

Fourth International

Trotsky Memorial Number

His Struggle for the Fourth International

Hitherto Unpublished Documents

Special Photographs



LEON TROTSKY

Nov. 7, 1879—Aug. 21, 1940

The First Phase
of the
European Revolution
By Ernest Germain

The Big Four at Paris

By LI FU-JEN

August 1946

25 Cents

Manager's Column

Letters from our agents indicate they are working on new ways of increasing the circulation of *Fourth International*.

A. Field of Minneapolis writes: "The sub for E. Dennis was obtained by one of our comrades who was in Indiana. Mr. Dennis is a *Militant* subscriber. The comrade went to see him, had a very interesting discussion with him, sold him a sub to the FI. He also told him about the vacation school. Dennis was very much interested and is planning to attend."

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Bill Singer of Connecticut advises that they obtained 10 out of 11 FI subs from *Militant* readers. He said: "They like *The Militant* and some of them had already seen the FI before—they are ready subscribers to *Fourth International*."

Philadelphia needs more FI's each month. Irene Fitzgerald has asked us to "increase Philly's bundle order to 50 copies a month."

* * *

We welcome Leon Forth, new literature agent for Chicago. He outlines briefly some plans for future work: "Could you please send me a current bill for the FI, showing recent payments. I feel fairly sure that this bill will be paid up shortly. . . . Very soon we are going to put on a drive to get the FI on a number of newsstands here."

* * *

The analytical material contained in *Fourth International* is of lasting importance and requests for back issues are numerous.

A teacher in Ann Arbor, Mich., sent us \$5 requesting that we send him "as many back issues of *Fourth International* containing articles by Leon Trotsky as \$5 will buy." He is "interested in studying Leon Trotsky's writings of his last period, say from 1932 on."

Back issues of *Fourth International* contain numerous articles by Leon Trotsky which have never appeared in any other publication. We have a nearly complete stock of these loose copies and will be glad to furnish prices upon request.

Jarvis Dusenbery of Perry, N. Y., ordered four copies of the June issue and enclosed \$1 in payment.

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CONTENTS

Review of the Month

"Hemisphere Defense" and U. S. Preparations for World War III	227
Stalinism in Western Europe	228
First Phase of the European Revolution By Ernest Germain	230
Trotsky's Struggle for the Fourth International By John G. Wright	235
Nationalized Industry and Workers' Management By Leon Trotsky	239
Special photographs	Center Spread
The Big Four at Paris	By Li Fu-jen 242
Two Books on the Soviet Union Reviewed by Ralph Graham	245
A Documentary History of the Fourth International By Leon Trotsky	249
The Main Political Tendencies in Indonesia By Wout Tieleman	253
Resolution on Withdrawal of Occupation Troops Adopted June 1946	254

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A subscriber in Washington, D. C., sent in 50 cents for two copies of the June 1945 issue of the FI "for two friends."

* * *

Readers express great appreciation of *Fourth International*.

J.S. of Canada writes: "My wife received your letter. Yes, we have each been receiving a copy of

Fourth International since I subscribed for it last July. We did not expect to have two copies come and I intended to write you about it, but farming is a pretty busy job and I just neglected to do so. However, I have not been letting such important and really good reading go to waste. I try to keep them circulating as much as possible. I certain-

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Belle Montague of Cambridge, Mass., appraises the June issue: "At last I have seen in print a true, comprehensive picture of our epoch . . . the ruins, blood, ashes, starvation, murder and torture that distinguishes this period in which we live . . . not to speak of a correct description of the master criminals of New York and Washington, the most bestial rulers who have ever soiled our earth with crimes so monstrous as to appear almost unbelievable.

"I refer to your article 'Review of the Month,' in the June issue of the magazine. As soon as I had read it myself, I at once visited my friends in the workers' district, here in Cambridge, and shared it with them, as they cannot very well afford to subscribe.

"All of them—more than 70 persons—urged me to write to you and express their feelings as well as my own, but I truly find it difficult to express my admiration for the article in question. Such an article is worthy of being quoted by future historians as a description of our times, and *Fourth International* is the only magazine in this country worthy of the time and attention of a thinking person these days. I can hardly say more than this.

"I would like to enquire if it would not be possible to publish the 'Review' in the form of a pamphlet for widespread distribution. . . . I, myself, would like the pleasure of distributing several hundred copies right here in Cambridge. Please consider this suggestion seriously. Do not allow this article to be filed away and forgotten—it is too valuable, too precious. It is marked by an element of greatness that reminds one of Marx."

* * *

E. Brent of Detroit has found a solution to the "gift problem." She writes: "Last year I won a bound volume of the FI and when my husband returned from a long trip at sea I gave it to him as an anniversary gift. The 1945 bound volume arrived this year just in time—the day before our anniversary."

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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 7

AUGUST 1946

NUMBER 8

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

*"Hemisphere Defense" and the Preparations of American Imperialism
For World Domination—The Degeneration of Stalinism in
Western Europe Along Chauvinist Lines*

"Hemisphere Defense" And U. S. Preparations For World War III

PREPARATIONS FOR A NEW WORLD WAR In the widely ramified policies and activities of the United States Government it is impossible to discover a scrap of real evidence that would support the myth that World War II—any more than World War I—was a war to end war. Just the contrary is true. In every branch of government, in every sphere of its activity, a growing body of evidence points to the inescapable conclusion that American imperialism, far from organizing peace, is preparing for a new and more horrible war.

Emphasizing this fact was the action of the House and Senate on June 21 in passing Army and Navy appropriation bills exceeding \$11,000,000,000 for the fiscal year which started on July 1. The appropriation for the Army was \$7,091,034,700—the largest in all the peacetime history of the country. In neither house was a single voice raised against this colossal waste of wealth in a period when the standard of living of the masses is being steadily undermined and driven downward. The managers of the legislature did not even deem it necessary to hold a roll-call vote. A perfunctory voice vote sufficed.

During the recently-concluded war, the United States established military bases throughout the world in order to secure its strategic ascendancy. Some of these are permanent installations, others of a temporary character. The appropriations carry funds for permanent construction at bases now held in Alaska, the Mariannas, the Philippines, Hawaii and Okinawa.

More than this, the American imperialists are now at work on plans to convert the entire Western Hemisphere—two whole continents—into a single armed camp under their own exclusive control. This scheme, which has been given the euphemistic title of "Hemisphere Defense," was announced by President Truman on May 6. A bill to implement it (the Inter-American Military Cooperation Bill) is before Congress. The measure is described in a Foreign Policy Association bulletin (May 17, 1946) as one which "seeks to create in the New World a bloc of states which would act as a military unit and whose power would be so great as to eliminate the possibility of successful challenge from any quarter." Not only the countries of South and Central America are to be drawn into this grandiose military scheme, but also Canada.

The plan envisages standardization of military equipment,

military doctrine and training to the specifications and models employed by the armed services of the United States. Standardization of the equipment is to be achieved by scrapping that presently used by other members of the Hemisphere Bloc and replacing it with equipment of the types furnished to the United States armed services by arsenals and factories in this country. The United States, moreover, will undertake the maintenance and repair of the equipment it supplies. Standardization of military doctrine and training will be effected by detailing U. S. military training staffs to the countries composing the bloc and by training officers for those countries in U. S. military, naval and air academies.

As the Foreign Policy Association bulletin discloses, the U. S. Army, spearhead and driving force of American imperialism, has for some time "informally been going about the task of standardizing the training and equipment of the armed forces of the American Republics" without awaiting the passage of legislation by Congress. Specific Congressional authority is needed, however, to sell or transfer military equipment other than a few "surplus" items.

THE NEW WORLD POWER

If the plan is ever realized in its entirety, it is not difficult to see what a powerfully enhanced commanding position American imperialism will occupy in relation to its rivals, both actual and potential. It will have a gigantic base of military operations sprawled over two large continental areas. Each of the separate countries will be closely knit into a single military system dominated by the United States. Because of its hegemony in the bloc, and the technical dependence of all the lesser countries, the United States will become a "Hemispheric Power" to a degree never before anticipated or equalled.

To whip the Latin American countries into line, American imperialism is employing the powerful economic and financial weapons at its disposal. Wherever opposition is encountered, pressure is applied. The governments of those countries, representing the semi-colonial bourgeoisie, have no stomach for a real struggle against Yankee imperialism. They are too afraid of the revolutionary consequences of a mass upheaval which such a struggle would entail. And so they tend always to submit. Besides, their own rule being somewhat shaky, they are glad to have adequate and efficient armed forces at their disposal for quelling internal unrest. The policy-makers in Washington

are also very much alive to this aspect of the matter. Discussing the "Hemisphere Defense" plan in a dispatch from Washington last October 17, Thomas F. Reynolds, correspondent of the *Chicago Sun*, wrote: "Certain War Dept. circles have not hesitated to voice fears of 'Communism' in South America and steadfastly have argued in favor of arming existing regimes, even though some of them might have serious difficulty in establishing their democratic character."

PLAN SPRINGBOARD FOR WORLD MASTERY

The "Hemisphere Defense" plan, to the extent it is realized, will do more than help Wall Street tighten its imperialist stranglehold on Latin America, exercised mainly in the economic and financial domains. Control of Latin America, as a prerequisite to the exploitation of its peoples and its wealth, is of course vital to American imperialism. But this control is essential, too, as an indispensable part of the greater world aims of the Wall Street brigands, aims which are leading inexorably to a third world war.

This, the most important aspect of "Hemisphere Defense," was succinctly outlined by an official spokesman of Yankee imperialism, in the person of George S. Messersmith, who recently was transferred from Mexico to become U. S. ambassador to Argentina. In a farewell speech to the American colony in Mexico City on May 11, Messersmith not only told his audience that war was coming. He even indicated who the enemy would be. The policy of the Soviet Union, he declared, was similar to that of Germany during 1933-38, the implication being that war with the Soviet Union was inevitable. Therefore, he added, there must be "complete collaboration in the Western Hemisphere—political, military, strategic and economic. Today I know that we have nothing better than an armed truce."

PRAVDA ANALYZES

"HEMISPHERE DEFENSE"

Stalin understands very well what is going on. His organ *Pravda*, on June 29, discussing the "Hemisphere Defense" plan, declared that the United States is "transforming the Monroe Doctrine into a general offensive on the Latin-American countries. This offensive pursues the aim of completely, or almost completely, eliminating competitors, and provides an indivisible monopolistic domination by the United States in all countries of Latin America without exception and based on political, economic and military levers. It is thus proposed to turn Latin America into a military-strategic bridgehead of the United States. Giant propaganda machines have been put in motion. They are called upon to cover up naked imperialistic business with discussions of the 'noble aims' of United States policy on Pan-American solidarity." (*New York Times*, June 30, 1946).

What *Pravda* says is completely true. But mere exposure and denunciation of the new war plans of American imperialism will not prevent a third world war in which the Soviet Union will be the target of attack by the dominant imperialist powers. Only the world working class, taking to the road of the socialist revolution, can foil the plans of the war-makers and at the same time save the Soviet Union from destruction. Stalin long ago abandoned the program of the socialist revolution, which represents a mortal threat to his reactionary regime, and so cannot base the defense of the Soviet Union on the international working class. Nor is it possible any longer for Stalin to engage in long-term maneuver-

ing between the imperialist foes of the Soviet Union, for the war destroyed the old balance of power beyond any possibility of its restoration. Hence Stalin must limit himself to efforts to build a safety corridor around the Soviet Union and a counter-bloc to that being organized by American imperialism. In this latter field, all Stalin can get is a miserable handful of small and enfeebled capitalist states in Europe. This bankrupt policy naturally furnishes no real defense for the Soviet Union. It only encourages the American imperialists to speed up their preparations for wiping out the USSR and thus accelerates the drive toward a third world war.

Stalinism in Western Europe

THE PATH OF STALINIST DEGENERATION

The Stalinist parties in Europe are moving ever further down the road of nationalism and social imperialism. An instructive episode, illustrating the depths of this political depravity, was the action of the Italian Communist Party, as reported in the *New York Times* of July 4, in repudiating its own section and membership in the territory of Venezia Giulia, which includes the Adriatic port of Trieste. The episode developed in connection with the decision of the "Big Four" in Paris to detach Trieste from Italy and convert it into a "free city" of the Danzig type. This cynical "Power Politics" decision has aroused tremendous anger among the Italian masses who are infuriated at the proposed dismemberment of Italy.

The Italian Stalinist leaders did not denounce the dirty deal consummated in Paris, for the simple and obvious reason that one of the parties which engineered it was the Stalinist clique in the Kremlin. Togliatti and his cronies could hardly be expected to oppose any action by Moscow, no matter how much it violates the feelings and interests of the masses they claim to represent.

Besides, there is only one real answer to the national quarrels and the bickerings between national states over disputed ports, cities and territories; there is only one way to eliminate the national animosities and dispel the hatreds—the razing of all the customs and tariff barriers, the unification of the European states and their economic collaboration. In other words, the creation of the Balkan and Danubian Federations inside of and as part of the Socialist United States of Europe. That is the only program by which Europe's ruination can be halted and the continent lifted up again. But this program can be realized only by the working class. And since the Stalinists have long since abjured the proletarian struggle for power, they could do nothing else but follow in the footsteps of all the bourgeois and petty bourgeois demagogues and charlatans and play on and exacerbate the chauvinist feelings and national prejudices of the agonized masses.

To quiet their own following and cover up for the Kremlin, the Stalinist leaders in Italy hastened to declare publicly that the loss of Trieste and other misfortunes were due to the anti-Soviet policy of the Italian government! They were not responsible, they said, for Italian foreign policy and disapproved of it intensely (conveniently overlooking the fact that they held cabinet seats in the government which made this policy). This whole line was of course an evasion of the issue. Trieste is being severed from Italy, not by decision of the weakling Italian government, but by edict of the "Big Four"—including Stalin. (The Kremlin, as a matter of fact, had demanded cession of Trieste to Yugoslavia, one of its Balkan satellites, but agreed to its "internationalization" as a compromise.)

STALINISTS ABANDON INTERNATIONALISM

While great crowds were demonstrating in Rome against the severance of Trieste, the Stalinists in Venezia Giulia were also organizing protest demonstrations against the "Big Four" decision, but, unlike the Romans, were demanding that Trieste be turned over to Yugoslavia! This was most embarrassing to Togliatti and company. That is why they sought to extricate themselves from their difficulties by proceeding to publish a statement disavowing their comrades in Venezia Giulia, who, they lamely explained, were Slavs (though Italian citizens) and preferred to live under the Yugoslavian flag.

This shameful incident, but a minor climactic point of the whole nationalistic course of the Stalinist movement, again throws into bold relief the blatant abandonment by the Stalinists of working class internationalism and the degeneration of the Stalinist parties along lines of petty bourgeois chauvinism. For the last six months political observers have watched how the Italian Stalinists joined the ugly chorus of Italian bourgeois nationalism in howling for Trieste. The Yugoslav Stalinists, with equal vigor and just as determined "national pride" have demanded that Trieste be ceded to them. The same cynical abandonment of the socialist program of working class solidarity, the same descent into the labyrinth of bourgeois politics can be seen in the case of Germany. While the German Stalinists are correctly demanding the unification of Germany, the Kremlin opposes such a unification, tooth and nail, and the Stalinist brothers across the border in France are uniting with Bidault and the French capitalists in demanding the dismemberment of Germany, and the "internationalization" of the Rhineland and Ruhr.

In France, furthermore, the Stalinists participate in a bourgeois coalition government which maintains the stranglehold of French imperialism in the colonies. They were the authors of the draft constitution, defeated in the May 1946 referendum, which would have sanctified colonial slavery anew. But the Stalinist leaders in the French colonies, in Morocco and Algeria and Indo-China, try to appear before the masses as champions of national freedom from French imperialism.

NEW TECHNIQUE IN BETRAYAL

The crimes and betrayals of the Stalinists, are of course, nothing new. But in the past, their *line* was always of a more or less standardized character. The Stalinists, at times, even went to ridiculous lengths to achieve an absolute uniformity. The present advocacy of *conflicting* national programs on the part of the Italian and Yugoslav Stalinists, and the German and French Stalinists, represents, we must acknowledge, a new departure, not to speak of a new low in Stalinist cynicism. It must not be imagined that this new *technique* indicates that the Stalinist parties possess a new-found independence. Not at all. The present discordant lines of the different Stalinist parties are not only approved by the Kremlin, but in many cases, undoubtedly dictated by it.

The discordant voices in the ranks of world Stalinism reflect the absence of a political program based upon the interests of the international working class and the colonial masses. Stalin destroyed the Communist International and its program. The Communist parties were converted into agencies of the Kremlin and required to formulate their policies in accordance with the conjunctural needs of that regime in particular countries at particular times. Socialist internationalism, world working class solidarity, went out the window. For it was substituted an espe-

cially noxious kind of nationalist opportunism, heavily laden with the poison of chauvinism, which has become the hall-mark of Stalinism everywhere.

Having ceased to be the political instruments of the international class struggle for socialism, the Stalinist parties inevitably became tools of capitalist reaction. Each is a supporter of the capitalist *status quo*, an opponent of the socialist revolution; while at the same time each remains firmly attached to the purse-strings of the Kremlin and to Stalin's GPU apparatus. They do not want to overthrow the bourgeois governments. Instead, they participate in them and use their influence with the masses to pressure those governments in directions desired by the Kremlin. To retain their influence with the masses, they sponsor mild reform programs, gently criticize the bourgeois ministers with whom they rub shoulders at banquets and cabinet meetings, and on occasion talk very radical.

STRONGEST PROP OF CAPITALISM

In recent elections the French Communist Party polled over 5,000,000 votes; the Italian Communist Party over 4,000,000. These figures represent a tremendous mass following. Yet the Stalinists, as they themselves declare, have no intention of making a bid for power. With a revolutionary program and a determination to overthrow capitalism, the Stalinists in crisis-torn France and Italy could quickly win to their banner the overwhelming mass of the population and seize power. But this is the last thing they intend to do.

In bygone days, the Stalinist leaders tried to justify their class-collaborationist People's Front policies as necessary in order to attract the petty-bourgeois masses and thus win a majority of the population for the revolution. Today, with already tremendous mass followings, and the most feeble bourgeois governments to contend with, they pursue the same class-collaborationist policies, only in a more crass and vulgar form. Originally the instruments of social revolution, they long since became one of the strongest props of capitalism.

Trotsky once explained how a workers' party which refuses to fight for power, necessarily, because of the very mechanism of capitalist society, becomes the tool and plaything of the capitalist powers-that-be. We see this most clearly in the degeneration of the Stalinist parties of Western Europe.

Resolutions of Eleventh Convention of the American Trotskyist Movement

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- II. The European Revolution and Tasks of the Revolutionary Party

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The First Phase of the European Revolution

By ERNEST GERMAIN

With remarkable conformity, the Trotskyist organizations throughout the world, despite their enforced wartime isolation, have elaborated a common political line predicated on a world revolutionary upsurge as the consequence and end product of World War II. They based this on a number of deductions derived from the internal laws of development of decaying capitalism in economic, political, social and politico-psychological fields. These conceptions simultaneously constituted the fundamental planks of the program of the Fourth International and the very reason for its existence. To juxtapose them with events as the latter have actually unfolded becomes a major task for the whole movement.

