

Special 24-Page Supplement

CAPITALIST BARBARISM OR SOCIALISM

By the International Communists of Germany

The New INTERNATIONAL

OCTOBER • 1944

Editorials

The P.A.C. and the Elections

FIVE LABOR CONVENTIONS

The Auto Workers by Max Shachtman

The Mine Workers by David Coolidge

The Shipbuilders by Ernest Lund

The Electrical Workers by Albert Gates

The Rubber Workers by Mary Bell

Articles on the "Russian Question" and the Critics of Marxism

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Editor's Notes

As the reader will note, the study of our German Comrades, "Capitalist Barbarism or Socialism," which we began to print in last month's issue, is printed this month, complete from beginning to end, in a convenient special supplement. We considered this such a worthwhile contribution to the problems of Marxism today that we went to the extra expense involved in adding so many more pages to the usual thirty-two-page issue.

The publication of this document has left us less room for other material. We are therefore holding over for publication in the next issue or issues a number of articles of special interest. One is the long-delayed continuation of Karl Marx's historic attack upon Herr Vogt. Another is a first contribution to a study of the latest fashion in politics—"mass psychology"—with special reference to one of its specialists, Erich Fromm. The article is written by a new contributor to *The New International*, Harris Warner. A criticism of the attitude of the Negro intellectuals toward the Negro problem in the United States constitutes the theme of a review by Freddie Forrest of the study of the American Negro question by the Swedish sociologist, Gunnar Myrdal. Ernest Lund has written an analysis of the relations and conflicts among Russia, England and the United States, with special reference to the "mysterious" Teheran Conference. The twenty-seventh anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution will also be commented on in a special article.

Crowded for space, and compelled to print only those articles which, like the reviews of the five trade union conventions, could not be postponed, we had to refrain most reluctantly from commenting on three of the most important questions of the day: Tragedy and Treachery in the Warsaw Uprising; the Liberation of Paris and the Prospects of France; and Allied Post-War Plans for the Demolition of Germany. Another article we were compelled, just as reluctantly, to hold over was an analysis of the situation in much discussed and little known Argentina, written by one of our comrades in Buenos Aires. Well, all these next month, too.

Finally, we plan another article on the Socialist Workers Party, which is now engaged in a "discussion" which is certainly one of the most curious—and most saddening, as we shall see—in the history of the Trotskyist movement. In view of the fact that the questions under discussion are of great concern to all revolutionists, both here and abroad, and the fact that in spite of this the discussion is not brought into the light of day (in accordance with a practice which the SWP calls, of all things! Bolshevism), a comment on the "discussion" in our next issue will prove interesting to our readers.



Because of the special value of the study of our German comrades, "Capitalist Barbarism or Socialism," which is published as a supplement to this issue of *The New International*, we have decided to print an extra number of the supplement itself. Many readers will undoubtedly wish to obtain an extra copy for another friend or comrade. They will be available to all—first come, first served—who write to *The New International*, 114 West 14th Street, New York 11, N. Y. Price per copy of the special supplement, postage included, is twenty cents.

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Editor: MAX SHACHTMAN

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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VOLUME X

OCTOBER, 1944

NUMBER 10

NOTES OF THE MONTH

The P. A. C., the Elections and the Future

On September 23, President Roosevelt opened his campaign for a fourth term. He had chosen to speak to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen & Helpers of America. Not only in the choice of the occasion for his opening speech but also in what he said, the President recognized the significance of labor in modern society. In the course of the speech, he defined three main tasks: (1) the winning of a speedy victory. The speed of the victory, he implied, was necessary in order to relieve the strain and burdens upon the masses of the people. (2) Setting up an international machinery for the keeping of the peace. This also was the unanimous demand of the great body of the workers. (3) Reconversion. All his hearers understood him to mean such a transference of production from the needs of war to the needs of peace that the great body of the workers would not suffer unemployment. It was a proposal of the workers, for the workers, to the workers, but by the President.

