

The

NEW

**LETTER TO A
CUBAN SOCIALIST**

by A. Alvarez

INTERNATIONAL

The First Authentic Report on the

***Anti-Stalin Underground
in the Russian Ukraine***

•
Stalin and Germany

by Jacques

•
***The Struggle for the World:
Capitalism, Stalinism, War***

Resolution of the ISL

APRIL 1949

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

MEMO

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

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This is the first issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL to appear after the formation of the Independent Socialist League.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL will continue to carry the message of independent socialism for the ISL as it has done in the past for the Workers Party. Our weekly newspaper, *Labor Action*, will reach its subscribers in all countries of the world regularly, as it has done up to now.

We checked through our files the other day and found that these publications go out to readers in 43 different countries on every continent; from Wagga-Wagga, Australia, to Cochabamba, Bolivia; to readers in almost every state in the Union and all of its major cities. We regard it as one of our primary tasks that the flow of information concerning the developments in the working class and in the socialist movement shall not cease.

The cost of sending thousands of copies to the four corners of the world, to socialist comrades who are unable to pay, plus the present high costs of printing have placed a heavy drain upon our financial resources. Therefore the ISL has launched a Fund Drive for \$14,000 in order to sustain the press.

We know that our readers will wish to contribute to the success of this effort. Every contribution enables us to send more copies to brother socialists abroad who write frequently asking us to continue to send our periodicals. We ask you to send us your contribution to enable us to continue this work. All contributions of whatever size will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by return mail.

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As is our practice, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL will not be published during the summer months of May and June. The next issue will be dated July 1949, and will feature articles on Congress; Germany and the New Europe; a Report from England and an extremely interesting piece on Ilya Ehrenburg.

This issue will appear on time, and we expect to resume our regular appearance with this issue.

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MARTIN ABERN

The name of no socialist comrade is more closely connected with our publication, *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*, than that of Martin Abern. Founder, builder, manager and contributor to it, his sudden and unexpected death at the end of April 1949 is a grievous loss to those many thousands who knew him through his long association with our publication. If, in recent years, circumstances beyond his control had made it impossible to continue his active role on behalf of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*, nothing can dim his long years of service to it.

Comrade Abern's long years in the American revolutionary and socialist movement, dating back to the First World War, are familiar to all of us. The story of his devotion to the cause of socialism, and the facts of his over thirty years' dedication to this movement, have already been published in *Labor Action*. We shall not repeat them here. But Martin Abern's relation to *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* formed an important part of his socialist life and career.

Instrumental in Founding NI

Perhaps more than any other comrade in the American movement, he was instrumental in its foundation as an organ of Marxist politics in the United States. This was in 1934, approximately fifteen years ago. At that time, the Trotskyist movement in America was a small force, with still tinier means at its disposal. The launching of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* was more than a feat of organizational skill—it signified endless effort and devotion to the conception that a Marxist movement required a theoretical organ just as surely as man requires oxygen to breathe. Martin Abern understood this need and he, as perhaps no one else could have done, made it a reality. *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* was born under his guidance and through his initiative.

It was an immediate success. Those fortunate enough to still possess copies dating from the founding years of the magazine can testify to its high quality and value. Its name and its circulation spread rapidly among Marxists throughout the world, and it be-

came the central organ of the world Trotskyist movement. As business manager at that time, Comrade Abern was tireless in pushing forward its expanding circulation to all corners of the world. Our many friends in Asia, Europe and Latin America will well remember Marty's letters to them—filled with friendly interest and suggestions regarding our common socialist problems and activities.

We Salute His Memory

After a short period of suspension, *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* resumed its publication again in January 1938. Again, it was Martin Abern who insisted upon its revival, simultaneous with the formation of the Socialist Workers Party. Publication has been uninterrupted since this period, and Comrade Abern was again the active manager for many years. It was during this period that the magazine's publication reached an all-time high in terms of copies printed, circulation and international influence.

Comrade Abern was more than our magazine's business manager. He took an active part in its editorial life and the selection of material considered of publication merit. While literary and theoretical analyses were not the foremost qualities of his political life, he contributed valuable articles on American labor politics, events in England, etc. But above all, his loyalty to *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* was surpassed by no one, and his patient efforts to expand its influence or to overcome its innumerable obstacles are the truest possible reflection of his real personality.

Thus it is that with full sincerity we can say that our *NEW INTERNATIONAL* was the creation of Comrade Martin Abern more than of any other single individual. We know that all our readers who know its story will share this belief with us. In these difficult times, very few revolutionists have left as much behind them to testify to their devotion and capacities. We know, too, that our readers will join with us in saluting his memory and expressing our desire to continue this vital work so well begun and handled by him.

THE EDITORS

The Russian Ukrainian Underground

A People's Revolt Against Stalin

We are particularly pleased to present this historic and theoretical account of the Ukrainian national-revolutionary movement against Stalin to our readers. The world press has made numerous allusions to the existence of this movement, but we believe this is the first authentic and detailed account to appear in English anywhere. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL can verify the authenticity and accuracy of this report, as well as the reliability of its author.—ED.

•

I

October, 1948, marked the fifth anniversary of the organization in the northwestern forest regions of the Ukraine of the first revolutionary divisions which took the name of Ukrainian Revolutionary Army (UPA). The first detachments of the UPA, organized deep in the German rear, since the Germans at that time had reached Kharkov, immediately began to carry on a struggle on two fronts: against the German military and civil power and the Bolshevik "red" parachutists. The Ukrainian partisans fell upon the German occupation forces, on communication lines of the enemy in the rear, protected the local population against deportation for work in Germany and at the same time did not permit the "red" parachutists to gain influence over the population.

The first slogans of the Ukrainian partisans were: "Against Hitler and Stalin," "For the Independence of the Ukraine." The success of the partisan movement was so great that as early as 1943-44 whole territories of the north and west Ukraine lay under their control: Volhynia, Galicia, Carpathia and a large part of the territories to the west of the Dnieper. Deeply penetrating raids were conducted across the Ukraine, even reaching White Russia (Byelo-Russia, the name of the area lying between Great Russia and Poland; the term "White" is geographical and not political), and the Baltic coastlands.

When, toward the end of 1944, all the territories of the Ukraine once more fell under Stalinist occupation, UPA continued to carry on the struggle. Carpathia and Volhynia became the base regions for its operations. With their bases and strong points in impassable forests and mountains, the partisans continued to attack the new occupation forces, conducting raids deep into the rear of the enemy. The Bolsheviks conducted their operations against the partisans only with the aid of MVD and MGB [secret police] troops, as a part of the ordinary Red Army troops kept coming over to the side of the partisans.

In spite of strong terror the partisans had continuous support from the population and therefore their actions were largely successful. In 1945-46 the partisans successfully disrupted the attempt at forced collectivization of the peasants in Galicia, and for a long

time protected the Ukrainian population of the territories along the Curzon line, which territories had been taken from Poland, from forced deportation to East Prussia and Pomerania. Establishing the centers of its military operations in Volhynia and Carpathia, the Ukrainian Revolutionary Army in 1946 transferred the main part of its work to underground activity of separate small groups throughout the territories of the Ukraine. The underground revolutionary work consists in the strong development of anti-Bolshevik propaganda and in the preparation of the people for a possible revolutionary uprising.

In what field of action is the Ukrainian revolutionary underground in the USSR today?

Much has been written of the military exploits of the UPA, especially in the period from 1946 to the present, in the western European and American press. But this information is not always accurate. Under the influence of Moscow propaganda the UPA is often described as some sort of fascist, nationalist, anti-popular movement having no success among the workers of the USSR. The bourgeois press of the West, reprinting stories from the Moscow, Polish and Czech press and radio gives them a sort of biased coloration, adding to be sure—"even if they are fascists, no matter, so long as they fight Communism." But the thoughtful reader, knowing the value of the propaganda of the Kremlin and the bourgeoisie still raises the question: How can it be that "without the support of the people," the Ukrainian revolutionists have been fighting for six years against the occupiers of their homeland? How could such an "insignificant, criminal band" deal out blows of such great political significance to its enemies as the assassination of the Chief of Staff of the German SA, Lütze, the top commander of the southern Russian front, General of the Red Army Vatutin or the assistant minister of the armed forces of Poland, General Sverchesky? Why should it be necessary for a full secret military treaty to be concluded in 1946 between the three states: USSR, Poland and Czechoslovakia, against some group or other of "wretched fascists"? From all these unanswerable questions there emerges one clear question, demanding a clear answer: What is the UPA fighting for?

II

The initiators of the Ukrainian Revolutionary Army in 1942 were Ukrainian nationalists. From the very first days of its organization, its first political slogan was, "Struggle for an Independent Ukraine." Under the German occupation, UPA carried on actions that were basically military. Its ideology and political propaganda were still developing and being worked out. It is necessary to point out that the or-

ganizers of the UPA—the Ukrainian nationalists—matured and hardened into a strong, disciplined organization, even before the war. Since they existed solely in the territory of the Western Ukraine, occupied by old Poland, the nationalists hardened in a struggle with Polish nationalism.

An All-National Army

The ideology of nationalism, completely disregarding social questions and excluding them from its program, developed only in a national framework, quickly passing into the forms of national chauvinism. In Polish territory, this was a completely legitimate development, since on the part of the Polish bourgeois government there was a developing and sharpening of similar forms of Polish nationalism. And it was this Ukrainian nationalist organization which became the progenitor of the UPA. During their struggle with the Germans, the nationalists could still counterpose themselves to the enemy on the basis of their ideology, since the German ideology was also, if not to a greater degree, nationalistic. But already toward the end of 1943, the region of UPA operations started to spread over territories which, before the German invasion, were within the boundaries of the Soviet Union. An influx of former Red Army men, Komsomols [Young Communists], even men who were ideologically Communists and in general the youth, which had grown up under the Soviets, started into the ranks of the UPA, and increased from day to day. *Already by 1943 the UPA had become a real international [literally: an all-national] army.* And at this point the ideology of nationalism suffered its first and mortal blow: it capitulated, never to return again. It became apparent that the mere slogans of national independence were insufficient to raise the people to the level of revolutionary struggle. It was necessary to put forth social slogans, a social program, to instill a social essence into the national forms of the revolutionary movement. Great changes now took place in the UPA; new men with a new ideology entered its leadership. Already in 1943 in its publications in Volhynia the foremost slogan of the UPA was: *“Only in an independent Ukrainian state can the true realization of the great slogans of the October Revolution be attained.”* (See the UPA newspaper in Volhynia, No. 1, 1943, “Defense of the Ukraine.”)

In the same year (1943), in the impassable forests of the Carpathians, there took place an illegal international congress of representatives of 16 nationalities dwelling within the borders of the USSR. The congress established an international revolutionary organization of peoples under the Moscow yoke. At that time there already existed separate military detachments of the different nationalities in the UPA: Byelo-Russians, Georgians, Uzbeks, Turcomen and others, bound in close cooperation with the Polish, Baltic, Slovak and other partisans. At the same time

the entire territory of the Ukraine was reoccupied by the Red Army and the UPA began to function under new conditions. With the end of the war, the UPA transferred the center of its operations to the Western part of the Ukraine, and changed its tactics in the central Ukraine, passing to propagandistic underground revolutionary work and establishing groups in all the large cities of the Ukraine.

In the period of 1945-46, nationalist ideology had already completely disappeared from all the theoretical, ideological and propagandistic publications of the UPA. Its place was taken by a new progressive ideology with a clear social program. This ideology derives from no doctrine, its direct source is the people and it corresponds to their aspirations. No longer do we speak of struggle “in general” for an independent state, but now we speak of the nature of the state for which we are fighting. Thus the UPA proposes the following as its program for a new social order in the Ukrainian state.

1. For state-nationalized and coöperative-social property in industry, finance and trade.

2. For state-national property in land with agriculture to be conducted either collectively or individually, depending on the wishes of the population.

3. A return to capitalism in any instance is a regression. (See the book, *The Position of the Ukrainian Liberation Movement*, published by the UPA in 1947, reissued by the emigration in 1948, in Germany.)

Exclude Restoration of Capitalism

Further on we read: “The complete liquidation of the class struggle demands the destruction of the source of classes itself, i.e., in the capitalist countries—the institution of private property in the means of production; in the case of the Soviet Union—the political monopoly of the Stalinist party, the dictatorial, totalitarian regime.” (Ibid.) From this it follows that a return to private property *in the means of production* in the future Ukrainian state is completely excluded. But this conclusion was not drawn from any doctrinal considerations, but from the actualities of the situation, i.e., that not only is there no desire for a return to capitalism, but even if there were, it could not be realized. The basic support of the new state will be social property. This is the present social program of the UPA.

In other underground publications of the UPA during 1948-49, we read about further extensions of our program and ideology. In the simple sheets circulated among demobilized Red Army men and officers, we find a call to revolutionary struggle, “against the new class of exploiters—the Bolshevik party magnates, for a classless society and real people’s democracy.” (See the paper, “Revolutionary Democrat,” No. 3, for 1948.) Many other similar publications exist. It is interesting that among them we find the articles of orthodox Marxists (for instance, one of the

leaders of the underground, O. Gornovskii); articles by former nationalists who still curse socialism, but who, upon analysis of their conceptions of revolution in the USSR, support "permanent revolution"; to the use of the term itself (for example, the publicist, P. Poltava); articles not only about socialism but also about the national question, including quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin, in opposition to the Stalinist position (for example, the publicist, Ya. Busen). All these tendencies exist in the deep Ukrainian underground, and their publications are spread all over the Ukraine.

Thus we see that nationalism no sooner encountered Soviet realities than it capitulated. Its place was taken by the new ideology of the construction of a true socialist society, based on a true popular, political democracy. This ideology, arising from our direct confrontation with the reactionary system of the USSR, a system replete with social contradictions, is its revolutionary antipode, but not on the road back to the restoration of private capitalist society, but rather on the road forward, to socialism and popular democracy.

III

In attesting the accuracy of our theses, we present the following facts to the reader. When in 1947 certain UPA raiding parties on our Western front broke through Czechoslovakia to Austria and Western Germany, they brought with them a large quantity of printed theoretical, ideological and propagandistic material. Additional raiding parties, arriving in the spring and summer of 1948, brought similar materials with them. All of these had been printed in the forests and mountains of the Ukraine, on underground presses, in the USSR. In the end of 1948, a part of these materials was reissued, in the emigration, in Germany, with the aim of informing the Western world about the real ideology of the revolutionary underground movement at present in the Ukraine. These materials were published in a book under the title, *The Position of the Ukrainian Liberation Movement* (publishing house, "Brolog," Munich, 1948, 140 pp.). In addition several brochures and other material have already been reissued.

Besides the socio-political program of the UPA, set forward by us above, one finds in these publications statements like these:

"The Soviet order . . . is not a socialist order, since classes of exploited and exploiters exist in it. The workers of the USSR want neither capitalism nor Stalinist pseudo-socialism. They aspire to a truly classless society, to a true popular democracy, to a free life in free and independent states. Today soviet society, more than any other, is pregnant with social revolution. In the USSR, the social revolution is strengthened by the national revolutions of the oppressed nationalities."

Because of a lack of space, we limit ourselves only

to these quotations. But even from these few lines the objectives of the struggle of the revolutionary Ukraine become clear. Against so progressive and revolutionary an ideology present-day Stalinism can counterpose nothing but naked terror and force. But it is evident at the same time that on naked force, terror and lies alone no system will long maintain itself. *Social and national revolution in the USSR is inevitable.*

Resistance Throughout Russia

Do not think that it is only in the Ukraine that an underground revolutionary struggle is being waged, although it is a fact that the Ukrainian resistance is the strongest by far. From announcements of the Soviet radio and especially from information reaching the emigration from the Ukrainian underground movement, it is known that similar revolutionary underground struggle exists in Lithuania, Latvia, in Poland, in Byelo-Russia, in the Caucasus, in Central Asia. One may assume that the revolutionary movements in these nationalities are based on the same ideological positions as the UPA.

From all that has been written above about the ideology and struggle of the revolutionary underground in the USSR, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Whereas before the war in 1941 a revolutionary underground movement was impossible, today, after the war, in connection with the instability and rotting of the Stalinist system, *and in connection with the existence of a new, revolutionary ideology*, a revolutionary underground in the USSR has become possible.

2. The struggle against Stalinism is possible only if conducted on the basis of *socialism and revolutionary democracy*, since Stalinist ideology capitulates before such an approach, and since only such an approach finds wide support among the workers of the USSR.

3. The ripening revolution in the USSR will be at the same time social and political. It will be no return to capitalism, but the last step to a socialist, classless society, based on a true popular democracy.

4. All this has been proved by the Ukrainian revolutionists by their six-year struggle deep in the Ukrainian underground.

* * *

P. S.—Here we must draw the reader's attention to several terms, used by us in this article, since they are used in the same way by the members of the revolutionary underground in the USSR. We refer to such terms as "Bolshevism," "Soviet," "USSR," etc. Of course, this usage contradicts the scientific historical facts: Bolshevism in the USSR had already passed out of existence by 1929, and the Soviet power also; the USSR is only a Stalinist screen, or better, a drape for the old Czarist Empire. But the reader must un-

Letter to a Cuban Socialist

On the Problems of Latin America

Under new post-war conditions events in Latin America continue to correspond to the old, oscillatory rhythm characteristic of this region: popular movements, more or less confused, but on the whole progressive, which lose their grip when faced by the first real economic or political difficulty. Two factors seem to predominate in all these countries, varying with each national situation—sometimes considerably—within these general limits. One is the traditional “pretorian” role of the army. This point deserves very heavy underlining. The factor involved here is especially characteristic of South America. As is well known, these armies do not correspond to any function of real defense, even in the bourgeois sense of the term. They are, above all, an instrument for internal policing and also of lilliputian imperialism. Hence, two consequences. They become a constant political factor, often predominant, always important. On the other hand, they often serve as transmission belt for external influences (today the United States or Argentina), either for creating internal revolutions or as an indirect instrument of some foreign imperialist policy (in other words, the “aggressor” country isn’t even pursuing ends which are its own—a phenomenon typical also of the Balkans).

