deepen and broaden its possibilities of exploitation. Independent intervention of the proletariat on the revolutionary arena threatens to deprive the bourgeoisie of the possibility to exploit altogether."

Independent intervention of the proletariat on the revolutionary arena, or a program striving towards this goal, is precisely what the revisionist tendency brands as "ultra-leftist." They insinuate that up to the present the political line of the Fourth International has been restricted to a fight for improved wages and workers' conditions . . . The revisionist tendency's revolution is "basically equivalent to a democratic revolution," and it lasts . . . until Socialism. Meanwhile, one must think of a change in the existing conditions and "separate" interests must be subordinated—that is the "permanent revolution" a la Brink & Co. . . .

In conclusion we have to say: he who wants first to liquidate the "main enemy," or the "main obstacle," i.e., fascism or national oppression, and only then to think of modifying capitalist conditions, is unlikely to witness any changes in the bourgeois system, and still less to see the advent of Socialism. That would be the road towards the victory of reaction.

*London, July 1944*

# The Future of the Soviet Union And The Victories of the Red Army

Translated from MANANA, Mexico City Weekly magazine,  
No. 59, October 14, 1944.

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We have received this article from a European comrade. There are a number of loose and inexact formulations in the article, such as: "the workers' state fell and was replaced by the Stalinist despotism"; an improper reference to the October revolution as "a happy episode," etc. Distance makes it difficult, however, to consult with him on these and other incorrect formulations. We are publishing the article because in its main line it conforms with the Trotskyist position on the Soviet Union.—Ed.

\* \* \*

## "What Will Be the Outcome?"

"The fate of USSR will be decided, definitively, not on the maps of the general staffs but in the class struggle."—L. Trotsky, 1936.

\* \* \*

The Soviet Union, born out of the international class struggle, will be saved or will succumb along with the struggle. This is an axiomatic truth which hardly needs to be argued.

The triumph of the Russian proletariat was no more than a happy episode in the world struggle of the proletariat against capitalism. A triumph of the greatest importance, yes, but incapable of consolidating and completing itself without the aid of other revolutions. Lenin, Trotsky and all the old Bolsheviks, even Stalin before he turned into the leader of the counter-revolution, believed that the fall of the workers' state was certain if it did not receive reinforcement from new proletarian victories. Their prophecy, entirely in accord with the international necessities of socialism, has been fulfilled, but not in the way they foresaw. The failure of the world revolution did not result in the sudden collapse of the USSR and the reestablishment of capitalism; it resulted in the internal corruption of the regime, expressed and exploited by the Stalinist Thermidor. The workers' state fell, and was replaced by the Stalinist despotism. Nevertheless, the property system, introduced by the revolution, was preserved, although subjected to constant ravaging by the bureaucracy. Rosa Luxemburg alone saw dimly this possibility of internal destruction.

Between what was predicted and what occurred, there is no basic contradiction: only a difference in timing. The leaders of the revolution believed that the defeat of the proletariat, chiefly the European, would put the bourgeoisie in position to attack the USSR and reestablish capitalism. Capitalism, however, in spite of its triumph over the masses, has been too much entangled in its own inner conflicts to be able to play the role of savior. On the other hand, within the USSR, the revolution, although constantly fighting a retreating action, showed enough resistance to prevent a forcible reestablishment of the old property owners either in alliance with or in the very person of the new bureaucracy.

The counter-revolution had to follow in gradual steps the road laid out by the bureaucratic interests. This was also necessitated by the special economic status of the USSR. The largest part of its wealth was created after the revolution. This property lacks what the bourgeoisie would call "legitimate" owners.

Restitution is impossible. The only thing left is to give it away or steal it; and for this, who in greater authority or better position than the bureaucracy which administers and wastes and enjoys the fruits of the Soviet national income? No, the old property-owners cannot be restored in the USSR, but new ones can be established. This is the direction in which the whole system headed by the Marshal is going. The path of capitalist restoration and the timing of its realization differ from what was forecast by the old leaders of the revolution. But the essence of their prediction cannot fail of fulfillment: failing new revolutions, capitalism will be restored in the USSR.

There are certain individuals and political groups today who incline to believe in the possibility of a property system half-way between capitalism and socialism. It would take over capitalism's distribution system and socialism's nationalized property and planned economy, and the system as a whole, under the "enlightened dictatorship" of industrial technicians and political bureaucrats, would take the form of an unforeseen social order whose closest approximations would be Russia under Stalin and Germany under Hitler. Certain theories have even been elaborated along these lines, or rather attempts at theories: "bureaucratic collectivism," "managerial revolution," and other variants. For the supporters of these theories, the Soviet nationalized property and planned economy, far from approaching their crystallization in a return to a system of private property, represent the archetypes to be followed in the long run by the chief capitalist countries. The technico-political bureaucracy is taken, in these theories, for a new social class called to play out its role in an entire historical cycle, just as did the patrician aristocracy of antiquity, the feudal nobility and the bourgeoisie.

## Anti-Marxist Theories

I cannot stop here to refute these theories. I will only say, for the purposes of this article, that they ignore the nature of both capitalism and socialism. They do not look at history in its evolution, but only at one isolated moment of its evolution. At their highest point, the forms of capitalist property approach forms of a socialist type; and inversely, at their lowest point, the forms of socialist property approach those of a capitalist type. What is revealed in the first case is the direction; in the second, the origin. But the material evolution of society is not a continuum of uninterrupted progress. It is broken into by the world class struggle, which in one place makes rapid jumps ahead, in another imposes sudden retreats, giving ground on one flank and gaining it on others, moving ahead here and being counteracted elsewhere. Just as the zigzags of lightning do not keep it from following its course from the clouds to the earth, so the advances and retreats of the world class-struggle do not keep humanity from traveling its road. If the theorizers about a new social class could observe the evolution of the world class struggle with the same speed that the eye sees the flash of lightning, they would not venture to take one of its tangents for its fundamental direction.

The Stalinist regime represents the greatest concessions to capitalism and the least to the proletariat, within the property

system established by the revolution. The regime in Germany, to which all the rest of the capitalist countries approach in varying degrees, represents the greatest concessions to the unification and management of the means of production, and the least to the proletariat, within the capitalist system. In the first case, historical development is turned backward by Stalinism; in the second, it is dammed up by fascism. The inventors of the new social class attempt to generalize these special cases. But the key to the whole thing is in knowing if the evolution of the property system can be halted—as they contend—in a state which synthesizes production for consumption (planned economy) with social hierarchies and an unequal distribution of products in accordance with the capitalist law of wages. This is a monstrous contradiction. Planned economy brings with it a socialist distribution of products and the raising of the technical, economic and cultural levels of humanity. Wherever the capitalist law of distribution exists, it will end by breaking up a planned economy. Either the means of production have to be adapted to the needs of distribution, or else distribution must be arranged in accord with the possibilities of a planned economy. Between these two extremes of the basic social tendencies many variants may arise, but the economic categories are irreducible: either capitalist or socialist. There exists no other possibility of a social system, in the historical meaning of the phrase. In the USSR either private property will reappear on the base of the abusive privileges of distribution introduced by the bureaucracy, or the bureaucracy will be ripped apart and crushed by the people, and the march towards socialism renewed.

## The Stalinist Bureaucracy

Materially and ideologically, the Stalinist bureaucracy is as similar to the bourgeoisie as can be imagined. The top technical and political bureaucracy of the USSR has the same customs, the same way of living, the same scorn for those below, the same material privileges as the Churchills, Hitlers, Roosevelts, Morgans, Fords, Rockefellers, Rothschilds, Duponts, Krupps. Whereas the latter draw on the capitalist property system, the former suck on the nationalized property. But the Stalinist bureaucracy is in an obviously inferior position. Whereas the privileges and the entire activity of the capitalists is perfectly in accord with their system of property, the abuses and privileges and the political usurpations of the bureaucracy are in contradiction with the system of planned economy. The Rothschilds, Krupps, Hitlers, Churchills, etc., need the capitalist system as much as it needs them; but the Stalins, Molotovs, Vishinskys, etc., are unnecessary and harmful to the nationalized and planned economy. They have no other way out than to set the economic system in harmony with themselves; at that point they will be in no way distinguishable from the capitalist class. In other words, if they are not to perish, they will be obliged to reintroduce private property.

But a step of this sort cannot be legally effected before it has first been actually introduced into the social structure of the country. And even so, the bureaucracy will not dare to announce it *openly*. They will say, perhaps, that the revolution has now achieved all its objectives, that from now on it need only rejoice in its triumph and in the marvelous good-nature of the Marshal. It was precisely on the eve of the war that the material privileges of the bureaucracy had reached their zenith. To go further was impossible without an open break with the planned economy. Ideologically, everything was then ready for solidifying their illegitimate usurpation of power and privileges into an ownership legitimized by law and sanctified by the gods.

The decisive solution—either towards capitalism or towards socialism—coincides with the social convulsions brought about by the war, to the discomfiture of Stalinism and the bourgeois counter-revolution throughout the world. In 1939 an English economic society, wishing to reassure its government about a possible alliance with the "Bolshevik" Stalin, offered evidence from a study of Soviet economy that the bureaucracy constituted a newly-forming bourgeoisie interested solely in the *status quo* throughout the world. Independently, a French society of the same sort arrived at the same conclusion. And for his part, the Polish ambassador to the USSR, who could have had no interest in speaking contrary to the anti-Bolshevik tendencies of his government, declared as follows: "The mass executions which are taking place at the present time are making impossible the restoration of Leninism." And finally, already during the war, an editorial in *Harper's Magazine*, published in New York, in commenting on the nationalist and anti-Bolshevik change which had begun "in the schools, the press, literature and other spheres, since many years back," referred to the reception which the Soviet press gave to a new decoration bearing the name of a Czarist general: "The most glorious name in Russian military history is the name of the great genius, the teacher of Kutuzov, the conqueror of many foreign armies: the name of Alexander Vassilevich Suvorov." On its own behalf the editorial added, with sufficient reason: "General Denikin or any other of the Russian conservatives who fought in the White armies could express the same sentiments."

All this—and a great many other declarations and practical measures of the Russian government which could be cited—reveals the extent of the ruling caste's awareness of and need for a reactionary road. For a long time the bureaucracy had been bending its efforts towards the preparation, in accord with its interests, of a way out from the insupportable contradiction between itself and the planned economy. During the war itself the abyss which separates its privileges from the people has deepened, its system of permanent repression intensified, and new armed instruments created for the purpose of crushing every resistance or attack of the people. The most striking among these is a kind of Stalinist S.S., a privileged section within the army which already had a large degree of privileges in peace time. For these Janizaries the normal army pay is doubled or trebled; they are better clothed, better fed, and relieved of the dirty and dangerous work. What object can there be in the formation of this corps except to set up around the regime an armed instrument completely tied, by its own material interests, to the bureaucracy? Like every reactionary social layer, the bureaucracy, under the cover of war against the imperialist enemy, is carrying on a second civil war against the defenseless and starving people.