President Roosevelt, however, claims to represent not only the workers but all classes in the community. The NEW INTERNATIONAL considers itself the representative, first and foremost, of the interests of labor. Our policy for many years past has been the traditional Marxist policy of no support to capitalist candidates in the presidential elections. Let us examine the professions of the President and see how far any proposal, analysis or explanation that he makes should cause any class-conscious worker to support him.

A speedy victory is his first aim. But, for that matter, it is impossible to see what change in the military plans of Eisenhower, of MacArthur, of Nimitz and the rest will take place if, for example, Roosevelt is replaced by Dewey. Both of them will continue to urge that speedy victory depends upon the continuance of the no-strike pledge. Both will conduct the military administration with due regard to oil in the Near East, squeezing Britain out of Latin America, air supremacy against Britain, intrigues as to whether Germany should be de-industrialized for the benefit of American capitalism or leaving Germany some strength so as to be able to use her against a possible domination of Europe by Stalinist Russia. Both will continue to support the Badoglio and the most reactionary elements that they can find in Europe to suppress the aspirations for national independence and the "Four Freedoms" of the European peoples. Such has been Roosevelt's policy. Dewey might do it better, but we doubt it. And in any case, to the workers, it is not important.

The President's second point was the setting up of international machinery for peace. Here we have his own record in the past to go by. In 1916, Wilson had been reelected on the slogan, "He kept us out of war." Six months afterward, the United States was at war with Germany. In 1940, the people were deeply suspicious of the course of action which the President had been following in relation to the European war. Therefore, on October 30, 1940, in a speech at Boston, Roosevelt reassured them as follows: "You mothers and fathers, I have said this before but I shall say it again, and again, and again: your sons are not going to be sent into any foreign war."

For our part, this October the President can say again and again (any number of times he pleases) that he proposes to set up international machinery for the preservation of peace. We tell the people of the United States that Wilson lied us into the last war, Roosevelt lied us into this one. And twenty years hence another capitalist President, if such unfortunately still exists, will lie us into the third. Roosevelt's record on the war allows no one to trust him on the peace. In 1937, in the Chicago speech, he shouted the challenge to Japan that the "aggressor" should be quarantined. He telegraphed to Hitler and Mussolini in 1938 asking them to accept the compromise of Munich and sent congratulations to the Munich men. When the war actually began, his policy of economic sanctions, of lend-lease, of exchange of destroyers for military bases—all these, carefully calculated to lead the American people into war, were presented as measures which were to keep us out of war. Lenin called the first League of Nations a "thieves' kitchen." History is now proving it in the blood and suffering of countless millions. Dumbarton Oaks is only another League! There is no international machinery of imperialists which can prevent imperialist war and Roosevelt knows it.

The third question is the question of reconversion. Senator Truman, Vice-Presidential nominee, has written for the *CIO News* of October 9 that "to achieve full production and jobs for all, we must have planning, national planning." Yet so far, with the end of the war in sight, no plan has come from all the multitudinous bureaus, agencies, commissions, committees, etc., of the government. We deny that capitalism can plan full production and eliminate unemployment. But what we point out here is the fact that no plan has been placed before the workers by which they can judge of the intentions, such as they are, of the Roosevelt Administration. The President claims that by the New Deal he restored the country to prosperity. The consequences of the New Deal were that after eight years we still had ten million unemployed in the country. Owing to the development of the productive capacity during the war, the contradiction between the possibilities of production and the consumption of the people on a capitalist basis is today infinitely wider than it was in 1940. Yet Roosevelt has told us emphatically that the New Deal is dead. If the New Deal is dead, then what deal does he propose now? Nothing. For the workers to spend their strength, their energy, their money in supporting Roosevelt is merely to encourage these capitalist politicians in the brazenness and impudence with

which election year after election year they continue to deceive the American people.