The events in Venezuela are especially typical in this respect. The popular insurrection led by Betancourt¹ was a typically progressive movement within the limits of the post-war period. Chalbaud was one of its military leaders, representing the young officer cadres of the army. After the insurrection “took over power,” we saw the growth and then the explosion of a typical conflict of Latin American liberalism. (Remember the role of the liberal generals in XIXth century Spain.) The movement was extensive enough to permit the Betancourt government to undertake a vast job of organizing the masses, a job propor-

1. Betancourt, the head of *Accion Democratica* and of the Venezuelan insurrection, became, after the seizure of power, the head of the revolutionary Junta until he transmitted his power to the new democratically-elected president, Romulo Gallegos. Gallegos, in turn, was forced to renounce power following the military coup of Col. Chalbaud, former member of the Betancourt revolutionary Junta and head of the Venezuelan army.

derstand: in the contemporary USSR the agents of Stalinism have been beating with bayonets and bullets into the heads of the people their “socialism,” “democracy,” “Bolshevism” and “Soviet power.” Therefore all these terms have long been accursed to the workers. But essence remains essence and let the reader forgive us this small phraseological inexactness. Let the reader keep the essence in mind.

Vs. F.

tionately unparalleled even when compared to Mexico, where the *democratic* organization of the trade unions and of the “ejidos” (farming communities) seems to have always been a farce. If such an organization had dealt with a more numerous or more conscious proletariat (even that of Cuba, for instance, with its traditions of the European revolutionary workers’ movement, via the Spanish immigrants, and its agricultural proletariat preponderant among the rural population) it would probably have dashed all hopes of a military coup. At least, that is my impression. But in the given backward conditions it was an unavoidable necessity for the civilian political movement to come to grips with the problem of the army. This autonomous, functionless body of the Latin American countries must be crushed; otherwise it will fatally reassume its former “function” of arbitrator and parasitic profiteer of social struggles. What matters is not that Chalbaud (mere example of a social type) was for a while liberal and sympathetic to the popular movement; but that, by the victory of this movement itself, he became the head of the army, of that parasitic social organism which, in the present structure of these countries, is in a position to arbitrate the civilian struggles and therefore fatally tends in this direction. Here lies a permanent menace which took shape as soon as conditions permitted.

It is clear that the Betancourt and Gallegos government did not know how or were unable to confront the military problem. I do not exactly know why. Printed information is very scattered and is of little avail. The difficulty is increased by the lack of Latin American uniformity. The situation in Latin America is rather European in this respect: here indeed is a far from homogeneous bloc of authentic national entities (with some exceptions). Maybe *Accion Democratica* simply did not have enough time. Maybe it really underestimated the problem in an opportunist sense. Maybe, finally, by a combination of both factors, it was too heterogeneous to unify itself rapidly enough to solve the problem in time. Nonetheless, whatever the factors may have been, it seems that *Accion Democratica* started to act along these lines. Betancourt, it is said, began organizing a popular militia—conspiratively—and this fact, among others, is supposed to have precipitated the military coup. If this is true, the fault manifestly lies in the “conspirative” method, which cannot touch the masses in an efficacious manner, which never deceives the adversary and which, consequently, always falls through. More generally speaking, here are my conclusions: No democratization of the Latin American armies is

possible. These are professional and parasitic formations wherein a mere change of cadres ("the sergeants becoming colonels"), or even of the composition of the troops, in no way changes their "pretorian" function. There is only one road for a victorious popular movement: to crush them, to destroy them by means of popular pressure and vigilance organized throughout the trade unions. Here arises an alternative: either arming the people and periods of military training; or nothing at all besides the simple police functions assigned to bodies for which the trade unions and rural communities are guarantees and which will be changed frequently. We must take into account the enormous technical progress in the military field which makes the traditional program of arming the people a little obsolete and which, on the other hand, implies heavy burdens for the backward and "poor" countries. It is evident that no Latin American country can dream of opposing the United States in terms of military effectiveness. On the other hand, problems of military defense do incontestably arise for some of them—at least provisionally—against certain imperialist tendencies (Argentina, Brazil), against certain dictatorial regimes, certain "rival" nations. A decision in favor of one or the other alternative will have to be reached according to each individual case.

Position of the Movements

According to my information on the Cuban situation, (1) the "Autentico"² government and movement are both deeply discredited; (2) the right opposition (the former "Batista Bloc") continues to be discredited and divided; (3) the left opposition remains weak, without organizational form, without prestige, and divided; (4) the army cadres are said to have been renewed to a rather large extent by the Autenticos in a way favorable to their interests; (5) the economic conjuncture continues to be "prosperous" but unstable because of inflation and the total lack of even the slightest coordination; (6) finally, Batista is supposed to have posed his candidacy as president for the next elections. In these conditions the army inevitably tends to play its role of arbiter and to invigorate its "pretorian" functions despite everything.

2. The **Autenticos** are a mass petty-bourgeois party which took shape after the downfall of Machado in 1934. Its head, Ramon Grau San Martin, headed the revolutionary provisional government, called "la pentarquia," of which Batista, a former sergeant promoted to colonel-sergeant, was a member. After a while Batista built up new military cadres and overthrew Grau San Martin and set up a military dictatorship. The **Autenticos** became an illegal opposition party until 1940, when Batista convened a Constituent Assembly and succeeded in being elected president. The **Autenticos** became a legal opposition party and succeeded in 1944 in having their candidate, Grau San Martin, elected president. In 1948 Grau San Martin was succeeded by another **Autentico** candidate, Prilo Socarras. The rapid unpopularity of the **Autentico** party in power led to bitter internal struggles, which resulted in the formation of a new party led by a former stronghand of Grau San Martin—Eduardo Chibas, who by now is one of the main figures of the left opposition in Cuba. It led also to attempts of former President Batista to build up a new right-wing opposition—attempts which have so far resulted in the formation of a new Batista party.

Thus, for Cuba also, the same problem arises within a more or less short span. And here, as everywhere else, the Stalinists will play their game in favor of a "strong government," even if for the time being it would be hostile to them. They need it in order to control the workers' movement. And it can hardly tear this control away from them (even Peron has "difficulties" with them). On the other hand, every extension of democratic liberties—even limited—is unfavorable to their attempts at penetration and totalitarian inroads. Thus, while waiting to take the situation into their own hands, if and when they can, they always tend to favor authoritarian solutions.

Effect of Stalinism

The other factor which dominates the situation in Latin American countries is the not very conscious character of the democratic-progressive movements, their low level and national narrowmindedness. The degeneration of the Stalinist movement, then its totalitarianization, have here manifestly played a fatal role. They have corrupted and continue to infect the young revolutionary workers' movement, adding themselves to the very rapid "bourgeoisification" of the socialist movements where they existed historically (Argentina, Chile) and to the mistakes of anarchistic "spontaneism." For this very reason they have rendered the democratic movement impotent. On the other hand, no proletarian current has appeared among the workers side by side with and opposed to Stalinism. Proof of this is manifest in the direct and continuous control of the Mexican government over the trade unions; in the Autentico tendency within, later the Autentico organization of, the Cuban trade unions; in the very formation of Venezuelan trade unions by "Accion Democratica"; in the reorganization and enlargement of Peruvian trade unions by the Apra; finally, in Peronian Bonapartism's easy control and regimentation of the Argentine trade unions. But what precisely do these facts prove? That, as a result of the Stalinist obstacle and its infection of the workers' movement, the forward surge of these countries takes place—despite the obstacles of American imperialism, national reaction and Stalinism—by spontaneous processes of mass radicalization in the form of petty-bourgeois democratic movements which are at the same time dynamic and confused, opportunist and revolutionary. In Latin America it is not the proletariat—despite its importance and its historic function—which influences the petty bourgeoisie, but the latter which influences and often organizes the proletariat and carries it along with it. The proletariat's influence is exercised only impersonally, so to speak, generally by the ideological path of the socialist perspective which dominates the entire historical epoch and as such is not exclusively due to the *spontaneous* development of the proletarian forces, as we know since Marx and Lenin. That this is the

situation in Latin America seems to me unquestionable; it results from a combination of the maturity of socialism on a world scale and the backward state of Latin America, which is even more retarded and artificially blocked by Stalinism. But—and this is remarkable—such a situation is far from being merely negative. To be convinced of this, just compare it to the eclipse of living forces in Eastern Europe, colonized by Russia's totalitarian imperialism, or to the stagnating impotence which hits western Europe, wedged in between the Russian menace and the expansion of American control. To express my opinion exactly, I should rather say that such a situation is progressive within given limits and, left to itself, cannot lead to any stable and lasting solution. It implies a development beyond these limits, short of which these countries fall back into the former chaos. Of course this development can result only from the conscious work of a vanguard which reorganizes and rearms the workers against Stalinism and petty-bourgeois illusions, thanks to the very circumstances created by these democratic-progressive movements. (Not the least of their positive traits is precisely to permit the organization or rapid growth of the trade unions and the possibility of political rearming of the workers.)

Unfortunately, the very formation of such a vanguard, to say nothing of its work, for the moment amounts to practically zero. Tiny little national groups—confused, isolated, sectarian and/or opportunistic, generally wornout and disoriented, without any international connections, even embryonic ones—claim to answer the need for such a vanguard. Actually they represent practically nothing, neither in respect to cadres nor roots. When they do engage in some activity, they “practise” a pseudo-policy of prestige, a pseudo-propaganda without any real theoretical value and a pseudo-agitation lacking a transmission belt to the masses and without any effect on them. To crown it all, most of them, besides, lay claim to an independent organization and to a mythical independent action. The reasons for such a situation are many. (And unfortunately, let it be said in passing, the situation in Europe or Asia hardly seems better in its way.) First of all, Trotskyism which, between the two wars, was the only real international movement against Stalinism—this was evident to all—has died a well deserved death. (What seems to subsist of it—the Trotskyist parties of the Asiatic countries—are either indigenous movements having only the ideology of Trotskyism, or else they are prisoners, although with a mass base, of the same fundamental contradictions as the Trotskyist residues elsewhere, and will avoid degeneration only by transforming themselves profoundly.) Trotskyism, as an international movement, died because it built its perspective on an erroneous prognosis of the Russian development and, in a correlative way, on a catastrophic un-

derestimation of the world labor-socialist setback. By keeping the Trotskyist position on the USSR after Stalingrad (which confirmed the bureaucracy's hold on power and its reinforcement on a world scale), it was bound to lose all possibility of action and all influence; whereas a radical change of position at that time, even though late, could, however, in my opinion, have prepared a decisive role for Trotskyism in the post-war period. Correlatively, by making the prognosis of a revolutionary perspective for Europe as a result of the war, it condemned itself to read events backward, to lose everywhere the little influence it still kept and to reinforce everywhere the tendencies of capitulation to and compromise with Stalinism.

Moreover, the claims to renew and outgrow Marxism on “Indo-American” soil proved to be a cover for confusionism and petty-bourgeois compromises. (The mass influence of the corresponding movements does not in the least correspond to their programmatic value, but to the proletarian-socialist setback.) Finally, those elements—generally Trotskyist or their sympathizers—which could have regrouped a vanguard and catalyzed these petty-bourgeois democratic movements, kept themselves in sectarian isolation, their pretext being to keep an organizational independence—which did not exist or which soon stopped existing for lack of organization itself—or to keep a programmatic integrity which, in so far as it is a short-term historical program of action, has not stood the test of events.

Start from Scratch

In this respect, therefore, everything must be done anew. What is involved is a rearming in theory and perspective and a reorganization of the modes and course of action. On the first point, this is an international task to which the Latin American elements can of course bring only their contribution and in which they depend on the work accomplished elsewhere. In no way, however, does this hinder practical activity. On the contrary. For it is in accordance with the very development of practical activity that the theoretical perspectives will become clear. How to form cadres and strike roots depends on local conditions, of course, and there is no general answer. But, above all, it is necessary to be in that which *exists*. This is an apparent banality, but such a condition is found to be unfulfilled almost everywhere. Even where there seem to be more important groups with a mass influence (Chile, Bolivia), they do not appear to be connected with what could be called a national current—whether it be that they are not concerned with integrating themselves in it, when it does exist, or with taking the initiative to form it on a large base, when it has not yet taken on an organizational form.

This stems from the Trotskyist past. After the various Communist parties had been formed and the process of Stalinization took root in them, the strug-

gle naturally took the form of internal opposition and of conquest of the party, that is, of the instrument of mass action, from within. This stage, in Latin America, rapidly led to the following one: formation of a new party. This stage in turn proved to be a total failure. That is the unquestionable fact. The reasons for it, in my opinion, in decreasing order of importance, are: (1) the situation created in these countries by the conditions of economic stagnation, with sudden speculative booms, and political corruption; this situation favors Stalinist tactics and makes revolutionary tactics more difficult; (2) the false Trotskyist perspective: "defense of the USSR," "proletarian" character of the Communist parties, underestimation of the petty-bourgeois formations which attract the masses to them; (3) corollary to (2)—the tactical rigidity which led these groups to "explain" their isolation and ineffectuality, and persist in it, by a "principled" pseudo-analysis.

Into the Popular Movements!

Briefly, experience has decisively proved the vitality of the petty-bourgeois democratic-socialistic formation and the sectarian artificiality of the groups claiming to constitute new Bolshevik-Leninist parties. It has thus also proved, in my opinion, the falseness of the historical perspective and of the tactics according to which these groups proceeded. It has made clear the disastrous consequences of underestimating the petty-bourgeois popular movements and refusing to integrate oneself in them, not only to find there a milieu for work from which the new party would shortly arise, but above all and especially to help unequivocally in forging these movements into vigorous instruments of democratic action, and to help their proletarian base and their spontaneously revolutionary cadres and elements (students, for instance, poor peasants, cadres like Guiteras) to surmount the petty-bourgeois limitations of the movement. It is not at all an accident that the only movement which succeeded in realizing positive work, despite its limitations and its present defeat—Accion Democratica—had as its original core a group of former Communist militants gathered around Betancourt who, in their fashion, had drawn the conclusions of Stalinism. Inversely, why does not our work bear fruit, after years of devoted and thankless efforts? The ridiculous weakness of the initial core? Certainly. But then nobody in the beginning would have expected more from it than a first modern achievement. And the result—far from even being a moderate expansion—has been the decomposition of the initial core itself. Local conditions of corruption, petty-bourgeois impotence and adventurism, trade-union bureaucratism? Certainly, once more, and in no way do I underestimate these obstacles. No, I believe it is a question of lack of correct orientation despite the about-face in former tactics. You appear to the milieux in which you work—

despite efforts to take roots seriously and "unequivocally"—as foreign and dogmatic elements. You are wrong to consider the first step forward to be the expansion of your own core. For years this core has had no existence, despite its apparent "shadowy existence." And what must be formed is precisely an entirely different core, conceived in a much wider fashion. The question is to integrate—*without any dogmatic or hierarchic pretensions*—all the elements which have had a militant and socialist experience in the Communist Party or among the Trotskyists and which have not become corrupted in the sense of an individual "solution"; and at the same time to integrate this group in a progressive popular movement, not with fractional claims, however, but in the form of an open tendency. What has to be done, rather, is to be flexible in orienting the formative process of a dynamic wing and its political rearming, without trying to impose political and organizational formulas on it from above or from behind the scenes.

Material for such work does exist, for instance, in Cuba, and the political conditions which favor it do exist or are continually being reconstituted. During the period of the rising unpopularity of Grau and the election of Socarras I had the impression that the movement to be penetrated was Chibas' party. It seems to have more or less fallen apart after the election. Whatever the value of this specific case may be, I believe there is room for a new popular-democratic movement in the face of an unpopular government, "bureaucratized" and impotent Autenticos and the machinations of the new Batista bloc in formation. Even a weak grouping, but one which would prepare the people for coming national and international events, which would clarify for them the impotence and corruption of the Autenticos in power, the machinations of the Batista bloc and the specific role of the Cuban Stalinists (linking it to the Kremlin's world strategy) and the perspective of a military coup—such a group could gain a large audience rapidly if it knew how to present and to consider itself as the mere beginnings of a popular democratic movement.

One last word on the situation in Argentina. I do not wish to discuss it as a whole. I only want to indicate that the social demagogy of Peronian Bonapartism has reached a bottleneck and that we are rapidly headed for a stage of economic struggles and wide-scale and open government repression. Will this stage drag out or, on the contrary, will it rapidly reach a crisis of the regime? At any rate, this development which will soon take place will be important for Argentina, and for all of Latin America by repercussion. It must be closely studied without illusions or "theses" and its meaning for the masses must be interpreted—*if means of expression are available.*

AMELIO ALVAREZ

Stalinism in Germany

A Critical Discussion of Ruth Fischer's Book

Stalinism will go down in history as a reactionary regime of incredible blackness and horror. It stood at its inception as a major cause of the fatal historic turn in European history in 1923. The defeat of the German proletarian revolution in that year also served to consolidate its grip on Russia. An entire generation has gone by since those decisive events, a generation which saw the rise of Hitler, the second imperialist world war and, again with the aid of the finished totalitarian system in Russia, the continued setback to the socialist revolution after that war. The great stir of hope felt by the masses everywhere with the October Revolution has given way to greater and greater apathy, even despair, with the downsliding of the revolution under Stalin. Today the very word communism stands besmirched and dishonored.

The Kremlin has cleverly bewildered people everywhere, more especially workers and intellectuals, as to the nature of present-day Russia by its continued use of Marxian terminology and by the unfolding of the bureaucracy directly out of the Bolshevik Party. Coupled to this has gone the systematic attempt under the dictator to loot and pervert history just as the bureaucracy has despoiled Russia. How desperately the rulers have tried to twist the past so as to fill it with their glory, thus to enhance the prestige of the Leader while denigrating that of the great Bolshevik revolutionists! If this attempt has failed by and large, it can be attributed most of all to the writings of L. D. Trotsky. It is his work that has salvaged the true ideas and ideals of socialism for humanity. No greater contribution can be made to the cause of the working class, which is at the same time the cause of all suffering humanity, than to further the efforts to unmask the frauds of Stalinism and to reveal the true history of the defeats brought about by the present Russian rulers. Only in this way will workers learn to distinguish between real socialism and the great conspiratorial lie that is called socialism today in Russia.