## The Alternative

The victories of the Red Army cannot in themselves assure the continuance of nationalized and planned economy. They have succeeded in preventing the restoration of capitalism by German imperialism. In this respect the character of the war on the part of the Soviet Union is a just one. For this reason every revolutionist hostile to Stalinism has supported it. But the war, pushing to their extremes the contradictions existing in the USSR, chiefly the separation between the people and the bureaucracy, has impelled the latter to the very edge of capitalist restoration. Hardly has the external danger been conquered than the internal danger reappears, in gigantic form. Because the military victories have been achieved under the

leadership of the bureaucracy, they have succeeded only in postponing the solution of the dilemma: capitalist restoration or continuance of the revolution—with the term *bureaucracy* now replacing the term *imperialism*. Anglo-American imperialism, as much interested as German imperialism in putting an end to the first experiment in non-capitalist economy, will work towards this end by leaning upon the present bureaucracy or, if necessary, setting up one group of bureaucrats in opposition to another.

There is more than one indication that this latter will be necessary. The top Stalinist bureaucracy owed its victory over the revolution in large part to the support of the petty bureaucracy,—the aristocracy of workers and the kolkhoz aristocracy. A minority section of both these latter has been fused with the top technical, political or military bureaucracy. Another part of the kolkhoz aristocracy constitutes today a social layer of moderately wealthy peasants. But the majority of the privileged workers and farmers who constitute the chief support of the bureaucracy against the revolutionary elements are being left far behind as a result of the enormously increasing usurpations of the top bureaucracy; and they are bound to add their discontent to that of the mass of the population, and to feel themselves constantly more inclined to common action with the masses. The social pressure against the top bureaucracy has increased during the war and will continue increasing immediately after the peace. As a result, the upper ruling circles will become divided,—if they are not so already. Some will be in favor of drastic solutions which would unloose a wave of terror more widespread than any previous and would leave the top leaders free to do what they wished with the economy and the people; others will consider it wise to moderate their course and complete the process of usurpation gradually; still a third group will see the necessity of making concessions to the people and temporarily moving in a leftward direction. In this connection, the choice of their imperialist ally will further increase the discord within the top bureaucracy. Along with the supporters of an alliance with English-speaking imperialism, whether giving preference to England or the United States, there will be those who believe that an alliance with German imperialism would be the more advantageous and stable. Not for nothing are the committees of "Free Germany" and the "Association of German Generals" being maintained in Moscow. . . .

## The Impending Crisis

The behind-the-scenes fight can easily turn into the open armed struggle. Repressions and coup d'etats by one group of bureaucrats against another not only are possible but inevitable if a new Russian revolution does not arise to drive out altogether the entire reactionary bureaucracy. The staunchest supporters of violent solutions will undoubtedly be recruited from among the high commands of the army, where the quintessence of Stalinist despotism is to be found. Will the Marshal continue to be the supreme leader in the stage of reintroduction of capitalism? That would seem to us to be difficult for him, although Stalin's wisdom has always consisted in keeping quiet until all others have spoken, so as to be sure of staying with and holding a majority. But every sharp retrogression towards capitalism would have to justify itself in some way. In exchange for putting an end to the economic system introduced by the revolution, it would have to present itself to the people as the enemy of the Stalinist GPU; it would try to turn the revolutionary hatred which the people feel for the present regime, into a reactionary direction. Probably even Stalin would have to be

sacrificed and hanged as a "Trotskyist." But it is of very minor importance whether the Marshal continues as leader or falls victim to his own methods.

What is important to the world and to the proletariat in particular, is that the bitter struggle between the Stalinist Thermidor and the Bolshevik revolution should enter upon its definitive solution, now, when the European masses are organizing a new socialist offensive more powerful than any that have gone before. On the triumph or the defeat of this offensive depends the reestablishment of the power of the proletariat in the USSR, or the solidification of the bureaucracy into a new bourgeoisie. The Kremlin knows this perfectly. Its proposition to the Dumbarton Oaks conference (the creation of an international air corps capable of quickly attacking any regions where disturbances threaten), shows a panicky fear of the revolution greater even than that of the bourgeoisie itself.

The balance-sheet of the world class struggle will inevitably furnish the solution. The history of the Soviet Union teaches that the proletarian revolution has enormous power of resistance, against both internal and external enemies. It will show also that it has a great capacity for offensive action, over long periods of time and great distances. The ideas and the achievements of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, far from having been drowned in the filthy mire of the Stalinist counter-revolution, will reappear, shining and powerful, showing the road to future revolutions. The example of Russia, taken up again by the European proletariat, will give the Soviet masses the necessary impulse to crush the bureaucratic despotism.

G. E.

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## Two Pertinent Quotations From Leon Trotsky

"In order that the nationalized property in the occupied areas, as well as in the USSR, become a basis for genuinely progressive, that is to say socialist development, it is necessary to overthrow the Moscow bureaucracy."

"War accelerates the various political processes. It may accelerate the process of the revolutionary regeneration of the USSR. But it may also accelerate the process of its final degeneration. For this reason it is indispensable that we follow painstakingly and without prejudice these modifications which war introduces into the internal life of the USSR so that we may give ourselves a timely accounting of them."

"The USSR in War" (*In Defense of Marxism*, pp. 19, 21.)

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"We revolutionists fight against the bureaucracy in the USSR because by its parasitic policies and its repressions it undermines the nationalization of the means of production and the monopoly of foreign trade, that is to say the fundamental bases of socialist construction. World imperialism demands of the Kremlin oligarchy that it carry through its work to the end, and after the reestablishment of ranks, decorations, privileges, domestic servants, marriages for money, prostitution, punishment for abortions, etc. etc.—the reestablishment of private property."

"We call on the Soviet workers to overthrow the oligarchy in the Kremlin and to set up a genuine Soviet democracy as the essential conditions for socialist construction."

(*Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*, Nos. 75-76, p. 11.)

# Political Economy Under Stalin

By A. ROLAND

There has finally appeared an honest-to-goodness translation of the document of the Russian economists on the teaching of political economy in the Soviet Union. Poor Russian professors! The GPU sets strict limits to the sphere within which they may theorize. With the richest Marxist literature once at their command in the land of "socialism" and planned economy, they are reduced to timid quotations from the spurious pearls of wisdom found in the drab writings of the autocrat of All the Russians. Their science is commanded to justify the glaring inequalities that have been introduced into Soviet society by the self-interested bureaucracy. They leave it to their petty bourgeois American colleagues to carry on a lively discussion concerning whether it is socialism or capitalism that now exists in the Soviet Union. Academic freedom exists even less than other freedoms in Stalin's Russia.

The bloody purges in the most prolonged series of political mock trials in all history have not served to encourage lively creation in the field of political economy. This subject is in fact the most touchy of all to the Kremlin. What better proof is needed than the statement in the document of Leontiev that "The teaching of political economy in our institutions of higher learning has been resumed after an interruption of a few years." It has been reinstated only in the last academic year. It was not the war that caused this lapse. It was the need to purge learning along with everything else, the need to seize and put under lock and key more Marxist (that is, dangerous) literature. But if the economic theories of Marx and Engels are taboo, what then to teach and remain out of the concentration camp? It is truly difficult to be a professor under such conditions, even a Stalinist professor.

The American professors, without any difficulty at all, accept as quite normal the conditions under which their Russian counterparts have to exist. There is Professor Normano, for example, who assures us that nothing new is taking place (only forgetting, by accident, to tell us about the old). "The characteristic of the post-revolution period in Russia was action and not theorizing, and even theoretical changes took place by way of action—in some cases being later acknowledged by theoretical pronunciamentos." The whole function of a science is to guide action by theory, not merely to remain immersed in empirical observations. What is clear is that the professor does not believe in his own science. Or perhaps he is warning his prying fellow-teachers not to throw too much light on what is happening, that the "administrative action" of the Stalinists will in due course restore capitalism in Russia without any prodding from those eagerly awaiting this outcome.

## Stalinist "Science"

Leontiev and the others feel their safest course is to justify what is and therefore to give it the proper Stalinist coloration. They base their "science" on Stalin's formula: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work." It would be treason to do less, for this doctrine is actually in the Stalinist Constitution as the basis of socialism, the first stage of communism. It was under this formula that the bureaucracy introduced piecework and the Stakhanovite speed-up in their attempt to increase the woefully low Russian productivity of labor. The appeal to the money incentive and the use of every

device of bureaucratic coercion are contained in this formula. It is, as is well known, a perversion of the Marxist description of communist society: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." The two statements have almost nothing in common with each other. To say that Stalin's crass formulation is the basic tenet of socialism, is to cast utter discredit on socialism.

Is it socialism that exists in the Soviet Union? Only one blissfully ignorant of Marxism, or deliberately falsifying (as does the Kremlin dictator) could say so. The proletarian revolution even when it occurs in the most advanced capitalist country, will not establish socialism at once. It will create rather the possibility of moving towards socialism, and certainly at a far more rapid rate than was possible in backward Russia. Nobody foresaw in advance that the proletarian revolution would succeed first of all in culturally and economically backward Russia. Marx and Engels naturally theorized concerning what socialism would look like in the future. To make clear how socialism would be built, what it would do for humanity, Marx started with the most advanced stage reached by capitalism and thought ahead from that. Not that he considered that the workers must of necessity first take power in an advanced country. He thought at one time, in fact, that the revolution might break out in Russia first of all. Elsewhere, showing his conception of the socialist transformation of society as a world matter, he remarks that the French would begin the revolution, the Germans continue and deepen it, the English—with the most advanced technique in his day—finish it.

## Marx's Position

The seizure of power by the Russian workers placed on their shoulders the tasks performed in other lands by the bourgeoisie. Thus the Russian Revolution illustrated the application of socialist methods to solve capitalist problems. The Soviet state was required to expand the forces of production, not on the base of an advanced technique, but from the ground up. True the Russians could borrow the most advanced techniques, but they could borrow them only at a rate determined by the forces already at their disposal, including an extreme lack of trained labor power in a peasant country, poverty, and a backward economy and culture. The revolution in the forms of property—the nationalizing of the land and the factories, the monopolizing of transport and trade—did not begin to solve the problem of building socialism. All that it did was to place the problem for solution on the order of the day, in life as Trotsky says.

Marx in viewing the problem as it would arise not in a backward land but in the most advanced, had seen clearly that society would have to go through a long transition period. He even distinguished between the earlier phase of this period and the later. Socialism, the first phase of the transformation, would usher in a period of growth of the forces of production over and beyond anything that had previously been seen in the capitalist countries. The standard of living would rise continually in this period. This period would give way at a time when society was producing extremely cheaply a great abundance of everything, so that all want had disappeared, to the

final stage of communism. Work would then be done directly for society; it would be considered normal and necessary; it would be performed voluntarily, each giving the best of his creative ability. Only then would "each give according to his ability and receive according to his needs."