Why Was the War Bound to Terminate in a Revolutionary Upsurge?

The line of reasoning followed by us may be summarized in essence as follows: In the long run the imperialist war aggravates all the contradictions of the capitalist regime. An ever increasing burden of privations becomes imposed upon the masses. At the same time the potential of revolutionary energy of the proletariat becomes renewed. Finally, in a number of countries, the war leads to the weakening or even complete collapse of the respective state apparatus, enabling the working class to press the class struggle to its most advanced stage, namely: that of dual power. With a complete breakdown of the imperialist equilibrium, the combination of all these factors provides favorable conditions for extending the revolutionary struggles on a European and even world scale.

Translated into concrete terms, in relation to the concrete European conditions, this means: The burden of war would become more and more unbearable to the masses on the old Continent. Their will to struggle, which dropped to its lowest level in 1939-40, would begin to rise and manifest itself at an ever swifter tempo.

The old state apparatus in various countries fell apart ignominiously in the course of the German conquest. What remained of them proved physically incapable of restraining the movement of the masses. Between the European proletariat and the revolutionary upsurge there arose the steel dam of the Nazi military and police machine. The weakening and crumbling of this machine would determine the outbreak of a series of insurrectionary revolutionary movements. The unleashing of the German revolution would unify these movements, invest them with a European amplitude, coordinate them generally, and give the organs of dual power, arising in the process, the opportunity to become strong enough to resist the pressure of English and American imperialism over a quite long period of time. In its turn this period would be especially favorable for a rapid growth of the sections of the Fourth International.

Were These Perspectives Confirmed?

A brief survey of events that unfolded in Europe since the latter part of 1943, already permits us by itself to determine to what extent these perspectives have been confirmed and wherein they have proved inaccurate. No one will deny that European economy has been completely exhausted as a consequence of the terrible war waste and havoc. One year following the termination of the war, the output of Europe's heavy industry is below one-half of its pre-war production. Nor will any one deny that the intolerable living conditions imposed by the war upon the masses have led to a renewal of their fighting potential. A study of the graphs of strike-struggles (which often begin at zero, as is the case in most countries that were already fascist by 1939) shows a sudden rise in all countries of Europe as early as 1943. By comparison with the pre-war period, this curve rises sharply and in 1945 attains a level surpassing everywhere, except in France, the last upsurge of 1936. (Moreover, this strike curve rises upwards on the world scale, as does the entire revolutionary upsurge. But we do not intend to dwell here on this aspect of the problem.)

Numerous mass actions took place under full-scale Nazi occupation, while the Gestapo apparatus was still powerful. These actions include four general strikes in Greece and Italy, the movement against the (labor) draft in France, the conquest of Yugoslavia by the victorious partisans, a series of general strikes and the establishment of factory councils at Liege, Belgium. All of these are in marked contrast with the general passivity of the proletariat in 1939-40, and demonstrate at the same time that actually involved here is a *revolutionary* upsurge and not merely a series of economic movements similar to those that convulsed the victor countries after World War I. As we shall presently show, in many countries these events likewise terminated in the creation of organs of dual power, even if only in embryonic forms.

Consequently, the difference between the perspectives of the Fourth International and the revolutionary actions of the masses must be sought for in their *lack of scope, lack of simultaneity* and *lack of coordination*. We have witnessed a revolutionary wave on a European scale but at a much slower tempo and much more irregular than we expected. And, most important of all, the absence of the German revolution appears to render questionable one of our central predictions.

Dual Power During First Stage

Dual power reached its ripest expression in Italy. Workers' councils were created and even a workers' and soldiers' council was set up at Milan as early as the initial phase of the Italian revolution, July 1943. Next, "inner committees" were constituted in the factories, and innumerable "National Liberation Committees" sprang up in cities and villages from one end of

the peninsula to the other. During the winter of 1943-44, the arming of the Italian partisans assumed mass proportions. Finally, toward the end of April 1945, a genuine insurrection occurred which ended in the seizure of all factories in Northern Italy by workers' committees, the establishment of complete control of social life by the partisans, the organization of revolutionary tribunals of justice and the exercise of all political functions by "National Liberation Committees" (cf. London *Economist*, May-June, 1945). The bourgeois *Times* correspondent, who grasped the character of these events better than did certain disillusioned radicals, called this a "social revolution."

In Czechoslovakia much the same things took place during the revolution of May 1945. Likewise present here were the four principal elements of dual power, namely: workers' councils in control of factories, workers' militia, committees of liberation functioning as sovereign political organs, and people's tribunals. A bourgeois journalist (London *Economist*), who describes the situation quite graphically, adds to this picture the cogent observation that the "central government" wielded actually no power at all and that the workers had themselves expropriated all the factories.

In France, the uprising in Paris brought about a fairly extensive arming of the masses, along with occupations of a number of factories and the establishment of committees in most of them. The same phenomena occurred in several southern French cities (Lyons, Limoges, Toulouse, Perigueux), marked by this special feature, that in a number of places some of the organs among these elements of dual power, continued, despite their embryonic character, to function for many months.

In Greece the partisan movement, directed politically by the EAM, was in control of large areas even before the "liberation." "Dual power" existed here in the literal sense of the term. Alongside the "official" Greek Government at Cairo with its military formations and the vestiges of its executive and judiciary powers, in Greece proper there functioned committees, militias and people's tribunals elected by the masses. During the open civil war in December 1944 even these parallel (bourgeois) bodies were suppressed in many quarters of Athens and other zones under EAM control, and all the power in certain spheres (above all in the judiciary sphere) passed into the hands of popular elected bodies.

In Yugoslavia the partisan movement assumed from the outset characteristics similar to the movement of the Greek partisans; and there, too, the transition was made to the building of popular organs of power in all spheres. Subsequently, however, it was completely channelized by the CP and its auxiliary organizations. We lack sufficient information to determine to what extent the spontaneous initiative of the masses has continued to play a role since that time.

In Poland the approach of the Red Army unleashed a revolutionary movement among the workers as well as the peasants. The former occupied the factories, the latter seized the land. Moreover, the workers established complete control over production.

Finally, in Belgium, dual power, properly speaking, existed only in the military sphere, where it led to the events of November 1944. But the factory committees at Liege represented potential organs of power on the day after the "liberation," and the initiative evinced by the masses in arresting "collaborationists" ("inciviques") in May-June 1945 was likewise a manifestation of independent mass intervention into spheres, which under "normal" conditions, are reserved exclusively for initiative and action by organs of the bourgeois state.

Was Dual Power Actually Involved?

The *proletarian* character of the first revolutionary wave in Europe has been contested by various sides. It has been above all denied that the organs wherein it found its expression were genuine organs of dual power. Both the rightist as well as the leftist wings of the International have identified these new political formations as new forms of old organisms, i.e., organisms of the bourgeois state! Some have even gone so far as to identify the military organizations created spontaneously in the course of the struggle of the masses with . . . the imperialist armies! Finally, others for whom an analysis of events is simply a pretext for denouncing the "diabolical hand" of Stalin and of "Russian imperialism," have been able to discern in these manifestations of the revolutionary struggle of the masses only "machinations of Quisling organizations in the service of Russian imperialism," as opposed to "Quisling organizations in the service of Anglo-American imperialism."

The arguments which aim to contest the *revolutionary* and *proletarian* character of the organs of power created in struggle during the Hitlerite occupation, may be summed up as follows:

1) The "committees" in their various forms were not elected bodies but were set up on a proportional basis according to the strength of the different political parties. 2) These "committees" included many petty-bourgeois elements and even bourgeois politicians. 3) These "committees" and these "militias" were subsidized by imperialism and/or by the Soviet bureaucracy.

These three arguments are familiar to us. They comprise the arguments employed by the ultra-lefts during the Spanish revolution in order to deny the civil-war character of events and to view them solely as a "preparatory stage of the imperialist war." But these same arguments, at least the first two, are also to be found among those used by the POUM (a centrist Spanish party), in its attempts to polemize against Trotsky's criticisms.

"There is no fundamental difference," the POUM leaders said, "between the Central Committee of the Militias and the Catalan Generalidad, because the Central Committee of the Militias is not 'elected,' either; and it likewise contains petty-bourgeois elements."

Further,

Trotsky attempts to compare the relations between the Soviets and the Provisional Government in Russia during the Revolution with the relations between the Central Committee of the Militias and the Generalidad in Catalonia in 1936. This is another instance of Trotsky's insistence on applying Russian schemes everywhere.

As a matter of fact, all these theories, those of the centrists and sectarians alike, prove that these gentlemen are congenitally incapable of seeing the rain even when the rain-drops are dropping on their noses.

The true character of the organs of power issuing from the first revolutionary wave is clearly apparent from their *origin* and from their position *vis-a-vis* the organs of the bourgeois state. Each of them arose as the result of *independent initiative* by the working class and the petty-bourgeois masses, or, at all events, of their vanguard. *Among the ranks*, the spontaneous character was everywhere clearly revealed in elections of leaders, not only in factory committees but also in the basic military formations, and "liberation committees" in villages, neighborhoods, etc.

The fact that the leading bodies were frequently *appointed* and set up in accordance with the proportional strength of the various political parties simply reflects the *conciliationist character* of the *leadership* of the movement: of the Stalinist and

reformist leadership whose desire was to restrict, if not liquidate altogether, dual power as such. This is hardly a novelty. Throughout the entire past history of revolutionary struggles, these same tendencies have pursued the self-same policy and arrived at the self-same results. Re-read the chapter in Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* dealing with the first Executive Committee of the Soviets in Petrograd and you will find in it an account of the intrusion of many adventurist and petty-bourgeois elements; you will learn, too, that it *was not elected, properly speaking*, by lower Soviets, either. A study of the composition of the first Council of Workers and Soldiers in Berlin shows that genuine fascists succeeded in worming their way into it (for example, the case of Colin Ross). A study of the known mechanisms of the transfer of power in the Russian Revolution, in the German and Spanish revolutions, discloses exactly the same forms of reaction as became manifest during the initial phase of the Italian, Greek and Czechoslovak revolutions. Compare the "profound" idea of the German centrist Hilferding "to integrate the Soviets into the Weimar Constitution" with the identical tactic of the Stalinists in France, Belgium, Italy and Greece to "integrate the formations of partisans into the official Army," and you will once again encounter the same political physiognomy in conditions that are fundamentally identical.

Finally, the true dual power character of the popular organs issuing from the first revolutionary wave, emerges clearly from the attitude of Anglo-American imperialism, the Soviet bureaucracy and the "national" bourgeoisie toward them. No sooner had the German occupation troops disappeared from the scene, no sooner did the traditional bourgeois organs of power make their appearance, leaning heavily upon the English and American imperialist armies, than the bourgeoisie unleashed a persistent and implacable struggle to liquidate the organs of power created by the masses. If involved were really "rival bourgeois" organs, why did it prove impossible to "integrate" them into the mechanism of "bourgeois order"? Can other instances be cited where the rivalry between different "bourgeois clans" provoked a civil war such as took place in Greece? The type of reasoning that begins by denying the duality of power and hence the social revolutionary character of the events we have witnessed in Europe from July 1943 to July 1945, ends up in practice by abandoning class criteria in analyzing the historical process. The fury with which the bourgeoisie attacked and annihilated the organs of power arising from the "resistance movement," employing in accordance with the existing relationship of forces, the most diverse methods—from "provisional" recognition up to open white terror—cannot be explained, in the last analysis, except by the *class character* of these organs, embryos of the proletarian organs of power, embryonic Soviets and workers' militias!

The Peculiarities of the First Revolutionary Wave

Nevertheless, a comparison of 1943-45 events with those of 1917-19 discloses instantly important differences between the first revolutionary wave following World War I and the first revolutionary wave following World War II.

In the first place, during 1917-19 the revolutionary movement properly speaking was limited to Eastern and Central Europe. In Western Europe, what took place was the sharpening of the economic struggles of the proletariat. But this time, bourgeois power tottered throughout Europe.

In 1917-19 the revolutionary upsurge *started* with the most important explosions in the largest revolutionary centers: there was the victory of the Russian Revolution, there were the successive ups and downs of the German revolution in 1918-23. This time Russia completely defaulted as an arena of revolutionary struggles, while the German proletariat has been able to play only a secondary role.

Following World War I, the graph of revolutionary struggle was characterized at the outset by a brief and precipitate rise, which attained its peak by the spring of 1919, and was followed by a sharp and continuous decline, interrupted only by a new and very brief upswing in 1923.

This time the graph of revolutionary struggle begins with a slow and hesitant rise, interrupted by many oscillations or partial retreats, but *its general tendency is upwards*. The importance of this fact is obvious. While the post-World-War-I movement suffered at the very beginning from the burden of initial defeats, above all in Germany, the present movement, on the contrary, suffers from the fact that at no time as yet have the full forces of the proletariat been thrown into battle. The defeats, therefore, are transient and relative in character, do not jeopardize the subsequent development of events, and can be neutralized by the passage of the struggle to a more advanced stage.

This important difference does not derive solely from the limited potential of the first wave (the absence of the Russian and the German proletariat from the struggle). It derives equally and especially from the whole past of the labor movement. The proletariat that rushed headlong into revolutionary struggle in 1918 had no previous experience with decisive defeats. Temporarily demoralized by the reformist betrayal of 1914, the proletariat found the necessary initial conditions for unleashing mass struggles in the development of the objective situation (the weakening of the bourgeois state apparatus, the worsening of living conditions, etc.). It engaged in these struggles with a well-defined *socialist consciousness* and with a lack of revolutionary experience (which weighed heavily upon the unfolding revolutionary upsurge of 1918-23).

Its struggles in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, the Baltic countries and Italy assumed the form of struggles for *socialism*; the attraction of the Russian Revolution played a preeminent role in these struggles. The reformist leaders themselves had to take the socialist enthusiasm of the masses into account. The internal "discussion" in the labor movement, although it terminated in overt anti-communist terror, took on the following form: How shall we build socialism? Is it desirable to begin immediately? A superficial reading of the newspapers of that day suffices to show that this method of thinking imbued the masses themselves.

On the other hand, the lack of experience in revolutionary struggles led to a continual groping for methods of action on the part of the masses and on the part of the Communist leaders who had assimilated the "lessons of October" very inadequately. It was only on rare occasions and toward the end of painful breaking-points, that the *mass* movement was able to assume the most mature forms of dual power.

After the second imperialist world war, the European proletariat had behind it a long succession of crushing defeats. The younger generations no longer received a socialist education. The older generations were poisoned with a paralyzing skepticism regarding revolutionary possibilities. The mass organizations, Stalinist and reformist, who rode the crest of the first revolutionary wave, did everything in their power to eradicate the vestiges of socialist consciousness, to extinguish the sparks of resolute revolutionary will. The word "socialism" found its

way only rarely into the press, discussions and even speeches. The masses became only rarely and in a completely disconnected way *conscious* of the objectively anti-capitalist and revolutionary character of their struggle.

The Proletariat Fills Up "The Void"

But while the masses found themselves on a lower level of *consciousness* as compared with 1918, they had, on the other hand, attained to a higher level of *experience*. "The thread, cut by the war and by fascism, is taken up by the masses at the point where they had dropped it." The most advanced forms of past struggles no longer constitute the end, but become the starting point for mass actions in the present period. This became most obviously apparent in Italy where the struggle started with the formation of Soviets and Soldiers' Councils, and with arming—forms which the struggle was unable to assume or which it assumed only sporadically in the course of four years' revolutionary battles after the first world war. This is likewise demonstrated by the fact that under the pressure of objective conditions there disappeared as if by enchantment the profound inability to comprehend the problem of arming, which constituted in the past one of the principle deterrents to the revolutionary struggle in Western Europe.

The absence of the subjective factor, the extreme weakness of the revolutionary party, of course, enabled the Stalinist and reformist leaders to deepen this contradiction between the ripe experience of the workers and their debilitated socialist consciousness. To the aspirations of the masses, who were transgressing the framework of bourgeois society, they opposed "limited" objectives which they themselves ascribed to the struggle ("the liberation of the territory," "the rebirth of the country," the "democratization" of the regime). In this way the Stalinist and reformist leaders tried to bring the masses back to more "suitable" forms of struggle . . . or to persuade them that it was not necessary to struggle at all!

Nevertheless, and this is the *principal* factor, this malignant influence of the counter-revolutionary leadership of the proletariat could operate basically, could prove decisive and widespread only to the extent that the *events* themselves came to their aid. After analyzing the *forms* of the struggle of the masses, their origin and social character, we return here to our starting point, namely: *their lack of scope and coordination*. It is precisely this factor that permitted, in the last analysis, the ensemble of counter-revolutionary interventions (by Anglo-American imperialism, the "national" bourgeoisie, the Soviet bureaucracy, the treacherous "workers" leadership) to attain a high degree of effectiveness. To understand how this operated, we must seek the *starting point* of the mass uprisings.

This starting point is easy to determine. In practice it coincides almost everywhere with the *interval* between the departure (or breakdown) of the German military machine and the arrival and firm intrenchment of the Anglo-American military machine. This interval leaves a "void" in the administration of "men and things"—a void which the masses show a tendency to fill up automatically by *constituting their own organs*.

The spread of several days between the German collapse in Czechoslovakia and Italy and the establishment of a central bourgeois power, permitted the constitution of a more solid system of dual power. In Paris a spread of 24 hours permitted the creation of a nucleus of dual power. And it is by no means accidental that the autonomous organs of the masses were main-

tained longest in those regions that the Allied army "by-passed" during operations in August-September 1944. That is how Churchill understood the problem when he declared on December 8, 1944:

I drew his (President Roosevelt's) attention to the fact that if there were a long interval between the departure of the German authorities from the city (Athens) and the time that an organized government could be established it was very likely that the EAM and the *extremist* communists would try to take possession of the city . . .

Involved here is not an accidental peculiarity of events, but one of the most fundamental tendencies inherent in decaying capitalist society. With implacable logic, the proletariat, *independently of its state of consciousness*, is compelled by objective conditions to try anew to take the leadership of society into its own hands. The entire history of the last 30 years is only the outcome of these desperate attempts of the working class to rise to the level of its historic mission, attempts rendered desperate because they were doomed to failure in the absence of an adequate revolutionary leadership. And what could be more natural than that this fundamental tendency should first manifest itself under especially favorable conditions, where a well-established bourgeois power is absent?

On the other hand, it was unavoidable for each of these interludes to occur at *different* times in different countries. It was easy to foresee that in the complete absence of a well-established international proletarian leadership, and in the absence of even serious national leaderships, the uprisings would be isolated and fragmentary in character, which would, in turn, facilitate the tasks of the counter-revolution in its various guises. To raise the movement to a general level, and on a European scale, it was necessary to have a generalizing element. We understood long before the events that this generalizing factor could be provided only by the German revolution. It is therefore the absence of the German revolution that constitutes the *basic* cause for the sporadic way in which dual power made its appearance in Europe and for its being suppressed far more rapidly than we had expected.