It is with this in mind that one approaches the work of Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*. There are not many left who can reveal what went on in Germany as direct participants in the struggle of the Communist Party to take power under the guidance of the Comintern. Why did they fail? The correct analysis of that failure can be of utmost importance for the future. The working-class movement, when it revives from the depths of defeat and disaster, must not and will not start again from the beginning. Certainly, if it does not make use of all previous experience, it is almost foredoomed to repeat

old mistakes under whatever new conditions it confronts. This experience of decades is summed up in the theoretic writings of the Marxists. Where does Ruth Fischer stand in relation to this fund?

Ruth Fischer came to the communist movement directly from her student days. She did not undergo the arduous and painful novitiate of the Russian Bolsheviks before they became the recognized leaders of their party. Ruth was projected into the top-most ranks of the German Communist Party during a most critical period and in a very brief time. She became an activist and organizer before having any real opportunity to perfect herself in the theoretic foundations laid down by the great Marxist teachers. It was but natural for the German leadership, as for every other, to look with respect verging on veneration to the Russian leaders who had brought about the first great proletarian victory. The trouble came when a deep rift appeared in the Bolshevik Party with Lenin's illness. A profoundly significant political choice had to be made among those contending for leadership. Fischer, unaware of the real nature of the struggle and unequipped to make a principled choice based on theoretic understanding of what was transpiring, chose the wrong side along with thousands of others. She followed in the wake of Zinoviev who proved in the sequel to be nothing but a catspaw in the hands of the Macchiavellian Stalin. Fischer was one of those who entered into the game of vituperation and denunciation of Trotskyism. Like it or not, she helped lay the basis for the counter-revolution in Russia, for the coming to power of Stalin and his totalitarian regime.

Lacking in Analysis

The present work appears not in the midst of the events with which it deals, nor even after a short passage of time, but a quarter of a century later. The writer of the book has had every opportunity therefore to check the validity of her views, as well as those of others, in the light of everything that has happened since those fateful days. The ripened wisdom that might have proved of value to the vanguard today is unfortunately not manifest in Ruth Fischer's writing. Fundamentally she remains the same "activist" insufficiently equipped with powers of analysis to sum up her experiences in a form that will throw real light on the past. Her vision remains narrow and personalized. This impels her to a semi-eclectic interpretation of the sweep of historic events.

The central theme in this first volume is the fateful year 1923 in Germany, the period immediately preceding, and the one that followed. Fischer was

greatly influenced by and worked closely with Maslow. The latter subscribed in 1921 to Bukharin's "theory of the offensive," according to which a military action by the workers, even if only by a small minority, would electrify the working class so that each time in renewed ("permanent") offensive, it would mobilize in greater strength till victory was achieved. Maslow, in support of this unfortunate theory, wrote in *Die Internationale* (Berlin, 1921): "If it is asked what was actually new about the March action [the attempt at a putsch], it must be answered precisely that which our opponents reprove, namely, that the party went into the struggle without concerning itself about who would follow it." Lenin had written his famous pamphlet on *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* precisely against this ultra-left, lightminded attitude (in 1920). This criticism, perhaps, and the course of the struggle in Germany, pushed Maslow and Fischer in the other direction, for when the crisis of 1923 arose, they were pessimistic and felt that the party was insufficiently prepared and under the wrong leadership. Yet never was there a situation more fraught with the possibility of working-class success than in 1923. The Ruhr crisis, helping to deepen and to speed up the economic crisis with its inflationary chaos, the complete bankruptcy of the ruling class, the rift among the imperialist victors, the active aid from revolutionary Russia—everything seemed auspicious for victory. Everything, that is, except the one essential element, a correct and courageous leadership in the German CP as well as in the Russian CP which dominated the Comintern.

How Maslow-Fischer Took Leadership

Ruth Fischer outlines from her present vantage point the steps in the failure of the German revolution in September-October, 1923. Neither Maslow nor she, however, thought at the time that the defeat was decisive. They helped (whether consciously or unconsciously) the Russian Troika (Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin) to cover up the depth of the debacle for which they were responsible, by subscribing to the Stalin-Zinoviev thesis that the revolution was still on the agenda and just ahead. Brandler was removed from the German leadership and Maslow-Fischer were placed in control. The Fischer narrative that this was really brought off by the German workers themselves, actually against the will of the Comintern, is simply laughable. Their removal from leadership only ten months later is blamed quite correctly on Stalin. Their ascent to leadership is ascribable to the identical source. Stalin said at the time that this meant the real Bolshevizing of the German party. Their "success" was due solely to the fact that they supported the (Stalin-inspired) Zinoviev campaign of falsification against Trotsky. Trotsky's analysis of the situation showed that the peak of the revolutionary wave

had passed and was not ahead. Fischer repeated with the Troika that they saw in the Russian Opposition "the loss of perspective of world revolution, the lack of faith in the proximity of the German and European Revolution, a hopeless pessimism." (*Pravda*, June 25, 1924.)

The art of revolutionary leadership reveals itself above all else in the ability to evaluate in time the sharp turns of our epoch. The sudden ups and downs in the economico-political conjuncture require new direction of the line of strategy pursued by a party. Every one of these turns has brought in its train the bitterest conflicts in the communist parties; and under Stalinism whole leaderships have been sloughed off to conform to the need of the Kremlin bureaucracy to find scapegoats so as to maintain the proper "infallibility" and to evade responsibility. Maslow-Fischer were precisely such sacrifices when it became obvious that Trotsky had been right a year earlier in saying that the revolutionary situation in Germany had changed to its opposite, and that the "line" pursued after 1923 had been false.

Trotsky and Brandler

Ruth Fischer never learned to distinguish between Bolshevism and Stalinism, more specifically between Trotskyism and Stalinism; which is to say in reality, between revolution and counter-revolution. Her book reflects this lack. She is concerned to justify herself and follows the old precept that the best defense is the offense. Without trying to vindicate her past in so many words (in this she shows wisdom), she attacks—Trotsky! She reveals in this attack, of course, not Trotsky, but Ruth Fischer, confused to this day and with all her problems unresolved. The groundwork for the attack on Trotsky is laid by means of a lurid picture of Radek and his intrigues in Germany. "All the leading men of the Russian Politburo nursed their personal connections with selected groups of foreign communists. . . . Radek lined up with Trotsky. He tried to bring the Brandler group into his orbit [that is, Radek's], a major link in a chain of Trotskyite strongpoints throughout Europe. . . ."

The tone is that of Stalinist politics, from which Ruth Fischer never quite recovered, it seems. She never understood the difference between a leader who tries to influence the minds of others by the sheer power of his ideas, to teach them to think for themselves and thus to act correctly; and one who corrupts and warps the minds of others by means of bribes and appeals to ambition and self-interest. This quotation is only one among many that tend to reduce the struggle between political tendencies entirely to that of a personal struggle for power. (Thus one does not have to analyze the ideas and their application to events; the ideas become mere covers for intrigue.) Whatever Fischer's attitude at the time concerning Trotsky's responsibility for Radek's course in Ger-

many, she is later forced to admit that this was not the case. Her suspicion of Trotsky and his motives, however, never abated. And she tries to picture him as the firm supporter of Brandler and the German right wing. Her version pictures Trotsky as shuffling off his unreliable partners, Brandler and Thalheimer, in his work on the *Lessons of October* written just after the German debacle.

L. D. Trotsky answered the Fischers long ago. He answered by picturing all the events in which he played so large a role exactly as they occurred, painstakingly quoting all the available documents, above all those of his enemies. Thus he writes in the *Third International After Lenin*: "There have been several attempts, after the event, to attribute to me a solidarity with the line of Brandler. In the USSR these attempts were camouflaged, because too many of those on the scene knew the real state of affairs. In Germany this was done openly because no one knew anything there. Quite accidentally, I find in my possession a printed fragment of the ideological struggle that occurred at that time in our Central Committee over the question of the German Revolution." He then quotes from the speech of one of his opponents made after the events: ". . . Comrade Trotsky, before leaving the session of the Central Committee [in September, 1923], made a speech which profoundly disturbed all the members of the Central Committee and in which he alleged that the leadership of the German Communist Party [Brandler, etc.] was worthless and that the Central Committee of the German Party was permeated with fatalism, sleepy-headedness, etc. Comrade Trotsky then declared that the German Revolution was doomed to failure."

Intrigue and Personal Politics

The event verified Trotsky's opinion. He nonetheless opposed the removal of Brandler after the capitulation of the German leaders without a fight, because he objected to Brandler's being made a scapegoat for the much more criminal failure of the Comintern under Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin. Trotsky fought this system of removals as being demoralizing, whereas Ruth Fischer not only supported it but became temporarily the immediate beneficiary. It was this opposition to Brandler's removal, misunderstood by the Fischers because they took their politics on a different level entirely, that gave rise to the idea that Trotsky supported Brandler. Fischer herself never rose above the level of intrigue and personal politics and it is only on this plane that she throws her obscuring light. Thus speaking of Thalheimer's book on the year 1923 written only in 1931, she shows him attempting to win his way back into the good graces of Stalin. She says: "This colored presentation is a fabricated post-crisis defense, garnished with servile observations on Stalin's lucid analysis of German politics. In reality, every participant on the commit-

tee in Moscow during January, 1924, knew exactly what he was selling and what he was buying."

Fischer couldn't focus properly on events during the 1923 crisis and after, nor has she been able to correct this inability with the years. For that would require complete candor concerning her own role. Thus she writes (p. 364): "The Politburo and the General Secretariat, it was obvious, had fatally underestimated the importance of the developments in Germany and their influence on the Russian Party and on Russia. In the fall of 1923 it was evident in Moscow that the German disaster was a major turning point in post-war Europe. . . . Thus every Russian politician had to reconsider his German policy. Trotsky concentrated his attack on Zinoviev's personal responsibility. . . ." Interesting, is it not, that Trotsky's name comes under review first of all—and nobody else's? If anybody did not have to reconsider his previous policy, it was surely Trotsky, whose analysis had been proved a thousand times correct by the events.

Fischer on Trotsky

The assertion that the debacle was understood in Moscow in 1923 is also false as applied to all the others, as can be proved from Ruth Fischer's own book. The Triumvirate, and Ruth Fischer with them, thought that the revolution was still ahead and they had to wait another year to convince themselves that a profound revolutionary crisis had been permitted to pass without a Communist bid for power. As for Trotsky holding Zinoviev "personally responsible," his writings are at hand and constitute a crushing reply. They analyze the rise of the bureaucracy in Russia, the completely Menshevik policies of the Troika, the weighing down of the revolution by the backwardness of Russian economy and culture, the isolating of the October Revolution by the failure of other European revolutions. The personal elements are surely not lacking, but they take only their proper place.

The book which purports to reveal Stalin's role in relation to German communism, shows real venom when it deals solely with Trotsky. Let us glance at some of her comments before attempting to fathom why this is so. Trotsky opened up his fight against the bureaucracy which threatened the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party, in his writing, *The New Course*. Somehow Fischer becomes optimistic today concerning the possibility that Trotsky might have gained the upper hand after the German debacle. Then she continues: "At the climax of the campaign, however, Trotsky suddenly disappeared from the open battle and declared himself too sick to continue the discussion. The confusion in the oppositionist camp was enormous; the party bureaucracy fought with greater ferocity, and by large transfers of opponents from Moscow to other areas the group of shrewd

party organizers won the day. . . . In Trotsky's *My Life*, published in 1930 and written much more dogmatically than his later book, the reader comes to a curious paragraph. In the midst of reporting the decisive 1923 crisis, Trotsky takes three pages to describe the pleasures of duck hunting. He gives a portrait of a certain duck hunter, who is interested only in shooting ducks in swamps. Because of him, Trotsky got wet feet and came down with an attack of influenza, followed by 'some cryptogenic temperature,' which kept him away from party life for several months."

Further on we read: "He decided that his influenza made a sojourn in the sunny south necessary and on January 18 departed for Sukhum. As Lenin's death was expected from one week to the next, this trip is one of the most puzzling incidents in the whole complex picture. The simplest explanation is the most probable: that Trotsky, following a party custom [!], removed himself from the site of the factional struggle in order to give his opponent enough of an advantage to facilitate a reconciliation. On January 21, Lenin died. Here the student of the period cannot avoid considering the possibility that Trotsky may have had a secret understanding with the Politburo that he would not return to Moscow. The normal procedure would have been to hurry back immediately, not only for the funeral, at which Trotsky's silhouette should have been seen by the Russian people, but for the subsequent distribution of key posts and the first political decisions after Lenin's death. Both of Trotsky's books describe his absence as necessitated by circumstances, but it is evident that he did not want to return to Moscow."

Unfounded Slander

This passage characterizes Ruth Fischer's mind. She goes further and attributes to the Left Opposition the views and feelings of the Stalinists and of those who were played upon by Stalin's gross fabrications. "Several Russian friends of Maslow, especially Lutovinov (a member of the Workers Opposition, not in sympathy with Trotsky although for a brief spell this group made an alliance with Trotsky's Left Opposition), reacted to Trotsky's 'flight to Sukhum,' as it was called among the oppositionists [!], was incorrectly interpreted as an attempt to avoid drastic measures against him. Discussions began to include what shrewd steps were best to avoid expulsion from the party and deprivation of Soviet legality. If Trotsky went to Sukhum, the others associated with him in his caucus had to fear a less voluntary transfer to a less healthful climate. His flight, his silence, were understood as meaning 'Attention, danger ahead!' For he could, and he should, have risked more than his more vulnerable supporters."

Is it necessary to characterize this version as anything but vicious slander, the kind of slander re-

sorted to by the Stalinists? Trotsky's name stands above all others but Lenin as that of the most fearless leader of the October Revolution. How does Fischer forget that his remarkable life stands open before the whole world? His illness, a periodic form of fever accompanied by complete nervous exhaustion, remained with him the rest of his days. Trotsky has explained how he was tricked from attending Lenin's funeral. Fischer has not even a remotely valid reason to give to explain why Trotsky should have desired to stay away from Moscow. She says, and we can well believe her in this regard: "For many reasons, Maslow and I were not able to accept Trotsky's point of view. All of his points concerning democracy were artificially limited to the narrow field of party legality; he ignored the major issue of the relation between the party and other soviet organizations. The temporary alliance between the Workers' Opposition groups and Trotsky had been made in spite of their continued distrust of his autocratic methods. Hidden behind discussions about the new and the old generation, about the lessons of October; about nuances in the interpretation of party history before 1917, the real issue was the persistence of terrorist measures, which had outgrown their original function of combating the counter-revolution."

A Mystery—and No Key

One can hardly believe one eyes in reading this explanation. This, mind you, is written about the one man (there was no other!) who best of all explained the relations between the party and the Soviet institutions, the party and the class. The man who showed the Bolshevik Party in advance with the vision of genius, where it was heading and where the revolution would wind up under the continued leadership of Stalin and the bureaucracy which he headed and encouraged.

There is surely irony in Ruth Fischer's rather grudging admission, after "explaining" (without the slightest pretense of real analysis) why she could not agree with Trotsky, that he understood best of all the turning points in German history. She pictures him as a "spetz" on Spain and France, not at all on Germany! "*Lessons of October* was not an effective weapon in the fight against Stalin's rise. As a component interpretation of the German events of 1923, however, it remains of great value. The turning points in the history of the German Republic were grasped more clearly by Trotsky than by any other contemporary. That is true of his analysis for 1933 as well as 1923; his three pamphlets on the German situation, written in Istanbul just before Hitler came to power, represent a succinct and correct presentation of the German crisis of 1932, fully confirmed by Hitler's victory and its consequences."

This fact must puzzle Fischer no end! For she has no true grasp of the type of mind capable of in-

tegrating a theoretic approach to the relation of classes with a wide grasp of the given conjuncture and its trend, the party strategy necessary to meet the conjuncture properly, the interrelated corollaries in program, tactics and organization down to the very question of personnel. This dialectic approach from the side of analysis she tends to sweep aside as abstract and irrelevant. Witness her remark on Trotsky's work on the Chinese revolution, in which he threw the same brilliant light on the Chinese events as on the German, the latter being near enough for Fischer to appreciate. "As early as 1923, Trotsky had begun opposing the Stalinist policy in China. Through a maze of irrelevancies and scholastic refutations, he kept hitting at the vulnerable point—the illusion that the Comintern had found loyal allies in Chiang and his Kuomintang."

Curious Spectacle

Too bad that Ruth Fischer does not enter more into detail on what she considers irrelevant and scholastic. But we do have her word for it. It is again, unfortunately, not written anywhere that she supported Trotsky's correct criticism. In fact we have the rather curious spectacle of witnessing the reading of lessons by one who was almost invariably wrong to one who was almost invariably right!

No doubt it may seem curious that a review of a book on Stalin and German communism should devote itself so largely to Fischer's views on Trotsky. There is the best of reasons for this. No book dealing with communism in our day can avoid, at whatever level, dealing with the ideas of the movement. The contributions made by Stalin to these ideas need halt nobody for long. The history of Stalin and his influence is the history of the building of an apparatus inside the Bolshevik Party to dominate and then destroy that party from within. It is a history of cunning, nay diabolical, intrigue combined with ruthlessness, of the use of the GPU (first conceived to fight the counter-revolution) to brake and canalize the revolution and to terrorize into silence and submission all opposition to the brutal and privileged rule of the new bureaucracy. The new rulers ousted the workers completely from power and built a totalitarian regime with complete control of the economy. That regime can best be called today state capitalism. Fischer does not even plumb to the depths of Stalinist degradation. Nor does she cast any new light on the entire phenomenon. On the contrary, she leaves gaping holes where analysis is necessary; the malignant role of Stalin is underemphasized rather than overplayed.