Socialism is a higher civilization than capitalism in every respect. Yet Marx declared that even under socialism, as it emerges from capitalist society, society would still be filled with much of the content of the old bourgeois structure.

"Bourgeois law... is inevitable in the first phase of the communist society, in that form in which it issues after long labor pains from capitalist society. Law can never be higher than the economic structure and the cultural development of society conditioned by that structure."

Lenin based his theory of the state on this dictum of Marx. Since society does not yet produce enough of everything for all, the sphere of distribution and consumption must still be regulated in a bourgeois manner. Man has not yet sloughed off his old habits and become a communist by nature. The forces of production will be built to greater heights in the first stage by giving people an incentive in the sphere of consumption. In short money and the law of value will still rule society. This being the case said Lenin:

"Bourgeois law in relation to the distribution of the objects of consumption assumes, of course, inevitably a bourgeois state, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of compelling observance of its norms. It follows that under communism (Lenin speaks here of the early period) not only will bourgeois law survive for a certain time, but also even a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie."

Russia started at the lowest rung of the ladder, where terrible want was and still is prevalent. The planning of economy, proposed first by Trotsky, was intended in the first instance to try to catch up as rapidly as possible to capitalist production. This has not been achieved if we take economy as a whole. The war has now set Russia back by its devastation of town and countryside. The low level of production of consumers' goods could not be better illustrated than in the warning given to Soviet soldiers invading Rumania not to be "deceived" by the "glitter" of capitalist civilization! This is so frightfully backward a country as Rumania! How, then, can one talk of "socialism" in Russia? But isn't it true that the industries are nationalized, and isn't there a monopoly of foreign trade in the Soviet Union, and isn't this socialism? It has been pointed out that these factors are necessary for socialism but are not yet socialism. Russia is not and never was a socialist society. Trotsky calls Russia a transition society between capitalism and socialism. Materially Soviet society remains nearer to capitalism than to socialism. And not only materially!

The Russian workers are still paid wages for their labor power, more especially for piecework. This means that they are subject to bourgeois law, and more especially to the bourgeois law of value. Money and the law of value remain part of civilization up to the final stage of communism. They continue to perform a function after the downfall of capitalism, that this system of society could not carry out; namely, drawing into the main stream of social life and encouraging the development of everything primitive and backward on a world-scale.

Marx pointed out in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* that the law of wages remains the same after the downfall of capitalism as before.

"Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities so far as this exchange is of equal values. Content and form are changed because under the changed conditions no one can contribute anything except

his labor and, on the other hand, nothing can pass into the possession of individuals except individual objects of consumption. But, so far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents; i.e., equal quantities of labor in one form are exchanged for equal quantities of labor in another form."

There follows a remark which the Stalinist professors dare not quote when they discuss this question:

"The *equal right* is here still based on the same principle as bourgeois right, although principle and practice are no longer at daggers drawn, while the exchange of equivalents in commodity exchange only exists for the average and not for the individual case. In spite of this advance, this *equal right* is still continually handicapped by bourgeois limitations.... The equality consists in the fact that everything is measured by an equal measure, labor.... This *equal right* is an unequal right for unequal work. It recognizes no class differences because every worker ranks as a worker like his fellows, but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus capacities for production, as natural privileges."

The professors would like to forget that Marx designates this not as a socialist, but as a bourgeois law.

## Falsification of Marxism

The Stalinists use these quotations from Marx to "justify" not mere inequality in wages, but the tremendous inequalities that the parasitic bureaucracy has introduced into Soviet life. They falsify Marxism. Lenin points out that to Marx this inequality, while unavoidable at first, is still a "defect." Lenin adds:

"Until the higher phase of communism arrives, the Socialists demand the strictest control, by society and by the state, of the quantity of labor and the quantity of consumption; only this control must start with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the control of the workers over the capitalists, and must be carried out, not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of armed workers."

Lenin followed Marx and Engels on the measures to be taken by the proletariat against the formation of a bureaucracy in the new state. Their desire was to minimize inequality in order to prevent the danger of a return to capitalism. Democracy, complete democracy, in both the economic and the political spheres was necessary for this purpose. That is why Lenin demanded not only regular elections but recall at any time, payment for officials no higher than the wages of a worker, and an immediate transition to a regime in which all will fulfill the functions of control and supervision so that "all may for a time become bureaucrats, and therefore nobody can become a bureaucrat."

Stalin set the tone for the justification of inequality in an interview with Emil Ludwig ("the court portraitist") in 1932. Speaking of Marx's criticism of Stirner for his equalitarianism, the dictator said:

"Equalitarianism arises from the peasant mode of thought, the psychology of dividing up everything equally, the psychology of primitive peasant 'communism.' Equalitarianism has nothing in common with Marxist socialism. Only people who have no knowledge of Marxism can think of things in such a primitive way, as if the Russian Bolsheviks wanted to gather all wealth together and then divide it up equally."

This sounds at first sight as though it had some merit—but everything in its time and place. The real question then concerned not primitive peasants, but the relatively enormous share that the parasitic bureaucracy was bleeding from the

national income. And on this score there could be no doubt as to where the Marxists stood.

The professors of political economy—it seems incredible!—take Stalin quite literally and in 1944 speak of the incorrectness of idealizing primitive communism, the primitive communism of ancient times. The “equalitarianism” of that epoch, they tell us without batting an eyelash, was really due to weakness and backwardness. Civilization took progressive steps away from all that. Perhaps the professors feel it may be safe to go back at least that far in their criticism. But in today's reality even this has its function. It is not too difficult to see here and elsewhere the tendency to cast doubt on the merits of communism. After all it is better to keep one's face turned in the direction in which one is going, rather than in the opposite direction. There is also the Soviet General in Iran who replied to a correspondent's question that “Communism—that was something for perhaps a thousand years from now.” Perhaps the General thought that Stalin's system would last that same thousand years that Hitler so well forecast for his own.

## Economic Laws

The analysis thus far permits us to evaluate properly the inevitable diatribe against “enemies of socialism of various brands—bourgeois economist wreckers, restorers of capitalism from the camp of the Trotskyist-Bukharinist agency of fascism” who “have tried to extend to socialist economy the laws of capitalist economy. To suit their wrecking, counter-revolutionary purposes they have slanderously perverted the character of the socialist relations that have been introduced among us, falsifying them, repainting them in the colors of capitalist relations—spreading the pitiable fiction that the very same unchanged laws of capitalist economy which prevailed before, operate also under the Soviet power, and any attempt to break these laws can only lead to economic convulsions.” Too bad that the professors, the self-same ones who invented the theory with Stalin that the ruble no longer needed gold coverage and no longer had the same meaning as in capitalist countries, and who maintained that prices could be administratively set—almost at will—by the bureaucracy, too bad that after some experience with inflationary convulsions they must now conclude precisely with what they claim to be denying. The law of value does apply, they tell us, to “socialist” society. The self-same law that exists under capitalism. Just as the “socialist principle” is seen to be nothing more nor less than the “capitalist principle.” From each according to his ability, to each according to his work. The *New York Times* will subscribe to that with both hands and precisely because it does, it maintains that socialism has now been abandoned in Russia and capitalism restored. Of course it bases itself on more than the mere formula!

Both parts of this formula are false. The masses in Russia are driven to the utmost in their toil. Their labor is forced from them on penalty of starving otherwise, just as under capitalism. The piecework system, as Trotsky says, forces men to strain themselves to the utmost without any visible coercion. To each according to his work. That is the bourgeois law of value which remains for a time even under socialism.

The Stalinist economists state quite correctly that the law of the average rate of profit has lost its significance. But what was this significance? The average rate of profit under capitalism distributed the national surplus value gained in exploitation, in shares to the individual capitalists proportional to the amount invested. Surplus value does not disappear in the

transition society or under socialism. The state appropriates all surplus value. Under ideal conditions this would be used for capital investments to build the forces of production and for raising the living standards of the masses, as well as for ordinary administrative expenses of the state. This is still a half-way house insofar as property is concerned. Private property, we know, must pass through the state property stage in order at a later time to really become socialized. When it becomes socialized, the state will no longer be necessary and will wither away. Russian economy is in the state stage, not at all the same as the socialist stage.

The low level of productivity of Russian labor combined with the failure of the proletarian revolution to spread, permitted the bureaucracy to consolidate its totalitarian power in the Soviet Union. It goes without saying that this important fact will not be found in the “theoretic” work of the professors. The bureaucracy has long been the worst menace to the Soviet state and economy. It is not the workers who benefit from the nationalized property, but the Stalinist parasites. The whole structure with all its institutions has long been completely “bourgeoisified.” There remains the form of nationalized factories and the monopoly of foreign trade. The growth in inequality, the gulf between the directors of trusts, the technical personnel and the bureaucracy in general on one side, and the toilers on the other, brought about by the operation of the “socialist principle” as well as usurped privileges, has corroded the entire system. Trotsky says in his book on Stalin, “The Stalinist bureaucracy is nothing else but the first stage of bourgeois restoration.”

The professors cannot help but reveal the breaches that have been made. Deep inroads exist in the nationalized land. The peasants have now used their private plots, separated from the collectivized farms, for many years. They look upon these as private property and secure the larger part of their income from the labor devoted to these plots of land. Then too the produce thus privately raised as well as the supplies of grain, etc. received in kind as their share of the production of the collectives, are sold in the open market existing side by side with the closed government market. The economists cannot help but state that: “Between the organized market, which is in the hands of the Soviet state, and the free market element a struggle goes on.” The free market has grown at an enormous rate during the war. The government had to permit this in order to give the incentive for the greatest possible production. Where two markets exist, one for private trading, with much higher prices in the free market, there can be no doubt that speculation and middlemen spring up and grow apace. What part the bureaucracy itself plays in the way of graft and self-enrichment, not to say through outright robbery, we shall probably learn in due course. Leontiev admits that “two sorts of prices exist in fact in Soviet economy.” He makes no further attempt to explain this.

One can say with utmost assurance that in the tug-of-war between the socialist and the capitalist sectors of Soviet economy, the pull is all in the direction of capitalism at the present time. This despite the fact of war production on the part of the trusts. For even in this sphere, the individual factories have come more and more into touch with each other directly, instead of through central planning bodies. This trend has been encouraged by the bureaucracy. Its tendency is to atomize the economy. Taken in conjunction with the direct effects of the war, and the pressure of world imperialism, the danger of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union grows more and more acute. The process is not one that occurs all at once. The example of

"Soviet" Estonia may be taken as an illustration of how the process may spread. There the land has not been nationalized, but has been left in the hands of the peasants. No effort is being made (nor could it be made under present conditions) to collectivize them. But in addition all enterprises employing less than ten people are permitted to continue as private ones. Only the bigger plants are being nationalized.