The Legend of the Complete Passivity of the German Proletariat

The absence of the German revolution was the principal reason why the situation developed differently from our perspectives. It therefore merits a careful analysis in the light of *facts* and not of schemas set up beforehand by this or that tendency in the International.

It is first of all necessary to pose the problem *exactly*. It is astonishing, to say the least, that all those who have taken a position on this question admittedly take as their starting point an opinion *which does not stand up when confronted by facts*. It is the opinion that the German proletariat "passively" stood by while the Nazi apparatus collapsed. This is not exactly true. At present it is impossible for us to draw up the final balance sheet of the partial actions of the proletariat. But what we do know suffices to destroy once and for all the legend of the total "prostration" of the German proletariat, supposedly "drained" of its "class-consciousness" by the 12 years of fascist dictatorship. We know that in the Russian zone of Germany "*and elsewhere*," as the London *Economist* reports (March 23, 1946), "*the collapse of Nazism was followed by demonstrations of a socially revolutionary spirit. Workers seized factories and settled accounts with Nazi or Nazified management. The same sort of thing happened in the Ruhr.*"

We know that with the approach of the Red Army, the agricultural workers of Mecklenburg seized the land they had wanted for centuries. We know that at the same time the workers of Saxony hoisted red flags over their factories and elected genuine Soviets. (One of our Belgian Trotskyists took part in one of the factory committees created when the Russian troops entered Dresden. Included on this committee were several Left Communists opposed to Stalinism.) We know that local civil wars broke out almost everywhere, between the SS on one side and the Volksturm or the Wehrmacht on the other. We know that as early as 1943, an attempted uprising was crushed at Hamburg. And finally, and most important of all, we know that the moment the Nazi apparatus collapsed, the imperialist armies and the army of the Soviet bureaucracy installed a far more stable and no less harsh police apparatus in all the sections of the country. Under these conditions, it would be truly shameful to label the courageous attitude of the German proletariat as "universal passivity."

On the other hand, it is obvious that there did not take place more or less *general* actions. To explain this fact we are offered two categories of argumentation. The absence of the German revolution may be deduced from *subjective* factors, i.e., from the complete absence of workers' organizations, the consequences of 12 years of fascist dictatorship, the "decomposition of the class-consciousness" of the proletariat. On the other hand, one can find at the bottom of the absence of this revolution essentially *objective* factors. We shall first take up the second category of argumentation, in order subsequently to prove that the first category rests on erroneous arguments.

The Objective Causes For the Absence of the German Revolution

Among the many *objective premises* for the unleashing of a revolutionary upsurge at the end of the imperialist war are: the aggravation of social contradictions (concentration of the proletariat, decline in its share of the distribution of national income, etc.), increasing misery and devastation as a direct consequence of the war itself, decomposition of "morale" in the rear and at the front, decomposition of the military, police and state apparatus, etc. These premises do not arise suddenly, but are the product of a whole process, influenced by many factors. The reciprocal action of these factors results in an ever *increasing* discontent, decomposing morale *more and more*, and *increasingly* rousing the masses against the war and against the regime. The masses grope for the adversary; their hatred finds expression in innumerable incidents; they test out the power of resistance of the apparatus, and through a series of molecular experiences pass to the concentration of all their energy upon the immediate task—the overthrow of the regime and the termination of the war.

Those who have followed, month after month, the state of mind of the German army and the German proletariat are able to state that such processes unfolded in exactly this way in Germany, starting with the defeat at Stalingrad and up to the Italian revolution and the Allied landing in Normandy. The rapid spread of revolutionary ideas, the eager acceptance of these ideas by soldiers and workers, the appearance of an illegal German workers' press, the rapid multiplying of little protest movements, and strikes in the factories (*greves perlée*), mainly over the factory eating places—these characterize precisely the state of mind which by and large corresponds to that which reigned in Russia in 1916 and Italy in 1942.

To undergo transformation into a more extensive movement, these multiple isolated movements of discontent require the presence of a supplementary factor: the weakening of the repressive apparatus. *But this weakening did not occur at the moment when the conditions were most favorable for a general revolutionary movement.* The great majority of the German army, on the European coasts and in the interior of the continent, remained undefeated. The bombings failed to disorganize appreciably administrative life. The Nazi Party retained the levers of control firmly in its hands. The Gestapo remained at the apex of its power, even though overwhelmed by the extension of its "work."

But from this moment on, that is to say, from the moment when the state of mind of the masses become "ripest" for revolutionary action, a moment which we may fix towards the latter part of 1943, the process became abruptly transformed into its opposite. All the factors which had up to this breaking-point *favoured* the ripening of the objective premises of the revolution henceforth began to produce their *decomposition* instead. Up to a certain point the bombings tended to awaken the masses from their apathy, to tear them out of the narrow circle of personal preoccupations, to provide a living demonstration of the *political* character which is at the bottom of their troubles, and drive home the need of applying a political solution to them. But from the breaking-point on, the bombings tended to demoralize the masses, tear them away from social life, plunge them into the most abject physical and psychological degradation, dissolve them into hysterical multitudes of isolated individuals, struggling solely to survive. The same thing applies to the tension produced by the military developments and defeats. Having given rise up to a certain point to discontent and to a will to react, the same factors produced apathy and inert stupefaction after the turning point. We could provide similar sketches for the other factors which at the beginning serve to accelerate the process of disintegration of National Unity, only to end in disintegrating not only the imperialist state but the social life and cohesion of the masses.

An added factor of great importance is the objective effect of the prolongation of the war upon Germany. There was the massive destruction of the urban centers; the dispersion of the working population (at the time of capitulation most German cities did not contain 50 percent or even 30 percent of their normal population, thus the population of Berlin dropped to 1½ or 2 million inhabitants, Frankfurt to a little more than 250,000, etc.); there was the mobilization of the great majority of the working class into the army, the heterogeneous composition of the labor force in the plants (majority of foreigners, prisoners of war, women and petty-bourgeois elements).

Finally, to all this must be added the disastrous effects of imperialist and Stalinist propaganda which, while it did not "cement" the German working population to Hitler, as has been falsely claimed, did, however, actually place the German workers "between the frying pan and the fire" and left them with no perspectives save "terror without end."

To sum up, at the moment when most of the objective premises for the outbreak of a revolutionary movement had been produced by the course of the war, there remained one factor missing: the principal factor—the weakening of the repressive apparatus. When this weakening did actually occur, the other premises were no longer in process of ripening but in a state of decomposition, likewise as a consequence of the development of the war. *The concentration of all the objective premises of a revolutionary movement attaining full maturity at a given mo-*

ment—a concentration which alone is capable of producing explosions, even in the *complete absence* of the subjective factor (the revolutionary party)—was therefore lacking in Germany.

Italy and Germany: An Instructive Parallel

Do we mean to say that the specific *subjective* conditions—the product of 12 years of Nazi terror—were only of secondary importance? Not at all. The subjective factor is not so decisive for the outbreak of the revolutionary movement (that is to say, the first phase of the revolution), as it is for the second phase, the conquest of power. But it can play an enormous role, that of accelerator and generalizer. It may replace a number of missing objective premises and enable the first insurrectionary movement to triumph even at a time when all the other premises are not at hand. There can be no doubt that the existence of a powerful revolutionary party in Germany would have, moreover, welded the German and foreign workers into a single bloc and would by this fact have permitted a more rapid and extensive development of the numerous strikes which broke out in almost all the big plants over the food issue. Even more important would have been the existence of a revolutionary organization, even a relatively small one, among the soldiers. Such an organization would have been able to draw the mass of the Wehrmacht into an insurrectionary movement at the moment of the July 2 attempted *coup d'état*. The subjective factor could have implanted a new vitality into the objective premises, and would have made a revolutionary movement possible, even after the breaking-point referred to above.

On the other hand, it is absolutely wrong to deduce the absence of the German revolution principally from the absence of the subjective factor. In fact, a comparison with Italy shows that even 20 years of Fascist rule, amid an even greater “disappearance” of “socialist traditions” together with absence of revolutionary organizations and even of illegal anti-fascist or-

ganizations on a national scale, do not suffice to prevent the outbreak of the revolutionary movement given the objective premises.

It is true that there are a number of differences between Germany and Italy, which are not without importance for understanding the different course of events in these two countries. The Nazi regime succeeded in completely destroying every oppositional center, even among the bourgeoisie. Mussolini's regime did not attain the same effectiveness of terror. The Nazi regime tightly controlled the entire military, police and administrative apparatus of the state. In Italy, on the other hand, the top cadres of the Army, the nobility, closely attached to the House of Savoy, and the top clergy, close to the Vatican, escaped to some degree from fascist control. In Germany the Nazi organizations by far surpassed in many fields the Italian organization (in the field of provisioning, education, propaganda, etc.) But all these are differences of a *quantitative* character and do not alter the essentially *identical* character of the situation in both countries: without any organizations of their own, the masses had to confront a regime of terror! These differences might perhaps explain why the *coup d'état* engineered by Badoglio succeeded while that of Stauffenberg collapsed. But it nowise explains why the Italian masses rose *months before Mussolini's fall* in gigantic strikes, while the German strike movement never passed the stage of isolated and sporadic actions.

The absence of the German revolution resulting from the progressive dissipation of its objective premises; the sporadic, disparate and primitive character of the revolutionary movements in other European countries; and despite this, the creation in many centers of nuclei of dual power, which were, however, liquidated quickly because of their isolated character—these are the characteristics of the first stage of the European revolution.

Translated by James Wilde.

Trotsky's Struggle for the Fourth International

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

All of Leon Trotsky's basic teachings are concentrated in the major task of his lifetime's activity—the building of the Fourth International.

For an entire decade—1923-1933—he struggled to reform the Third International, which he had founded together with Lenin. When Stalinism paved the way for Hitler's assumption of power in Germany; when this betrayal passed over the heads of the completely degenerated Stalinized parties, history itself proved irrefutably that the Third International was beyond reform. It died ignominiously as had the Second International before it. What died with these old Internationals was not revolutionary Marxism, but two virtually duplicate sets of false ideas and practices—nationalism, opportunism, reformism. In brief, petty-bourgeois adaptation to capitalism and capitulation to it. A new International became necessary. As Trotsky tirelessly repeated, this was—and is—the *basic* task of our epoch. It was to this task that he devoted his best energies and the last years of his life.

For Trotsky, the building of the Fourth International was least of all a question of abstract theory or of an “organizational form.” He heaped scorn upon all those who posed the issue in this manner, because such an approach stands everything on its head. Trotsky saw that the world party of the working class is first of all a *closely knit system of ideas*, that is to say, a *program*. On no other basis is it possible to train, temper and fuse the proletarian vanguard internationally and nationally. From the given system of ideas—or program—flows a corresponding system of strategic, tactical and organizational methods. The latter have no independent meaning or existence of their own and are subordinate to the former.

One of Trotsky's favorite sayings was: “It is not the party that makes the program; it is the program that makes the party.”

Precisely because of this primary stress on program, Trotsky's decade of struggle to reform the Third International became in the most direct sense the preparation for the Fourth International.

This approach—and it is the only correct one—obviously invests ideas with extraordinary importance. Indeed we can say without any fear of exaggeration that none attach greater significance or power to ideas than do the revolutionary Marxists. Like Marx, Engels and Lenin, Trotsky regarded ideas as the greatest power in the world.

Lenin's Bolshevik Party valued its ideas as its most potent weapon. Bolshevism demonstrated in action, in 1917, that such ideas, once embraced by the masses, become converted into an insuperable material force.

Here is how Trotsky formulated this approach in a personal letter to James P. Cannon:

We work with the most correct and powerful ideas in the world, with inadequate numerical forces and material means. But correct ideas, in the long run, always conquer and make available for themselves the necessary material means and forces.

Trotsky's ideas derive their power from the same source as Lenin's: both are the correct expression of the struggle of living forces, first and foremost of the liberationist struggle of the proletariat. They represent not only the product of profound theoretical analysis (without which it is impossible to understand reality) but also the unassailable deductions from the march of history for the last hundred years (that is to say, from 1848 when Marx and Engels first expounded the laws governing the movement of capitalist society).

There are ideas and ideas. As against the correct ideas of Marxism, there is also the power of the false ideas. The former serve the interests of progress, of the world working class; the latter only play into the hands of reaction and deal untold injury to workers all the oppressed and to society as a whole. False ideas, like correct ones, do not fall from the sky. They, too, express one of the living forces engaged in struggle, namely: the camp of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

Like Lenin, Trotsky rejected the notion that the policies of opportunist tendencies represented merely mistakes in "theory." Theory is scarcely involved in the policy of the treacherous "Socialists," who each time base themselves on the current needs of propping up the rule of decaying capitalism. Theory has even less to do with the Kremlin's policy, which is each time determined by practical needs of safeguarding the privileges and power of the ruling clique. Fear of the proletarian revolution has long ago converted both the moribund Second and Third Internationals into agencies of world imperialism. Hence flows the necessity of an irreconcilable attitude towards them. For the first condition for unifying the workers is a complete break with all the agencies, direct or indirect, of the bourgeoisie.

The basic plank of a revolutionary program is—*internationalism*. Mere acceptance of "internationalism" is hollow mockery unless accompanied in practice by complete rejection of *nationalist* policies, in whatever guise they may manifest themselves. It was precisely against the nationalist deviations of the Soviet bureaucracy, most crassly expressed by Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country," that Trotsky launched his life-and-death struggle against Stalinism. He warned that the adoption of Stalin's theory would imperceptibly but inescapably shunt the Third International onto the tracks of opportunism.

This warning was swiftly verified by events. In England during the critical period of the labor movement in 1925-27, the Stalinists followed a false and opportunist policy (the policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee). In China the Stalinists betrayed the revolution of 1925-27 by pursuing a typical Menshevik policy of collaborating with the native bourgeoisie (Stalin's bloc

of "four classes"), in the name of establishing not workers' rule but the "democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants." In the Soviet Union, Stalin's false policies manifested themselves at the time in an opportunist economic policy (slow tempo of industrialization, fostering of neo-capitalist elements: "kulak grow rich," etc.) and subsequently in the adventurist economic policy in connection with the First Five-Year Plan.

The great lessons of these experiences in China, the USSR and England were the axis of the struggle inside the Russian party, and they later became the basis for the education and unification of the original world Trotskyist movement.

Internationalism became the very hall-mark of Trotskyism. Writing in 1938, on the Ninetieth Anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, Trotsky said:

The international development of capitalism has predetermined the international character of the proletarian revolution. "United action, of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat," [wrote Marx and Engels in 1848]. The subsequent development of capitalism has so closely knit all sections of our planet, both "civilized" and "uncivilized," that the problem of the socialist revolution has completely and decisively assumed a world character. The Soviet bureaucracy attempted to liquidate the *Manifesto* with respect to this fundamental question. The Bonapartist degeneration of the Soviet state is an overwhelming illustration of the falseness of the theory of socialism in one country.

The Elaboration of an International Program

Trotsky's primary objective from the outset was to elaborate an internationalist program, and to select groups and individuals on this programmatic foundation. No sooner were his hands untied for work on a world scale (by his exile to Turkey in February 1929), than he began hammering home the cardinal consideration that whoever assigns a secondary importance to the international factor is travelling on the road to national opportunism. "National programs can be built only on international ground." "Our international orientation and our national policy are indissolubly bound together."

"It is undeniable," he explained, "that each country possesses the greatest peculiarities of its own. But in our epoch their true value can be estimated, and revolutionary use can be made of them only from an internationalist point of view. Only an international organization can be the bearer of an international ideology."

Trotsky's touchstone for evaluating "tendencies in world communism"—and therefore his touchstone for political collaboration—was: the position taken by any given group on the above-listed three questions which he designated as "classic" (Anglo-Russian Committee, Chinese revolution of 1925-27, Soviet economic policy in conjunction with the theory of socialism in one country). In his opinion only an organization which demarcated itself ideologically from all others on these issues, could prove viable, capable of action, capable of withstanding the test of events, and finally able to unite the proletariat under its banner.

Why? Because in each case fundamental principles of revolutionary policy were involved. Agreement meant the possibility for joint work within a common organization; disagreement either excluded such a possibility or rendered it extremely remote.

While attaching paramount importance to questions of principle, Trotsky invariably subordinated questions of tactic, organ-

ization and the like. In March 31, 1929, in the same letter in which he lists the "three classic questions" as the decisive criteria, he adds the following highly illuminating comment:

Some comrades may be astonished that I omit reference here to the question of the party regime. I do so not out of oversight, but deliberately. A party regime has no independent, self-sufficient meaning. In relation to party policy it is a derivative magnitude. The most heterogeneous elements sympathize with the struggle against Stalinist bureaucratism. . . . For a Marxist, democracy within a party or within a country is not an abstraction. Democracy is always conditioned by the struggle of living forces. By bureaucratism, the opportunist elements in part and as a whole understand revolutionary centralism. Obviously, they cannot be our co-thinkers.

Of no less significance is Trotsky's refusal not only to unite but even to effect blocs with the Right wing, even though at the time it was a tendency within the Communist movement. This is an important lesson in principled politics. Only unprincipled politicians enter into political collaboration with those with whom they disagree fundamentally, but with whom they happen to have temporary agreement on secondary issues. Trotsky was unyielding on this score.

In March 1929 he wrote:

Two irreconcilably opposed tendencies are usually listed under the label of opposition: the revolutionary tendency [the Trotskyists] and the opportunist tendency [Bukharin-Brandler-Lovestone wing]. A hostile attitude toward centrism [the reference here is to Stalinism] and toward the "regime" is the only thing they have in common. But this is a purely negative bond. Our struggle against centrism derives from the fact that centrism is semi-opportunist and covers up full-blown opportunism, despite temporary and sharp disagreements with the latter. For this reason there cannot even be talk of a bloc between the Left Opposition and the Right Opposition. This requires no commentary.

Trotsky safeguarded the movement from being converted into a melting pot of divergent ideological tendencies not only by a principled and serious attitude toward unifications but also by a similar attitude toward splits.

During the same period he wrote:

It is not always, nor under all circumstances, that unity within an organization must remain inviolate. In cases where the differences assume a fundamental character, a split at times appears to be the only solution possible. But care must be taken that this be a genuine split, that is, that the split should not depart from the line of principled differences, and that this line be brought clear-cut before the eyes of all the members of the organization.

In the first seven years of its existence the Left Opposition experienced approximately a score of splits. The political opponents seized upon this with glee as proof of an intolerable "internal regime."

Trotsky dismissed this contention with contempt, pointing out that "it is necessary to take not the bald *statistics of splits*, but the *dialectics of development*." A movement irreconcilably defending its program against opportunism, against centrism, against ultra-leftism could not have possibly avoided splits under the most favorable conditions, and all the less so in the period of catastrophic defeats and universal disorientation of the labor movement.