Fischer builds her book around a thesis that has been advanced by every philistine writer on the revolution. She tries to place that thesis in the mind and mouth of Lenin, but her own claim to it need not be disputed. She bases herself on the testament of Lenin which warned against Stalin and his power as Gen-

eral Secretary. Lenin says: "I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority. . . ." Trotsky, according to Fischer, was represented by Lenin as being equally dangerous, although from another angle. "The most able man in the present Central Committee [has] . . . a too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be far too much attracted to the purely administrative side of affairs."

Ruth Fischer interprets Lenin: "Lenin classes 'the two most able leaders of the Central Committee' together as being both, if not equally dangerous; in the leadership of either there would be an overgrowth of organizational power, a possible deformation into personal dictatorship. As a counter-measure, Lenin proposes that the Central Committee be increased to fifty or a hundred, emphasizing the necessity for a larger collective control." Fischer tries in this manner to justify the conduct of Zinoviev and others (including herself) in opposing Trotsky. They based themselves, allegedly, on the fear that Trotsky would become a Bonapartist dictator. How is it that Fischer fails to explain why, instead of ousting Stalin, they united with him against Trotsky?

Interpretation of Testament

Fischer's account of the testament leaves much to be desired, is in fact disingenuous. It is true that Lenin weighed all the members of the Central Committee. Long before the testament Lenin had made up his mind concerning Stalin. His remark at the time Stalin was first proposed for General Secretary, is quite well known: "That cook will concoct nothing but peppery dishes." He reluctantly agreed to give Stalin the post (this was in 1922) on the urging of the scheming Zinoviev, who felt he could control Stalin. How is it that Fischer omits mention of the close relations between Lenin and Trotsky, particularly toward the end? Stalin's conduct in Georgia (and that of his agent Ordjonikidze) outraged Lenin, who showed deep pleasure when he learned that Trotsky shared his views on the Georgian question. Lenin turned to Trotsky not merely in this matter, but secured Trotsky's agreement to open a bitter fight against the growing bureaucracy which centered around Stalin.

Lenin never tried to impose his views on the Central Committee; he never handed down decisions, but used persuasion. That fact sets in striking relief his categorical demand in the testament that Stalin be removed from his post as General Secretary. It signals Lenin's alarm. And he turned for aid to overcome this enemy (remember he took the most unusual step of breaking off all personal relations with Stalin) to Trotsky.

Lenin wished also to have Trotsky appointed officially as his deputy when he felt that his illness might

remove him from all activity. Isn't all this enough to show whom Lenin wished to see as his successor? The rather innocuous sentence about Trotsky in the testament was put there (see Trotsky's *My Life*) to placate the others for criticism of them. Fischer simply ignores all the richness of facts to try to twist an interpretation out of the testament that would fly in the face of reality. But this being her premise (now as in the pact, if we are to accept her coin as genuine and not counterfeit), she gazes with jaundiced eye on every move of Trotsky's to show that what he intended was to build up his own personal power.

"Lessons of October"

This inability on her part to approach any question from an impersonal standpoint is shown also in her treatment of Trotsky's classic *Lessons of October*. "*Lessons of October* attacks an even narrower question, that of the party leadership. Trotsky desired first of all to destroy the authority of Zinoviev and Kamenev, whom he regarded as the most noxious personifications of the Lenin legend. Since Lenin personified the 1917 revolution [not Lenin and Trotsky?], Trotsky wanted to destroy their identification with the Lenin of October. He linked their 'desertion' in 1917 with Zinoviev's lack of leadership in the German October. [And wasn't it desertion?] But the purpose of Trotsky's proof that the Old Guard was fallible was only too obviously to propose himself, and during 1924 the Old Bolsheviks united to rebut Trotsky's attack." That is to say, it was not a conspiracy on the part of Zinoviev-Kamenev-Stalin-Bukharin to undermine Trotsky's prestige and influence, as was stated later by Zinoviev, but rather a conspiracy on the part of Trotsky to undermine them! There isn't the ghost of a hint here either, that this book, like Trotsky's *New Course*, was part of the attack on bureaucracy which Lenin had asked Trotsky to inaugurate! Trotsky's intention was more far-reaching indeed than any merely personal attack on Zinoviev and Kamenev. It was to save the revolution from the degeneration which he saw taking place, and above all to warn the new generation of what was consuming the vitals of the old one. How can one who pretends to Marxism today, and who is not a Stalinist, even remotely conceive that Trotsky was wrong?

The urge in Fischer to justify instead of examine critically her past, forces her to aim her blows as much at Trotsky as at Stalin. She has read much of Trotsky but has resisted digesting any of his ideas. But some things evidently escaped her altogether, which leads her to pure invention. Thus she has this to say concerning the Kronstadt revolt: "On March 7, at the order of the Politburo, Trotsky began the bombardment. . . . Lenin had given Trotsky the order to take the Kronstadt fortress under artillery fire. . . ." Fischer is here in accord with all the philistines who raise their hands in horror over the putting down of a re-

volt. And by forcible means! But she never took the trouble to read Trotsky's reply to these critics on Kronstadt. Lenin could not have given Trotsky any orders to fire for the simple reason that Trotsky was not there. But Trotsky never evaded the issue. He was a member of the Politburo and he assumed full responsibility for its actions on that basis, besides justifying the action on the ground that Kronstadt had become the focal point of counter-revolution. Fischer resorts not to analysis of the events, but to a description; she appears today to be in sympathy with the demands made by the Kronstadters, again a somewhat belated sympathy!

Fischer seems to forget her theme in the final chapter, but only momentarily. Her juxtaposition of names serves as a cover to confuse rather than to clarify. "In Russia, the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc fought the new phenomenon in full awareness of its character. . . . Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin . . . names besmirched by the most tremendous campaign of calumny ever organized . . . are the names of men, of living beings, who, like other men, were both strong and weak, with moments of confusion and despair, of fear, and even of panic. They did not always behave as we, with our comfortable armchair *post facto* analysis, would advise; they were not models of Marxist righteousness, of proletarian strength. Since they were every one of them deeply involved in the making of the new Russian state, they shared the responsibility for the product of their creation. . . ."

From the Stalinist Arsenal

The linkage of these names together with a "common" characterization is nothing short of malice. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin—they have our sympathy and partial understanding if not our admiration. The characterization may well apply to them, since by their participation in the plot against Trotsky, by their capitulations over and over again to Stalin, they did make themselves responsible for the Russian "product," the totalitarian state. Trotsky never compromised with his principles (which does not mean that he never compromised in tactical matters), and far from sharing any responsibility for the Stalinist product, fought it from the start and exposed it for what it was.

Trotsky was surely a model of "Marxist righteousness" and of proletarian strength. Isn't it unfortunate that Fischer, summing up her book with this generous remark, demonstrates in the very making of it, not to say in so many other instances throughout, precisely bits of that calumny against which she seems to polemicize?

Where, for example, can she find corroboration for her remarks concerning Trotsky's conduct of military affairs except in the archives of Stalinist slander? We "learn" from her book that "opposition to Trotsky's military measures led to serious internal

party strife, which Lenin moderated. He made the party realize [the workers and party members didn't otherwise, you see] that it owed the salvation of the revolution and the country to Trotsky's military genius; on the other hand, he countered the centralization of the army by means of greater control of its commanders by the party. The term "military opposition," used by party historians and Trotsky alike to denote this faction, is inadequate to characterize the fundamental schism between party power and army power, united under Lenin's command. This conflict is a major element in Stalin's rise, for Lenin protected him against Trotsky's extreme hostility.

"The improvization of a modern army from scratch, brilliantly carried out by a Bolshevik newcomer, created in the decisive first three years of the new state a permanent and dangerous friction between the new cadres in formation, the Red Army officers' corps, and the party organizers." The foundation for this schema will be found nowhere but in the archives of Stalinist behind-the-scenes slander and falsification.

Little Bit of Everything

Further to clinch matters, we read the following: "After the end of the Civil War, the army lost its predominant place in Soviet life to the advantage of the party apparatus. However, Trotsky, the organizer of the army, had become the most popular leader among the Russian people generally, more popular than Lenin, the party leader. To the masses, he was Trotsky the Victorious, Trotsky the Savior. . . .

"But in the party Trotsky's position was less secure. During the two and a half years he traveled about the front in his commander's train, his rulings had been in constant friction with the party; his attitude toward party interference was irritable and contemptuous. He attracted to him, nonetheless, all the forces in the party opposed to the Moscow center, for he was the alternate candidate with the best chances of success."

Ruth Fischer is nothing if not eclectic. She forgets that she herself had already indicated how Stalin worked first of all in the provinces to gain adherents in order to overwhelm the center. She forgets too that elsewhere she has criticized Trotsky for too narrow a vision in upholding the party as the sine qua non for success of the revolution! Suffice it to say that the slant given to the friction, not between the party and Trotsky (the party on every major occasion but one supported Trotsky and not those intriguing against him), but between Trotsky and the undercover Stalinist opposition which found a point of support now in the "military opposition," a small minority faction in the civil war days, now in any other handle that offered. The characterization of Trotsky's attitude toward the party is false and bends the facts of history in accord with the Stalinist version.

In her usual fashion, Fischer gives bits of all versions with either a minimum of space or none at all to Trotsky's painstaking, documented evidence. Thus she remarks in passing: "Trotsky is undoubtedly right when he reports in his memoirs the rumors and intrigues against him in Moscow during the two and a half years he commanded the front from his mobile train." Please explain how one can be undoubtedly right and undoubtedly wrong at one and the same time on the self-same issues! (When Ruth Fischer tries to be fair and "impartial," it sticks out like a sore thumb.)

This work is so badly balanced and ill-digested that it would require an even more ponderous tome to set straight all the warpings of fact. Ruth Fischer may give her recollections just as she remembers them. But she never really checked meticulously, documents in hand, what was fact and what manufactured fiction in the accounts of the history of the period. Is it necessary to warn that such a process is trebly essential in dealing with a portion of history that has been falsified to the extreme by the present rulers of Russia? The book therefore throws light on the mode of activation of one of the German leaders in the post-October epoch. None of the Germans, it must be said, has been able to write a truly authoritative and, above all, analytic account of the experiences of the German movement from 1918 to the present time. What this means is that none of them has grown through the experience to the height necessary for independent leadership in the proletarian revolution.

German Leadership Failed

Fischer summarizes at the end of her account of the failure of the German revolution. It is interesting to observe that blame is accorded—quite correctly, of course—to the Russians, but little is said on the light shed by the events on the German leadership. "German communism, however, could have matured, could have exploded the fetters of inhibiting dogmas, trade-union narrowness and a lack of realistic audacity, if the revolution in retreat in Russia had not added a new bridle. . . . By this corrosion, proceeding in perceptible gradations, the German revolt of 1923, which from the outside appeared to be undertaken under the most favorable conditions, was by inner necessity transformed into an impossible adventure. The details of this abortive coup reflect the process of disintegration of Russian communism. The defeat of the German Communists marks the close of the period of revolutionary internationalism 1917-1923."

By the same token, the failure of the German leaders to guide the ready and willing German working class to victory under exceptionally favorable circumstances—and this leadership extends from right to center to left—gave an enormous impetus to the degeneration in Russia. Fischer speaks of the great possibility afforded Trotsky to succeed in place of Stalin

after the German defeat, but Trotsky, who understood great class forces far better, saw that failure of the revolution abroad would strengthen the reactionary elements in Russia, not the international revolutionary ones.

It must be said, too, that neither Fischer nor any of the other German leaders combatted the corroding influence of the Comintern under Zinoviev-Stalinist misguidance. How is it that this corroding influence was so successful in gaining its adherents abroad as well as at home? On this important question Ruth Fischer throws no light, for while indicating its in-

fluence and effects in individual cases, she rejects it for herself. And yet her book shows the lasting influence that training in the Stalinist Comintern had on her. Which means that she is still wanting as a leader.

JACQUES

May 7, 1949

Ruth Fischer has been invited by the Editors of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL to reply to this critical review of her book in a forthcoming issue of our magazine.—ED.

The Inevitability of Socialism

Concluding Part of a Discussion of Marxist Theory

(Continued from last month)

Trotsky's comment also suggests the essential ingredients generating the inevitability. They are: (1) the economic development of society, and (2) existence determining consciousness. In other words, "the actual situation" refers to the economic development of society and, precisely because existence determines consciousness, the working class "will come to understand" that development. That is, since the mode of production has already become socialized under capitalism, the working class will unquestionably grasp the implication, turn that economic fact into a political reality.

From the very beginning, it seems, the doctrine of inevitability has always been a distinctly Russian commodity, gaining international prestige only after the victory of the Bolsheviks. And this is to say that even Marx had to repudiate the doctrine when it was attributed to him in a Russian review dealing with the first volume of *Capital*. Moreover, the passages usually cited to substantiate the doctrine, especially the passage generally used to support the conviction that the doctrine implies capitalism or socialism, completely fail to fulfill such purposes.

The passage proposing that existence determines consciousness is found in *The Critique of Political Economy*. Marx writes:

"In the social production which men carry on they enter definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social

consciousness. The mode of production in material life prescribes [bedingt] the general character of the social, political and intellectual process of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines [bestimmen] their being but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."

Only two interpretations of the passage can substantiate the inevitability of socialism. One is incompatible with the passage itself, and the other is implausible.

The implausible interpretation has already been used by Trotsky. In stating that the working class, at the cost of errors and defeats, will come to understand the actual situation and, sooner or later, will draw the imperative practical conclusions, Trotsky is assuming two things. They are: (1) only a limited number of errors is possible, and (2) they cannot be repeated forever. But, without the intervention of God, there is no reason to believe that the working class cannot repeat its errors even if the number be limited. Thus, the ground for making the assumptions is, at best, revolutionary optimism or, at worst, dogmatic. In either case, we are being asked to give our allegiance to a work of art.

The incompatible interpretation assumes *determine* to imply that, in time, a one-to-one correlation will come to pass between the mode of production and man's consciousness, a correlation that would erase the possibility of error. Aside from the fact that the only ground for the assumption is to reject consciousness or, once again, to resort to dogmatism, it simply does not refer to a one-to-one correlation. The word indicates that the mode of production—rather than, as Hegel insists, the transformation of consciousness into self-consciousness—generates the social difficulties encountered by man, indicates their solution,

and imposes the conditions under which they are to be surmounted. In other words, it is the mode of production, not the ratiocinations going on in his head, that man must come to terms with and that afford the material for thought, choice and action. That this is the fact for Marx, and not a one-to-one correlation, is verified by the insistence that the mode of production prescribes the *general*, not the particular, character of the social, political and intellectual processes of life. And certainly, without the mode of production prescribing their particular character, a one-to-one correlation is impossible.

The passage presumably suggesting that the economic development of society must culminate in socialism, that capitalism itself is to be immediately followed by socialism, is found in the first volume of *Capital*. Marx writes:

"The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labour of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation. This does not re-establish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era: i. e., on co-operation and the possession in common of the land and the means of production."

The title of the chapter in which the passage occurs is *The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation*. Since the passage comes at the end of the chapter, there can be no doubt that Marx wishes to indicate what the result of the *tendency* will be if, and only if, that tendency is realized. Thus, even though the

passage does deal with the transition from capitalism to socialism, it simply indicates that socialism is only a possibility, never an inevitability. Had Marx intended the conclusion of the chapter to indicate that the transition from capitalism to socialism is inescapable, that socialism is inevitable rather than possible, then he would have entitled the chapter: *The Historical Inevitability of Capitalist Accumulation*. At least, if Marx had any pretensions about fulfilling the canons of accurate description, this should be the title.

The passage itself merely testifies to the possibility, not to the inevitability of socialism. For Marx states that capitalism negates itself, not that it is negated by socialism. Naturally, after making the statement about capitalism's self-destruction, he does speak about socialism. But the fact that Marx finds capitalism can collapse of its own accord and not as a result of an effort to replace it with socialism, is a fact emphasizing that socialism is a tendency, a tendency that may even be realized, but not a preordained certainty.

Furthermore, in correcting a false interpretation of this chapter, Marx clearly indicates that he rejects Draper's conviction that history never affords two realizable possibilities, the absurd conviction that every future event is *inevitable or impossible*. At least, Marx leaves no doubt that Russia, as late as 1877, had alternatives, either one of which could be realized and both of which would bring to pass the economic conditions making socialism possible.

Marx states the alternatives by means of a question: "must Russia, as her liberal economists insist, begin by destroying *la commune rural* in order to pass to the capitalist regime; or, on the contrary, can she, without experiencing the tortures of this regime, appropriate all its fruits by developing her own peculiar historical gifts?" Since either alternative can be realized and is adequate for socialism, not only does this fact pull the rug from under Draper's conviction, but the latter alternative, the alternative of developing an agricultural economy based on *la commune rural*, also plays havoc with the fatuous opinion that socialism must be based on an industrial economy.

That alternatives are more than intellectual exercises and that socialism need not be based on an industrial economy become apparent in the following passage. After summarizing the misinterpreted chapter, Marx asks,

"Now what application to Russia can my critic make of this historical sketch? Only this: if Russia tries to become a capitalist nation like the nations of Western Europe, and in recent years she has taken a great deal of pains in this respect, she will not succeed without first transform-

ing a good part of her peasants into proletarians; and after that, once placed in the lap of the capitalist regime, she will experience its pitiless laws like other profane nations. That is all. But this is too much for my critic. He feels himself obliged to metamorphose my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into an historico-philosophic theory of a *marche général*, fatally imposed upon all peoples, regardless of the historical circumstances in which they find themselves placed, in order to arrive finally at that economic status which insures, together with the greatest expansion of the productive powers of social labor, the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon."²

Whether Marx, in scoffing at the idea that he is proposing an *historico-philosophic theory*, is also scoffing at the idea that socialism is inevitable, need not be a matter for speculation. For he explicitly repudiates the doctrine of inevitability in the preface to the second German edition of *Capital*. Marx observes that his method of presentation, a method which he describes as dialectical, has been little understood. One of the main difficulties has been that, even though he uses a dialectical method of presentation, this does not imply that either it or the subject-matter being presented possess the nature ascribed to them by Hegel. And it is just that misunderstanding that the writer of the previously mentioned Russian review is guilty of.