There is some indication of the future trend also in the Gold Conference. Stalin has undertaken to help buttress world capitalism with the aid of Soviet gold and economy. The capitalist countries, meantime, propose to seek to penetrate Soviet economy by economic pressure through this same channel.

## Observations on the Guerrillas

By G. MUNIS

Comrade Munis points out in this article the character and limitations of guerrilla movements and struggles. He emphasizes correctly that "The place for revolutionists is in the factories." In an article published in the October issue of the *Fourth International*, "The Real Situation In France" by our Paris Correspondent, the writer relates that "the Stalinists urged the workers to leave the factories and join the Maquis, where invariably the workers were integrated under the leadership and control of ex-officer cadre. The Trotskyists, on the other hand, urged the workers to stick to their factories which were their stronghold and not allow themselves to be dispersed and thus lose their class coherence."

A certain amount of confusion has been created on the nature of the so-called "resistance" groups because the capitalist correspondents indiscriminately label all the movements, whether in Yugoslavia, Greece or Italy and France as guerrilla or partisan. We do not yet possess complete and reliable information on the precise makeup and composition of these different movements and organizations. We therefore do not know to what degree some of them represent guerrilla movements of the type described by Comrade Munis or armed workers' guards and detachments, which are attached to the labor movement or the factories and which can become the nucleus for the armed militia.

We already know that many of these "resistance" movements are largely under Stalinist influence; that means they are led by the agents of the Kremlin bureaucracy, which aim to sell them out to the capitalist oppressors and the Allied imperialists, as chattels of Soviet diplomacy. It is the duty of the revolutionary vanguard to penetrate into all important organizations of this kind when they assume a mass character, in order to win the masses away from the reactionary Stalinist influence and to forge the alliance of the workers and peasants under the banner of the Socialist revolution.—*Ed.*

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The history of guerrilla warfare is as old as the military history of mankind. From the earliest times men have on occasion resorted to it. There have been guerrillas in Asia, in Europe, and in America. Their appearance has invariably been a phenomenon resulting from the military incapacity of a country, which brings them on the scene in order to put up opposition to the attacks or invasions of an enemy. The guerrillas try to fulfill the mission of national defense, which the regular army was incapable of carrying out; and if they are successful, the necessity is posed of their transformation into a new national armed force. Directly or indirectly, they constitute in fact a *disorganization* of the latter.

If after the destruction of a nation's armed forces and the subjugation of the country, there remains any breath for the

Incidentally, by these ties with world capitalism, Stalin has negated the whole theory of "socialism in one country." For it is clear acknowledgement of the dependence of Soviet economy on world economy.

There is only one great force that can save the Soviet Union from this danger. Without a proletarian revolution in Europe, which will arouse the Soviet masses into action against the reactionary bureaucracy, capitalist restoration is inevitable sooner or later. Stalin's victories do not at all lessen the danger. They may indeed hasten matters. These are the alternatives facing Russia.

## Observations on the Guerrillas

struggle for independence and if the geographic conditions make it possible, guerrilla bands appear. Not a single case is known in history in which they have succeeded by themselves in conquering the invader. Either they have been exterminated in greater or less time, or, with the help of supplies and troops of countries hostile to the invaders, the latter have been finally conquered. And at this conjuncture the guerrillas have been converted into the base of a new national army, that is, the armed instrument of the owning class.

The most characteristic, because the most general and positive, example is that of the Spanish guerrilla warfare against the Napoleonic invasion. In spite of the considerable number of the guerrillas, the daring which they showed and their independent spirit, in spite of the favorable Spanish topography and the limited development of the military technique of the period, the expulsion of the French troops could not be achieved until the English troops established a continuous front on the peninsula. As this situation developed, a new Spanish army was reconstituted into which the majority of the guerrillas were incorporated. However, there existed between the monarchy, defeated and imprisoned by Napoleon, and the majority of the guerrillas a serious political opposition. When the monarchy was restored to power through the joint action of the guerrillas and the English army and the new regular Spanish army, the guerrillas either remained in the latter or were dissolved by the monarchy, and their leaders, hostile to the Bourbon absolutism, were hanged. The struggle for a constitution and for democratic liberties undoubtedly was the principle motive force of the guerrilla actions. But not having been able to open up the battle against absolutism on the social field, the only one in which political victories could be gained, the guerrilla actions served, in the end, the interests of the feudal monarchy.

During the long civil war following the Russian Revolution of 1917, numerous guerrilla bands arose spontaneously in aid of the Bolsheviks. The revolutionary government gave them directions, armed them, tried to coordinate their actions. Certain groups gave important services in the war against the White armies. Nevertheless, the balance-sheet of the guerrilla actions was more negative than positive. The high command of the Red Army—Trotsky supported by Lenin—had to declare against the guerrillas and to speed up their full incorporation into the Red Army. The disorganization which they caused far outbalanced their usefulness in the rear of the enemy. Not even in the service of a revolutionary power, as an auxiliary force to an army of genuine liberation, were the guerrillas able to fulfil a serious mission, to say nothing of achieving a social

objective. Less than ever can they do so under the present military and political conditions.

Certainly what has been said about the guerrilla actions in the USSR, the Balkans, and France—and even of those groups operating in the most rugged terrains—is much exaggerated by propaganda. The quality of modern arms, by itself alone, rules out for the guerrillas any strictly military actions on a broad scale. In case they succeed, with the help of other powers, in extending the scale of their actions, the guerrillas will be converted into an army, and this army into an instrument of the helping powers (e.g., Tito and Mikhailovich). But what chiefly hinders the guerrillas, however revolutionary they may be considered, from a really positive action, is the contradiction between their methods of struggle and the methods necessary for the social transformation called for today. This contradiction is a practical expression of another more general and principled one: the contradiction between the struggle for the national bourgeois state and the struggle for the proletarian revolution. The former finds outlet in guerrilla methods, regardless of their degree of military effectiveness; the latter finds outlet through the social struggle, uses the method of class against class, without distinction of frontiers or uniforms. Each method contradicts and, in proportion as it expands, weakens the other. To the predominance of one or the other, corresponds the predominance of the national-bourgeois or the proletarian-international objective. The latter possesses immeasurably more numerous and effective methods of fighting in the enemy's rear and weakening it. Modern military technique itself offers great possibilities which can be used against the enemy, without the enemy being able to use them against us.

## Modern Guerrillas

The guerrillas who we have seen springing up in Europe, far from being led by a revolutionary authority, are in general led by reactionary authorities. Those groups who are holding themselves independent, whether for technical or political reasons, will inevitably fall under the yoke of the same reactionary powers as the others, or else they will be exterminated between the Axis and the Allies. Those who save themselves will have to be integrated in the social struggle, the place where they should have begun. In general, they are led by persons whose interest is in the reconstitution of the old bourgeois nationalities, which is the same as saying, by counter-revolutionists. Their own composition is undoubtedly far better, fundamentally peasant with a minority of discouraged workers, fugitives from the occupying authorities or simply impatient by nature and deceived as to the possibilities and the objectives of the guerrillas.

In a situation where the native capitalist oppressors join in various degrees with the oppressors of a foreign capitalism, it is not to be wondered at that sections of the national bourgeoisie try to confine all the hatred of the masses for capitalism into a channel solely against the foreign oppressor. The response which they find among the middle and prosperous farmers is a reaction consistent with the long individualistic tradition of these social layers, even though already in contradiction with the real interests of the latter. In the retarded education of the peasantry are concretized all the social tasks bequeathed by capitalism and even previous epochs. Without material possibility of betterment under capitalism, they keep hoping to own a piece of land, or, as in France, look nostalgically backward to the times when cultivation of the farm allowed them to give a dowry to their daughters and to put by a few small reserves in the local savings bank. The last to be mobilized against

oppression, the peasantry tends, when mobilized, to adopt extreme and anti-social forms of struggle if the opportunity is given them. These are the characteristics which will make them the last to be freed. Furthermore, no time better than the present in Europe to give rein to the particularist tendencies of the peasant; this suits perfectly the national bourgeoisie dominated by Hitler. All that is necessary under these conditions is any sort of a gun and a mountain. Certainly the peasants of Central Europe will not receive land from the bourgeoisie, nor will the French peasants be able again to give dowries to their daughters. When they begin to understand that, the stage of alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry will begin, and the incorporation of the latter in the socialist revolution. To precipitate this moment, it is essential to fight against the particularism of the peasant, and to draw him out of the guerrilla struggles into the social struggle.

## Proletarian Policy

Such efforts will not be necessary with the proletariat. The number of workers among the guerrillas is certainly insignificant, although we have no data for exact verification. But his position in the economic mechanism obliges the worker to consider his problems in conjunction with the class to which he belongs. He does not dream of the past, nor can he aspire to become a property owner. The logic of his self-defense leads him to set forth his demands in union with his fellow workers. This course in its extension leads him to the struggle against private property in general, and in particular against the government which represents it. But it is not excluded that the proletariat, even without lending much active support to the guerrillas, may allow itself to be misled by their actions. This would necessarily result in the weakening of its own struggle. But the proletariat is pushed in this direction by the pro-Allied sections of its own bourgeoisie, and by the counsels of the Stalinist and Socialist organizations. It would not be surprising in this atmosphere of pro-Allied blandishment and Nazi terror, if honestly revolutionary groups should be taken in by the guerrilla actions, and should regard them, if not as a panacea, then as an important aid in the general revolutionary struggle, to which the population should therefore give every support.

A dangerous tendency which must be fought. The barbaric oppression which Nazi-German imperialism has spread over Europe necessarily had to arouse in the peoples a powerful resistance. If the Nazi oppression is pictured in its true terms and the dormant necessities of the peoples of Europe and of the world taken into account, then the increasing resistance reveals itself as the process of turning the imperialist war into a civil war. If the normal and necessary development of this movement is not upset by disorganizing factors, its culmination would be the triumph of the proletarian revolution, the deathblow to the capitalist system of property.

Now the guerrilla movements in general, and more precisely those of Balkan and central Europe, interfere with this turning of the imperialist war into a civil war, by pushing the revolutionary resistance of the masses toward bourgeois objectives. They turn an essentially revolutionary and international resistance into a national and bourgeois resistance auxiliary to imperialism. Thus the bourgeoisie hopes, on the one hand, to reconstitute its own army, friendly to the Allies; on the other hand, to canalize the hatred of the poorer classes for fascism, towards capitalist goals. In opposition to the already advanced transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war, the national bourgeoisies, aided by the guerrillas, the Stalinists and

the Social Democrats, are trying to return it to an imperialist war.

The duty of revolutionists in Europe is to help all they can in the full flowering of the now budding civil war, and to fight everything which stands in its way. A task impossible of accomplishment without mobilizing the exploited masses for their own special interests. The problem of ending the oppression is not military, but social; not national but international. The guerrillas, besides representing a backward direction, try to pull away from the class struggle the most militant elements. They weaken more than they strengthen the revolutionary struggle, and they prepare a foundation for their own bourgeoisie. The intentions of the individual members of the guerrillas are beside the point. The place of revolutionists is in the factories, the fields, in the deportations to Germany, where the masses have to find the solution to their own situations, where there are the forces capable of resolving the problems which grind down the peoples.