Beginning with 1930 a whole series of splits occurred over the constantly recurring differences relating to the class nature of the Soviet Union. If in 1939-40 this issue precipitated the struggle inside the Socialist Workers Party, then in 1930, at the very inception of the European movement, it led to a break

with Urbahns in Germany, Louzon in France, Overstraaten in Belgium, etc.

When the turn from propaganda groups to mass work was launched in 1934-36, another series of splits occurred in France, England, the U.S. and elsewhere over the tactic of entry into the Socialist parties where left wing tendencies were crystallizing (the famous "French Turn").

But precisely because the movement had a banner and a program from which it refused to swerve, it was able to overcome each internal crisis and to forge steadily, even if slowly, forward.

Trotsky's Struggle for the International

Parallel with Trotsky's irreconcilability in defending the internationalist principles of the movement was his adamant insistence upon the necessity and primacy of the international organization. "Only an international organization can be the bearer of an international ideology." The organization form flows from and must correspond to the party's platform.

From the outset, he insisted on the speediest possible consolidation of all his genuine co-thinkers into an international body. "From its first steps," he wrote in February 1930, "the Opposition must therefore clearly declare itself as an international faction—as did the Communists in the period of the *Communist Manifesto*, or of the First International, or of the Left Zimmerwald at the beginning of the war (1914-18). . . . In the epoch of imperialism, a similar attitude imposes itself a hundred times more categorically than in the times of Marx."

This conception of party building was hotly disputed and opposed by all the varieties of centrism who favored a "broader," more "all-inclusive" organization. In practically every country in Europe, especially France, voices were raised in favor of the more accommodating perspective. Their fundamental criterion for political collaboration was as simple as it was false: opposition to Stalinism. These people sought to operate in politics much after the manner of those who strike up close personal friendships solely on the basis of mutual and pet dislikes. Trotsky fought the centrist trends implacably. For example, in answer to Paz and Treint, the French champions of an "all-inclusive" organization, he wrote:

They dream of creating an international association which will be open to everybody: those who support Chiang Kai-shek and those who support the Soviet Republic [in the 1930 conflict over the Manchurian railway]; those who endeavor to save the "autonomy" of the industrial unions from Communism as well as those who struggle for the influence of Communism in the trade unions; those who are for a united front with the Right wing groups [the Bukharin wing in Russia; the Brandlerites in Germany; the Lovestoneites in the U.S., etc.] against the official party as well as those who are for a united front with the official party against the Right wing groups. This program for a melting-pot is being advanced under the slogan of "party democracy." Could any one invent a more malicious mockery of party democracy?

Trotsky's criteria for the building of the International, it will be observed, were not at all based on purely negative bonds. What he invariably sought was not unity for unity's sake, but unity based on community of ideas. No selection was worthwhile in his opinion unless it was a selection of co-thinkers animated by common basic views, by the same fundamental principles.

This was Trotsky's position during the years when the movement functioned as a faction of the Third International; this remained his position after 1933 when the movement turned to

the task of building the Fourth International. The English ILP, the German SAP and others then came to the fore with proposals for a new melting pot. Trotsky rejected an "all-inclusive" International just as he had previously rejected an "all-inclusive" international faction. In the five years that elapsed between the issuance of the call for the Fourth International and its Founding Congress in 1938, the centrists played out to the fullest measure their experiment of creating a "broad," "non-sectarian," "non-dogmatic" International organization. Their catch-all International, the London Bureau, otherwise known as the "International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity"—a pretentious body, without a banner, without a program, was a conglomeration of parties and groups moving simultaneously in all directions. As Trotsky predicted, it fell apart without leaving a trace.

The Norwegian Labor Party of Tranmael broke with the London Bureau and entered the capitalist government of Norway. The Swedish Socialist Party, one of the original mainstays, had found its way back into the embraces of the Social Democracy; the German SAP travelled in the same direction. The Brandler-Lovestone "international" that adhered to the Bureau in its heyday simply dissolved. The splinter exile groups (the Italian Maximalists and the Austrian Red Front "lefts") gave up the ghost. The ILP, the lone survivor of this galaxy, continued to vegetate.

* * *

The early splits in the Trotskyist movement which we have already recounted were in reality only anticipations of the two subsequent struggles upon the outcome of which the very fate of the International depended.

The first of these came in connection with the Spanish Civil War which erupted in 1936; the second coincided with the outbreak of the Second World War.

The internal crisis in connection with the Spanish Civil War was precipitated by the following developments:

Under the leadership of Andres Nin the majority of Spanish Trotskyist section merged with the semi-nationalist Catalan Federation of Maurin. The product of this fusion was the POUM (Party of Marxist Unity) with a typically centrist program. This sacrifice of principles for the sake of "unity" led unavoidably to disastrous results. The POUM was not a revolutionary party at all, but like its prototypes merely gave the appearance of being one. It began its career by engaging in electoral maneuvers with the Spanish People's Front and ended by the entry of Nin into the bourgeois government, that is to say, by the commission of the greatest crime of all in a period of the socialist revolution.

The policies of the POUM were supported not only by the London Bureau, to which it was affiliated, but met with widespread sympathy among revolutionary workers throughout the world. As a matter of fact, there were illusions about the POUM within the ranks of the Trotskyists.

A break with the POUM implied swimming against the stream, including broad sections of class-conscious workers. Trotsky did not hesitate. He did not change his course.

In January 1936, after the POUM entered into an electoral bloc with the Spanish People's Front, Trotsky branded its course as *treachery*, and added in conclusion:

As far as we are concerned we prefer clarity. In Spain, genuine revolutionists will no doubt be found who will mercilessly expose the betrayal of Maurin, Nin, Andrade and Co., and lay the foundation for the Spanish section of the Fourth International.

Franco's assault came in July 1936. The POUM did not

effect a change in its policy, but slid further and further on its false and perfidious course. Trotsky continued to criticise and oppose. The subsequent fate of the POUM bore out his position to the hilt. It is hardly necessary to point out that had a different policy been followed, the Fourth International would have assumed responsibility for the terrible defeat in Spain and would have been, in consequence, badly compromised.

Trotsky's Break With Sneevliet

Among the organizations that sided with the POUM was the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party of Holland (RSAP) which under the leadership of Sneevliet and Schmidt was one of the signatories to the August 1935 call for the Fourth International. Trotsky remained firm, even though this meant a break with one of the largest mass parties affiliated to the Trotskyist movement at the time.

Despite this grave internal crisis, and without the RSAP, it became nevertheless possible by September 1938 to convene the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.

Less than a year later, in July 1939, Trotsky was able to declare:

The international organization of Brandler, Lovestone, etc., which appeared to be many times more powerful than our organizations has crumbled to dust. The alliance between Walcher and the Norwegian Labor Party and Pivert himself (leader of PSOP, a French counterpart of the Spanish POUM) burst into fragments. The London Bureau has given up the ghost. But the Fourth International, despite all the difficulties and crises, has grown uninterruptedly, has its own organizations in more than a score of countries, and was able to convene its World Congress under the most difficult circumstances. . . .

The movement could derive this inner drive and power from one source, and one source only—its unassailable ideas, its correct and tested program. This is how Trotsky explained it in July 1939:

The Fourth International is developing as a grouping of new and fresh elements *on the basis of a common program growing out of the entire past experience, incessantly checked and rendered more precise.* In the selection of its cadres the Fourth International has great advantages over the Third. These advantages flow precisely from the difficult conditions of struggle in the epoch of reaction. The Third International took shape swiftly because many "Lefts" easily and readily adhered to the victorious revolution. The Fourth International takes form under the blows of defeats and persecutions. The ideological bond created under such conditions is extraordinarily firm.

Within a few months after writing these lines, Trotsky was to engage in and lead, for the last time in his lifetime, another decisive struggle for the program and tradition of the Fourth International. This was the 1939-40 struggle against the petty-bourgeois opposition within the SWP. Involved here was still another attempt to revise and overthrow the colossal conquest of the revolutionary vanguard—its theory, its political principles, its organizational ideas and practices. Precisely because of its scope, the 1939-40 struggle recapitulated the essential features of all the preceding struggles.

The extraordinary firmness of the ideological bond that binds the movement created by Trotsky has been decisively confirmed by the emergence of a stronger and more homogeneous Fourth International out of the fiery test of World War II. What safeguards its future is the very same thing that has safeguarded its past, namely: it is being built in the same way and with the same ideas and methods that Trotsky taught all his co-thinkers.

Nationalized Industry and Workers' Management

By LEON TROTSKY

In 1938 when the Cardenas government of Mexico expropriated the oil industry from the Anglo-American imperialists, such newspapers as the N.Y. *Daily News* ascribed the act to the influence of Leon Trotsky then in exile in Mexico. This, of course, was untrue.

Trotsky had made an agreement, which he scrupulously observed, that in return for asylum he would not intervene in Mexican politics. He was forced consequently to limit himself to stating his position in general on the expropriation. He supported the act, explaining his views in an article dated June 5, 1938, published in the *Socialist Appeal* (now *The Militant*) of June 25, 1938. It was not known that Trotsky had written more fully on another aspect of the expropriation—the placing by the Mexican government of the oil industry under the management of the workers.

In April 1946, Joseph Hansen, former Secretary of Leon Trotsky visited Natalia Trotsky. He also called on friends of Trotsky. Among them was one who had made a study of the expropriation. This friend

In the industrially backward countries foreign capital plays a decisive role. Hence the relative weakness of the *national* bourgeoisie in relation to the *national* proletariat. This creates special conditions of state power. The government veers between foreign and domestic capital, between the weak national bourgeoisie and the relatively powerful proletariat. This gives the government a bonapartist character *sui generis* of a distinctive character. It raises itself, so to speak, above classes. Actually, it can govern either by making itself the instrument of foreign capitalism and holding the proletariat in the chains of a police dictatorship, or by maneuvering with the proletariat and even going so far as to make concessions to it and thus gaining the possibility of a certain freedom toward the foreign capitalists. The present policy [of the Mexican government—*Trans.*] is in the second stage; its greatest conquests are the expropriations of the railroads and the oil industries.

These measures are entirely within the domain of state capitalism. However, in a semi-colonial country state capitalism finds itself under the heavy pressure of private foreign capital and of its governments, and cannot maintain itself without the active support of the workers. That is why it tries, without letting the real power escape from its hands, to place on the workers' organizations a considerable part of the responsibility for the march of production in the nationalized branches of industry.

What should be the policy of the workers' party in this case? It would of course be a disastrous error, an outright deception, to assert that the road to socialism passes, not through the proletarian revolution, but through nationalization by the bourgeois state of various branches of industry and their transfer into the hands of the workers' organizations. But it is not a question of that. The bourgeois government has itself carried through the nationalization and has been compelled to ask participation of the workers in the management of the nationalized industry. One can of course evade the question by citing the fact that unless the proletariat takes possession of the power, participation by the trade unions in the management of the enterprises of state capitalism cannot give socialist results. However, such a negative policy from the revolutionary wing would not be understood by the masses and would strengthen the opportunist positions. For Marxists it is not a question of building socialism

told about talking with Trotsky for a whole afternoon on the uniqueness of workers' management of an expropriated industry in a capitalist country.

Trotsky promised to consider the subject more fully. Some three days later, Trotsky's French secretary called on the telephone that Trotsky had written a short article.

This remarkable article had never been printed anywhere. Comrade Hansen examined the manuscript. Typewritten in French, it was undated and unsigned but the interpolations and stylistic corrections in ink appeared to be Trotsky's handwriting. The style and above all the method of analysis and the revolutionary conclusions were Trotsky's beyond question. Comrade Hansen immediately had a copy typed and brought it to Natalia. She too is convinced of the authenticity of the article. The probable date it was written can be fixed as May or June 1938.

with the hands of the bourgeoisie, but of utilizing the situations which present themselves within state capitalism and advancing the revolutionary movement of the workers.

Participation in bourgeois parliaments can no longer give important positive results; under certain conditions it even leads to the demoralization of the worker-deputies. But this is not an argument for revolutionists in favor of anti-parliamentarism.

It would be inexact to identify the policy of workers' participation in the management of nationalized industry with the participation of socialists in a bourgeois government (which we called *ministerialism*). All the members of the government are bound together by ties of solidarity. A party represented in the government is answerable for the entire policy of the government as a whole. Participation in the management of a certain branch of industry allows full opportunity for political opposition. In case the workers' representatives are in a minority in the management, they have every opportunity to declare and publish their proposals which were rejected by the majority, to bring them to the knowledge of the workers, etc.

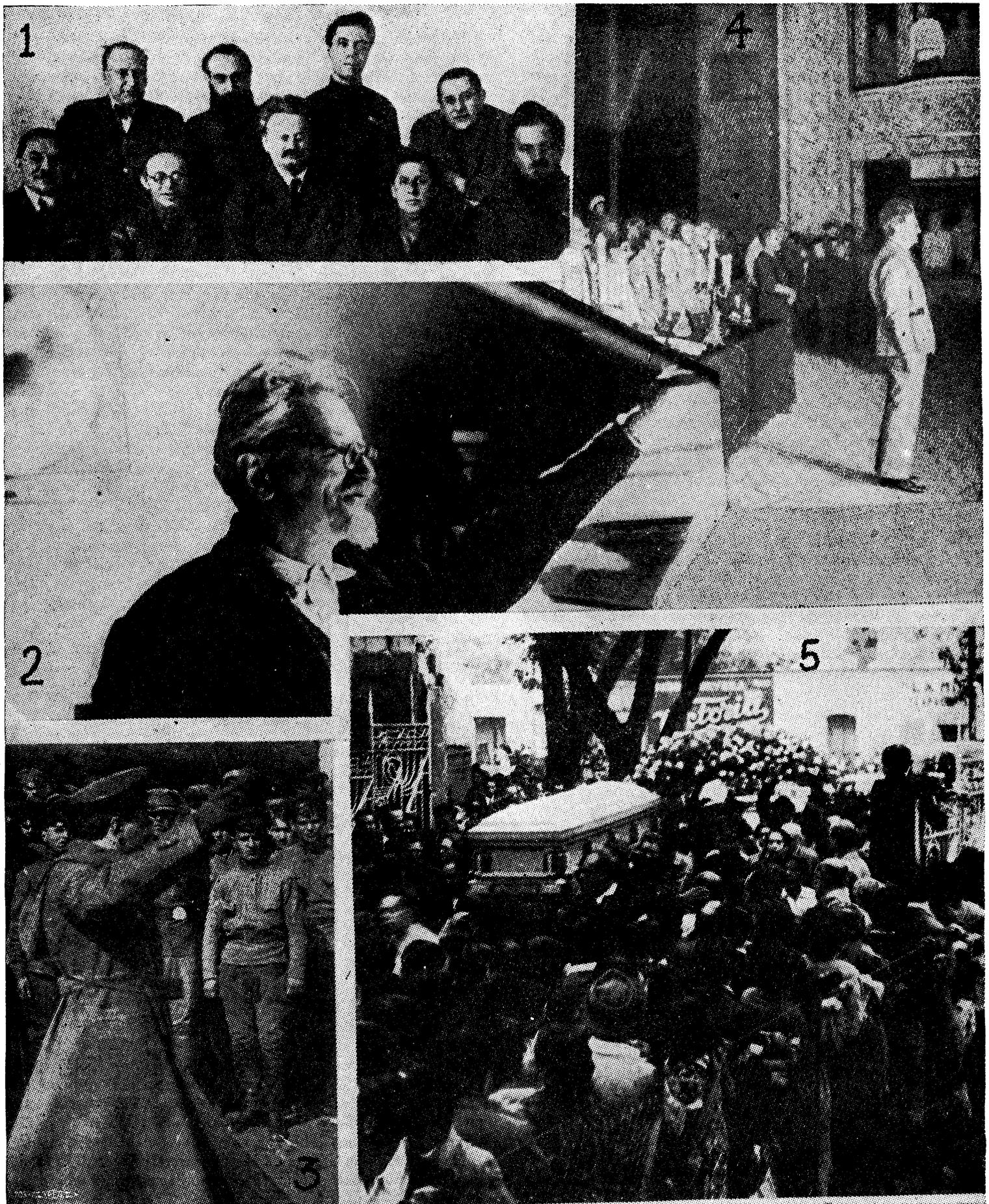
The participation of the trade unions in the management of nationalized industry may be compared to the participation of socialists in the *municipal governments*, where the socialists sometimes win a majority and are compelled to direct an important municipal economy, while the bourgeoisie still have domination in the state and bourgeois property laws continue. Reformists in the municipality adapt themselves passively to the bourgeois regime. Revolutionists in this field do all they can in the interests of the workers and at the same time teach the workers at every step that municipality policy is powerless without conquest of state power.

The difference, to be sure, is that in the field of municipal government the workers win certain positions by means of democratic elections, whereas in the domain of nationalized industry the government itself invites them to take certain posts. But this difference has a purely formal character. In both cases the bourgeoisie is compelled to yield to the workers certain spheres of activity. The workers utilize these in *their own* interests.

It would be light-minded to close one's eye to the dangers



1) Trotsky at the age of 11 years. 2) A 1904 photograph. 3) With his wife Natalia and his son Leon Sedov in 1928 in Stalinist exile at Alma-Ata. 4) Lenin and Trotsky reviewing Red Army troops on the Red Square in Moscow during the Civil War. 5) Commissar of War.



1) Trotsky with group of Oppositionists in Stalinist exile (1928). 2) At work on the Stalin biography (1940). 3) Addressing Red Army soldiers at the front during the Civil War. 4) Scene at Second World Congress of the Communist International (1920). 5) Scene at Trotsky's funeral in Mexico City, August 27, 1940.

which flow from a situation where the trade unions play a leading role in nationalized industry. The basis of the danger is the connection of the trade union top leaders with the apparatus of state capitalism, the transformation of mandated representatives of the proletariat into hostages of the bourgeois state. But however great this danger may be, it constitutes only a part of a general danger, more exactly, of a general sickness, that is to say, the bourgeois degeneration of the trade union apparatus in the imperialist epoch not only in the old metropolitan centers but also in the colonial countries. The trade union leaders are, in an overwhelming majority of cases, *political* agents of the bourgeoisie and of its state. In nationalized industry they can become and already are becoming direct *administrative* agents. Against this there is no other course than the struggle for the independence of the workers' movement in general, and in particular through the formation within the trade unions of firm revolutionary nuclei which are capable, while at the same time maintaining the unity of the trade union movement, of struggling for a class policy and for a revolutionary composition of the leading bodies.

A danger of another sort lies in the fact that the banks and other capitalist enterprises, upon which a given branch of nationalized industry depends in the economic sense, may and will use special methods of sabotage to put obstacles in the way of the workers' management, to discredit it and push it to disaster. The reformist leaders will try to ward off this danger by servile adaptation to the demands of their capitalist providers, in particular the banks. The revolutionary leaders, on the contrary, will draw the conclusion from the sabotage by the banks: that it is necessary to expropriate the banks and to establish a *single national bank* which would be the accounting house of the whole economy. Of course this question must be indissolubly linked to the question of the *conquest of power by the working class*.