Since the review begins with the passage taken from *The Critique of Political Economy*, the writer is not under the illusion that Marx, like Hegel, regards the historical process as being determined by consciousness. But, even though recognizing this fact, the writer finds, as a result of Marx's presentation, that the historical process still possesses the quality of inevitability attributed to it by Hegel. The review states:

"The one thing which is of moment to Marx is to find the law of the phenomena with whose investigation he is concerned. . . . This law once discovered, he investigates in detail the effects in which it manifests itself in social life. Conse-

2. What Marx is saying here is thoroughly at odds with Trotsky's laws of *uneven and of combined development* and, hence, with the *theory of the permanent revolution*. For example, both laws assume that a more advanced type of economy like capitalism is, by its very nature, compelled to enter a backward area like Russia or, what comes to the same thing, that a backward area like Russia, if it is to survive, must adopt the more advanced type of economy. But such an assumption destroys the plausibility of Marx's conviction that Russia could succeed in escaping the tortures of the capitalist regime.

quently, Marx only troubles himself about one thing; to show, by rigid scientific investigation, the necessity of successive determinate orders of social conditions, and to establish, as impartially as possible, the facts that serve him for fundamental starting points. For this it is quite enough, if he proves, at the same time, both the necessity of the present order of things, and the necessity of another order into which the first must inevitably pass over; and this all the same, whether men believe or do not believe it, whether they are conscious or unconscious of it. . . .

"The scientific value of such an inquiry lies in disclosing the special laws that regulate the origin, existence, development and death of a given social organism and its replacement by another and higher one. And it is this value that, in point of fact, Marx's book has."

In order to indicate that the writer of the Russian review has understood the method of presentation, yet to leave no doubt that he has completely misjudged the results of the inquiry, Marx sarcastically asks:

"Whilst the writer pictures what he takes to be actually my method, in this striking and (as far as concerns my own application of it) generous way, what else is he picturing but the dialectic method?"

At least, the insertion of the parenthetical expression, "as far as concerns my own application of it," before the words "generous way," makes sense only if it is intended as sarcasm. And the sarcasm is obviously provoked by the Russian's incredulous belief that Marx, like Hegel, actually knows what the next social order is going to be.

Not only does Marx's next observation confirm that this is the reason for the sarcasm, but it also indicates why he is unable to determine the nature of the coming social order. After pointing out that the method of inquiry must obviously differ from the method of presentation, he writes:

"Only after this work [the inquiry] is done, can the actual movement [of the social phenomena] be adequately described. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere *a priori* construction." [My emphasis—T. C.]

Thus, so far as Marx is concerned, the phantom of the *a priori* does not haunt the corridors of history. And, aside from a mechanical process of causality, the *a priori* alone can generate the necessity

(Continued on last page)

Capitalism, Stalinism, and the War

The 1949 International Resolution of the Independent Socialist League

The world of capitalist imperialism headed by the United States and the new totalitarian despotism of Stalinism headed by Russia face each other over the whole world as imperialist rivals and as antagonistic systems of class exploitation vying for the privilege of oppressing the peoples of the earth. Their "cold war" is the dominant fact, and the threat of the Third World War is the overshadowing issue of all current politics.

There has been no interlude of peaceful illusions. The two big powers openly jockey for positions and allies, through a series of warlike crises. Their diplomats and statesmen hurl defiance and denunciations at each other in language seldom used between states not at war or preparing for imminent war. Between the two contenders lies a Europe still suffering hunger, want and disease from the unprecedented devastation of the Second World War, and deathly afraid of the universally expected destructiveness of a foreseeable war of atom bombs, long-range guided missiles, bacteriological weapons and radioactive dust.

In this situation a paradox exists: Never before has there been such universal revulsion and horror in the face of the gathering storm of civilization on the part of the peoples of the world, and

a concomitant will to stop the man-made course to destruction; and at the same time never before has there been such widespread fear that the holocaust is inevitable. Not only the people but also the socialist and working-class movements stand with divided mind, unable to orient themselves in the midst of new, unclearly grasped and unanticipated phenomena.

The working classes of Europe, of America and of the colonial world have displayed no lack of fighting spirit and will to struggle since the end of the Second World War. The contrary is true, manifested by a scarcely interrupted series of class battles, from the Labor-Party-led political overturn in England, to the Stalinist-led general and political strikes on the Continent, to the nationalist-led struggles for independence in the colonial countries. The danger of war and the driving need for economic security ensures that the working class will continue to fight.

But this irrepressible class struggle is confused and its effectiveness partially nullified by the rise of a new factor, Russian bureaucratic collectivism, to the role of a first-class contender for world domination, and by the development of new trends in the capitalist world which amount to a new stage of the old sys-

tem. In most of Europe and in most of the world, the struggle for socialism is no longer merely the classic duel—proletariat versus bourgeoisie—but a three-cornered fight for power, with the working class ranged against not one class enemy but two; a degenerating capitalism which is anti-Stalinist and a totalitarian Stalinism which is anti-capitalist.

The basis for the disorientation of the proletarian forces consists in this: that these rival exploiting systems are not clearly recognized as enemies on an equal footing; that, since they are in mutual antagonism, one or the other is regarded by sections of the working class as a possible ally—as an ally as well against the threatening war.

The first task of Marxists in the face of this new constellation of world forces is a thorough reorientation of socialism in the light of the new phenomena in the capitalist and Stalinist sectors of the world. This means the adaptation of Marxism to the problems of our day in at least as sweeping a fashion as the adaptation accomplished by Leninism in its time on the basis of a recognition of the new stage of imperialism. It is on an analysis of the new conditions that the politics of Independent Socialism is founded—"Neither Washington nor Moscow!"—and it is on this that the socialist struggle against the war is based.

I. Changes in Capitalist Imperialism

A. Bureaucratic Militarization of Capitalist Economy

(1) Under the impact of the First World War, Karl Kautsky, the leading theoretician of social-democratic reformism, elaborated his theory of "ultra-imperialism," according to which the organic growth and internationalization of capitalist monopoly would lead to a single world-wide trust and international peace.

We have seen, in fact, that a kind of "super-imperialism" has indeed emerged from the advance of monopoly—two super-imperialist powers, each imposing its own imperialist sway over other modern and equally imperialist states.

But far from making for a more peaceful cohabitation of national states, the world-racking imperialist rivalry and the increased shift of all national economies for war and destruction has been brought to a pitch never before seen. For the first time, the life of every

important country in the world, including the United States, is being organized more and more on the basis of a permanent war economy and a permanent militarization of society.

(2) In economic terms, this means the rapid growth in the economic structure of capitalism of a third great department of production alongside the production of the *means of production* and the production of the *means of consumption*. This newly significant sector of the economy is the production of the *means of destruction*—production of goods which do not re-enter either into the process of reproduction or into (what is at bottom part of the same process) the production of labor power.

While the production of war goods and the devotion of means of consumption to the production of "soldier power" has always been a part of capitalist economy (where its economic effects have been

similar to those of luxury goods consumed by the capitalist class), the rise of this production to the immense role it now plays has been accompanied by far-reaching changes.

(3) The link between the economic and political changes thus produced is the fact that the *market* for this third department of capitalist production is the state. The rise to dominance in the economy of this type of production effects, therefore, the partial negation of the blindly-operating market as the regulator of capitalist economy and its replacement by the partial planning of the state bureaucracy.

In proportion as production for war purposes becomes the accepted and determining end of economic activity, the role of the bureaucracy ceases to be limited to that of a political superstructure and tends to become an integral part of the economy itself. This bureaucratization of economy in the capitalist countries leads to the growth of the state bureaucracy in size, in the importance

of its role for the regulation of the economy, and in its relative independence from the direct control of the capitalist class.

(4) In this stage of the dominance of war economy and the bureaucratization of capitalism, the role played by state intervention ("statification of the economy") changes accordingly. From its role in the early period of capitalism of forcing development (especially in the case of latercomers like German or Japanese capitalism), and from its role in the middle period of capitalism of "socializing the losses" of particularly sick or weak individual industries, *its dominant role today is that of building or maintaining the war potential of the economy in anticipation of future conflict or planning war production in actual conflict.*

This new character or statification is founded upon the new dominance of war economy and the new role of the state bureaucracy, tending to substitute state-organized planning for the blind operation of the market, largely at the expense of petty capitalism but also partly at the expense of limiting or infringing upon the political and even social power of the bourgeoisie (as in the case of the fascist war economies).

Nationalization

(5) This development has not advanced equally in all capitalist countries or all spheres of capitalist economy, being especially marked in those capitalisms devastated or bled white in the war (like England and France) and less marked in proportion to the wealth of the country (as in the United States).

Nationalization in England has already gone beyond the limits expected by Marxists (including Lenin) in the days when British capitalism still appeared as a going concern, albeit in a state of historical decline, in particular still able to feed on the wealth produced by its colonial slaves. If nationalization in England does not go further (say, to steel) in the next period, this will not be because such a step is excluded by the nature of forces operating in the degeneration of British capitalism. While a nominally socialist government staffed by the Labor Party is the vehicle through which these changes are taking place, the bourgeoisie has so far put up a comparatively weak resistance and the Conservative opposition has been compelled to promise that its resumption of power might slow up or temporarily halt the trend but would not turn it all the way backward.

Likewise in France, since the end of the Second World War, nationalization has played a role which, before the war, would have been scouted as impossible of realization under capitalism by all Marxists.

(6) The all-pervading degeneration of

capitalism marked by the new phenomena outlined above is superimposed upon its decades-long decline, just as the new stage of the bureaucratic militarization of capitalism does not negate but is superimposed upon its stage of imperialism.

It must be emphasized that while, both in economic structure and in political consequence, a new stage is marked, it is yet a new stage of capitalism, indeed of capitalist imperialism. The fundamental social reason for the emergence of this new stage is the delay of the socialist revolution and working-class intervention in cutting short the agony of capitalist decline in favor of a new social order based on workers' power.

(7) Out of this partial self-negation of the capitalist world, however, the new traits rising to prominence have more and more in common with the rival social order whose power has mounted parallel with the degeneration of capitalism: Russian bureaucratic collectivism. Thus already in 1939, discussing the bracketing of the New Deal, German fascism and Russian Stalinism under one head, Trotsky commented that "all these regimes undoubtedly possess common traits, which in the last analysis are determined by the collectivist tendencies of modern economy," and that "the tendencies of collectivization assume, as the result of the political prostration of the working class, the form of 'bureaucratic collectivization.' The phenomenon itself is incontestable. But where are the limits, and what is its historical weight?"

While in 1939 Trotsky expected this inner tendency of capitalism toward "bureaucratic collectivization" to be aborted by post-war revolution and to be therefore only of academic interest, the prolongation of capitalist degeneration and the continued "political prostration of the working class" more and more brings it to the fore and lends it increasing historic weight. The limits of this tendency

B. National Independence and Capitalist Imperialism

(9) The degeneration of today's capitalism is most noticeable at its peripheries, in the relations between it and the colonial world. The end of the First World War brought the strengthening of the colonial empires at least of the victorious powers. The Second World War has brought a thoroughgoing disintegration into all of world imperialism where it counts most, among their colonial slaves.

For the first time since the early progressive days of capitalism, peoples in revolt have won their national independence from big powers. The British and French empires, greatest in the world, are breaking up. India, classic example of colonial subjection, is now politically

are set by the struggle of the working class for power and, even aside from this, by the fact that the complete negation of capitalism short of working-class revolution requires the intervention of some other revolutionary social force which is visible in the Western capitalist countries only in broad outline.

8) This capitalist tendency toward "bureaucratic collectivization," therefore, by no means erases the distinction and antagonism between the rival social systems of capitalist America and bureaucratic-collectivist Russia, but bears on the *direction* of capitalist degeneration—given working-class failure to fight the trends created.

Capitalism itself is doomed. In the looming war between Western imperialism and Stalinist imperialism, the victory of the former can be achieved by it only by intensifying precisely those tendencies which push it in the direction of its enemy. War economy—bureaucratization—bureaucratic planning—controls—regimentation—declining standard of living in the midst of "full employment" for war production—these are the social prerequisites for gearing capitalism toward victory in the threatened war. It is irresponsible and utopian to believe that the victory of American imperialism in this war can be ensured at any cost lower than the acceleration of its own descent into that modern-type barbarism upon which it wars.

The fight against the inevitable assault of today's capitalism on the most firmly entrenched economic gains and democratic rights of the people is part and parcel of the socialist struggle against the war itself and its preparation. This is the most fundamental historical basis for our slogan "Neither Washington nor Moscow!" and the refusal of the Marxists to make the slightest compromise with social-patriotic notions of supporting the capitalist side of a war in order to gain a "breathing spell" from the threat of Stalinist totalitarianism.

independent. Egypt and most of the Arab world are no longer under direct British mastery. This change is not due to any change of heart by a reformed British imperialism under Labor Party control. On the contrary, British imperialism has not given the slightest sign of having changed its spots—in Africa, for example, where it still maintains a firm hand. Nor is it true, on the other hand, that "nothing new has really happened," that India's independence is a "fake," etc. India's political independence is as real as the political independence of any state today other than the Big Two themselves.

(10) What is noteworthy, from the point of view of the Marxist prognosis,

is that this change has been accomplished without a socialist revolution and not under the leadership of the working class in these colonies. If this stands in contradiction with the prognoses based on the theory of permanent revolution, it is so not because the theory misread the character of the colonial bourgeoisie, but because it did not envisage the transformation which has actually taken place: the accelerated degeneration of capitalism and therefore the disintegration of capitalist imperialism.

Capitalism, falling apart and held together at home through bureaucratic militarization, loosens its grip first at its outer fringes. The sweeping and world-wide changes in the colonial world testify to the entrance of capitalist imperialism onto a new stage of its degeneration.

New Imperialism

(11) But at the same time—and equally characteristic of the new stage of capitalism—national political independence has come to mean less and less in today's world. It no longer opens the doors it used to, in the earlier day when it meant (for the native bourgeoisie) the opportunity to itself enter upon the road of economic expansion and development among the powers of the world.

For the old relationship of colonial slave and colonial master, a new relationship is being established not only for the former colonial dependencies but also for countries which have enjoyed national independence for a century and more. This is a hierarchical relationship of economic subordination under the over-all hegemony of American super-imperialism.

(12) This relationship, under which the situation of the ex-colonies is being subsumed, is that which American imperialism is on the way to establishing between itself and the advanced countries of Western Europe. As noted in previous resolutions: since the Second World War, for the first time in modern days, the spirit of national resistance has found a social basis in these lands—not merely, as during the war, directed against actual military occupation, but directed against the usurpation of their national sovereignty by the United States through the economic levers of the Marshall Plan.

The relationship which is being established between American imperialism and (for example) Italy is not the same as the pre-war relationship between England and India. It is no longer that of master and colonial slave, but of overlord and vassal. The capitalist-imperialist world is no longer divided into two more or less distinct spheres consisting of a number of exploiting states and a larger number of bondsmen-nations without rights; it is a hierarchy under the overlordship of Washington, in an

imperialist system of mutual but unequal obligations with the dominant imperialism of the United States skimming the cream. The newly independent colonies are fitted into this framework.

(13) The American overlordship in Western Europe does not take the form of political suppression of national sovereignty, just as it did not in its conquest of Latin America; the vassal continues under the form of a "sovereign" independent state, subordinating itself to Washington of its own "free will"—that is, under the compulsion of economic necessity to knuckle under lest its own capitalist economy collapse.

In addition, the counter-threat from the East, from Moscow, drives it into the arms of that imperialism which at least seeks to prop up its existing ruling class. Thus the threat of Russian expansion becomes, in addition to their own economic weakness and need, the cement which binds together the new American hegemony being established on the Continent and over the rest by the capitalist world.

Only by convincing the peoples of Europe that it is the lesser evil can the United States mitigate the outbursts of national resistance which would otherwise greet its encroachment on their sovereignty. This has its counterpart in the propaganda appeal of Russia to the peoples under its own heel.

The two super-imperialisms feed on each other. In the European working class, the politics of the reformists who paint the victory of American imperialism as the lesser evil and as the pre-

requisite for a "breathing spell" is precisely the line of propaganda and conviction which permits Washington to realize its world ambitions.

(14) American overlordship in Western Europe is indeed a necessity if capitalism is to withstand Stalinist Russia's assaults on its bastions. It is irresponsible—or at least inconsistent—to greet the Marshall Plan as a necessary bulwark against Stalinism and at the same time object to America's utilization of the Marshall Plan for the purpose of dictating what its recipients shall or shall not do economically or politically. Capitalist Europe cannot defend itself while maintaining a real independence, in its present stage of degeneration. Economically and politically, it cannot organize itself into a unity, as against the Russian empire's integrated totalitarianism, except under outside tutelage.

As a social force, European capitalism has little or no appeal for the masses, either in its own countries or in Eastern Europe. The European reformists, who have never entertained the thought of socialist revolution as a bulwark against Stalinism, conclude that the only "practical" alternative is reconciliation to American imperialism or dependence upon it. In every part of the world—outside Europe too, where Stalinism's threat is far-flung—the politics of supporting America in its cold war now, or in the shooting war tomorrow, makes impossible any struggle for national independence beyond grumbling or pleading. Here too the shadow of the Third World War determines all politics.

C. The "Theory of Retrogressionism"

(15) If world capitalism, in its senility, is entering upon a new stage in our epoch of war and revolution, accompanying this development are retrogressive symptoms in all fields—social, political, ideological, cultural. The old system awakens barbaric echoes of its past, as civilized values in the broadest sense crumble with the economic structure.

The appearance of these symptoms, however, does not mean that two centuries of capitalist development and social change have simply been put in reverse and wound back on the film of history. Thus the reappearance of national-liberation movements and strivings in modern Europe represents, on one side, a hurling back of working-class consciousness, but it does not and cannot mean a throwback to the social conditions that prevailed in the early days of capitalism. Thus the hurling back of culture in so many of its aspects (most evident in German fascism and totalitarian Stalinism but visible also even in the United States) is a retrogressive movement, but it does not simply take society back to the problems and solu-

tions of a previous epoch. These symptoms are superimposed on an entirely new constellation of social forces.