The necessity of social revolution is so urgent for Europe that the nationalist tendency represented by the guerrillas is prejudicial as much to the peasantry itself as to the proletariat. The latter will understand this easily; the former with greater difficulty. But the revolutionists must direct themselves to both, showing them methods of struggle adequate for a socialist solution. The peasant must be wrenched away from the bourgeois influences and must weld his alliance with the proletariat. If the particularism of the peasant continues to be exploited by the bourgeoisie, the European proletariat will pay for it very dearly in the near future. On the other hand, the socialist revo-

lution will not have to wait long if the proletariat succeeds in detaching the peasantry from their bourgeois—and Stalinist and Social-Democrat—ideologists.

The poverty-stricken masses are especially likely to take the wrong road when what are called their organizations, which continue to have a monopoly of the forces of propaganda, have sold out to the class enemy. The new revolutionary leadership must form itself and open the new road by fighting against the Stalinist and Social-Democratic organizations, teaching the masses the opposite of what these latter have rammed into their heads. The future of the European revolution depends on the capacity of the revolutionary minorities to combat now the nationalist course marked out jointly by the bourgeoisies, the Stalinists and the Socialists. Against these, the revolutionists must raise the program and the methods of the European proletarian revolution. Struggle of the masses, fraternization of soldiers and the exploited, deepening of the civil war against the bourgeoisie in general, drawing of the peasantry into the orbit of the proletarian struggle, removing every possible mass base from the exploiters and their accomplices who either in exile or in Africa are awaiting their turn.

The people will understand; they will understand much more rapidly than it seems at first. Those who, without fear of and uninfluenced by the stupidities of today's propaganda, know how to bear aloft the standard of the objectives and methods of the proletarian revolution, will not be long in gaining the confidence of the masses and opening a new chapter in the history of humanity.

From *Contra La Corriente*, March 1944.

## From the Arsenal of Marxism

# How We Made the Russian October

By LEON TROTSKY

In the period shortly after the October revolution, Leon Trotsky utilized the repeated interruptions between the sessions of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, in order, as he wrote at the time, to "recall the course and the landmarks of the October revolution." This work was subsequently published as a pamphlet, *From October to Brest Litovsk*, and remained for many years the official Bolshevik version of the events that led to the establishment of the first workers' state. From this pamphlet, on the occasion of the 27th Anniversary of October, we republish

the sections which deal with the developments in July and August 1917, preceding the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the study and correct understanding of the Russian revolution has a direct bearing on the events unfolding today in Europe and throughout the world, when the program and banner of October alone point the way out to humanity from the slaughter-pens of capitalism.

The text which appears below is taken from the authorized English translation from the Russian made in 1919.

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power would naturally move in the channel of Soviet organizations and could take a more normal course. Having broken with the bourgeoisie, the middle-class democracy would itself fall under their ban and would be compelled to seek a closer union with the Socialist proletariat. In this way the indecisiveness and political indefiniteness of the middle-class democratic elements would be overcome sooner or later by the working masses, with the help of our criticism. This is the reason why we demanded that the leading Soviet parties, in which we had no real confidence (and we frankly said so), should take the governing power into their own hands.

But even after the ministerial crisis of the 2nd of July, Tseretelli and his adherents did not abandon the coalition idea. They explained in the Executive Committee that the lead-

After all the preceding experience of the coalition, there would seem to be but one way out of the difficulty—to break with the Cadets [the Constitutional Democrats, party of the Russian bourgeoisie] and set up a Soviet government. The relative forces within the Soviets were such at the time that the Soviet's power as a political party would fall naturally into the hands of the Social-Revolutionists and the Mensheviks. We deliberately faced the situation. Thanks to the possibility of re-elections at any time, the mechanism of the Soviets assured a sufficiently exact reflection of the progressive shift toward the left in the masses of workers and soldiers. After the break of the coalition with the bourgeoisie, the radical tendencies should, we expected, receive a greater following in the Soviet organizations. Under such circumstances, the proletariat's struggle for

ing Cadets were, indeed, demoralized by doctrinairism and even by counter-revolutionism, but that in the provinces there were still many bourgeois elements which could still go hand in hand with the revolutionary democrats, and that in order to make sure of their cooperation it was necessary to attract representatives of the bourgeoisie into the membership of the new ministry. Dan already entertained hopes of a radical-democratic party to be hastily built up, at the time, by a few pro-democratic politicians. The report that the coalition government had been broken up, only to be replaced by a new coalition, spread rapidly through Petrograd and provoked a storm of indignation among the workers and soldiers everywhere. Thus the events of July 3-5 were produced.

## The July Days

Already during the session of the Executive Committee we were informed by telephone that a regiment of machine-gunners was making ready for attack. By telephone, too, we adopted measures to check these preparations, but the ferment was working among the people. Representatives of military units that had been disciplined for insubordination brought alarming news from the front, of repressions which aroused the garrison. Among the Petrograd workingmen the displeasure with the official leaders was intensified also by the fact that Tseretelli, Dan and Chkheidze, misrepresented the general views of the proletariat in their endeavor to prevent the Petrograd Soviet from becoming the mouthpiece of the new tendencies of the toilers. The All-Russian Executive Committee, formed in the July Council and depending upon the more backward provinces, put the Petrograd Soviet more and more into the background and took all matters into its own hands, including even local Petrograd affairs.

A clash was inevitable. The workers and soldiers pressed from below, vehemently voiced their discontent with the official Soviet policies and demanded greater resolution from our party. We considered that, in view of the backwardness of the provinces, the time for such a course had not yet arrived. At the same time, we feared that the events taking place at the front might bring extreme chaos into the revolutionary ranks, and desperation to the hearts of the people. The attitude of our party toward the movement of July 3-5 was quite well defined. On the one hand, there was the danger that Petrograd might break away from the more backward parts of the country; while on the other, there was the feeling that only the active and energetic intervention of Petrograd could save the day. The party agitators who worked among the people were working in harmony with the masses, conducting an uncompromising campaign.

There was still some hope that the demonstration of the revolutionary masses in the streets might destroy the blind doctrinairism of the coalitionists and make them understand that they could retain their power only by breaking openly with the bourgeoisie. Despite all that had recently been said and written in the bourgeois press, our party had no intention whatever of seizing power by means of an armed revolt. In point of fact, the revolutionary demonstration started spontaneously, and was guided by us only in a political way.

The Central Executive Committee was holding its session in the Tauride Palace, when turbulent crowds of armed soldiers and workers surrounded it from all sides. Among them was, of course, an insignificant number of anarchistic elements, which were ready to use their arms against the Soviet center. There were also some "pogrom" elements, Black-Hundred ele-

ments, and obviously mercenary elements, seeking to utilize the occasion for instigating pogroms and chaos. From among the sundry elements came the demands for the arrest of Chernov and Tseretelli, for the dispersal of the Executive Committee, etc. An attempt was even made to arrest Chernov. Subsequently at Kresty prison, I identified one of the sailors who had participated in this attempt; he was a criminal, imprisoned at Kresty for robbery. But the bourgeois and the coalitionist press represented this movement as a pogromist, counter-revolutionary affair, and, at the same time, as a Bolshevik crusade, the immediate object of which was to seize the reins of Government by the use of armed force against the Central Executive Committee.

The movement of July 3-5 had already disclosed with perfect clearness that a complete impotence reigned within the ruling Soviet parties at Petrograd. The garrison was far from being all on our side. There were still some wavering, undecided, passive elements. But if we ignore the junkers, there were no regiments at all which were ready to fight us in the defense of the Government or the leading Soviet parties. It was necessary to summon troops from the front. The entire strategy of Tseretelli, Chernov, and others on July 3 resolved itself into this: to gain time in order to give Kerensky an opportunity to bring up his "loyal" regiments. One deputation after another entered the hall of the Tauride Palace, which was surrounded by armed crowds, and demanded a complete separation from the bourgeoisie, positive social reforms, and the opening of peace negotiations.

We, the Bolsheviks, met every new company of disgruntled troops gathered in the yards and streets, with speeches, in which we called upon them to be calm and assured them that, in view of the present temper of the people, the coalitionists could not succeed in forming a new coalition. Especially pronounced was the temper of the Kronstadt sailors, whom we had to restrain from transcending the limits of a peaceful demonstration. The fourth demonstration, which was already controlled by our party, assumed a still more serious character. The Soviet leaders were quite at sea; their speeches assumed an evasive character; the answers given by Chkheidze to the deputies were without any political content. It was clear that the official leaders were marking time.

On the night of the 4th the "loyal" regiments began to arrive. During the session of the Executive Committee the Tauride Palace responded to the strains of the Marseillaise. The expression on the faces of the leaders suddenly changed. They displayed a look of confidence which had been entirely wanting of late. It was produced by the entry into the Tauride Palace of the Volynsk regiment, the same one, which, a few months later, was to lead the vanguard of the October revolution, under our banners. From this moment, everything changed. There was no longer any need to handle the delegates of the Petrograd workmen and soldiers with kid gloves. Speeches were made from the floor of the Executive Committee, which referred to an armed insurrection that had been "suppressed" on that very day by loyal revolutionary forces. The Bolsheviks were declared to be a counter-revolutionary party.

The fear experienced by the liberal bourgeoisie during the two days of armed demonstration betrayed itself in a hatred that was crystallized not only in the columns of the newspapers, but also in the streets of Petrograd, and more especially on the Nevsky Prospect, where individual workmen and soldiers caught in the act of "criminal" agitation were mercilessly beaten up. The junkers, army officers, policemen, and the cavaliers of St. George were now the masters of the situation. And all these were headed by the savage counter-revolutionists. The

workers' organizations and establishments of our party were being ruthlessly crushed and demolished. Arrests, searches, assaults and even murders came to be common occurrences. On the night of the 4th the then Attorney-General Pereverzev handed over to the press "documents" which were intended to prove that the Bolshevik party was headed by bribed agents of Germany.

The leaders of the Social-Revolutionist and Menshevik parties had known us too long and too well to believe these accusations. At the same time, they were too deeply interested in their success to repudiate them publicly. And even now one cannot recall without disgust that saturnalia of lies which was celebrated and broadcast in all the bourgeois and coalition newspapers. Our organs were suppressed. Revolutionary Petrograd felt that the provinces and the army were still far from being with it. In workingmen's sections of the city a short period of tyrannical infringements set in, while in the garrison repressive measures were introduced against the disorganized regiments, and certain of its units were disarmed. At the same time, the political leaders manufactured a new ministry, with the inclusion of representatives of third-rate bourgeois groups, which, although adding nothing to the government, robbed it of its last vestige of revolutionary initiative.