The various capitalist enterprises, national and foreign, will inevitably enter into a conspiracy with the state institutions to put obstacles in the way of the workers' management of nationalized industry. On the other hand, the workers' organizations which are in the management of the various branches of nationalized industry must join together to exchange their experiences, must give each other economic support, must act with their joint forces on the government, on the conditions of credit, etc. Of course such a central bureau of the workers' management of nationalized branches of industry must be in closest contact with the trade unions.

To sum up, one can say that this new field of work includes within it both the greatest opportunities and the greatest dangers. The dangers consist in the fact that through the intermediary of controlled trade unions state capitalism can hold the workers in check, exploit them cruelly and paralyze their resistance. The revolutionary possibilities consist in the fact that, basing themselves upon their positions in the exceptionally important branches of industry, the workers can lead the attack against all the forces of capital and against the bourgeois state. Which of these possibilities will win out? And in what period of time? It is naturally impossible to predict. That depends entirely on the struggle of the different tendencies within the working class, on the experience of the workers themselves, on the world situation. In any case, to use this new form of activity in the interests of the working class, and not of the labor aristocracy and bureaucracy, only one condition is needed: that a revolutionary Marxist party exist which carefully studies every form of working class activity, criticizes every deviation, educates and organizes the workers, wins influence in the trade unions and assures a revolutionary workers' representation in nationalized industry.

Translated by Duncan Ferguson

The Big Four at Paris

By LI FU-JEN

It was possible to predict in advance the nature of the happenings at the Paris meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers which began on June 15 and continued well into July. The pattern of this "Big Four" gathering had already been drawn at the Potsdam conference and the London meeting of the "Big Five" last fall, of which it was the continuation. The purposes and aims of the participants remained unchanged. But where the London gathering ended in complete deadlock, foundering on the sharp antagonisms between the Anglo-American bloc, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other, the Paris meeting resulted in a measure of "agreement."

The purpose of the meeting was to prepare "peace" treaties to be presented to Italy, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Finland. Byrnes, Molotov, Bevin and Bidault each sat down to redraw the map of Europe in accordance with the immediate needs and strategic requirements of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France, and to divide the spoils of war. It was a gathering of imperialist brigands, plus the usurping brigands of the Stalin government. The business transacted was as dirty and as sordid as the interests which the conferees represented.

The line-up at this Paris conference was a faithful reflection of the realities of international relationships in the post-

war period. On every issue without exception the Anglo-American representatives appeared as a united bloc against the representative of the Soviet Union. The French representative, supposedly filling the role of "honest broker" and mediator between the big powers, turned up invariably as the supporter and servitor of the Anglo-American bloc. This line-up not only helped assure the predominance of the Anglo-American bloc. It also enabled the Anglo-American representatives to convert the conference into an anti-Soviet forum. At every point in the discussions the Soviet Union was made to appear as an obstructionist force which was rendering extremely difficult the task of working out a satisfactory framework for Europe's future.

At the top of the agenda stood the question of a "peace" treaty for Italy. And it was around Italy's future boundaries, the disposition of its colonies, reparations, and the distribution of Italian war booty (mainly the Italian fleet) that the conferees bargained, haggled and snarled at one another. If "peace terms" were discussed for the other Axis satellites—Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Finland—they were discussed in dead secret. All four of these countries are now satellites of the Soviet Union.

According to the partial decisions reached by the Big Four at Paris, Italy will be made to sign a robber "peace" which will reduce the country to the status of a Balkan power.

1. She is to be stripped of her African colonial possessions—Somaliland, Eritrea, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania—and will be required in the "peace" treaty to renounce all claim to these territories.

2. The entire group of Dodecanese islands are to be ceded to Greece.

3. Yugoslavia, satellite of the Kremlin, will get the Italian territories of Zara, the Dalmatian islands, Fiume and most of Istria.

4. The Italian port of Trieste, at the head of the Adriatic, is to be "internationalized" under authority of the Security Council of the United Nations.

5. The Piedmontese area of Briga and Tenda is to be taken over by France.

6. The Italian navy and merchant fleet are to be divided among the victorious powers. Italy's navy will consist of four cruisers and little else.

7. Italy is to pay an indemnity of \$100,000,000 to the Soviet Union, payment to be effected by deliveries in kind spread over a period of seven years.

The dismemberment of Italy and its empire was naturally not agreed upon without considerable horse-trading and squabbling. Italy's African colonies loomed large in the discussions. Britain is in complete control of these colonies by virtue of conquest. All the conferees agreed that Italy should be required to renounce these possessions, but they could not agree on how to dispose of them. "Laborite" Minister Bevin, watchdog of the imperial interests of Britain, proposed maintenance of the *status quo*, i.e., a continuation of British occupation and control, postponing final disposition of the question for one year. Molotov wanted the conference to appoint a quadripartite commission, with Soviet participation, to "observe, study and report" on the British administration. The commission, he said, should also have advisory powers. This proposal was not at all to Bevin's liking. It would be tantamount, he said, to setting up an actual trusteeship as contemplated in the United Nations charter and would in effect prejudice the eventual permanent decision regarding the Italian colonies. Behind this pretended concern for the judicial niceties, of course, was Britain's determination not to surrender what she had succeeded in grabbing during the war. Britain, said Bevin, must insist on maintaining her position "even if she found herself alone among the great powers in backing it." So no agreement was reached.

Naturally, none of the conferees suggested consulting the native peoples of the ex-Italian colonies as to their wishes in the matter. They count least of all in these conclaves of bandits busy dividing the swag of war. Nor were the foreign ministers visibly perturbed by the angry protest of the Italian bourgeoisie which denounced the decision to strip Italy of her colonial possessions. While the Italian premier, Alcide de Gasperi, loudly proclaimed that he would never sign a peace which deprived Italy of her African colonies, the Rome bourgeois newspaper *Minuto* assessed the Paris decision with lively realism. Adjuring the Italian government to sign no treaty renouncing the colonies, the paper declared:

Postponement of the decision on the Italian colonies means that the British, who now occupy and govern our African possessions, will remain masters of them for another year. This method fits in with the historical tradition of Great Britain, which has occupied a considerable part of the world provisionally and never has let go of it. One year from now the British will be even less disposed to abandon Somaliland, Eritrea, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.

Trieste was the subject of even more heated wrangling than Italian colonies. This strategic port on the Adriatic is the

natural outlet for the normally large trade of the Danubian countries, where Stalin is attempting to create a closed economic preserve for the Soviet Union. The Soviet monopoly of the Danubian trade conflicts sharply with the world aims of American imperialism—which will not countenance the closing of markets anywhere—and even more sharply with the immediate economic interests of Britain, which needs very urgently the markets, raw materials and food supplies of the Danube valley. Control of Trieste is vital. In Anglo-American hands it can be used as a lever to pry open Stalin's Danubian trade monopoly. Even before the Paris conference opened, the American imperialists, by seizing 700 Danubian barges in their zone in Austria, served notice on the Kremlin of their intention to smash this monopoly.

Molotov's first proposal was that Trieste should be ceded to Yugoslavia, satellite of the Soviet Union, as a "reward" for that country's "great sacrifices" in the war. Byrnes and Bevin would have none of that. They finally agreed to the internationalization of the city under an administration to be set up by the United Nations. Molotov had to agree. His next move was to agree to internationalization, but the boundaries he proposed to draw would have converted Trieste into an enclave wholly within Yugoslavian territory. Byrnes and Bevin would have none of that either, insisting that the projected "free city" of Trieste must have a frontier with Italy, which, unlike Yugoslavia, is very much under the Anglo-American thumb. Molotov had to climb down again and agree to boundary lines proposed by Bidault, acting as mediator between the Anglo-American and Soviet representatives. Having got thus far, the conferees split on the question of who should administer the new "Danzig." Byrnes and Bevin wanted it controlled by the Security Council of the United Nations—which, of course, is dominated by the United States and Great Britain. Molotov wanted it placed under the jurisdiction of the Council of Foreign Ministers. The question remained unsettled.

On the relatively minor question of Italian war reparations, Molotov was forced to recede from the original Soviet demand for a \$600,000,000 indemnity and to accept \$100,000,000, after attempting unsuccessfully to trade all Soviet reparations claims against an agreement to cede Trieste to Yugoslavia. But even the smaller sum of \$100,000,000 will be wrung from the labor of the poverty-stricken Italian masses, who thus are to be made to pay for the crimes of the Italian bourgeoisie and its Fascist government. The conferees agreed to strip Italy of her navy, but became deadlocked on the question of disposition of the various fleet units.

Small wonder that when the various decisions were announced they brought instant popular reaction in Italy. An estimated 5,000 people swarmed into the Piazza del Popolo in Rome and shouted, "Down with America, Britain, France and Russia." The demonstrators attacked automobiles bearing Allied military personnel. Banners carried inscriptions reading "Long Live Italian Trieste," "Long Live Italian Zara," "Trieste is Italian."

Meanwhile in Trieste, which has a mixed population of about a million, part Italian and part Slav, the reaction was even more violent. On the night of July 6 some 10,000 Italian demonstrators shouted at British and American soldiers: "You traitors! Why don't you get out of Italy? Why don't you go back home to America, England and India?" British and American troops broke up the demonstration by hurling tear-gas bombs. The Paris decision satisfied neither the Italians nor the Slavs. When it was announced, more than 200,000 workers in the Venezia Giulia area, which includes Trieste, went out on a

general strike and completely paralyzed all activity. Allied military authorities ordered the strikers back to work, with threats to use force, and to show that they meant business an American warship put into port and trained its heavy guns on Trieste.

The Trieste Settlement

The disposition of the Trieste question at the Paris meeting—as dirty a deal as was ever made at a conference of imperialist bandits—enables us once again to compare the deeds of the imperialists and the Kremlin clique with the high-sounding aims for which they allegedly fought against the Axis. An editorial in the *New York Times* of July 4 expressed the glaring contradiction with exceptional clarity:

As for the agreement itself, like many other decisions of the Big Powers, it pays scant regard to proclaimed principles and bases itself on expediency and a compromise among Big Power interests. The result is that it is disliked by all concerned, and by creating a Danzig on the Adriatic assures continued conflict for its ultimate possession.

If the Big Powers had followed the principles they proclaimed in the Atlantic Charter they would have held a plebiscite to make certain that any territorial change accorded with the expressed wishes of the peoples concerned. But since Russia opposed this, since the United States and Great Britain had abandoned this principle in other territorial settlements, and since France is intent on keeping the door open for similar settlements in western Germany, internationalization was perhaps the only way out under the circumstances, barring a final split.

By disposing of Trieste without any regard for the interests or wishes of the inhabitants, the Paris "peace-makers" have exacerbated national hatreds, set Slav against Italian and Italian against Slav, thereby sowing new seeds of national conflict and war. The economic consequences of the new territorial divisions will quickly be felt. They can only add to the economic chaos which is the picture of Europe today.

Every point on the agenda of the Paris conference revealed the deep split between the Anglo-American bloc and the Soviet Union. Some issues were resolved by compromises, with Molotov invariably yielding to Byrnes and Bevin. Others remained deadlocked. Yet the conference was confined exclusively to the peripheral problems of Europe. Germany is the central stake of world diplomacy on the Old Continent. The "peace-making" at Paris was therefore a kind of curtain raiser for the real drama to come. On the question of Germany's future, the Anglo-American bloc and the Soviet Union are sharply at odds. The conflicts over such issues as Trieste are but a foretaste of the wider divergencies which will later become manifest.

Time and experience have shown the Anglo-American imperialists the need for modifying the "peace" originally contemplated for Germany at Potsdam. Division of Germany into four occupation zones, each cut off from the other, has deepened the chaos of the German and European economy. While burdening Britain and the United States with tremendous budgetary commitments, the division prevents a reorganization of the German economy even on the extremely low levels determined by the victorious powers. Thus, while paying out tremendous sums for the occupation, there exists no possibility of economic return. Britain is unable to resume desperately needed trade with the defeated Reich. The United States cannot reorganize, even on the lowest levels, the economy of Europe in its own interests.

The big obstacle to the plans of the imperialists is the Soviet Union. Stalin's policy is one of integrating the Russian occupation zone with the economy of the Soviet Union. Politically,

Stalin seeks to prevent a reunification of Germany, for he fears a reunified Germany would only become a satellite of the western imperialist states and a source of new danger to the Soviet Union. Failing unification, the British have a plan for uniting the U.S., British and French occupation zones into a new German state, with its capital at Frankfurt. This state would have a population of 44 millions and would include the resources of the Ruhr and the Rhineland. Eastern Germany would become another state under Soviet domination, with a population of 22 millions. Raw materials and coal for its factories would have to come from non-German territories or from the Soviet Union itself.

It is precisely the threat of a unified Germany (excluding the Soviet zone of occupation) that Byrnes and Bevin hung over the Paris conference. But threats did not end there. The timing of the Bikini atom bomb test to coincide with the Paris conference was no accident. American imperialism was intent on reminding the Soviet negotiators that in all the decisive fields of strength the U.S., together with Britain, holds the aces. Molotov may be able to obstruct treaty-making for Europe except on Stalin's terms—for a while. But the pressures which the Anglo-American bloc are able to exert are enormous. Byrnes let it be known that unless peace treaties for Europe could be agreed upon, the United States, acting through the United Nations, would conclude its own treaties—at least with Italy and Germany—thus leaving the Soviet Union isolated behind its "iron curtain."

The Kremlin clique is not completely myopic. Stalin appreciates the fact that superior strength lies with the Anglo-American bloc. That is why all the yielding at Paris was done by Molotov. The Soviet Union was compelled to abandon its stand on Trieste. It lost out on the question of the Italian colonies. It was compelled to scale down its demand for Italian reparations. When the Big Four get around to discussing a peace treaty for Germany, the Soviet Union will be compelled to yield still more. For Stalin is incapable and unable to struggle against the imperialists in alliance with the international proletariat, and the Kremlin can find no other allies elsewhere; it can no longer maneuver between the different imperialist camps.

At Paris, the Soviet Union was in the position of fighting rearguard diplomatic actions, always retreating, always trying to cover its retreats. But the space for diplomatic maneuvering is constantly being narrowed down. When the problem of Germany comes to the fore, there will be no farther point in Europe to which diplomatic retreat can be made. The choice before Stalin will be clear-cut and inescapable: either to submit to Anglo-American pressures and thus escape a showdown; or resist, and retire into isolation behind the "iron curtain," thus sharply breaking with the imperialist camp and hastening the day of inevitable war.

It was in an endeavor to delay this approaching *denouement* that Molotov, at the Paris conference, did everything in his power to retard the calling of a 21-nation "peace conference" which Byrnes, backed by Bevin and Bidault, insisted on convening toward the end of July in order to pass upon draft "peace" treaties for the Axis satellites.

Byrnes demanded that it be called for July 29 in Paris. Molotov demurred to including China as one of the inviting powers, on the ground that the Chinese government had had no hand in negotiating the terms of the European treaties. This was obviously a stall, but Byrnes was able to make political capital out of Molotov's stand. After all, China was one of the "Big Five," and it was unseemly to "insult" a worthy ally by excluding it from the list of inviting powers.

Molotov next demanded that the "Big Four" foreign ministers determine in advance the rules of procedure for the projected "peace" conference. Byrnes and Bevin promptly objected to thus "tying the hands of the conference" in advance. They wanted to be free to line up their satellites among the 21 nations behind any proposals they may want the conference to adopt. In such a broad gathering the Kremlin is at a decided disadvantage. That is why Molotov wanted to establish the rules of the game in advance. But Byrnes and Bevin were adamant. The "Big Four" ministers then retired into secret session. One can only imagine what was said to Molotov behind the closed doors. When the full parley reconvened, Molotov announced his agreement with the summoning of the "peace" conference for July 29—with no restrictive rules set. Even in these secondary matters the Kremlin was compelled to submit.

The London conference of the "Big Five" demonstrated the irreconcilability of the interests—both immediate and historic—of the big imperialist powers and the Soviet Union; the Paris conference of the "Big Four" again heavily underscored it. Nowhere can an identity of interests be found, apart from the fact that both the imperialists and Stalin are anxious to prevent the masses of ruined Europe from rising in revolution. At every other point where the interests of the two camps meet—they clash. Stalin is driven to a course of territorial expansionism, both for purposes of military security and economic rehabilitation. This expansionist policy runs up against economic and political needs of the imperialists. The United States and Great Britain are impelled not only to attempt to pry open the

new domain of the Kremlin in eastern and southern Europe, but to break into the closed economic preserve represented by the Soviet Union itself.

But while this basic antagonism can be resolved only through the destruction either of the Soviet Union or imperialism, it will not necessarily explode in war in the immediate future. Stalin is only too well aware of the fearful weakness of the Soviet Union and the awesome might of American imperialism. The latter, for its part, faces great difficulties. World War II was a dangerous and costly business even for this richest and mightiest of powers. There is a popular revulsion against war which it will take time to overcome. The soldiers themselves are in no mood for new campaigns on foreign soil. Moreover, the war imposed enormous strain on the fabric of the economy. The American bourgeoisie needs time to mend its economic fences. This means garnering the fruits of the victory which signalized its paramountcy as a world power.

But there is no peace—in Europe or anywhere else in the world. At best there is an uneasy truce. The rivalries that yesterday converted Europe into a shambles are now keeping the Continent disunited, its economic fabric torn, its people ruined. The Paris conference was a warning to the European and world proletariat! It showed the only kind of world the imperialist peacemakers and the Kremlin clique are capable of organizing—a world of discord, of unabashed banditry, of economic chaos and sinking living standards for the masses, with the prospect of another and more terrible war hovering always in the background.

Two Books on the Soviet Union

Reviewed by RALPH GRAHAM

I CHOSE FREEDOM—By Victor Kravchenko. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1946.
ONE WHO SURVIVED—By Alexander Barmine. New York. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1945.

During the last fifteen years the Soviet Union has been the subject of a tremendous literature. Books have rolled in a veritable flood from the presses of the principal publishing houses. Almost every journalist assigned to the Soviet Union wrote a book on his findings. Literary luminaries would make a six weeks' tour of the Soviet Union under GPU guidance, then return home to write "authoritatively" on the "great Russian experiment." Even the Dean of Canterbury added his quota to this literary output. The books were numerous and they fell almost unflinchingly into one of two categories: either they were the work of the army of "fellow-travelers" and hired apologists of the Stalin regime, or they were the outpourings of persons with an anti-Soviet ax to grind.

Notably absent from the ever-growing collection were books by Soviet Russian citizens able to write critically and comprehensively about the Stalin regime. Nor is this surprising when one considers that critics were systematically "liquidated." Victor Serge and Anton Ciliga contrived to escape from Stalin's clutches and committed to writing some of their experiences and observations. From them the world gained some of the first true eye-witness revelations of life under Stalin. Now, in the books of Kravchenko and Barmine, we get the first rounded pictures of the more recent totalitarian rule of the Stalinist bureau-

cracy and what it means for the 180 million inhabitants of the Soviet Union.