(16) The political dangers latent in an erroneous theory on this question are most evident in, but not confined to, the formulation of the theory of retrogressionism put forward by the IKD group.

According to it, the process of retrogression "harks back in reverse order to the end of the Middle Ages, the epoch of 'primitive accumulation,' the Thirty Years War, the bourgeois revolutions, etc." and is "shoving society back to the barbarism of the Middle Ages," bringing about "a reversal . . . of all relations, foundations and conditions valid for the ascending development of capitalism" and producing "the exact counterpart" in reverse of this ascending development, creating "conditions in economics, politics, social relations, etc., which are like the conditions of the epoch of the origins of capitalism," etc.

In the political conclusion drawn from this theory, the IKD group, in emphasizing the "democratic revolution" against the despotic regime of capitalist barbar-

ism minimizes the specific and leading role of the proletariat as a class and even slurs over the decisive question of class distinctions in the broad popular and democratic movements against capitalism into which all oppressed classes and strata are driven by its decay. At the same time, by failing to emphasize the fact that for Marxists the conscious and consistent struggle for democracy can be conceived of in no other way than as the struggle for workers' power and socialism, the position of the IKD, which is at best ambiguous on this score, leaves open a return to the political program of the immature proletariat in the days of immature capitalism.

(17) On the theoretical side, its theory ignores precisely the new driving force of capitalist degeneration in favor of a

D. The Role of the Social-Democracy

(18) The degeneration of capitalism exercises a penetrating effect on all aspects of its society and on all its wings, from its reactionaries to its liberals. Not least of all does it affect social-democratic reformism, in the latter's capacity as the bearer of capitalist ideology in the ranks of the working class. Where the social-democracy has seemed to take a new lease on life in the countries of Western Europe, it has been in part at the expense of a change in its role corresponding to the changes working within capitalism itself.

(19) Social-democratic reformism is today increasingly one of the political channels through which the "bureaucratic collectivization" of capitalism expresses itself. The "collectivist tendencies" within capitalism press forward, and in many cases—as has happened often before—the old capitalist representatives are unwilling or unable to become their vehicles, hidebound by tradition and personnel. The social-democracy is in many respects peculiarly fitted to do so.

After the First World War, discredited capitalism required a "democratic" face-lifting, sops and stopgaps; and it permitted the social-democracy to take the lead in this direction until it was no longer useful. Today the needful for capitalism is not democratization; it is bureaucratization, a measure of bureaucratic state planning accompanied by increasing Bonapartism. Just as two decades ago the social-democracy "democratized" under the impression that it was thereby fulfilling an installment of its own program, so today it plays a role in the bureaucratic militarization of economy under the impression that it is achieving a slice of "socialism."

(20) This is possible for the social-democracy because—precisely in that basic respect which distinguishes revolutionary Marxism from all petty-bourgeois

sterile schematism. Far from lessening the leading role of the working class in the struggle for both socialism and democracy, the degeneration of capitalism and of its "democratic" sections in particular more than ever leaves the proletariat as the only social force which can lead all the oppressed in combating the descent to a new barbarism.

At the top of the agenda today for the socialist movement is the fight for every democratic demand, including national independence of subject peoples and nations, but this struggle has progressive significance only insofar as it leads to or creates more favorable conditions for the achievement of the *proletarian socialist revolution by the overthrow of capitalism*.

ideologies in the working-class movement—there is an underlying ideological kinship between social-reformism and Stalinism: the aim of a rationalized society plus a fear of the masses in movement and a rejection of the working class's claim to social leadership; its ideology of collectivism without trust in workers' democracy and initiative.

This is also why the soul of social-democracy is split throughout Europe between capitulation to American domination and capitulation to Stalinism, depending upon their relative power. Where Stalinism has not yet taken power, social-democracy mainly gravitates toward the former; in Italy, lapped by the wave of Russian power, it split between the two until the Stalinist debacle in the last election; but it then becomes anti-Stalinist in order to play its role as part of the vanguard of the native, capitalist tendencies toward bureaucratization.

(21) In the United States, where the reformist social-democracy is organizationally insignificant and capitalist degeneration least advanced, this ideological role is adopted by elements outside the miniscular Socialist Party or Social-Democratic Federation—the neo-liberals who have abandoned the traditional liberal fetish of freedom from state power in favor of another fetish, "planned capitalism," i.e., bureaucratized capitalism, denominated in liberal jargon as "progressive capitalism." In the case of American liberalism, as in the case of the European social-democracy, the same split is seen, however: into the pro-American liberals and the pro-Stalinist liberals (Wallaceites, neo-Stalinists), while in both camps the well-known phenomenon of "totalitarian liberalism" grows apace.

(22) This development—a modification of the long-standing political role of reformism—by no means erases what we have emphasized as being the funda-

mental *social* distinction between reformism and Stalinism, a distinction which also determines a basic difference in attitude toward the two on the part of the Marxists. The reformist parties are based on the existence of a more or less free labor movement in a more or less bourgeois-democratic state structure. Where this has ceased to be true, as in the totalitarianized satellites of Russia, the basis for the social-democracy has ceased to exist, and consequently the social-democracy itself has ceased to exist, being absorbed by the Stalinists or converted into new underground revolutionary movements.

(23) It is likewise the social basis of the social-democracy, as it is today—its working-class base—which also *limits* its role as a political channel for bureaucratic tendencies under capitalism, just as it was this same basic characteristic which limited its ability to act as an instrument for defending the capitalist state in the past. It can go along with these capitalist tendencies only up to a point; as ever, its working-class base pulls it in a different direction. It is this divided soul of the social-democracy which creates the opportunity for a left-wing—a Marxist tendency—to attempt to drive a wedge between the proletarian masses who follow the social-democratic leaders and the policy and program of the leadership itself.

A Pole of Attraction

(24) In those countries, therefore, where the social-democracy is still a mass organization, then—in the absence of sizable revolutionary parties, which is the situation in Europe today—the possibility exists of setting up within its left-wing ranks a pole of attraction for those independent workers who wish to orient away from both Washington and Moscow, an incubation center of the revolutionary third camp. This possibility does not and cannot exist within the Stalinist movements because of their totalitarian character.

Reformism still acts as a tail to capitalism and, at the same time, incubates elements of revolutionary-socialist struggle against capitalism—which means, by the same token, against reformism itself.

(25) Above all, it is not reformism which is today in most of the world the main enemy of revolutionary Marxism within the working-class movement. That is Stalinism.

In the period leading up to the First World War, the effect of the development of imperialism on the working class was to distort its ideology in the direction of reformist. Today the effect of the bureaucratic degeneration of capitalism on the working-class movement is to distort its ideology in the direction of Sta-

linism. The dominance of social reformism was the result of the imperialist development of the system; the Stalinization of the working class is the result of

the new stage of capitalism. In this sense Stalinism is the contemporary analogue of pre-war reformism, although not merely a variety of reformism.

E. The Socialist Struggle for Democracy

(26) The attitude of revolutionary socialists toward democratic demands and slogans has undergone substantial modification in the last period, especially during and since the Second World War, under the impact of the changes in capitalism itself. One of the first and biggest manifestations of this change was the position on the national-resistance movements in Europe adopted by the Workers Party in 1944. At the same time, the recognition of the world Stalinist parties as an anti-capitalist but reactionary movement highlights the crucial role of democracy today in the proletarian struggle against capitalism, in contradistinction from Stalinism.

(27) The fundamental difference between the reformist and the revolutionary view of the struggle for democracy dates back in modern times to the contrast between the politics of the pre-1914 social-democracy and of its revolutionary Marxist wing of the same period, when both operated on the common Marxist belief that the road to socialism lay through the unceasing struggle for the broadening of democracy. But the social-democrats based their fight on the view that there was an unlimited perspective of democratization before capitalism, which need only be driven to its ultimate conclusion in line with the natural tendency of a peacefully developing capitalism; among other revolutionary Marxists, the Bolsheviks viewed their struggle for democracy in Russia as inevitably bringing the masses in conflict not only with the autocratic regime of the czar but also with the capitalist class.

Where, therefore, the former view led the social-democrats to adaptation to and support of capitalism, and finally even support of its wars, the Marxist view led to the carrying of the democratic struggle over to the socialist revolution, without which it could not achieve fruition.

(28) The Russian October and the period of the first world revolution of 1917-23, which saw a proletarian revolutionary wave sweep over all of Europe and shake up the whole world, with soviet power and the overthrow of capitalism immediately on the order of the day, also saw the formation of the Communist International and the crystallization and codification of Marxist doctrine as developed by Lenin taking place under these conditions.

The fundamental difference between social-democracy and revolutionary Marxism took another specific form: the reformists undertook the task of defending and preserving capitalism against the assaults of the revolutionary pro-

letariat, calling this betrayal "the defense of bourgeois democracy." To this bourgeois democracy, under which guise the capitalist system was making its last stand, the Marxists counterposed *workers' power* and socialist democracy. Under the cover of the bourgeois-democratic regimes, temporarily staffed by the reformists, the continued dictatorship and oppression of the capitalist rulers stabilized itself—until the temporary burgeoning of democratic and republican forms in Europe gave way, once the revolutionary tide had receded, to fascism and the drive to a Second World War.

(29) This last struggle against the bourgeois-democratic form of capitalism, however, left its lasting impress on the Marxist movement and on its attitude toward the struggle for democracy under capitalism. While it is certainly not excluded that, with the rise of a second wave of world revolution, bourgeois democracy (or what is left of it) will again be able to be counterposed to workers' power, in a last attempt to head off the final overthrow of capitalism, the present trends and relations of forces in the world call imperatively for the revival of the revolutionary Marxist struggle for democracy, exemplified by the Bolsheviks, which led up to the first world revolution, and not the mechanical repetition of the slogans and attitudes which were characteristic while the direct struggle for socialist power was on the order of the day.

The fact that this revival has been delayed in the Marxist movement can be ascribed to two factors besides political inertia in general: the effect of the Stalinization of the Communist International even upon those who broke with Stalinism (like the Trotskyists); and the universal expectation of the Marxists that the outbreak of the Second World War would be the prelude to a second world-wide upsurge of proletarian revolution which would bring back the conditions of 1917-23 on an even higher plane. The actual aftermath of the war makes the readaptation of the Marxist-Leninist struggle for democracy an imperative necessity.

(30) The trend of capitalism today is not toward democratization but its reverse: militarization and authoritarianism, "bureaucratic collectivization" and Bonapartism. The "defense of bourgeois democracy" conducted by the reformist social-democracy today, this time as a "lesser evil" in comparison with Stalinism, is such as to drive them and their similars to whitewash and condone—i.e., not struggle against but support—an un-

ending series of inroads upon democracy necessitated by capitalism's degeneration.

In the United States, as has been noted, even "old-fashioned" liberalism is giving way to emphasis upon statism instead of democratic controls as the cure to the evils of capitalism. Only the revolutionary socialists today can inherit and prosecute militantly and consistently the fight for the defense of every democratic right under capitalism, and for the extension of democracy, as part of its struggle to mobilize the masses for the abolition of capitalism.

(31) The key to the struggle for socialism today is the struggle for democracy—the fight to awaken a mass movement behind the most thoroughgoing democratic demands as an indispensable means of leading this fight on to socialism. The Independent Socialist League therefore seeks to be the champion of every popular democratic struggle against the manifestations of degenerate capitalism; is implacably opposed to every plea that any such struggle should be subordinated, soft-pedaled or sidetracked because of its effect on United States power in its struggle for the world against Stalinist Russia; and determined to push such a fight for thoroughgoing democracy consistently and unwaveringly to its final conclusion, a socialist democracy.

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II. Stalinism and the Rise of the New Russian Empire

A. The Nature of Stalinism

(32) The basic analysis of the Russian state and of Stalinism which has been developed by our movement, like every other theory on this subject, has been tested in the past two years by a series of events of world importance. We can ascertain that it has not only stood up under this test but that it has shown itself to be the only line along which these events can be understood.

(33) During the period since the end of the war, Russia has emerged not only as a major imperialist power but as one of the Big Two of the earth. Its imperialism has matured and expanded with a rapidity characteristic of change in our epoch. Beginning the war as Hitler's junior partner in the Stalin-Nazi Pact, it is today capitalist America's only rival for world domination—a rivalry not only between different imperialists but also between two different systems of class exploitation, which meet each other with different political, social and economic weapons in the struggle for the "right" to oppress the peoples.

Russia has not merely "expanded"; it has set out to build and has already acquired in part a far-flung empire on every side of its own borders, consisting of states which are not merely "satellites" but subject nations held in chains by the same totalitarian terror that operates within Russia itself. The euphemism of Russian "expansionism" as a substitute for "imperialism" can be used only if all reality is ignored.

(34) During the past two years the unfolding of Stalinist policy, in the satellite states especially, has helped to confirm and clarify the nature of Russia and Stalinism. First and foremost among these developments has been the clear fact that the Stalinist regimes have without exception pursued a policy of bureaucratic nationalization of the economy and destruction of the capitalist class. In all of the satellite zones, the major part of industry has been nationalized; whatever sector of the economy still remains in private hands is almost exclusively made up of small enterprises, and even these are rapidly on the way to complete nationalization or state control.

The socio-economic system, as well as the political system, has been made identical with that of Russia itself in every important respect. The bourgeoisie has been expropriated not only politically but economically. The event which marked this development most dramatically was the CP coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, this being the last country in the Russian empire in which the bourgeoisie had retained any vestige of political control.

(35) With this demonstration the last props have been knocked from under the two theories on the "Russian question" heretofore posed in the Marxist movement as alternatives to our own. The "orthodox" Fourth International theory that Russia is still a (degenerated) workers' state, since "nationalized property equals workers' state," now requires the conclusion that the East European satellites are likewise "workers' states."

But this means that Stalinism—by no matter what unexpected or unpleasant means—has shown its ability to make the social revolution and overthrow capitalism in favor of a form of workers' power. It means further, that while the working class and a revolutionary-socialist workers' party is a good thing and perhaps even necessary for a further healthy development of the "revolution," they are not necessary for the making of the socialist revolution. It means further that the only role to be played by the revolutionary party is as a democratic opposition in, or wing of, the Stalinist movement.

While formally only the British section of the Fourth International has actually openly acknowledged the conclusion that the satellite countries are workers' states, the reaction of the Fourth International to the Tito-Stalin break demonstrates that it is actually tending to assume this character and role of a "left wing" or "democratic wing" of Stalinism. While tradition and pressure from within may slow up or zigzag this trend, it is unquestionably demanded by the theory to which they still cling.

(36) If the "workers' state" position has been wellnigh taken out of the realm of theoretical dispute by its refutation in life, the same is even more true of the theory that Russia is essentially capitalist—whether capitalism heavily overlaid by statification, or capitalism at its "highest" peak of development—or the theory that Russia is developing in the direction of capitalism. The destruction of capitalism and of the capitalist class, the refusal of the Stalinist rulers to compromise with it, politically or economically, in the satellite zones, leave no more room for doubt that we have here a social system different from and antagonistic to the capitalist system in any form.

Meanwhile, on the negative side, in Russia itself all predictions of internal Russian development based on either the "workers' state" or "state capitalist" theory have utterly failed to show the slightest sign of being realized.

(37) In noting the confirmation of our analysis of Russia and Stalinism by the events of the past two years, it must not be concluded that the Russian state and social system, or the international Stalinist movement, is already a finished social formation, about which a final set of formulas can be drawn up.

Stalinism itself is still meeting new problems as a result of its new role in the world and its characteristics are emerging—even to itself—only step by step as it grapples with its new problems. It is only in this sense that we can and do claim that the theory of bureaucratic collectivism has shown itself to be the indispensable key to understanding the Stalinist phenomena.

Nationalization Progressive?

(38) The sweeping character of Stalinist nationalization in Eastern Europe also reinforces another conclusion. It has been traditional in the Marxist analysis of capitalist phenomena to make or allow a distinction between the "progressive form" and "reactionary social content" of certain capitalist developments (like the growth of monopoly out of large-scale production). The sense in which the term "progressive in form" was applied to monopoly was contained in the thought that the concentration and centralization of large-scale industrial enterprise in the hands of a few capitalists prepared the way technologically for socialist collectivization, provided in fact the prerequisites for the latter. This was and is correct.

It is impossible, however, to apply the same distinction to the bureaucratic nationalization of industry under Stalinism. Stalinist nationalization is in no sense at all a prerequisite for the socialization of the means of production; nor does it "prepare the way" for the latter. Industrialization and centralization in the past represented the impact of what Engels metaphorically called "the invading socialist society" upon capitalism, developing capitalism to the point where socialism first became possible; Stalinist nationalization and industrialization represents not a necessary preparation for socialism but an abortion of this pre-socialist evolution, resulting in a social system which is the deadly enemy of socialism. The form of nationalized economy per se as opposed to capitalist property forms can be characterized only as "potentially more efficient"—an abstraction which permits a social characterization of actual phenomena only given a live historical context.

(39) Stalinist nationalization, therefore, is in no sense progressive, occurring as it does at a time when the prob-

lem before society on a world scale is no longer that of abolishing the domination of man by nature (sufficient at least for the realization of socialism) but when the problem is that of abolishing the domination of man by man.

B. Stalinist Road to Power in the Satellites

(40) The events of the past period have provided also the historical spectacle of *new* Stalinist states and bureaucracies in the process of formation. Up to the end of the war, bureaucratic collectivism, which was analyzed as a new social formation different from both capitalism and socialism (as well as from all pre-capitalist societies) was still a Russian phenomenon, limited to one country. An analysis of this new society through this one case was complicated by the fact that in this single specimen bureaucratic collectivism had arisen through the degeneration of a nationally-confined socialist revolution. In the early years of the war, this bureaucratic-collectivism-in-one-country already had expanded its own borders through purely military conquests, but had not yet spawned.

The bureaucratic-collectivist states set up by Stalinism in East Europe did not arise through the degeneration of a socialist revolution in power. Nor did they all arise in exactly the same way. In the case of Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria, for example, the Stalinist regimes were set up, from the beginning of the "liberation" (from the Nazis), on the bayonets of the Russian army as pure-and-simple quisling regimes, put into power by military ukase and maintained in power by terrorism. If any other road to power was possible in these cases, the Russians at any rate did not experiment with it, although individual bourgeois captives were temporarily utilized as figureheads to ease the transition. These satellites were and are nothing but formally independent satrapies of the Russian power.