Meanwhile events at the front ran their own course. The organic unity of the army was shaken to its very depths. The soldiers were becoming convinced that the great majority of the officers, who, at the beginning of the revolution, bedaubed themselves with red revolutionary paint, were still very inimical to the new regime. An open selection of counter-revolutionary elements was being made in the lines. Bolshevik publications were ruthlessly persecuted. The military advance had long ago changed into a tragic retreat. The bourgeois press madly libelled the army. Whereas, on the eve of the advance, the ruling parties told us that we were an insignificant gang and that the army had never heard of us and would not have anything to do with us, now, when the gamble of the offensive had ended so disastrously, these same persons and parties laid the whole blame for its failure on our shoulders. The prisons were crowded with revolutionary workers and soldiers. All the old legal blood-hounds of Czarism were employed in investigating the July 3-5 affair. Under these circumstances, the Social-Revolutionists and the Mensheviks went so far as to demand that Lenin, Zinoviev and others of their group should surrender themselves to the "Courts of Justice."

## Events Following the July Days

The infringements of liberty in the workingmen's quarters lasted but a little while and were followed by accessions of revolutionary spirit, not only among the proletariat, but also in the Petrograd garrison. The coalitionists were losing all influence. The wave of Bolshevism began to spread from the urban centers to every part of the country and, despite all obstacles, penetrated into the army ranks. The new coalition government, with Kerensky at its head, had already openly embarked upon a policy of repression. The ministry had restored the death penalty in the army. Our papers were suppressed and our agitators were arrested; but this only increased our influence. In spite of all the obstacles involved in the new elections for the Petrograd Soviet, the distribution of power in it had become so changed that on certain important questions we already commanded a majority vote. The same was the case in the Moscow Soviet.

At that time, together with many others, I was imprisoned at Kresty, having been arrested for instigating and organizing

the armed revolt of July 3-5 in collusion with the German authorities, and with the object of furthering the military ends of the Hohenzollerns. The famous prosecutor of the Czarist regime, Aleksandrov, who had prosecuted numerous revolutionists, was now entrusted with the task of protecting the public from the counter-revolutionary Bolsheviks. Under the old regime the inmates of prisons used to be divided into political prisoners and criminals. Now a new terminology was established: *Criminals* and *Bolsheviks*. Great perplexity reigned among the imprisoned soldiers. The boys came from the country and had previously taken no part in political life. They thought that the revolution had set them free, once and for all. Hence they viewed with amazement their doorlocks and grated windows. While taking their exercise in the prison-yard, they would always ask me what all this meant and how it would end. I comforted them with the hope of our ultimate victory.

Toward the end of August occurred the revolt of Kornilov; this was the immediate result of the mobilization of the counter-revolutionary forces to which a forceful impulse had been imparted by the attack of July 18. At the celebrated Moscow Congress, which took place in the middle of August, Kerensky attempted to take a middle ground between the propertied elements and the democracy of the small bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks were on the whole considered as standing beyond the bounds of the "legal." Kerensky threatened them with blood and iron, which met with vehement applause from the propertied half of the gathering, and treacherous silence on the part of the bourgeois democracy. But the hysterical outcries and threats of Kerensky did not satisfy the chiefs of the counter-revolutionary interests. They had only too clearly observed the revolutionary tide flooding every portion of the country, among the working class, in the villages, in the army; and they considered it imperative to adopt without any delay the most extreme measures to curb the masses. After reaching an understanding with the property-owning bourgeoisie—who saw in him their hero—Kornilov took it upon himself to accomplish this hazardous task.

Kerensky, Savinkov, Filomenko and other Socialist-Revolutionists of the government or semi-government class participated in this conspiracy, but each and every one of them at a certain stage of the altering circumstances betrayed Kornilov, for they knew that in the case of his defeat, they would turn out to have been on the wrong side of the fence. We lived through the events connected with Kornilov, while we were in jail, and followed them in the newspapers; the unhindered delivery of newspapers was the only important respect in which the jails of Kerensky differed from those of the old regime.

The Cossack General's adventure miscarried; six months of revolution had created in the consciousness of the masses and in their organization a sufficient resistance against an open counter-revolutionary attack. The conciliationist Soviet parties were terribly frightened at the prospect of the possible results of the Kornilov conspiracy, which threatened to sweep away, not only the Bolsheviks, but also the whole revolution, together with its governing parties. The Social-Revolutionists and the Mensheviks, proceeded to legalize the Bolsheviks—this, to be sure, only retrospectively and only half-way, inasmuch as they scented possible dangers in the future. The very same Kronstadt sailors—whom they had dubbed bandits and counter-revolutionists in the days following the July uprising—were summoned during the Kornilov danger to Petrograd for the defense of the revolution. They came without a murmur, without a word of reproach, without recalling the past, and occupied the most responsible posts.

I had the fullest right to recall to Tseretelli these words which I had addressed to him in May, when he was occupied in persecuting the Kronstadt sailors: "When a counter-revolutionary general attempts to throw the noose around the neck of the revolution, the Cadets will grease the rope with soap, while the Kronstadt sailors will come to fight and die together with us."

The Soviet organizations had revealed everywhere, in the rear and at the front, their vitality and their power in the struggle with the Kornilov uprising. In almost no instance did things ever come to a military conflict. The revolutionary masses ground into nothingness the general's conspiracy. Just as the moderates in July found no soldiers among the Petrograd garrison to fight against us, so now Kornilov found no soldiers on the whole front to fight against the revolution. He had acted by virtue of a delusion and the words of our propaganda easily destroyed his designs.

According to information in the newspapers, I had expected a more rapid unfolding of subsequent events in the direction of the passing of the power into the hands of the Soviets. The growth of the influence and power of the Bolsheviks became indubitable and had gained an irresistible momentum. The Bolsheviks had warned against the coalition, against the attack of July 18, they predicted the Kornilov affair—the masses of the people became convinced by experience that we were right. During the most terrifying moments of the Kornilov conspiracy, when the Caucasian [Savage] division was approaching Petrograd, the Petrograd Soviet was arming the workingmen with the extorted consent of the authorities. Army divisions which had been brought up against us had long since achieved their successful rebirth in the stimulating atmosphere of Petrograd and were now altogether on our side.

The Kornilov uprising was destined to open definitely the eyes of the army to the inadmissibility of any continued policy of conciliation with the bourgeois counter-revolution. Hence it was possible to expect that the crushing of the Kornilov uprising would prove to be only an introduction to an immediate aggressive action on the part of the revolutionary forces under the leadership of our party for the purpose of seizing sole power. But events unfolded more slowly. With all the tension of their revolutionary feeling, the masses had become more cautious after the bitter lesson of the July days, and renounced all isolated demonstrations, awaiting a direct instruction and direction from above. And, also, among the leadership of the party there developed a "watchful-waiting" policy. Under these circumstances, the liquidation of the Kornilov adventure, irrespective of the profound regrouping of forces to our advantage, did not bring about any immediate political changes.

## The Conflict with the Soviets

In the Petrograd Soviet, the domination of our party was definitely strengthened from that time on. This was evidenced in dramatic fashion when the question of the personnel of its presiding body came up. At that epoch, when the Social-Revolutionists and the Mensheviks held sway in the Soviets, they isolated the Bolsheviks by every means in their power. They did not admit even one Bolshevik into the membership of the Executive Committee at Petrograd, even when our party represented at least one-third of all the Soviet members. Afterwards, when the Petrograd Soviet, by a dwindling majority, passed the resolution for the transferring of all power into the hands of the Soviet, our party put forth the demand to establish a coalition Executive Committee formed on a proportional basis.

The old presiding body, the members of which were Chkheidze, Tseretelli, Kerensky, Skobelev, Chernov, flatly refused this demand. It may not be out of place to mention this here, inasmuch as representatives of the parties broken up by the revolution speak of the necessity of presenting one front for the sake of democracy, and accuse us of separatism. There was called at that time a special meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, which was to decide the question of the presiding body's fate. All forces, all reserves had been mobilized on both sides. Tseretelli came out with a speech embodying a program, wherein he pointed out that the question of the presiding body was a question of orientation. We reckoned that we would sway somewhat less than half of the vote and were ready to consider that a sign of our progress. Actually, however, the vote showed that we had a majority of nearly one hundred. "For six months," said Tseretelli at that time, "we have stood at the head of the Petrograd Soviet and led it from victory to victory; we wish that you may hold for at least half of that time the positions which you are now preparing to occupy." In the Moscow Soviet a similar change of leadership among the parties took place.

One after the other the provincial Soviets joined the Bolshevik position. The date of convoking the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets was approaching. But the leading group of the Central Executive Committee was striving with all its might to put off the Congress to an indefinite future in order thus to destroy it in advance. It was evident that the new Congress of Soviets would give our party a majority, would correspondingly alter the make-up of the Central Executive Committee, and deprive the conciliators of their most important position. The struggle for the convocation of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets assumed the greatest importance for us.

To counterbalance this, the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionists put forth the Democratic Conference idea. They needed this move against both us and Kerensky.

By this time the head of the Ministry assumed an absolutely independent and irresponsible position. He had been raised to power by the Petrograd Soviet during the first epoch of the revolution: Kerensky had entered the Ministry without a preliminary decision of the Soviets, but his entry into the Ministry was subsequently approved. After the First Congress of Soviets, the Socialist ministers were held accountable to the Central Executive Committee. Their allies, the Cadets were responsible only to their party. To meet the bourgeoisie's wishes, the General Executive Committee, after the July days, released the Socialist Ministers from all responsibility to the Soviets, in order, as it were, to create a revolutionary dictatorship. It is rather well to mention this, too, now that the same persons who built up the dictatorship of a coterie, come forth with accusations and imprecations against the dictatorship of a class.

The Moscow Conference, at which the skillfully manipulated professional and democratic elements balanced each other, aimed to strengthen Kerensky's power over classes and parties. This aim was attained only in appearance. In reality, the Moscow Conference revealed Kerensky's utter impotence, for he was equally remote from both the professional elements and the bourgeois democracy. But since the liberals and conservatives applauded his onslaughts against democracy, and the conciliators gave him ovations when he cautiously upbraided the counter-revolutionaries, the impression was growing upon him that he was supported, as it were, by both the former and the latter, and, accordingly, commanded unlimited power. Over workingmen and revolutionary soldiers he held the threat of blood and iron. His policy continued the bargaining with Kornilov behind the scenes—a bargaining which compromised him

even in the conciliationists' eyes: in evasively diplomatic terms, so characteristic of him, Tseretelli spoke of "personal" movements in politics and of the necessity of curbing these personal movements. This task was to be accomplished by the Democratic Conference, which was called, according to arbitrary forms, from among representatives of Soviets, dumas, zemstvos, trade unions and cooperative societies. Still, the main task was to secure a sufficiently conservative composition of the Conference to dissolve the Soviets once for all in the formless mass of democracy, and, on the new organizational basis, to gain a firm footing against the Bolshevik tide.