No one can question the credentials of the authors. Both spent the major part of their lives under the Stalin regime. Kravchenko is an industrial engineer who held key posts in Soviet industry. He broke with the Stalin regime in this country, where he was on the staff of the Soviet Purchasing Commission during the war. At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution he was a young man, fired with enthusiasm for the socialist ideal. He fought in the Red Army through the civil war and intervention, became an ardent party member, and was called to military service again when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. Barmine's record is similar but more varied—Soviet industrialist, businessman, soldier, diplomat and journalist. He broke with the Stalin regime in 1937, while occupying the post of Soviet *charge d'affaires* in Athens, but his book was not published until last year.

Both Barmine and Kravchenko, unlike less fortunate Soviet officials who broke with Stalin (Ignace Reiss, Walter Krivitsky), have thus far managed to evade the murderous attentions of Stalin's hired assassins. Kravchenko explains that inwardly he broke with the regime many years ago. But one cannot break with Stalin, and continue to live, if one remains in the Soviet Union. Only those sent on official missions abroad can leave the Soviet Union. Kravchenko had to wait a long time before the opportunity came. Barmine, as a Soviet diplomat, had the opportunity long before Kravchenko. But his determination to break came only after the monstrous purge of the Red Army in

which many of his personal friends were sent to their deaths as "traitors" when he knew them to be loyal defenders of the Soviet Union.

In their flight from Stalinism, both authors have landed in the lap of capitalist "democracy." This requires that we approach critically all the political conclusions which they draw from the arsenals of facts at their disposal. Both belong to the Souvarinist tendency which identifies Stalinism with Bolshevism. Kravchenko, however—without doubt unwittingly—destroys this false identification when he describes Soviet life and politics during the first years of the Revolution, when Lenin and Trotsky were at the helm of the Soviet state. The living, dynamic democracy and creativeness of those years contrasts all too sharply with the harsh suppression and dull conformity which the Stalinist bureaucracy introduced.

But of the facts which the authors set down, the experiences they relate, the observations they record—of these there can be no question. Both books ring true. They contain a wealth of circumstantial detail which is in harmony, and which fully tallies with all the information previously established. Even Stalin's literary hatchet-men in this country have attempted no refutation. Stalinist reviews of the two books have consisted of sneering insinuations against the authors and a studious refusal to take issue with their presentation of facts.

Within the literary framework of personal narratives, Barmine and Kravchenko unfold the repellent story of the Stalin regime. For nightmarish horror no work of fiction can even begin to compete with these books. First, we are given glimpses of the Bolshevik Revolution and civil war—the glorious and heroic years of the first workers' state. Then comes the rise to power of the usurping bureaucracy in the period of revolutionary ebb and defeat, with Stalin as the quintessential expression of the attitude and needs of the new ruling caste. We are taken through the period of the five-year plans, the forced collectivization of agriculture ("liquidation of the *kulaks* as a class"), the fantastic Moscow frame-up trials, the monstrous purges, Stalin's man-made famine in which millions perished, and, finally, the war against Nazi Germany with all its terrible consequences for the Russian people.

Outstanding in a book woven of drama and horror is Kravchenko's description of the great famine in south Russia and central Asia which followed as the inevitable consequence of Stalin's adventurist program of forced collectivization. "Harvest in Hell" is the lurid title of this chapter, and it reeks of death and ruin.

On a battlefield men die quickly, they fight back, they are sustained by fellowship and a sense of duty. Here I saw people dying in solitude by slow degrees, dying hideously, without the excuse of sacrifice for a cause. They had been trapped and left to starve, each in his home, by a political decision made in a far-off capital around conference and banquet tables. There was not even the consolation of inevitability to relieve the horror. [Butter, for instance, was exported abroad from the very regions where people were dying of hunger, in order to get foreign currency with which to import machinery.]

The most terrifying sights were the little children with skeleton limbs dangling from balloon-like abdomens. Starvation had wiped every trace of youth from their faces, turning them into tortured gargoyles; only in their eyes still lingered the reminder of childhood. Everywhere we found men and women lying prone, their faces and bellies bloated, their eyes utterly expressionless.

Kravchenko was one of many thousands of Party men sent into the famine-bound areas to see that the new crops were harvested, to prevent the starving from eating the green shoots, to save the collectives from breaking down, etc., etc. So he knows

whereof he writes. How many of the peasants died? No one knows. The regime of the Stalinist bureaucracy not only revealed no statistics of the famine victims, if, indeed, such statistics were gathered. It has never acknowledged to this day that there was any famine at all! Foreign press correspondents in Moscow were forbidden entry into the famine regions and prevented from sending abroad any of the facts that came to their attention. Some, who were transferred to other countries, and took the opportunity to write what they had heard while in the Soviet Union, gave estimates of three to five million dead.

The man-contrived famine followed upon the "triumphant completion" of the first five-year plan. Allowing for all the bureaucratic boasting and exaggeration, and the statistical fakery which was soon to be uncovered, the execution of this plan did provide the Soviet Union with some of the basic elements of a heavy industry. But at what cost in human life and welfare! The workers and the technical staffs were slave-driven at a murderous pace for several years without a let-up. Impossible norms of production and tempos of construction were set. The industrial population was worked to exhaustion. Meanwhile, with all the emphasis placed on the development of heavy industry, there was no corresponding growth of industries producing consumer's goods. There were growing insufficiencies of food, clothing and housing. The workers' standard of life dipped below that of Czarist times. A fearful poverty was superimposed on nervous exhaustion due to killing labor. Barmine gives a most graphic description of the Soviet capital at the end of the first five-year plan:

After the improvements of 1922-28, Moscow showed appalling changes. Every face and every house front was eloquent of misery, exhaustion and apathy. There were scarcely any stores, and the rare display windows still existing had an air of desolation. Nothing was to be seen in them but cardboard boxes and food tins, upon which the shopkeepers, in a mood of despair rather than rashness, had pasted stickers reading "empty." Everyone's clothes were worn out and the quality of the stuff was unspeakable. My Paris suit made me feel embarrassed in the streets. There was a shortage of everything—especially of soap, boots, vegetables, meat, butter, and all fatty food-stuffs.

I was much astonished to see crowds waiting in front of the candy stores. Fellow-travelers after a hasty trip through Russia would return home and tell glowing tales of the socialist paradise where crowds waited in long lines, not for bread, but for candy. The truth was quite different. Famished people sought anything to fill their empty stomachs. Even the revolting sweets made of saccharine and soya beans were gladly consumed, because they were almost the only edible things that could be bought—even then one pound of them cost an average day's wages.

Manufactured goods were much scarcer than money, and money was scarcer than jobs. It was true, as propaganda abroad said, that there was no unemployment; but living on a workman's pay was the hardest thing in the world. The housing crisis had reached a point never before known. In front of the empty co-operatives, long queues stood day and night in the hope of being allotted ridiculously small quantities of foodstuffs. . . .

I was struck by these material evidences of crisis, and still more by the nervous tension among Communists, intellectuals, technical specialists, and workmen; in short, among all those who had been most involved in the Five-Year Plan. Faces were marked with anxiety and fatigue, and minds were so exhausted that no one seemed capable any longer of controlling his reactions or of seeing things calmly. Everyone was caught up in a tangle of imperative instructions, resistant facts, constantly recurring difficulties, official lies, nerve-wracking needs, fears, and doubts.

To Stalin's limited mind, it appeared that the whole economic process could be commanded and directed by Kremlin

decree. Industrialization and collectivization could be carried through without any regard for the needs and desires of the workers and peasants. Having proclaimed the possibility of "building socialism in one country," the job had to be carried through even if it meant wiping out half the population. When bureaucratic arbitrariness ran into objective difficulties and popular resistance, with the result that the whole economic fabric was torn and broken, Stalin's answer was—the purge. Firing squads, secret murders in GPU cellars, show "trials" of alleged saboteurs and foreign agents, and mass deportations were his "remedy" for economic dislocation and breakdown. Since there could be no admission of fault or miscalculation at the top, scapegoats had to be found—and punished. Critics of the regime, real or suspected, had to be "liquidated." Needless to say, these methods, while leaving the basic causes of the crisis untouched, served to deepen the economic chaos. The technical staffs of entire industries were wiped out in the purges. Such staffs cannot be created in a day.

Stalin's purges naturally occupy a prominent place in the two books. We will give the floor to Kravchenko, who describes this grim business in its enormous scope, with special reference to Nikopol, where he was employed as an industrial engineer in a large plant. Kravchenko himself felt the brutish hand of the Stalinist inquisition and narrowly escaped "liquidation," so that his testimony is not just that of an observer, but of a victim or near-victim. This is what he writes:

The outside world watched the several blood-purge trials staged in the former Hall of Nobles in Moscow. It failed to understand, it does not understand to this day, that the Moscow trials were just a formal facade, a show window, behind which the real horrors were being piled mountain high. The public trials involved a few dozen carefully selected and rehearsed victims. The purge involved hundreds of thousands, ultimately around ten millions who were sorted and disposed of rapidly; these to prison, these into exile, these for the forced labor battalions, these to die.

Crowds of women and children swarmed around the NKVD building in Nikopol at all hours despite bitter cold. The NKVD men would disperse them, but soon they were back again, weeping, screaming, calling the names of fathers, husbands, brothers. Many of these unfortunates were local inhabitants, but a lot of others had come from nearby villages, where the pogrom was striking down village Soviet chairmen, Party secretaries, Comsomol leaders, presidents of collective farms. This scene outside the NKVD I shall never be able to expunge from my memory. A great theatrical genius, hoping to convey mass despair, macabre and boundless sorrow, could not have invented anything more terrifying.

And in the midst of the storm, through the howling of the stricken and the grimacing of the suffering, press and radio announced the formal adoption of "the world's most democratic Constitution" in November, 1936.

There was not one purge but several, a series. Each marked a new stage of crisis. The more unsure the regime felt, the greater and more cruel the repressions. Stalin carried through a ruthless war against the whole Soviet people. Victims were grabbed off from every department of government, every branch of the economy and social life, every layer of the population. Nor were the bureaucratic tops of the regime exempt. When the super-purge of 1936-38 tapered off, says Kravchenko:

there was not an office or enterprise, an economic or cultural body, a government or a Party or military bureau, which was not largely in new hands. Had a foreign conqueror taken over the machinery of Soviet life and put new people in control, the change could hardly have been more thorough or more cruel.

In addition to the thousands who died before firing squads, or who met more cruel death at the hands of sadistic torturers

in the cellars of the secret police, millions were condemned to forced labor in camps in the most inhospitable and unhealthy regions of the country. Here under appalling conditions which Kravchenko is also able to describe as an eye-witness, unnumbered multitudes died, Kravchenko avers that in 1938

among Communists close to the Kremlin throne, whispered estimates placed the slave labor forces at more than fifteen millions; in the next few years the estimate would be closer to twenty millions.

Yet even this does not exhaust the estimate of victims. For everyone who was purged had relatives, friends and dependents who were made to suffer. Says Kravchenko:

millions who escaped the purge were maimed in their minds and wounded in their spirits by the fears and brutalities amidst which they lived. For sheer scale, I know of nothing in all human history to compare with this purposeful and merciless persecution in which tens of millions of Russians suffered directly or indirectly. Genghis Khan was an amateur, a muddler, compared to Stalin.

The purge of the Red Army was as sweeping and comprehensive as it was in other spheres. Barmine gives a "rough tally" of those who disappeared: three out of five marshals, eleven vice-commissars of war. Six of the eight generals who formed the court-martial alleged to have condemned to death Tukhachevsky and seven others of the High Command. Seventy-five of the eighty members (all generals and admirals) of the Supreme Military Council of the Red Army, including all the commanders of military districts, the commander-in-chief of the air force, the commander-in-chief of the fleet, and all but one of the commanders of the different sea fleets. Ninety per cent of all generals. Eighty per cent of all colonels. Approximately thirty thousand lesser officers.

It was this beheaded Red Army which had to go into battle against the Nazis. Barmine asserts that if Stalin had not shot the entire commanding staff of the army in 1937, "the battles which saved Russia would have been fought on the Vistula and the Nieman instead of the Volga and the Neva. Three peacetime years is not long enough for a beheaded army to grow a new brain." The places occupied by such brilliant military strategists as Tukhachevsky, Bluecher, Yakir, Feldman, Kork, Uborevich—all "liquidated" in the purge—were filled by such utterly talentless marshals as Voroshilov, Budyenny and Timoshenko, whose only "qualification" was their servility to Stalin. Barmine testifies, and the whole world knows, that these military mediocrities neither attempted a strategy nor put into operation any plan. "All they used their gigantic manpower and equipment for was to stop successive holes in the dike through which the Germans were pouring." Stalin soon had to remove these generals from the command and replace them with abler men. Meanwhile, the Red Army and the Soviet people paid, and continued to pay, a fearful price for Stalin's purge of the armed forces. Hitler's troops were able to overrun a large segment of European Russia, bringing death and ruin to the most populous regions. The Red Army suffered calamitous casualties without being able to stem the tide of invasion until much later.

But this is only a part of the picture. The Soviet economy, which was required to serve the needs of war, had developed in lopsided fashion under the five-year plans due to the fantastic disproportions inherent in the very plans themselves. Stalin imagined he could steamroller his way through the very toughest of obstacles by a prodigious sacrifice of human life and welfare. By the Soviet Union's own unaided efforts, the country would not only be industrialized at terrific speed, but it would "catch up with and outstrip" the most advanced capitalist country, the United States. We know where Stalin's adventurism in the eco-

conomic domain led—to breakdown and chaos. Soviet economy had not recovered from the awful consequences of Stalinist “planning” when the Nazis invaded the country and the debilitated industry was called upon to furnish the mechanical sinews of war and the needs of an army of many millions.

How blighting were the effects of Stalin’s policies in the economic sphere is well illustrated by Kravchenko when he relates that Soviet soldiers died by the thousands at barbed wire barricades set up by the Nazis—because industry was unable to supply such a simple contrivance as steel wire cutters. As for battery flashlights—there just were no such luxurious aids for the Soviet soldiers. But industry could not even give them such a simple substitute as kerosene lanterns. Iron shoes for the horses were unobtainable, with the result that the cavalry and animal transport suffered. The soldiers marched and fought in canvas shoes.

These deficiencies were put down as the work of “internal enemies.” And so the repressions and purges went on in time of war as they had in time of peace—a “war within a war,” says Kravchenko, who attests that this was “the only part of the war effort that worked quickly and efficiently in the first terrible stage of the struggle” against the Nazis. . . . “It took precedence over measures of military defense.”

Amid the terrible sufferings of the Soviet masses, in peace as in war, one stratum of the population, the Soviet *elite*, not merely has its fundamental wants satisfied but lives in plush comfort. The degree of good or luxurious living depends upon the position of the individual in the hierarchy of the privileged, with the best naturally reserved for the ultra-privileged bureaucrats at the top of the social scale. While the masses go hungry and are clad in rags, the *elite* enjoy the best of food and clothing and plenty of it. While the workers live in the same squalid slums that existed under Czarism, Soviet officials occupy the newest and best apartment houses. The much-publicized rest homes and vacation spots are reserved for the ruling caste and the most privileged section of the workers. Bacchanalian feasts at which the bureaucrats gorge themselves on the finest of domestic and imported foods and wines are commonplace. They and they alone ride in the automobiles. Stalin himself lives like an Oriental potentate. His every whim is gratified at the expense of the Soviet budget and his whims are many and costly. He affects, for political purposes, a simplicity of living which is belied by too many contrary facts. Barmine’s book contains some matchless writing which shows the abysmal gulf separating the standard of living of the bureaucracy and its “chief” from that of the Soviet masses.

Kravchenko explains why the Soviet masses, while inwardly rebellious, nevertheless have endured thus far the parasitism and the repressions of the parvenu usurpers in the Kremlin:

They were impotent in their suffering; weakened by twenty years of war, revolution, undernourishment and systematic persecutions; dizzied by slogans and bewildered by lies; cut off completely from the outside world. Yet they never approved the brutality of their rulers. The bitterness was deepest in the Party itself, because it was mixed with a feeling of guilt and churned by galling helplessness as against the rulers and their might.

Disbelief in the framed-up charges against the Old Bolsheviks murdered by Stalin was universal, Kravchenko testifies: “They’re not fooled, they’re not fooled one bit.” And—“they are waiting for their chance to seize the rights which are theirs.”

During the war, when the abyss between the bureaucracy and the people assumed uglier forms than ever before, Kravchenko avers that he heard for the first time “open cursing of

the officialdom” in Moscow. This was when the German army was at the very gates of the Soviet capital and the city was being evacuated. The bureaucracy monopolized the trains to remove themselves and their families from the danger zone, together with their furniture, their wardrobes and their mistresses, while thousands of wretched families camped amidst their bundles and suitcases at the railroad stations in the vague hope of a place or even a foothold on some train going anywhere eastward. At the same time—“as if to taunt the miserable mobs, comfortable caravans of official motorcars streamed out of Moscow, loaded with the families and household goods of the *elite*.”

If to the social chasm which separates the rulers from the masses one adds the immense cruelties of the Stalin regime, its totalitarian brutishness and disregard of human life, its glaring deceitfulness, fraud and hypocrisy, it is easy enough to understand that the rule of the Kremlin oligarchy, despite all its appearance of strength, rests on a seething foundation of enormous discontent. The latent mood of rebellion has penetrated even the hierarchy of the privileged. This is perhaps the most important of the political revelations in Kravchenko’s book.

The Red Army officers, the Stakhanovist workers, the factory managers, the industrial engineers and technicians, the state and collective farm managers, the party functionaries and government officials detest and fear the regime of which they are the social beneficiaries. To be sure, they enjoy the “good life” in matters of material comfort. But in the vast ocean of misery and oppression which surrounds them on all sides, many feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. The animosity of the humble worker and peasant assails them in a thousand tangible and intangible ways. And this is the least of their woes. Much more direct and palpable is the perpetual feeling of uncertainty and insecurity which pervades their lives and taints their material enjoyments. None feels safe. Everyone feels that if things go wrong—and things are *always* going wrong—he may end up in an NKVD cellar or a forced labor camp. The unease and apprehension of the Soviet *elite* are delineated by Kravchenko:

Let it be remembered that to thousands of the men and women around me I was a person of consequence, one of the Party elect. I had favors to dispense. Under my roof they found abundance and comfort—things and conditions for which all but a handful of people were tragically starved. My standards of life were modest, even bleak, when compared to those of men in my position in America. But in Nikopol, Taganrog, Pervouralsk or even Moscow they were so far above the average, so remote from the working-class level, that I seemed to live in a world apart. Few of those who envied their well-paid *novi barii*, their new masters, or caught a glimpse of the sorry splendors of our life, realized the weight of fear, lack of personal freedom and professional independence, the torment of uncertain tenure under which we enjoyed our advantages. . . . Our days seemed hurried and transitory—way stations to another assignment or to sudden extinction.