(41.) In Czechoslovakia, however, after five months of military occupation, the Russians left behind a mixed government, in which the Communist Party was handed control over the central institutions of state power (army, police) and of propaganda; but at the same time a certain measure of political power was shared with representatives of the shattered and weakened bourgeoisie who engaged themselves in return to follow the pro-Russian line in international relations. The difference between Czechoslovakia and the first type of satellite was determined essentially not by any greater power enjoyed by the Czech bourgeoisie as against the Polish, etc., but by the existence of a proletariat which was the most numerous and the best organized in Eastern Europe.

The Czech CP did not dare to move

This is the only basic criterion for the category of "progressiveness" in today's world, and means: that is "progressive" which is a prerequisite for, or does in fact lead to, the establishment of *socialist democracy*.

for complete control until in the intervening period it had succeeded in insuring its rear by subjugating and breaking possible resistance by the working class to complete totalitarianization through a regime of constantly stepped-up terror. In the end the Stalinist drive to gather all power into their own hands achieved success by counting on the passivity of the working class in the face of a coup from above by picked terror squads recruited from the proletariat and used against the proletariat.

(42) The passive reaction by the Czech proletariat to the coup was based on the following conditions:

(a) The essence of state power was already in the hands of the Stalinists as a result of the Russian conquest; the Stalinists were not overthrowing the state power but merely utilizing it to complete the totalitarianization of the country.

(b) Czechoslovakia's geographical position and common border with Russia as well as its original military occupation by Russia had already put it in Moscow's orbit from the beginning; and this objective fact was recognized by all. The coup represented no change in this respect but only blasted the illusions of the bourgeois politicians and their followers that their country could revolve in Russia's orbit as a maverick planet.

(c) There was no alternative visible to the workers which did not involve dependence on the totally discredited bourgeoisie, which was clinging to its own economic power by a thread and to its political power by sufferance. Like the majority of European workers, the Czech proletariat in the mass looked with hope only to socialism, nor was there left a viable bourgeoisie which could appear even as a practical lesser evil to Stalinism.

In such an impasse, the immediate alternatives were only support of the Stalinist dictatorship for venal or illusory reasons, or passive toleration and immobilization.

(43) The fact, however, that the Stalinist road to total power in Czechoslovakia did not take place completely under Russian guns but was at least consummated after a semi-public struggle of political forces permits an insight into another aspect of the nature of Stalinism. The CP apparatus, which came riding in on the Russian army's gun-carriages, sought to establish social roots of its own within the country. In the West (e.g., France and Italy) where

the Stalinists place their anti-capitalist face out in front, it is well known that the Stalinist movement has displayed great attractive power for coralling militant and revolutionary elements in the working class who see no other mass party fighting the enemy in power, the capitalist class.

In most of Eastern Europe, where the CP leadership was plucked out of Moscow's Hotel Metropole and placed on top, the consequences are different. Insofar and as long as the Czech CP was still able to use the remnants of the bourgeoisie as a bogymen, it exercised a gravitational pull on socialist workers. With the tightening of its own reins and the progressive enfeeblement of bourgeois control in the government, its influence over the illusions of the workers and its possession of their active support waned (e.g., victory of the anti-Stalinist wing of the SDP over Fierlinger before the coup). Throughout, in any case, the Stalinists sought, and found, points of support outside the circle of pro-Stalinist workers with revolutionary illusions, knowing that the latter were unreliable props.

Sources of Stalinist Bureaucracy

(44) The Stalinist bureaucracy in formation seeks to recruit not merely to the ranks of the party but also specifically to the bureaucracy. In the conditions of the satellite zone, the first recruiting group is the labor and social-democratic bureaucracy itself. Already noted in Part I is the extent of the ideological kinship between the bureaucracies of reformism and Stalinism, and, as the counterweight in the capitalist countries, the different social basis of the reformists and Stalinists. Where, however, capitalism has been wellnigh destroyed or at least seriously enfeebled and on the way out, as in Czechoslovakia, the reformist labor bureaucracy is left rootless and its habitual ways of thought and life push sections of it to absorption into the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Hence the common phenomenon in Eastern Europe today of an influx of social-democratic turncoats into the Stalinist apparatus, in some cases providing the tops with their only really native elements. A second fertile source of recruitment to the Stalinist bureaucracy under Eastern European conditions is the middle-class intellectual, socially rootless even under declining capitalism, repelled by the anarchy and inefficiency of capitalist society and its inability and unwillingness to give rein to his special talents even in its own behalf. The type is common, for example, in the leadership of the Yugoslav CP. Given the plethora of bureaucratic jobs opened up by Stalinist nationalization, to which must be added a large number of jobs not directly paid by the government but controlled by it, such

elements—plus workers raised into an aristocracy of management—are absorbed into the new Stalinist regime.

To them, in the case of Czechoslovakia, must be added the adaptable elements of the old bureaucracy. Far from requiring a clean sweep of the entire old bureaucracy when they take power, the Stalinists have a real need to try to integrate into their own regime as many of the old political *figures* and officeholders as possible.

Avoid Mass Initiative

(45) The Czech coup showed that the Stalinists' aim is to *avoid* unleashing the mass action and revolutionary initiative of the workers in their road to power. While, as long as remnants of the bourgeoisie remain, they are willing to use gingerly the club of working-class action against them, the Stalinists do not themselves wish to arouse the masses to revolutionary self-activity even to make their own Stalinist coup.

It would be a mistake to consider that this is due in any concrete situation only to a calculated fear that the masses may get completely out of hand, though this operates as a strong deterrent where the CP itself has no independent power. In Czechoslovakia, where the CP was already in complete control of the state apparatus of coercion, the awakening of mass revolutionary activity was neither necessary nor desirable for them. In France and Italy, where the CP has several times now led the proletariat to the verge of insurrectionary action in battering-ram action against the capitalist government, it has each time drawn back before the danger of revolution could spill over.

The Stalinist bureaucracy tends to develop the same mental cast toward action-from-below that is developed by every reactionary and anti-popular force which is interested in defending its own privileges above all. Just as even in the most democratic capitalist countries, this inherent fear of the masses takes forms not strictly demanded by the actual relationship of forces but flowing from the nature of the class (e.g., the widespread fear of revolution in the American bourgeoisie in the depression years of the '30s), so the Stalinists' fear of the masses flows from their anti-working-class character. Like the bourgeoisie itself at times, they *may* be compelled to call on working-class action to take the stage to a greater or lesser extent, while seeking to keep it within limits. They can moreover do this all the more freely in proportion as there is no organized working-class opposition to crystallize the anti-Stalinist democratic revolutionary forces. In this they follow a course analogous to the bourgeoisie's utilization of proletarian class struggle against feudal power in their time.

(46) The Stalinists do not seek their

road to power through working-class revolution or revolutionary action. They seek to utilize class struggle only to support the foreign policy of the Russian state or hasten the process of the breakdown and disintegration of the capitalist framework, to create a chaotic vacuum into which they can step from above through their control of an apparatus. Their adventurist sabotage strikes in France and Italy play the short-range game of pressure for a pro-Russian appeasement policy and serve the longer-range aim of creating the conditions under which Stalinism wishes to take power *without* the revolutionary intervention of the masses.

In France and Italy these conditions are not near; and neither, therefore, is Stalinist power on the Atlantic. The victory of Stalinism in Western Europe—which would mean the longest step toward world Stalinist domination—is ab-

stractly a possibility; but it can be posed as a possibility only given an extreme stage of disintegration of Western capitalism such as was true in the East as a result of the Second World War and such as creates a near-vacuum of political and social power. But this abstract possibility has already been sufficiently expressed in the very enunciation of the historic alternatives of socialism or barbarism.

Not abstractly but in terms of the real world situation, long before such a stage can be expected, war between Russia and the Western capitalist world and the revival of the movement for proletarian revolution will first have settled the question of the fate of capitalism. The last word is still to be said by the working class. The outcome is not to be deduced from abstract analyses but will be determined by the struggle itself.

C. Tito and Russian Imperialist Contradictions

(47) After the satellites militarily conquered by Russia and after Czechoslovakia, a third case from which new light has been cast on the nature of Stalinism is represented by Yugoslavia. This is the only country in the Stalinist empire in which the Stalinist revolution was made by a native mass movement. This native mass movement, the Tito Partisan army, upon which the Yugoslav CP rode to power, was indeed not primarily a working-class movement but overwhelmingly a peasant force, recruited from the peoples of a multinational state which is the most agrarian in all Europe.

Tito's bourgeois rival Mikhailovich was based on an exiguous bourgeoisie which was not only weak even before the war and exercised social power only through the monarchy, but which was further weakened by the Nazi occupation. At the same time, the emergence of Russia during the last years of the war as a major partner in the Allied camp and its domination over Eastern Europe exacted from the Western Allies the abandonment of Mikhailovich and the recognition of Tito's Partisans by the United States and England.

While therefore it is true that Tito's Partisan army was indeed a native mass movement, it is also true that it was able to come to power and squeeze out Mikhailovich with the toleration of the capitalist West only because of the background fact of Russia's heightened military-diplomatic strength. Thus Tito's apparatus came to power not as imported quislings but as leaders of a mass struggle with native roots independent of the Russian state; it is this fact which was decisive in hastening the emergence of centrifugal forces leading to the break with the Cominform (Moscow).

(48) Where the Czech events repre-

sented the last stages in the consolidation of Stalinist power in Eastern Europe and cast a sidelight on its road to power, the Yugoslavian events four months later represented the first major break in the Stalinist empire, forecast the beginning of the end of Stalinist power, and cast light on the inherent contradictions which will tear it apart. Russian imperialism is driven by its very nature to come into head-on conflict with the aspirations for national independence on the part of its newly acquired satellites.

The tempo with which this clash develops is determined by three factors: (a) Russia's totalitarian regime, which requires complete totalitarianization not only within Russia itself but also in its empire. (b) The tenseness of the war situation in the world engendered by Russia's rampant imperialism as well as America's. (c) The degree to which the Stalinist bureaucracy of the satellite countries is able to realize its inherent aspirations to exploit its country independently.

Russia's policy in Eastern Europe is the coordination of its satellite states into an integrated war machine—economically and politically. It aims at the complete subordination of economic life in the satellites to the needs of Russian war economy. This takes no account of the independent economic needs and aspirations of the satellites but seeks to dictate their economic policy and place them under the tutelage of the Russian planners as if they were merely provinces.

(49) In Yugoslavia this led to a clash over the industrialization of the country, which in Russian eyes figures as an agrarian supplier of food and raw materials to an Eastern European economic unit. In Rumania the development of industry takes place under Russian owner-

ship and control. In Czechoslovakia, whose economic ties have been traditionally with the West, Russia imposes an economic iron curtain, tying Czech economy to its own war machine. In all the satellites normal relations with the West are hindered and the economies artificially distorted in order to coordinate them with Russian war plans.

This over-all aim of the "Russification of economy" in Eastern Europe stands in the way of a full and healthy development of countries which have suffered long because of their under-development and their predominantly agrarian character.

(50) The Stalinist bureaucracies in these countries, moreover, seek to transform themselves from merely agents (proconsuls, tax-farmers and policemen) for the foreign Russian power, into indigenously-rooted native ruling classes—to become a real class in the first place, a status they naturally do not possess through the mere fact of their importation.

The social roots for a bureaucratic-collectivist ruling class, however, require not a nation of small peasants but a modern nationalized—therefore an industrialized—economy. In the agrarian countries the independent interests of the Stalinist bureaucracies drive them to push the industrialization of their countries whether this does or does not accord with the over-all plan of Russian war economy. In the more industrialized states of East Europe, as Czechoslovakia and Poland, similar independent economic drives are at work. Economically and politically, the new Stalinist bureaucracies, even when imported by Russian military might, seek the same status as an independent native ruling class as is enjoyed by their Russian similars.

The Tito Split

(51) Russia cannot keep its subject states under control simply or primarily through the pressure and power of its economic forces, as capitalist United States is trying to do through the Marshall Plan. This is, first of all, not in the nature of its system, which operates through bureaucratic planning from above by the terroristic political apparatus. It is, secondly, not wealthy enough to do so. For both reasons it cannot even retain the forms of autonomy or permit even illusions of national autonomy to exist for long.

(52) In the present international situation, moreover, the integration of Eastern Europe into its war economy means that it is the satellites which are doomed to bear the first brunt of the war with the West, because of their geographical position. While the social bases of the new Stalinist bureaucracies are the same as the Russian and a community of interest prevails as against the capitalist world, their own self-preservation re-

quires them to seek a more independent status than that of frontier guards for the Russian ruling class.

(53) These factors, operative in different forms and to different degrees in all the satellites, reached their greatest strength of expression in Yugoslavia first of all because the Yugoslav Stalinist regime is the only one which started with indigenous social roots on the basis of a native mass movement and secondly because the need for independent economic development is most pressing here. In other satellites (including Poland and Albania), however, sympathy with Titoism reached the point where even leaders of the CP had to be purged; and there is no doubt that everywhere else (particularly Bulgaria) the same inherent contradiction between totalitarian war planning and national independence, powered by the strivings for independent ruling class status on the part of the new Stalinist bureaucracies, is shaking the structure of Russian imperialism.

(54) Although the clash between Russia and Yugoslavia did not—as appeared possible at first—lead to an armed attack by Russia (directly or through a neighboring satellite) upon Yugoslavia for the purpose of bringing Tito into line, it can be stated that in this event the position of the anti-Stalinist workers should be to wish for the victory of Yugoslavia in its war against the invader; such support would have been determined by the nature of the war itself, limited to a duel between the two states, in which Tito's regime would be fighting for the national independence of the country as truly as this was the politics behind the Ethiopian side of its war with Italy.

The independent class support and aims of the Marxists in such case would not differ, with respect to Tito, from the attitude taken by revolutionists toward the bourgeois government of the Spanish loyalists or the semi-feudal regime of Haile Selassie. While, however, the conflict between the two totalitarian regimes remains propagandistic and diplomatic and on the bureaucratic level, the Marxists give no support whatsoever to the Tito-Stalinist regime in Yugoslavia but expose its reactionary character and identity with the Moscow regime, and seek to mobilize all popular support against it.

(55) The irrepressible conflict in the Stalinist empire is indeed the reflection of the basic inherent contradiction of bureaucratic collectivism itself—the contradiction between totalitarianism and social planning. The "potentially more efficient" form of nationalized economy requires, under bureaucratic collectivism, a terroristic police regime which is warp and woof of the social system and which leads to its own contradictions while it eliminates those peculiar to capitalism.

The break between the Yugoslav and Russian Stalinists, therefore, is symptomatic of the instability of the Russian empire. The latter has barely had time to reach its post-war peak before significant cracks and fissures have begun to appear. It is such breaks in the previously closed ranks of the tops which open the door to the independent movement of the masses from below; thus the apparently seamless iron hoop of totalitarianism is broken. It is such breaks in the Stalinist superstructure which point the way, under totalitarianism, for the masses' yearning for real freedom and peace and security to express themselves in revolutionary action.

D. The Line of Struggle Against Stalinism

(56) If the masses behind the Iron Curtain are not yet ready for such action today, it is because the first steps required are the beginnings of mass struggle for the simplest economic demands—on wages, vacations, working day, police regime in the factories, etc. The flowering of Russian imperialism and the consequent necessity of shaping the whole economy toward a permanent war footing, added to the enormous waste inherent in a bureaucratic collectivist economy, makes it impossible for the regime to allow an improvement in the standard of living of the masses.

But under bureaucratic collectivism, there are not and cannot be any purely economic struggles. The struggle for the simplest economic demand is by definition from the beginning a struggle against the totalitarian state—a political struggle. Similarly, every struggle against the "excesses" of the police re-

gime is a struggle for workers' democracy, for control of the nationalized economy by the people. But under bureaucratic collectivism the struggle for control of the nationalized economy by the people, the struggle for workers' democracy, is necessarily the struggle for socialism. Where the state already owns and controls the economy, every struggle over the state power becomes a struggle for the democratic rule of the working class as against the bureaucracy.

(57) In the Stalinist states, the ruling class—and therefore the main enemy—is the bureaucracy. There is no big bourgeoisie at all, this class having been completely destroyed in all of the Russian satellites. There are remnants of the small and middle bourgeoisie in some sectors of the economy, shorn of all political power, and tightly controlled by the Stalinist state; even those socially powerless remnants are progressively

being cut down by advancing statification and control. All responsibility for both economic and political life is centered in the hands of the Stalinist state, which necessarily is the focal point on which all movements of discontent and opposition converge.

The aim of all opposition in such a state inevitably centers around the demands of *democracy*. Not only is this demand the essence of the *socialist* struggle under the bureaucratic-collectivist regime it is at the same time the program around which the widest strata of the population can be effectively mobilized. Even in the case of the peasants—the only important social force remaining in the Stalinist satellites still based on private property—the socialist program, which advocates truly voluntary collectivization founded on education, supports the struggle of the small peasants against the despotism that deprives them of the land on the basis of a “collectivization” which scarcely conceals the fact that the peasants are reduced to state serfs on the land, exploited and lorded over by the government police. Such a program is a powerful weapon capable of drawing the peasantry around the anti-Stalinist workers in opposition to the agrarian policies of a totalitarian state based on terrorism and enslavement to the state.

The task of the Marxists, therefore, is to enter into battle against the main enemy alongside every genuinely popular movement of resistance to the despotism of the state. They will seek to organize the class forces of the working class independently in such a struggle, raise their own class banners and achieve working-class hegemony over this democratic struggle, along with whatever bourgeois elements are involved in the fight or are ever temporarily at its head.