Here it will not be out of place to note, in a few words, the difference between the political role of the Soviets and that of the democratic organs of self-government. More than once, the Philistines called our attention to the fact that the new dumas and zemstvos elected on the basis of universal suffrage, were incomparably more democratic than the Soviets and were more suited to represent the population. However, this formal democratic criterion is devoid of serious content in a revolutionary epoch. The significance of the Revolution lies in the rapid changing of the judgment of the masses, in the fact that new and ever new strata of population acquire experience, verify their views of the day before, sweep them aside, work out new ones, desert old leaders and follow new ones in the forward march. During the revolutionary times, formally democratic organizations, based upon the ponderous apparatus of universal suffrage, inevitably fall behind the development of the political consciousness of the masses. Quite different are the Soviets. They rely immediately upon organic groupings, such as shop, mill, factory, county, regiment, etc. To be sure, there are guarantees, just as legal, of the strictness of elections, as are used in creating democratic dumas and zemstvos. But there are in the Soviet incomparably more serious, more profound guarantees of the direct and immediate relation between the deputy and the electors. A town-duma or zemstvo member is supported by the amorphous mass of electors, which entrusts its full powers to him for a year and then breaks up. The Soviet electors remain always united by the conditions of their work and their existence; their deputy is ever before their eyes, at any moment they can prepare a mandate to him, censure him, recall or replace him with another person.

If during the preceding revolutionary month the general political evolution expressed itself in the fact that the influence of the conciliationist parties was being replaced by a decisive influence of the Bolsheviks, it is quite plain that this process found its most striking and fullest expression in the Soviets, while the dumas and zemstvos, notwithstanding all their formal democratism, expressed yesterday's status of the popular masses and not today's. This is exactly what explains the gravitation toward dumas and zemstvos on the part of those parties which were losing more and more ground in the esteem of the revolutionary class. We shall meet with the same question, only on a larger scale, later, when we come to the Constituent Assembly.

The Democratic Conference, called by Tseretelli and his fellow-combatants in mid-September, was totally artificial in character, representing as it did a combination of Soviets and organs of self-government in a ratio calculated to secure a preponderance of the conciliationist parties. Born of helplessness and confusion, the Conference ended in a pitiful fiasco. The professional bourgeoisie treated the Conference with the greatest hostility, beholding in it an endeavor to push the bourgeoisie away from the positions it had approached at the Moscow Conference. The revolutionary proletariat, and the masses of

soldiers and peasants connected with it, condemned in advance the fraudulent method of calling together the Democratic Conference.

The immediate task of the conciliators was to create a responsible ministry. But even this was not achieved. Kerensky neither wanted nor permitted responsibility, because this was not permitted by the bourgeoisie, which was backing him. Irresponsibility, towards the organs of the so-called democracy meant, in fact, responsibility to the Cadets and the Allied Embassies. For the time being this was sufficient for the bourgeoisie. On the question of coalition the Democratic Conference revealed its utter insolvency: the votes in favor of a coalition with the bourgeoisie slightly outnumbered those against the coalition; the majority voted against a coalition with the Cadets. But with the Cadets left out, there proved to be, among the bourgeoisie, no serious counter-agencies for the coalition. Tseretelli explained this in detail to the conference. If the conference did not grasp it, so much the worse for the conference. Behind the backs of the conference, negotiations were carried on without concealment with the Cadets, whom they had repudiated, and it was decided that the Cadets should not appear as Cadets, but as "social workers." Pressed hard on both right and left, the bourgeois democracy tolerated all this dickering, and thereby demonstrated its utter political prostration.

From the Democratic Conference a council was picked, and it was decided to complete it by adding representatives of the professional elements; this Pre-Parliament was to fill the vacant period before the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Contrary to Tseretelli's original plan, but in full accord with the plans of the bourgeoisie, the new coalition ministry retained its formal independence with regard to the Pre-Parliament. Everything together produced the impression of a pitiful and impotent creation of an office clerk behind which was concealed the complete capitulation of the petty bourgeois democracy before the professional liberalism which, a month previously, had openly supported Kornilov's attack on the Revolution. The sum total of the whole affair was, therefore, the restoration and perpetuation of the coalition with the liberal bourgeoisie. No longer could there be any doubt that quite independently of the make-up of the future Constituent Assembly, the governmental power would, in fact, be held by the bourgeoisie, as despite all the preponderance given them by the masses of the people the conciliationist parties invariably arrived at a coalition with the Cadets, deeming it impossible, as they did, to create a state power without the bourgeoisie. The attitude of the masses toward Milyukov's party was one of the deepest hostility. At all elections during the revolutionary period, the Cadets suffered merciless defeat, and yet, the very parties—i.e., the Social-Revolutionists and Mensheviks—which victoriously defeated the Cadet party at the elections, after election gave it the place of honor in the coalition government. It is natural that the masses realized more and more that in reality the conciliationist parties were playing the role of stewards to the liberal bourgeoisie.

Meantime, the internal situation was becoming more and more complicated and unfavorable. The war dragged on aimlessly, senselessly and interminably. The Government took no steps whatever to extricate itself from the vicious circle. The laughable scheme was proposed of sending the Menshevik Skobelev to Paris to influence the Allied imperialists. But no sane man attached any importance to this scheme. Kornilov gave up Riga to the Germans in order to terrorize public opinion, and having brought about this condition, to establish the

discipline of the knout in the army. Danger threatened Petrograd. And the bourgeois elements greeted this peril with unconcealed malicious joy. The former President of the Duma, Rodzyanko, openly said again and again that the surrender of debauched Petrograd to the Germans would not be a great misfortune. For illustration he cited Riga, where the Soviets had been done away with after the coming of the Germans, and firm order, together with the old police system, had been established.

Would the Baltic fleet be lost? But the fleet had been debauched by the Revolutionary propaganda; *ergo* the loss was not so great. The cynicism of a garrulous nobleman expressed the hidden thoughts of the greater part of the bourgeoisie, that to surrender Petrograd to the Germans did not mean to lose it. Under the peace treaty it would be restored, but restored ravaged by German militarism. By that time the revolution would be decapitated, and it would be easier to manage. Kerensky's government did not think of seriously defending the capital. On the contrary, public opinion was being prepared for its possible surrender. Public institutions were being removed from Petrograd to Moscow and other cities.

In this setting, the soldiers' section of the Petrograd Soviet had its meeting. Feeling was tense and turbulent. Was the Government incapable of defending Petrograd? If so, let it make peace. And if incapable of making peace, let it clear out. The frame of mind of the soldiers' section found expression in this resolution. This was already the heat-lightning of the October Revolution.

At the front, the situation grew worse day by day. Chilly autumn, with its rains and winds, was drawing nigh. And there was looming up a fourth winter campaign. Supplies deteriorated every day. In the rear, the front had been forgotten—no reliefs, no new contingents, no warm winter clothing, which was indispensable. Desertions grew in number. The old army committees, elected in the first period of the Revolution, remained at their places, and supported Kerensky's policy. Re-elections were forbidden. An abyss sprang up between the committees and the soldier masses. Finally the soldiers began to regard the committees with hatred. With increasing frequency delegates from the trenches were arriving in Petrograd and at the session of the Petrograd Soviet put the question point blank. "What is to be done further? By whom and how will the war be ended? Why is the Petrograd Soviet silent?"

The Petrograd Soviet was not silent. It demanded the immediate transfer of all power into the hands of the Soviets in the capitals and in the provinces, the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants, workers' control of production, and immediate opening of peace negotiations. So long as we remained an opposition party, the slogan, *All Power to the Soviets*, was a propaganda slogan. But as soon as we found ourselves in the majority in all the principal Soviets, this slogan imposed upon us the duty of a direct and immediate fight for power.

In the country villages, the situation had grown entangled and complicated in the extreme. The Revolution had promised land to the peasant, but at the same time, the leading parties demanded that the peasant should not touch this land until the Constituent Assembly should meet. At first the peasants waited patiently, but when they began to lose patience, the coalition ministry showered repressive measures upon them. Meanwhile the Constituent Assembly was receding to even remoter distances. The bourgeoisie insisted upon calling the Constituent Assembly after the conclusion of peace. The peasant masses were growing more and more impatient. What we had foretold at the very

beginning of the Revolution, was being realized: the peasants were seizing the land of their own accord. Repressive measures grew, arrests of revolutionary land committees began. In certain districts Kerensky introduced martial law. A line of delegates, who came on foot, flowed from the villages to the Petrograd Soviet. They complained that they had been arrested when they attempted to carry out the Petrograd Soviet's program and to transfer the landlords' estates into the hands of the peasant committees. The peasants demanded protection of us.

We replied that we should be in a position to protect them only if the power were in our hands. From this, however, it followed that the Soviets must seize the power if they did not wish to become mere debating societies.

"It is senseless to fight for the power of the Soviets, six or eight weeks before the Constituent Assembly," our neighbors on the right told us. We, however, were in no degree infected with this fetish worship of the Constituent Assembly. In the first place, there were no guarantees that it really would be called. The breaking up of the army, mass desertions, disorganization of the supplies department, agrarian revolution—all this created an environment which was unfavorable to the elections for the Constituent Assembly. The surrender of Petrograd to the Germans, furthermore, threatened to remove altogether the question of elections from the order of the day. And, besides, even if it were called according to the old registration lists under the leadership of the old parties, the Constituent Assembly would be but a cover and a sanction for the coalition power. Without the bourgeoisie neither the S.R.'s nor the Mensheviks were in a position to assume power. Only the revolutionary class was destined to break the vicious circle wherein the Revolution was revolving and going to pieces.

The power had to be snatched from the hands of the elements which were directly or indirectly serving the bourgeoisie and making use of the state apparatus as a tool of obstruction against the revolutionary demands of the people.

*All Power to the Soviets!* demanded our party. Translated into party language, this had meant in the preceding period, the power of the S.R.'s and Mensheviks, as opposed to a coalition with the liberal bourgeoisie. Now, in October 1917, the same slogan meant handing over all power to the revolutionary proletariat, at the head of which, at this period, stood the Bolshevik party. It was a question of the dictatorship of the working class, which was leading, or, more correctly, was capable of leading the many millions of the poorest peasantry. This was the historical significance of the October uprising.

Everything led the party to this path. Since the first days of the Revolution, we had been preaching the necessity and inevitability of the power passing to the Soviets. After a great internal struggle, the majority of the Soviets made this demand their own, having accepted our point of view. We were preparing the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets at which we expected our party's complete victory. Under Dan's leadership (the cautious Chkheidze had departed for the Caucasus), the Central Executive Committee attempted to block in every way the calling of the Congress of the Soviets. After great exertions, supported by the Soviet fraction of the Democratic Assembly, we finally secured the setting of the date of the Congress for October 25. This date was destined to become the greatest day in the history of Russia. As a preliminary, we called in Petrograd a Congress of Soviets of the Northern regions, including the Baltic fleet and Moscow. At this Congress, we had a solid majority, and obtained a certain support on the right in the persons of the left S.R. faction, besides laying important organizational premises for the October uprising.