Kravchenko’s revelation of the “inner condition,” so to speak, of the privileged social caste upon which Stalin’s rule rests, is the first direct evidence from a competent source of the extreme instability of the regime. To begin with, the bureaucracy and the top stratum of the working class provided only a very narrow foundation for the rule of the totalitarian Kremlin clique. Now we discover that even this narrow foundation is weak and shaky, composed of elements which cannot but hate the dominant tops because of the fear and uncertainty which pervades and poisons their lives. In the course of eighteen years Stalin has been unable to establish, and

harden, a homogeneous social formation which could serve as a reliable basis for his rule. Instead, we have a picture of a social formation, which, while enjoying all the material amenities of a privileged caste, is driven by the conditions of its political existence to hate and fear the regime of which it is the social beneficiary. This leaves the Kremlin clique in a position of such isolation that it can maintain its rule only by police methods—the methods of intimidation and violence not only in relation to the masses but towards the bureaucracy itself. What a glaring commentary on the views of those innovators in the realm of political theory who contend that the Soviet bureaucracy is—of all things!—a new ruling class! The innovators must explain the unique phenomenon of a “ruling class” which cowers in fear and terror before the political instrument of its own rule.

Some one may ask: If all the horrors depicted by the two ex-Soviet officials are true, why did the Soviet masses—also that rebellious section of the Soviet *elite* to which the authors belonged!—rise so magnificently to defend the Soviet Union in the war against Hitler? Why did they not seize upon the war crisis to settle scores with the hated tyrants who were the authors of all their misery? Neither Kravchenko nor Barmine refers to the fact that as yet there is no revolutionary party to lead the masses in struggle against the Stalin regime. But Kravchenko gives the following general answer to these questions—an answer which is eloquent testimony to the strong persistence of socialist ideas in the Soviet Union and a guarantee that Stalinism will ultimately meet its doom:

Like all of them (the Soviet people) I loved my country. I knew that it was something distinct from the gang who ruled and terrorized us. . . . The fact that I could muster a sincere enthusiasm for victory, a passionate hatred of the invader, though I detested the Soviet regime, is the key to the mystery why the Russians fought and in the end

conquered. They did not fight *for* Stalin but *despite* Stalin. No one knows this better than the Kremlin clique itself. . . . In its propaganda to the armed forces and the population at large the Kremlin insisted that the invaders were intent on restoring landlords and capitalists. This was an effective morale builder and, indeed, offered the most solid common ground on which the regime and the people could meet. Except for a negligible minority, it should be understood, the Russians categorically did not desire such a restoration, under any disguise, no matter how sincerely they might detest the political and economic despotism of the Soviet system.

Kravchenko's unexpected allusion to the “Soviet system” in this quotation is an example of the verbal trickery by which both he and Barmine, after their break with Stalin, facilitated their passage to the camp of capitalist “democracy.” After offering repeated proofs that what the Soviet masses detest is *not the Soviet system but the Stalin Regime* and that they sacrificed themselves in war to defend what still remains of the Soviet system (namely, the socialized economy), we are suddenly confronted with the assertion that it is the “despotism” of the *Soviet system* that is the object of popular hatred. This assertion blandly ignores the fact that Stalin had to destroy all of the Soviet system except its economic base, and all its living representatives, in order to clamp his usurpatory rule on the country. By identifying the Soviet system with its Stalinist destroyers, Barmine and Kravchenko reveal themselves as renegades from Socialism and demonstrate their willingness to serve its class enemies.

Significantly, the United States government readily gave refuge in this country to both these ex-Soviet officials and even afforded them protection against the NKVD assassins who were at their heels. Contrast this with the resolute and persistent refusal of the State Department to grant asylum to Leon Trotsky, who broke with Stalin but remained faithful to Socialism until his death!

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By LEON TROTSKY

With the publication of two letters written by Trotsky in 1929 we continue the documentation of internal problems in connection with the building of the Fourth International (This series began in our May issue).

The July 12, 1929 letter further clarifies Trotsky's rejection of an “all-inclusive” organization, especially the proposals made at the time—by Souvarine in France among others—to collaborate with the Right Wing tendency in the Communist movement. This tendency was represented in Germany by the Brandler-Thalheimer group. In Russia, by Bukharin and Rykov. In the U.S., by the Lovestoneites.

Brandler and Thalheimer had been in the official leadership of the German Communist Party up to the debacle of 1923 when they were supplanted by the Maslow-Fischer group which had ultra-leftist tendencies. By 1929 both groups had been expelled from the official movement (headed by Thaelmann). In the beginning the Maslow-Fischer group (then known as the *Volkswille* group) drew closer to the Trotskyists, only to break off at a later period.

The newspaper *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, referred to in the text, was the Vienna organ of the Austro-Marxists, the Austrian variety of oppor-

tunism in the Second International. Wels was one of the prominent leaders of the German Socialist Party and the German trade unions.

The August 6, 1929 letter relates to the struggle in France to launch a regular publication. This was one of the key problems of the early period, especially acute in the case of France and Spain.

Semard and Monmousseau, referred to in the text, were prominent Stalinist leaders of the French CP.

Once Again on Brandler-Thalheimer

Constantinople
July 12, 1929

Esteemed Comrade,

I am very thankful to you for your detailed letter of June 3. It contains much valuable information which I hope to use in the future. Here I wish to confine myself to the question of our attitude toward the German Right Opposition.

1) You admit that Brandler-Thalheimer failed to understand the revolutionary situation in Germany in 1923, the revolutionary situation in China in 1925-27, the revolutionary situation in England in 1926, and finally the Thermidorian character of the struggle against "Trotskyism" in 1923-27. All this is admitted by you. But thereby you admit that Brandler-Thalheimer are *not* revolutionists, because revolutionists are determined and recognizable by their attitude toward the basic issues of the world revolution. What can we Bolsheviks have in common with non-revolutionists, or what is still worse, with people who have fought against our revolutionary decisions and slogans during the most critical moments in the last six-seven years?

2) You are, however, disturbed over Brandler and Thalheimer's being called liquidators and Mensheviks. If one takes this literally, then it is of course wrong. But the *tendency* whereby they are counterposed to us is undoubtedly the liquidationist and Menshevik tendency. The Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung* criticizes me in exactly the same way as Thalheimer. Together with Thalheimer the Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung* sympathizes with Stalin against me, and with Rykov and Bukharin against Stalin. But the Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung* does it openly, while Brandler-Thalheimer play the wretched game of hide and seek. In such cases I prefer the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, i.e., an avowed enemy.

3) Your letter contains annihilating arguments against the Rights. Nevertheless you find it necessary to add that the situation "in the German Communist Party would improve if it were carrying out the so-called Rightist policy instead of the present policy."

But after all, we have already seen the Brandlerite policy as the leading party policy. It led to the greatest catastrophe toward the end of 1923. This catastrophe is at the bottom of all the subsequent violent shifts of German Communism to the right and to the left. This catastrophe was the premise for the ensuing phase of stabilization of European capitalism. How then can one overlook the fact that Brandler as a politician stands on the other side of the barricades?

4) You know that I did not arrive suddenly at this annihilating conclusion. I wanted to hope that Brandler could learn. In the autumn of 1923 he sensed his own inadequacy. He told me several times that he lacked the strength to orient himself in a revolutionary situation. However, after he let slip the revolutionary situation, he became filled with haughtiness. He began to accuse me of "pessimism." He looked forward to 1924 with "greater optimism." I then understood that this man was incapable of distinguishing between the face of the revolution and its back.

If this were a personal idiosyncrasy, it wouldn't be so bad. But after all this has now been erected into a system and upon this system a faction is being built. What can we have in common with this faction?

5) I do not thereby undertake any defense whatever of the policy of Maslow and others. In 1923 Maslow's verbal radicalism stemmed from the same passivity as in Brandler's case. Without understanding the ABC of the question, Maslow tried to laugh off my demand that a date be set for the uprising. At the Fifth World Congress he was still of the opinion that the revolution was on the up-swing. In other words, on the most fundamental questions he shared the mistakes of Brandler, serving them up with an ultra-leftist sauce. But Maslow tried to learn until he tumbled into the swamp of capitulationism. Other former ultra-lefts did learn a few things. I do not at all assume responsibility for the line of *Volkswille* as a whole. Even today there are not a few eruptions of the past, i.e., combinations of opportunist tendencies with ultra-leftism. But nevertheless these

comrades have learned a great deal, and many of them have shown that they are capable of learning more, Brandler-Thalheimer have, on the contrary, taken a gigantic step backward, erecting their revolutionary blindness into a platform.

6) You see merit in their struggle for party democracy. I do not see this merit. Brandler-Thalheimer never raised their voices against the crushing of the Left Opposition. They not only tolerated the Stalinist regime but supported it. They joined in the chorus of the Thermidorian persecution of "Trotskyism." When did they feel themselves called upon to struggle for party democracy? When the apparatus began to crush them and when they became convinced that they could not come to power by exclusively serving the Stalinists. Is it really possible to see merit in opportunists because they begin shouting when the Centrists, afraid of criticism from the left, begin crushing them? No one likes to be beaten. There is no merit in it.

The centrist methods of struggle against the Rights are revolting and in the last analysis help the Rights. But this does not at all mean that the democratic regime of the Communist Party is obliged to assure the right of citizenship to the opportunist tendency of Brandler.

It is impermissible to approach party democracy as a thing in itself. We speak of party democracy *on specific revolutionary foundations* which exclude Brandlerism.

7) The second merit of the Brandlerites you see in their struggle for transitional demands and their search for ties with the masses, etc. But after all do we need ties with the masses for the sake of these ties alone and not for the sake of *revolutionary* (and therewith *international*) goals? If we were to proceed from the bare ties with the masses, then we ought to turn our eyes toward the Second International and Amsterdam. In this respect the German Social Democracy is far more imposing than Brandler-Thalheimer.

It is of course possible to object that this is an exaggeration: Brandler-Thalheimer are, you know, not the Social Democracy. Of course, they are *not yet* the Social Democracy, and, of course, they are not the *existing* Social Democracy. But one must know how to approach events in their development. The German Social Democracy did not begin with Herman Muller, either. And, on the other hand, Brandler still only wants to get the masses, but hasn't got them yet. You yourself remark with indignation that the Brandlerites are turning their backs upon the international proletariat. They are not concerned with the Russian revolution, nor with the Chinese revolution, nor with the rest of mankind. They want to carry out their policy in Germany, just like Stalin wants to build socialism in Russia. Live and let live. But after all we know to what this has led in the past: to August 4, 1914. Permit me to recall once again that young opportunist factions, especially oppositional factions, are no "nicer" in relation to the old social chauvinist parties than a young pig is "nicer" than an old swine.

National Reformism

8) But those are seriously mistaken who imagine that Brandler is actually capable of leading the masses "on the soil of reality" (i.e., of national reformism). No, on this soil Brandler has an unconquerable competitor. To the extent that a mass worker has to choose between Brandler and Wels, he will take Wels, and in his own way he will be correct: there is no need to begin from the beginning something that has already been accomplished.

9) You seem to give credit to Brandler-Thalheimer for their criticism of Thaelmann's May 1 policy. In passing you express assurance that I could not possibly approve this policy. I don't

know whether you have read my letter to the Sixth World Congress, *What Next?* This letter contains a special chapter devoted to the perspectives of the radicalization of the German working class and in it is a *direct and categorical warning against the silly Thaelmannist over-estimation of the degree of this radicalization and against the dangers of ultra-leftist adventures latent in this*. I will deal in greater detail with all this in a pamphlet which I hope to issue next month. But in criticizing bureaucratic adventurism I will draw all the more sharply a line of demarcation between my criticism and that of Brandler. Opportunists always appear very triumphant in criticizing revolutionary adventurism. But they also pave the way for it: Brandler paved the way for Maslow, just as Maslow paved the way for Thaelmann who combines all the mistakes of Brandler and Maslow and adds to them his own blunders which stem from bureaucratic stupidity and boastful ignorance.

10) You point to individual groups of the Left Opposition and call them "sectarian." We ought to come to an agreement on the content of this term. Among us there are elements who remain satisfied with a home-spun criticism of the mistakes of the official party, without setting themselves any broader tasks, without assuming any practical revolutionary obligations, converting the revolutionary opposition into a title, something akin to a Legion of Honor. There are in addition sectarian tendencies which express themselves in splitting every hair into four parts. It is necessary to struggle against this. And I am personally ready to wage a struggle against it, and not to be deterred, if need be, by old friendships, personal ties, and so forth and so on.

However, there should be no illusions. Revolutionary Marxists have been once again—not for the first time and probably not for the last time—driven into a position of an international propaganda society. By the very nature of things such a situation involves certain elements of sectarianism, which can be overcome only gradually. You seem to be frightened by the smallness of your numbers. This is, of course, unpleasant. It is, of course, best to have organizations numbering millions. But where are we, the vanguard of the vanguard, to obtain organizations of millions on the day after the world revolution has suffered catastrophic defeats in the most important countries, defeats produced by a Menshevik leadership which hides behind a false mask of Bolshevism? Where?

We are passing through a period of colossal reaction, following the revolutionary years (1917-23). On a new and higher historical stage, we, revolutionary Marxists, find ourselves thrown back into a position of a small and persecuted minority, almost as was the case at the beginning of the imperialist war. As all of history demonstrates, beginning, say, with the First International, such regressions are unavoidable. Our advantage over our predecessors lies in this, that the situation today is more mature and that we ourselves are more "mature" for we stand on the shoulders of Marx, Lenin and many others. We shall capitalize on our advantage only if we are able to evince the greatest ideological irreconcilability, fiercer even than Lenin's irreconcilability at the outbreak of the war [of 1914-18]. Characterless impressionists like Radek will depart from us. They will invariably speak about our "sectarianism." We must not fear words. We have already passed twice through similar experiences. This happened during the 1907-12 reaction in Russia. This happened in all of Europe during the war years. There will still be individual capitulations, desertions and outright betrayals. This is inherent in the nature of our period. All the more reliable will be the selection of our ranks. The greatest honor for a genuine revolutionist today is to remain a "sec-

tarian" of revolutionary Marxism in the eyes of Philistines, whimperers and superficial thinkers. Let me repeat: today we are once again only an international propaganda society. I do not see in this the slightest reason for pessimism, despite the fact that behind us is the great historical mountain of the October Revolution. Or more accurately, precisely because this great historical mountain lies behind us. I have no doubts that the development of the new chapter of the proletarian revolution will trace its genealogy back to our "sectarian" group.

11) In conclusion, a few words about Brandler's faction as a whole. You agree with me that Brandler-Thalheimer are incorrigible. I am ready to agree with you that the faction still remains superior to its leaders. Many workers fell into this faction, despairing of the policy of the official party, and at the same time, being unable to forget the ill-starred leadership of the ultra-lefts following 1923. All this is true. A section of these workers, like a section of the ultra-left workers, will go over to the Social Democracy. Another section will come to us, if we do not show any indulgence to the Rights. Our task consists in explaining that the Brandlerite faction is only a new gateway to the Social Democracy.

12) Do we need a platform of transitional demands? We do. Do we need a correct tactic in the trade unions? Unquestionably. But it is possible to discuss these questions only with those who have clearly and firmly decided *for what ends* we need all this. As I will not discuss various tendencies in materialism with a man who crosses himself on passing a church, just so I will not start elaborating slogans and tactics with Brandler who, out of principle, labels the back of the revolution as its face (and vice versa). We must first intrench ourselves on principled positions, take a correct starting point and then proceed to unfold along tactical lines. We are now in the period of principled self-clarification and merciless demarcation from opportunists and muddlers. This is the only avenue to the highway of revolution.

With warm and irreconcilable greetings,

L. TROTSKY.

An Open Letter to the Editorial Board of "La Verite"

August 6, 1929

Dear Comrades!

You are about to publish a weekly newspaper based on the principles of the Communist Left Opposition. I am with you with all my heart. This is exactly what is needed.

In France the influence of the Opposition is far too slight. This is because there are too many oppositional groups in France. Many of them are stagnating. From time to time they put out an issue of a magazine containing documents of the international opposition or episodic articles on isolated questions of French life. The reader forgets the contents of the last issue by the time a new one reaches him. It is indispensable to break out of this situation. It is necessary to supply the masses with correct and systematic Marxist evaluations of all the events of social life. Politics demands the continuity of thought, words and deeds. That is why politics demands a daily newspaper.

The Opposition still lacks the resources today to undertake a daily. You are obliged to begin with a weekly. This is already a step forward; provided, of course, you do not stop here but will continue to stubbornly steer—toward a daily.

Those ideas which you represent—the ideas of Marxism, enriched by the practice of Lenin's party and the entire post-war revolutionary struggle of the international proletariat—will cut a path for themselves. There can be no doubt of this. All

that is necessary is that these ideas be intimately tied to the facts of life, geared to actual events and fructified by the living experience of the masses. Your weekly will serve this end.

Thereby it will become an irreplaceable instrument for elaborating the platform of the French Opposition—a platform that is correct in principle and viable. Only pedants are capable of thinking that a platform can be hatched in an office and then proclaimed as a ready-made premise for political activity. No, a fighting program can only set down and generalize the political experience that has already been gone through, and in this way create conditions for broader and more successful experiences in the future.

Marx once remarked that a single actual step of the movement is more important than a dozen programs. Marx had in mind programs which are created outside the actual struggle, primarily for the consolation of their creators. Marx's words, alas, apply most directly to the present position of the French Communist Opposition. Wherein lies its weakness? In this, that it has not waged a political struggle, or in those cases where this was undertaken, it was done only episodically. This inevitably leads to the formation and preservation of shut-in and conservative circles which, as everyone knows, never pass the test of events. A continuation of this condition threatens to cruelly compromise the French Opposition and for a long time to bar its road to the future. A concentration of all the forces of the Left Opposition faction is indispensable. Your *Verite* must become the organ for such a concentration.

It is impermissible to lose any more time; enough has been already lost.

The mistakes of official Communism are not accidental in character. They are implanted in the very nature of the ruling faction. *Centrism* is an intermediate tendency, intermediate between reformism and Communism. Centrism has not and cannot have its own independent line. It always gropes for a line under a rain of blows from the right and from the left. It rushes from side to side, executes zigzags, swings around a circle and falls from one extreme into the other. It ought to be added that contemporary centrism is utterly bureaucratized and completely subject to the commands of the summit of the Stalinist faction. This invests every zigzag of the leadership with an international scope, independently of the existing conditions of the labor movement in each country. As a result we witness the progressive weakening of the positions of world Communism. Individuals of the Semard and Monmousseau type are the most finished representatives of bureaucratic centrism in France.