Attitude Toward Mikolajczyk

(58) In Poland, before the complete coordination of the country by the Stalinists, this anti-Stalinist camp of national resistance to Russian domination was headed by Mikolajczyk and included a remnant of reactionary-bourgeois elements as well as socialist working-class and peasant force. Without giving one iota of political support to Mikolajczyk but indeed fighting his influence over the anti-Stalinist opposition, the task of the Marxists in this situation was to give unequivocal support to the struggle of the movement on which he temporarily rested.

The struggle of the Marxists and of the working class in such a popular democratic camp is in no sense a struggle for “bourgeois restoration” but on the contrary the only way in which bourgeois restoration can be fought as an alternative to Stalinism and the broad masses led in a socialist direction. Even the leadership of Mikolajczyk over the

movement in Poland was only the temporary expression of a transitional period during which the Stalinists openly look over all power.

Civil War and the Bourgeoisie

(59) In Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, the advance of the Stalinists to open and complete control did not even meet with such resistance from the old bourgeois leaders, who capitulated completely, their own social basis having been destroyed through the progressive expropriation of the Czech bourgeoisie. Those signs of resistance and opposition which appeared during and soon after the CP coup arose, it would appear, from the student population and from the Sokol movement. Despite the appearance of pro-American or pro-British slogans in the manifestation of these elements of resistance, it is the task of the Marxists to give unequivocal support to all such popular elements of opposition to the regime while seeking to infuse it with their own class leadership and class program.

If the bourgeois politicians of the Benes camp had—as they did not—either the will or the ability to resist, and if a civil war based on a genuine popular movement had resulted from this hypothetical situation, we emphasize that it would have been the duty of all socialist workers to fight along with this camp against the Stalinist camp, supporting it in the same manner in which the Marxists supported the bourgeois-democratic Loyalist regime in the Spanish civil war: by their own (i. e., revolutionary) methods, by building a proletarian wing in the democratic camp and fighting behind the banner of that proletarian power.

(60) The threat of a bourgeois-restorationist movement in Eastern Europe looms, however, in proportion as disillusionment with the Stalinist regime finds no revolutionary alternative through which it can be channelized and in proportion to pressure by Western capitalism.

Given the largely agrarian character of many of the Russian satellites and the presently atomized state of its working class, the revitalization of working-class revolt against Stalinism—the seeds of which revolt are sown by Stalinism itself—may require first a series of demonstrations in the West. Insofar as the Western proletariat shows that the power of Stalinism can be broken in their own countries; insofar as they prove that Stalinist power is not fated to roll over Europe's working class; insofar as they exhibit in struggle a *non-capitalist* alternative to Stalinist totalitarianism—to this extent the revolt of the East European peoples will be speeded, their self-confidence raised, and the situation created whereby they can take advantage of the cracks in the Stalinist structure and push through these fissures in a wave of

assaults upon the Stalinist power.

(61) This demonstration, however, cannot be made as long as the working class of the West channelizes the fight against Stalinism through support of capitalism. The overthrow of Stalinism in the East requires the revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism in the West.

No Support to Either Camp!

(62) This basic political approach to the problem of fighting Stalinism is even more important in the West, where the Stalinist movements are still followed by large sections of the working class. During the past two years there has been a marked decline in Stalinist influence from the post-war high point in almost every country of Europe. This decline is due partly to the masses' experience with Stalinist policy both in the West and in the East, and partly to the Marshall Plan offensive of American capitalism. Neither the Marshall Plan nor the prospect of temporary economic improvement has, however, convinced the Western European workers that the restabilization of capitalism under American domination offers an alternative worth fighting for enthusiastically as against Stalinism.

The chief reason why the Stalinists still remain the strongest parties supported by the working class—in spite of their own crimes and progressive disillusionment with them—is the fact that they appear as fighters against capitalism and for peace. Any movement which follows the policy of supporting capitalism as against Stalinism, or of supporting American imperialism as against Russian, deprives itself of the possibility of winning these masses away from the Stalinists and for a progressive movement. At the best, given sufficient self-exposure by the latter, the masses will be left without any alternative for which they are ready to fight devotedly and actively. The sine qua non for breaking the workers away from Stalinist leadership is the regroupment of the scattered forces with a revolutionary third-camp position and the making of a new beginning in forging a new instrument for the mobilization of the proletariat against both capitalism and Stalinism.

(63) The *only* mass party of the working class in existence in Western Europe is the social-democracy, which bases itself on the “lesser-evil” policy. While it is the only movement which appears before militant workers as an alternative to following the Stalinists, the reformist pro-American and pro-bourgeois-democratic character of its line and leadership is an insuperable obstacle to its effectively playing the role of bulwark against Stalinism within the working class.

Nevertheless, in most places, given the feeble state of the independent Marxist movement, the rise of a Marxist third-

camp wing within the social-democratic movements offers the best opportunity for setting up a pole of attraction for the disillusioned Stalinist workers as well as for leftward-moving socialists; and thus contributing toward the regroupment of forces from the existing working-class movement.

(64) Such a new beginning is the first task in Europe and America today. In most of the world, and above all in Europe, it is no longer enough for working-class revolutionists to chart the lines of

class struggle against capitalism in the assurance that every blow struck against capitalism is a blow for the socialist future. They face two enemies: a capitalism which is anti-Stalinist and a Stalinism which is anti-capitalist. This three-cornered struggle for power was implicit in the Czech events; and it is this utterly new constellation of social forces which disorients and confuses the working-class movement.

It is the recognition of this new stage which is the basis of the politics of the

third camp. Without the working-class struggle, no socialism: this is truer than ever before. What is not true is that mere anti-capitalist struggle automatically equals socialist struggle. The conscious planned intervention and leadership of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard, anti-capitalist and anti-Stalinist, which has not been poisoned at its source by a false conception of the relation between socialism and workers' democracy, is more than ever the key to socialist victory.

III. Marxists and the Third World War

(65) The imperialist nature of the present struggle between the two colossi is evident in the sight of all. More and more, even liberalistic apologies for social-patriotism do not attempt to deny the imperialist basis of the clash but only argue that one or the other of the imperialists is worthy of support as the lesser evil. The basis of all these anticipatory rationalizations is the old and wellworn one, marked by not the slightest originality or freshness: namely, the thesis that one or the other of the combatants is, if not less imperialist, at least more democratic or more peace-loving than the other. In every essential respect, the character of the looming world war, as we see it developing now—will be as thoroughly imperialist as the second and first.

The Independent Socialist attitude toward this threat of war is founded firmly on our analysis of *the character and direction of development* of the two social worlds facing each other in enmity. We declare that, as in the first and second world wars, support of either camp amounts to a betrayal of the interests not only of socialism and the working class but humanity. This view has never been so firmly founded in experience as it is now that the aftermath of the second of the great wars of our era is present before our eyes.

(66) The Second World War and its outcome did not fulfill the pre-war expectations of the Marxists that it would be followed by working-class revolutions, after the model of 1917-1921. But the essential reasons given by our movement for refusing to support it have been fully and terribly confirmed by post-war events.

(a) There can no longer be the slightest doubt that the war was imperialist on both sides and on the part of all its participant nations—both in motive and consequences. On the part of the United States in particular: it has been proved that it did *not* enter the war merely in self-defense against Japanese attack;

the demagogic war aims put forward by Roosevelt (the Atlantic Charter) became a laughingstock even before the war was over; as the result of its dominant role in the war, American imperialism has extended its interests into every corner of the globe, is feared by the peoples of every country as a new bidder for worldwide mastery, is attempting to subordinate the economies of Western Europe to its own capitalists' interests through the Marshall Plan, has bases and troops throughout the world, and is the chief support of reactionary regimes everywhere as long as they are aligned against its rival Stalinist Russia.

(b) As after the First World War, there is less democracy in the world, not more; less freedom, more hunger and poverty, less hope of permanent peace. The imperialist who waged the second war "for democracy" had no difficulty in dividing up the world with totalitarian Russia at Yalta and Potsdam in secret deals the full details of which are not yet known. If the added power and influence which Russia thereby gained is being decried now, it is only because Russian imperialism is now the main threat to America's full enjoyment of her victor role.

(c) There is not only less democracy in the world, there is less democracy in the United States itself. It is possible freely to admit that the propagandist predictions made before 1939—about the onset of war meaning totalitarianism at home—were exaggerated. But what was not exaggerated and is all-important is the *direction* of development set up by America's victory. During the war itself the government refrained from launching any general attack on civil liberties and permitted the labor leaders themselves to hamstring labor's rights, this being possible in view of the lack of mass anti-war resistance while the world conflict was going on. It is with the end of the war and the arrival of that period which was supposed to see the fruits of America's victory for democracy, that the

militarization of America and the drive against democratic and working-class rights has been gaining strength. A series of "firsts" have been chalked up in short order: the first draft in peacetime; the first attack in over a quarter century on the basic rights of collective bargaining and the right to strike; the revival of government strikebreaking through injunctions; "subversive" lists and "loyalty purges" on a scale never before seen in the United States, more and more resembling adaptations of Gestapo and GPU procedure and based upon the totalitarian precept that anyone under suspicion is guilty until proven innocent, and on the principle of "guilt by association." While the social-patriots rationalized the war with the argument that its imperialist content was overshadowed in importance by the difference between capitalist democracy and fascist totalitarianism, it has turned out that the victory even of the "democratic" imperialists drives another nail into the coffin of democracy. The consequences of the victory of the "democracies" in the Second World War have been reactionary and retrogressive through and through. While the victory of the lesser evil is always posed as necessary for a "breathing spell" for the working class, one more such "breathing spell" won and democracy may cease to breathe.

(d) While the war did not end with the defeat of both sides by the socialist revolution of the proletariat, this only progressive denouement of the war was aborted precisely by the fact that the working-class forces had been led to place their trust in the victory of one or the other of the imperialists—in the Stalinists and their Russian myth or in American democracy and its illusion-makers. The promises of the left-wing defensists with regard to the progressive consequences of Allied victory have been tested and have led only to cruel deception. *The policy of the third camp—opposition to both sides in the imperialist war—was the only line along*

which any progressive outcome was at all possible, and in this lies the vindication of the Marxist anti-war policy. The only hope for a reversal of the world trend to destruction lies in pursuing the line of the third camp consistently and rallying the new undeceived masses around it.

(e) While in the period from 1918 to 1939 it was freely predicted from all quarters that the "next war" would mean "the end of civilization as we know it" with "no victors and no vanquished," the Second World War has been gotten through without any such definitive consequences. "Civilization as we know it" still exists in Europe, albeit in the midst of unprecedented shambles and destruction and lapped by the barbaric totalitarianism of Russian Stalinism. But with the atomic bomb in existence, there are few people now reluctant to accept the darkest predictions a second time. It cannot be expected that the Third World War, even if there is a victor and even if the "lesser evil" (American capitalism) is that victor, can lead to anything but another "breathing spell" marking another step in the breakdown of civilization and civilized values, not to speak of untold destruction, unless it leads to the overthrow of the present rulers of the world.

For a Third Camp!

(67) The Marxists reject with scorn the vulgarized notion often ignorantly or maliciously ascribed to them according to which in an imperialist war there is "no difference" between the two sides. This was not true of the revolutionary Marxist attitude in the First World War and still less true in the Second World War. The main combatants were: fascist capitalism on the one side and bourgeois-democratic capitalism on the other. The question posed before socialists was not whether one side, taken statically, was a "better" or more desirable form of capitalism than the other—a question long before answered in the affirmative by the Marxists—but whether this real difference justified socialists in supporting one camp.

The Third World War now being prepared between America and Russia will be, as we have already pointed out, not merely between two imperialist rivals, and not merely between a totalitarian and a bourgeois-democratic state, but between two different social systems. Far from making for any softening in the Marxist third-camp position, this fact underlines the necessity for the strictest adherence to it. Already in the Second World War, this new element—the involvement of a bureaucratic-collectivist state in the capitalist war—played a role, although a secondary one. The Workers Party, predecessor of the ISL, was in fact born through the struggle against the conception that when

there are two different social systems at war we are perforce required to choose between them. In 1939-40 this struggle was directed against the view that it was Russia that was to be defended against the capitalist world. Today, in the ranks of American socialism and labor it must be directed against the equally anti-socialist view that it is degenerating capitalism that must be defended against Stalinism.

"Breathing Spell"?

(68) *Given the fact that the DIRECTION of development of capitalism itself is toward bureaucratic degeneration and totalitarian collectivism in proportion as the system disintegrates without a revolutionary overthrow, the victory in a third world war of unprecedented physical destruction by the capitalist world can only hasten that process of bureaucratic degeneration—while the working class is disarmed by its support of its own capitalist master and unmobilized for the only struggle which can save humanity, the struggle for socialism.*

In not the best but the worst case, in any long-drawn-out atomic war under modern conditions in which the victor is as badly wrecked as the vanquished, the working class is certain to be dragged to destruction along with the ruling class unless and until the proletariat strikes out on its own independent road of fighting for its own power instead of for the ever-elusive breathing spell.

(69) On this question the thinking of American workers, and even of American socialists and Marxists, is seriously retarded and old-fashioned precisely because of the experience of the recent war, in which continental United States for the second time escaped physically unscathed. That this cannot happen again is a platitude; but the consequences, having not yet been acted out in life here as they have been in Europe, have not been absorbed.

Thus it is that proposals for preventive war—i. e., calculated unleashing of the bomb—are so much more freely thrown around in American circles. Thus it is too that American social-patriots, apparently relieved by the difference in degree between the predictions and the actual aftermath of World War II in the United States, seem willing to assume that the aftermath of World War III will be qualitatively comparable and measurable in the same terms.

(70) There is one basis and only one basis on which the political difference between America's remaining bourgeois democracy and Russia's totalitarianism can be made the ground for supporting the former's victory as the lesser evil: that is, if the goal of socialism is abandoned, explicitly or by implication, as unrealizable in our epoch, and a longer or shorter "breathing spell" posed as the best of possible goals. On the other hand,

whether socialist victory interrupts the war or follows it by a longer or shorter interval, as long as it is recognized as the only road out of the blind alley of capitalist-Stalinist degeneration, there is still no other way to fight for its victory, except by consistent adherence to the third-camp struggle.

(71) The political problems in international relations thrown up by the "cold war" now being waged revolve around the same issues and considerations, fundamentally, as the question of the war itself. The cockpit of the cold war today lies in Germany and here is displayed in miniature not only the methods but the traps raised by the United States-Russian struggle for the world. As in the supreme test of war itself, there is no Marxist solution for the resolution of the conflict short of the struggle for a workers' government.

The German Occupation

(72) The main problem facing the German people is the restoration of unity and national independence; no fundamental economic or political problem can be solved without this prerequisite. The working-class and socialist movement in Germany can be restored only through making this struggle the center of its political program. The road to socialism in Germany and in Europe lies through the most militant and consistent fight for these elementary democratic demands.

The power of this struggle for democracy resides in the fact that it is directed at one and the same time against both Stalinist and Western imperialism; and against all conservative and reactionary elements in Germany who—if not now reconciled—could easily become reconciled to foreign occupation for the purpose of keeping down a revolutionary people at home. Since the reconstruction of the European Continent is inconceivable without the restoration of German national unity and independence, the struggle for this goal becomes simultaneously the task and duty of the whole European working class.

(73) In fighting for an Independent and United Germany, we do not make our demand for United States withdrawal conditional on simultaneous and similar action by the Russians—a proposal which in any case comes up against the difficulty that Russian withdrawal may or may not be a fake, and therefore tends to turn into the demand that the United States keep its troops there regardless, in order to guard against Stalinist "peace" maneuvers. Such a policy can have only the effect of inculcating dependence upon the armies of American and British imperialism as the bulwark against Stalinist expansion in Europe, for the same reason that the bourgeois and reformist leaders now look to America's atom bomb as the bulwark against Stalinist expansion in the world.

On the other hand, an independent and united Germany, created wholly or partly through the awakening of a popular anti-Allied and anti-Stalinist mass movement under the leadership of the working class in a struggle against the foreign oppressors, would not only be able to rally behind it all of the revolutionary forces of Western Europe but would also be able to wield the only weapon (other than the atom bomb itself) capable of disintegrating Russian Stalinist power over its subject peoples: namely, the contagion of revolution. The biggest "demonstration in the West" capable of firing the revolutionary spirit of Europe's working class would be the demonstration by the German masses that there is a third way outside of submission to either of the imperialist giants.

(74) Just as any watering-down of the socialist struggle against American imperialism in Germany is a down payment on support of American imperialism in war against Russia, so also is this true in the case of the socialist attitude toward the Marshall Plan. In this con-

nection the convention endorses the analysis and conclusions laid down by the National Committee in its statement on the Marshall Plan at the July 1948 plenum. [See text in *Labor Action* for July 19, 1948.] We note in particular

Inevitability of Socialism—

(Continued from page 115)

that could irrevocably control the course of human activity, the quality which, for Hegel, inevitably determines the sequence and nature of the successive orders of society. For this reason, even if an accurate presentation of the movement of the social phenomena does give the appearance of inevitability, Marx insists that it is a mere looking-glass hallucination, a verbal mirage.

Beside this explicit denial and the fact that the previously cited passages substantiate the denial, there is another reason for concluding that Marx rejects the doctrine of inevitability. He regrets that historical events "can be speculatively distorted so that later history is made the goal of earlier history." The regret indicates that history is not a teleological process. But, without a teleological process, the conviction about socialism being inevitable is devoid of any content what-

the necessity for socialist opposition to any plans for the channeling of Marshall Plan aid toward military supplies and arms instead of economic aid or for the setting up of a separate government program toward this end.

soever. For to speak of the inevitability of socialism without socialism being the goal is a more lamentable speculative distortion than the one condemned by Marx.

Finally, even if Lenin and Trotsky, as well as Plekhanov, shared the erroneous conviction that the victory of the proletariat is unavoidable, the mistake scarcely means that they completely misunderstand the writings of Marx. On the contrary, it simply indicates that they, like Homer, occasionally nod. The very temper of their lives suggests that the doctrine of inevitability is a negligible part of their thought. And only a philistine worshipping the bitch goddess *success* would urge that the doctrine of inevitability is the reason leading them to accept the ideal of socialism.

[A brief reply by Hal Draper will appear in the next issue.—ED.]

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