# INTERNATIONAL NOTES

## Australian Communist Party

From the Theses of the Revolutionary Workers Party of Australia (Trotskyists), July 1943.

Twenty-four years after Lenin formed the Third International (Comintern) for the purpose of extending the Socialist revolution from the Soviet Union to the major capitalist countries of the world, Stalin has decreed its official liquidation. The task set for the Comintern by Lenin remains wholly unfulfilled. Instead, the workers of the world have suffered a series of crushing defeats and capitalism has plunged humanity into another imperialist holocaust.

For these catastrophic defeats, and this major set-back to Socialism, the Comintern must bear a great share of the blame. It has not lacked either the numbers, or the organizational principles, or the traditions to lead a successful struggle for Socialism. On the contrary, its numbers in Germany, France, China and elsewhere at the moment, if we can believe them, even in Australia, have far exceeded those of the Bolsheviks of 1917. Many thousands of militant workers have passed through its ranks. It inherited the enormous prestige of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. It has failed because it has refused to follow an international working class policy and instead it has subordinated itself to the directives of the bureaucracy of the USSR. The bureaucracy has been determined at all costs to maintain the *status quo* of the USSR, internally and in the field of world politics, even if it means disaster to the workers of the rest of the world. This policy has reached its logical conclusion in the abandonment of even the pretense of interest in the revolutionary movement in the rest of the world and the reliance instead on the pact with the laborhating Anglo-American imperialism.

We do not dispute that the failure of the revolutionary wave to extend beyond the borders of the USSR in 1917 and the consequent isolation of the Soviet Republic, made it inevitable that the leaders of the country should maneuver between the encircling capitalist states, playing upon their mutual antagonisms, and even making pacts with one group against others. This need was recognized by Lenin and Trotsky. The crime of Stalin against the working class has lain in forcing the various national sections of the Comintern to vary their policies in accordance with the temporary expedients of the foreign alliances of the USSR. But the fault lies not only with Stalin; only leaderships placing career before principle could allow the organizations, of which they were important members, to be so played upon.

But once granting the complete control that the ECCI had over the local sections and the domination of that committee by the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union we can understand the unprincipled changes, first to "Social Fascism," then to the "Popular Front," then to the line "against imperialist war," then to the call for a "Just Peace," finally to the call for the cessation of the class struggle in the interests of the "democratic" powers and the dissolution of the Comintern itself. It is not to be wondered that some of the finest elements of the working class, despairing of following these violent zigzags, have become disillusioned and apathetic.

Because for the moment it is in the interest of both the USSR and the Allied imperialists to unite in a military pact against German imperialism, the Communist Party of Australia is devot-

ing itself to tying the Australian workers to the war chariot of "our own" capitalist class. They have declared a state of class peace with the capitalists, they call for class collaboration and national unity, they cripple strikes and support industrial and military conscription. In short, they are acting, in De Leon's phrase adopted by Lenin, as "labor lieutenants of capitalism."

The Communist Party justifies this policy by the need for the defense of the USSR. As we have shown earlier and as was stated by Lenin, Trotsky—and Stalin himself in his revolutionary days—the USSR can only be defended by the resurgence of the revolutionary wave in the major capitalist countries of the world. The Allied imperialists aim at the winning of their war and the reduction of the USSR to a subordinate political and economic position. Their plans against world Socialism can only be defeated by the revolutionary activity of the workers and colonial peoples of the world. Opposition to imperialist war itself must be the basis of this activity while the war lasts.

The slogan "national unity" can mean nothing but the subordination of the whole community, especially the working class, to the war needs of the capitalists, who control all sources of economic and political power. That is why the capitalists themselves lead in the call for unity and promise that all will be arranged after the war is over.

The Communist Party of Australia is finding increasing difficulty in pursuing this policy of national unity in the face of the steady movement of the workers towards the left under the pressure of the war. It is in precisely those organizations, such as the Miners and the Waterside Workers Federation, in which the Communist Party has control of the apparatus, that its troubles are greatest; the workers hostility most intense. These are merely a prelude to the inevitable wide-spread disillusionment that is coming to the militant workers as to the ability of the Communist Party to lead the working class to the attainment of Socialism. And that the Communists can see the writing on the wall is shown by their lying attacks on the members of the Fourth International whom they label with venom, "Trotskyists."

## The Fourth International

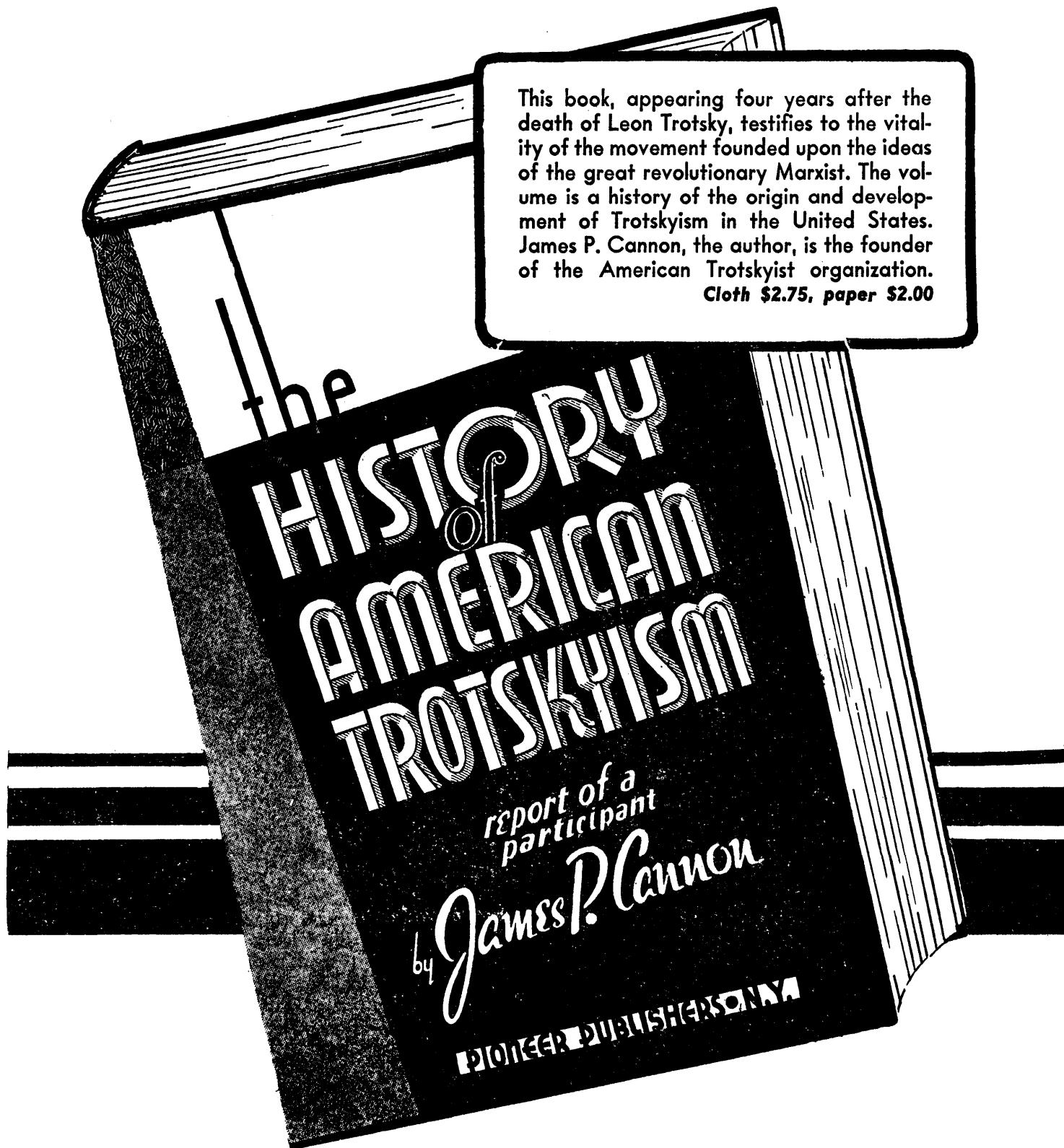
The Fourth International of which the Revolutionary Workers Party is the Australian Section, began as the Left Opposition within the Comintern, developed during the "Third Period," the period of "Social Fascism," and was formally founded at an International Conference in Switzerland in September, 1938.

It grew steadily in strength until the present war outlawed its sections, all of which courageously adopted and stood by a policy against imperialist war and for a revolutionary peace. The German onrush dislocated all work on the [European] continent, but evidence, mostly of executions, consistently comes through showing that the sections have revived and are in the van in the fight of the European workers against the regime of German fascism.

\* \* \*

In Australia, as in the rest of the world, as the workers realize in practice the effects of the social patriotism of the labor parties and of the maneuvers of the "Communists" so must they turn to the only revolutionary socialist party, the Revolutionary Workers Party, and towards the revolutionary socialist international of the world today, *The Fourth International*.

Just Published!



This book, appearing four years after the death of Leon Trotsky, testifies to the vitality of the movement founded upon the ideas of the great revolutionary Marxist. The volume is a history of the origin and development of Trotskyism in the United States. James P. Cannon, the author, is the founder of the American Trotskyist organization.

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# An Appeal for Aid to the 12 Class-War Prisoners and Their Families

Dear Friends:

Twelve members of Minneapolis Truckdrivers Local 544—CIO and of the Socialist Workers Party have been in prison now for over ten months, solely because of their labor activities and political opinions. Six others were released on October 20th.

The imprisonment of the 18 under the vicious Smith "Gag" law makes the Minneapolis Labor Case the most important civil liberties issue in the Second World War. Already over 350 unions and other progressive organizations representing more than 3,500,000 members have supported the work of the Civil Rights Defense Committee.

Ever since the 18 went to prison the CRDC has provided relief for their wives and children. Without this aid the families of these persecuted labor leaders would suffer great hardships and privations. Today, with the high cost of living, feeding and clothing their unfortunate ones becomes an ever-increasing problem for the Committee.

The Minneapolis Labor Case directly involves you and the democratic rights of your union. Our campaign to free the 18 and repeal the Smith "Gag" Act is a campaign to defend the hard-won rights of the American labor movement.

**HELP US TO MAKE THEIR CHRISTMAS CHEERFUL!**

**PLEASE SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENSE COMMITTEE, 160 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK CITY 10, N. Y.**

Fraternally yours,

**JOHN GREEN**  
President, Industrial Union of Marine  
and Shipbuilding Workers-CIO

**JULIUS HOCHMAN**  
General Manager, N. Y. Joint Board,  
Dress and Waistmakers Union,  
ILGWU-AFL

**GEORGE BALDANZI**  
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