The latest adventurist zigzag to the left—whose immediate aim is to screen from the eyes of the workers the massacre of the Communist Opposition—found its expression in a number of adventures and laid bare from Canton to Berlin both the heroism of the advanced layer of the workers as well as the political bankruptcy of the leadership. As a result of this convulsive zigzag, which brought the only thing it could, namely, defeat, one must expect a further weakening of centrism and the strengthening of the wings—the right and the left.

A moment now approaches clearly favorable for the recruitment of revolutionary workers under the banner of Marx and Lenin.

Rejecting the circle spirit, with its petty interests and ambitions, *Verite* must unite around itself all the virile, healthy, and genuinely revolutionary elements of the Communist Left Opposition. The vanguard of the workers needs this today as urgently as it needs its daily bread.

The attitude of the revolutionary press toward its readers

is the most important test of a political line. The *reformists* deliberately lie to their readers in order to preserve the bourgeois system. The *centrists* employ lies to cloak their vacillations, their uncertainty, their capitulation and their adventures. They do not trust themselves and therefore do not trust their readers. They are of the opinion that the worker can be led only if he is blindfolded and pulled by the hand. Such is the spirit of the official press of the Comintern nowadays. It has no faith in the workers. It exercises guardianship over them, as if they were little children. When they ask awkward questions, it sternly shakes its finger at them. Precisely this engenders apathy in the ranks of the party and the growing vacuum around it.

The mass of workers does not at all consist of infants. It consists of people with the harsh experience of life. It does not tolerate nursemaids, whose strictness is as a rule directly proportional to their stupidity. The worker seeks not commands but assistance in political orientation. For this it is first of all necessary to tell him what is. Not to distort, not to tendentiously select, not to embellish, not to sugarcoat, but honestly say what is. The politics of Communism stands only to gain from a truthful clarification of reality. Untruth is needed for salvaging false reputations, but not for the education of the masses. The workers need the truth as an instrument of revolutionary action.

Your paper bears the name *Verite* (Truth). This name, like all others, has been amply abused. Nevertheless it is a good and honorable name. The *truth* is always revolutionary. To lay bare the truth of their position before the oppressed is to lead them to the highroad of revolution. To tell the truth about the rulers is to undermine the foundations of their rule. To tell the truth about the reformist bureaucracy is to condemn it in the consciousness of the masses. To tell the truth about the *centrists* is to help the workers assure a correct leadership of the Communist International. This is the task of your weekly. All forms and manifestations of the labor movement must be conscientiously illumined. An attentive reader must become convinced that if he wants to learn the genuine facts of the proletarian struggle in France and in the whole world he must seek them in *Verite*. He will in this way adopt our standpoint for it will loom before him in the light of facts and statistics. Only the tendency which together with the workers and at their head seeks a correct orientation, can create for itself conscious and devoted partisans who do not know disillusionment and lagging spirits.

Dear friends! I am with you with all my heart. I joyfully accept your proposal for collaboration. I will do everything in my power to make this collaboration regular and systematic. I will try to supply articles for each issue on the situation in Russia, on events in world life, and the question of the international labor movement. Warmly wishing you success,
L. Trotsky.

P. S. Some comrades have called my attention to the fact that parallel with your weekly there is reportedly scheduled the appearance of another oppositional weekly and they ask: What is the reason for it? Let me answer briefly. If the second publication is preparing to put forward the self-same ideas that we are, then its participants ought not to multiply parallel enterprises but instead take their place in common ranks. It is otherwise if their ideas differ so profoundly from ours as to justify the publication of a competing weekly. But in that case these are opponents and against opponents one conducts a fight. At all events, my sympathy and support belong only to *La Verite*.

The Main Political Tendencies in Indonesia

By WOUT TIELEMAN

The great power of the Indonesian revolution—despite the tendentious reports in the capitalist press—undoubtedly lies in the fact that all the Indonesian masses have participated from the beginning with the greatest enthusiasm in the revolution. The mass of poor peasants and workers united in the struggle against the new exploitation of the Dutch imperialists. To the masses the struggle for independence undoubtedly is synonymous with the struggle against exploitation.

The leadership of the struggle soon fell into the hands of the intellectuals, who, educated in Holland, possessed a great advantage in intellectual development in comparison with the majority of the Indonesian masses. The intellectuals had a great advantage also in respect to politics, since they had come in contact with the political struggle in the course of their studies in Holland. It is a well-known fact that the Indonesian intellectuals, as a rule, while studying in Holland, devoted much of their time to their political training.

Besides their advantage in political development, the intellectuals of Indonesia also occupied a more privileged position in the country. They formed the nucleus from which Indonesian industry could draw its leading figures, such as their engineers, directors, lawyers, etc. Thus they had become the representatives of the rising Indonesian bourgeoisie. This fact has greatly influenced the political position and activities of the Sjahrir government.

The Indonesian bourgeoisie on the one hand will gain a more advantageous position in a completely independent republic; but on the other hand, they fear the mass forces which they have released. In fact it was not the aim of the workers and peasants to replace the foreign exploitation with an Indonesian one. They want to put an end to all manner of exploitation by seizing control of the factories and by the division of the big estates. In the struggle for independence in Indonesia the bourgeoisie has to depend on the exploited masses, who, in turn are fighting against exploitation. But the bourgeoisie wants to dampen the spirit of the masses in order to preserve the system of private property. They are in further fear that any abolition of private property will increase the opposition to independence of the world impe-

rialists, especially the British and American, who have large investments in Indonesia.

It stands to reason that when the revolutionary struggle took on the character of a long and arduous process, the impatience of the masses with the Sjahrir government grew. This brought about an increasingly reactionary anti-labor domestic policy on the part of the government, which, at the same time, weakened in its foreign policies to such an extent that it protested in the UNO the Soviet proposals to withdraw the British troops from Java. The British troops have become a pillar of support for Sjahrir in his struggle against the so-called extremists. The name "extremist" is used for those who do not retreat and who want to continue the struggle at all costs.

The Indonesian army is in the meantime not being used against landings of Dutch troops in Java. The former continually withdraws without giving battle. Scattered opposition is attributed to the so-called extremists. It is clear that Sjahrir wants to cease the armed struggle at all costs, and to create a better atmosphere for negotiations by granting concessions. At the same time the Netherland troops are forcibly suppressing those Indonesians who resist the orders of Sjahrir. **SJAHRIR EMPLOYED THESE TROOPS AS AUXILIARY FORCES AGAINST THE INDO-NESEAN PROLETARIAN REVOLUTIONISTS.** The landings of the Dutch troops continually weakens the position of the Indonesian republic, but between the proletarian revolution and a privileged position under Dutch rule, Sjahrir has clearly chosen the latter.

This treacherous policy of Sjahrir weakened the military position of the Indonesian proletariat. Nevertheless the present political situation is characterized by the growing opposition towards the Indonesian bourgeoisie, as the treachery of Sjahrir is every day being exposed.

About the beginning of February, we received the first reports in the Netherlands of the formation of a "Peoples Front" in Indonesia under the leadership of the "Trotskyist" Tan Malakka. Despite the restrictions on communications from the interior of Java the report has now taken on more concrete form. The exact composition of this "Peoples Front" is not yet known. It was reported, however, that

this "Peoples Front" included 140 different parties and groups. It is also not fully clear whether the "Peoples Front" is a coalition of the exploited classes with some of the owning classes as was the case with the Peoples Front in Spain and France. However in view of the demands of this "Peoples Front," it seems sure that what was involved was a *united front* of the exploited masses. The most important slogans were:

Withdrawal of all British and Dutch troops.

Release of all Pemoedas (members of a militant youth party) and political prisoners.

Dissolution of the international courts.

According to latest reports, the "Peoples Front" also carried on propaganda for a change in the social structure of Indonesia, including the abolition of the Indonesian nobility and the division of the big estates.

After the conference in Solo, the "Peoples Front" was pushed into the background. The methods employed by the Sjahrir government against the masses will be clear from the following:

The Solo Conference was awaited with great interest by the masses because this was to constitute a test of strength between the rising "Peoples Front" and the Sjahrir government, which was growing weaker every day. However the Solo Conference resulted in a victory for Sjahrir and a defeat for the Peoples Front, which was then suppressed for some time until the beginning of this month.

The much anticipated duel between Sjahrir and Tan Malakka did not take place as Tan Malakka did not appear at the conference. Sjahrir took full advantage of his absence and compelled even political followers of Tan Malakka like Soedirman, commander of the Republican army, to take the side of Sjahrir. The Dutch labor renegade, J. de Kadt, former co-founder of the OSP (Dutch Centrist Party) and, at that time, political adviser to Sjahrir, wrote in an article in the Dutch paper *Het Parool*:

The moral victory of Sjahrir is even greater since Tan Malakka, the leader of the Peoples Front did not appear to present his arguments. What could he reply to the question why he did not appear at the conference,

when the followers of the Peoples Front were in the majority. . . . If he really had a policy he wouldn't have been afraid to face the arguments of Sjahrir!

Tan Malakka could have replied with no difficulty. But ON THE EVE OF THE SOLO CONFERENCE TAN MALAKKA WAS ARRESTED BY THE SJAHRIR GOVERNMENT AND IN THIS WAY PREVENTED FROM VOICING HIS POSITION ON SJAHRIR!

These arrests (arrested also were many other prominent Indonesian leaders, i.e. Joesoef, leader of the Communist Party of Indonesia) were kept secret as long as possible to increase the effect of the Solo Conference results and to make them last longer. Only on March 21 was the report of the arrest broadcast by the Allied radio at Batavia. No confirmation was to be had, however, from the Indonesian government. On April 13 *Het Parool* announced that the Netherlands News bureau ANP-Aneta reported that strange rumors were being circulated about Tan Malakka, leader of the Indonesian Peoples Front: He was supposed to have been kidnapped by his opposition on the eve of the Conference. It added that this was a "vague rumor." A correspondent of the *Times* in Batavia sent in a similar report, except that the rumor had come from Indonesian sources and also that Tan Malakka probably "was convicted for disturbing the structure of the Indonesian state."

By means of this treacherous maneuver of Sjahrir, the Peoples Front lost prestige with the Indonesian masses, and Sjahrir used the time to strengthen his position by purging the police apparatus and the army of those elements that were unsuitable for his purposes. Meanwhile the military power of the Dutch imperialists increased in Java.

However, as soon as the real situation became known, the influence of Sjahrir began to wane and the reputation of Tan Malakka was restored. The recent heightened activities of the Peoples Front demonstrates that the process has already begun. The reputation of Tan Malakka, because of his uncompromising opposition to Dutch imperialism, is that of an almost legendary figure in Java. Sjahrir recognized this fact by getting him out of the way in time.

The arrest of the revolutionary leaders may for a period have a depressing effect on the revolutionary development, but it cannot destroy the revolutionary activities of the masses. In fact the arrest of Tan Malakka will open the eyes of the workers and peasants as to the real aims of Sjahrir and will thus boomerang on the latter.

The formation of a real revolutionary party in Indonesia and a campaign to release the arrested leaders, together with continuous activities for taking over the factories and dividing the big estates are the major tasks confronting the Indonesian revolutionists.

In Indonesia Tan Malakka is accepted as a Trotskyist. It is true that this revolutionist, during the split in the Communist International, chose the side of Trotsky, although he was not officially connected with the ICL. Certainly he did not formally align himself with the Fourth International, since he lived under circumstances of strictest illegality and was continually sought after by the agents of Dutch imperialism, who never gave up hope of sending him to the concentration camp of *Boven Digoel*. In approximately 1936 Tan Malakka even spread the rumor about his death in order to confuse his enemies. His following in Indonesia, and especially in Java, was always greater than the Stalinist following. The official Communist Party in Indonesia (PKI) after the arrest of Joesoef issued a declaration that it has nothing to do with the CP of 1926, which was illegalized by the Dutch imperialists. It also appealed to its membership to purge itself of extremist elements. And furthermore it repudiated and completely betrayed Joesoef. As everywhere else the Stalinist party functions as a full collaborator of the national bourgeoisie.

So the CP will suffer the same fate as the Sjahrir government and is destined to lose its popularity with the exploited masses of Indonesia. This in turn will facilitate the formation and strengthening of a real revolutionary communist party in Indonesia.

Holland, July 1946

Resolution on the Withdrawal of Occupation Troops

Adopted Unanimously by the International Executive Committee, June 1946

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

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

The Paris Conference was not able to solve

any of the principal questions concerning the peace treaty with Italy and the other satellite countries nor above all the essential questions of Austria and Germany. Its failure has just brought about the breaking of the Potsdam agreements concluded between the defeat of Germany and that of Japan. More than ever the partitioning of Germany and Austria into zones continues with disastrous results for the workers of all Europe.

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

If the servants of American imperialism have once again been able to pose as the champions of peace, of the right of self-determination of peoples, etc. . . . despite their policy of looting

both in Europe and in the Far East, it is because the spokesmen of the Soviet bureaucracy have been seen not only to abstain from taking positions, even platonically, for the right of free self-determination of peoples, but on the contrary, become the "realistic" defenders of reparations, annexations, of the military occupation of Europe and the imperialist guardianship over the colonial countries and engage in bartering among the claims of the different powers at the expense of the vanquished.

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

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

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

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

Moreover, prolonged military occupation results, within the victor countries themselves, in the maintenance of a burdensome and costly military apparatus and permits the building and selection of cadres and troops designed to be used eventually against the workers of those countries.

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

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

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

To the impasse into which the policy of the imperialists and of the Stalinist bureaucracy

has led, to the bankruptcy of the peace conference and of the UNO and to the threat of the Third World War, the Fourth International counterposes the revolutionary struggle of the exploited masses of all countries for the triumph of the world socialist revolution and the Federation of the Socialist United States of Europe and of the world.

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

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

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

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

The British and French sections as well as the American Trotskyists put forward the slogan of the withdrawal of the troops of their own imperialism from all the countries which they occupy (Europe, India, Indonesia, etc., etc.

... for England; Europe and the colonies, for France; Europe, Philippines, China, etc., for the USA). The Bolshevik-Leninists of the USSR denounce the anti-working class policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the occupied countries and demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops, but the sections in the occupied countries will emphasize especially internationalist and revolutionary fraternization with the soldiers of the occupying armies, fraternizations to which they will subordinate the campaign for the withdrawal of these troops. Our comrades in all zones of occupation must present the policy in such a way that it cannot be used against the Soviet Union to the advantage of the imperialists.

THE ALTERNATIVES FACING MANKIND

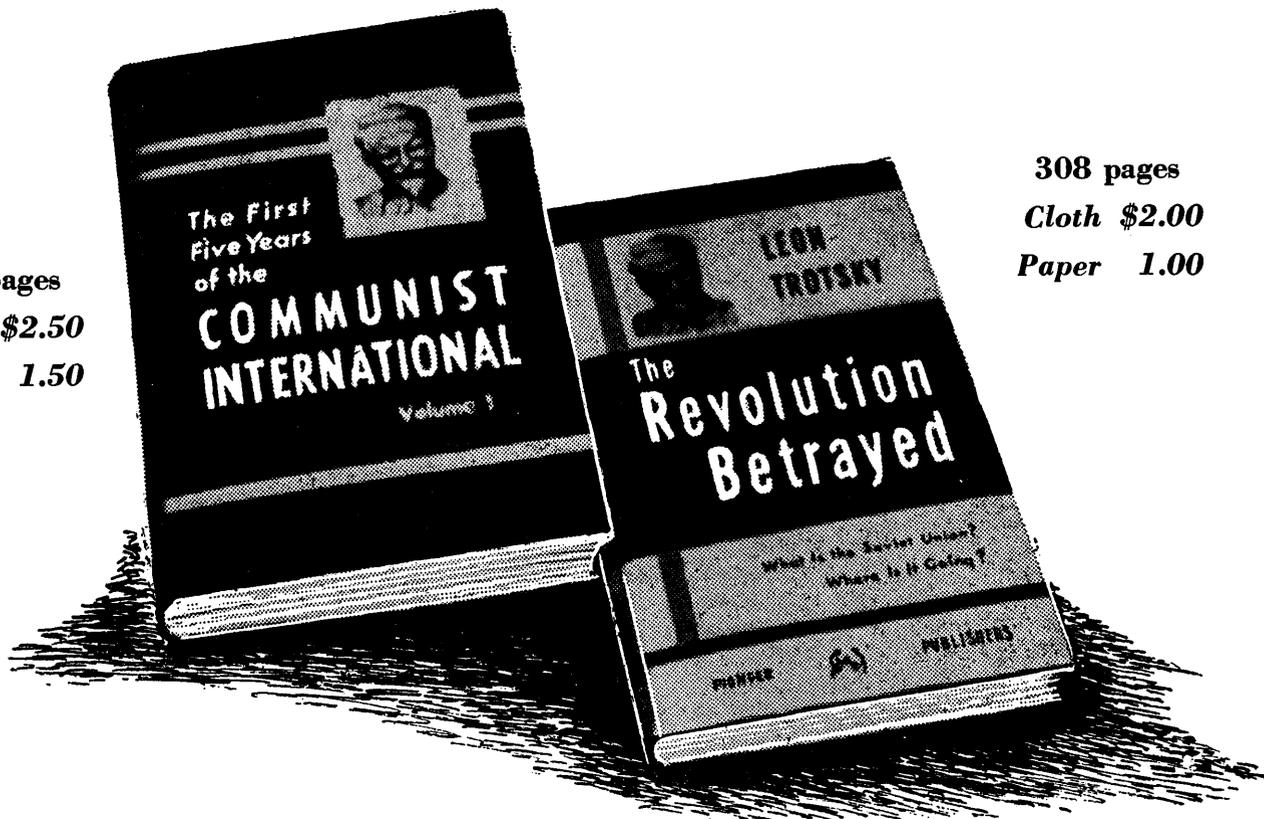
The opportunists, who before the World War summoned the workers to practice moderation for the sake of gradual transition to socialism, and who during the war demanded class docility in the name of civil peace and national defense, are again demanding self-renunciation of the proletariat—this time for the purpose of overcoming the terrible consequences of the war. If these preachments were to find acceptance among the working masses, capitalist development in new, much more concentrated and monstrous forms would be restored on the bones of several generations—with the perspective of a new and inevitable world war. Fortunately for mankind this is not possible.

The state-ization of economic life, against which capitalist liberalism used to protest so much, has become an accomplished fact. There is no turning back from this fact—it is impossible to return not only to free competition but even to the domination of trusts, syndicates and other economic octopi. Today the one and only issue is: Who shall henceforth be the bearer of state-ized production—the imperialist state or the state of the victorious proletariat?

In other words: Is all toiling mankind to become the bond slaves of victorious world cliques who, under the firm-name of the League of Nations and aided by an "international" army and "international" navy, will here plunder and strangle some peoples and there cast crumbs to others, while everywhere and always shackling the proletariat—with the sole object of maintaining their own rule? Or shall the working class of Europe and of the advanced countries in other parts of the world take in hand the disrupted and ruined economy in order to assure its regeneration upon socialist principles? (From the "Manifesto" of the 1st Congress of the Communist International, March 1919; L. Trotsky, *The First Five Years of the Communist International*.)

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