"I Can Do It Better"

But perhaps Dewey, the Republican candidate, has a positive program. Let us see. Arthur Krock, Washington correspondent, summed up the campaign of Dewey and his tactics so far in the *New York Times* of September 24. The headlines of the article tell the whole story. Here they are:

**"DEWEY TACTICS IN RACE CONFUSE HIS BACKERS
"Politicians in Capital, Anxious for the Governor to Win,
Fear His Position Is Too Close to Roosevelt's
"EXPECTED SHARP DIFFERENCES"**

If the capitalist politicians and the capitalist press cannot find any substantial difference between Roosevelt and Dewey, it is a delusion for workers to think that there is any. In the article itself, Krock points out that Willkie in 1940 had no other program than that he could do "the same things better." In 1944, Dewey puts forward no program simply because he has none. That's all.

This is what explains the course of the campaign. Having no program, Dewey, as the "attacker," has had to concentrate his attack upon irrelevant superficialities. Thus, according to Dewey, what is wrong with the country is that the Administration consists of old, tired, quarrelsome men. Put into office young, vigorous, amiable men and we shall have international peace, jobs and security. He declares, dramatically, "It is time for a change." On this, we agree. But it turns out that Dewey's great change would consist chiefly of restoring to the White House its reputation for truth-telling and integrity. The aim is worthy. But, first of all, it is difficult. The only remote connection which we can make between the White House and truth is the statement by the first President that he cut down the cherry tree, but, sad to relate, historians are now in general agreement that this story is a fabrication. In any case, truth from the White House would demand the President's saying that he had no plan for curing unemployment and insecurity. We do not expect this from Roosevelt. But we do not expect it from Dewey either. The bankruptcy of the two capitalist parties in face of the great problems which confront the United States stands revealed. For the workers to support the one or the other is not only to encourage them in their pernicious politics; it is to take responsibility for the crimes that they have committed in the past, and the chaos, misery and disasters of the future.

What, then, must the workers do?

The course of the election itself gives a clear indication of the correctness of the policy which we have been advocating for many years past.

The distinctive feature of the present election is the emergence of the Political Action Committee as the political reflection of the CIO inside the Democratic Party. Roosevelt and the Democratic politicians are aware of the importance of the PAC for a Democratic Party victory. But the bourgeoisie as a whole is united in its condemnation of this organization because it recognizes that the PAC is a stage in the development of labor as an independently organized political party in the country. This bourgeois condemnation is only to be expected. What is disgusting is the attitude of some so-called socialists and friends of labor, such as, for instance, Louis Waldman, candidate of the Socialist Party for the governorship of New York in 1928, 1930 and 1932. In the *Saturday Evening Post* of August 26 he states that while labor has the right and "many liberals believe the duty" to take an active

interest in politics, the idea of a political junta delivering the labor vote "is repugnant to American psychology." He concludes: "Such a political machine is dangerous enough in the right hands; in the wrong hands, it might become a positive menace to the public welfare and more difficult to defeat than any machines Republicans or Democrats have ever built." Out of the mouth of this hanger-on of the bourgeoisie, now terrified at the vision of a successful Labor Party, have come words of great wisdom. That is precisely what we have been urging and shall continue to urge—the organization of a powerful independent Labor Party which will be infinitely more powerful than any party the Republicans or Democrats have been able to build in the past.

All those who fear the power of labor are now busy trying to prove that an independent Labor Party is contrary to the history, the tradition the political practice, the psychology, of the American people, and therefore inimical to the interests of labor itself. This is just a lot of lies and nonsense. In No. 60 of *The Federalist*, Alexander Hamilton analyzed the principles of representative government which moved the founding fathers in their preparation of the Constitution of the United States. There, in the most natural manner in the world, he speaks of "the landed interest, or the monied interest, or the mercantile interest, or the manufacturing interest." He goes on to say that in a country "consisting chiefly of the cultivators of land, where the rules of an equal representation obtain the landed interest must, upon the whole, preponderate in the government." In those days, it seemed perfectly natural that specific interests should be represented in the political bodies which administered the country and represented according to their strength. But in 1788 there was no organized labor interest. Now, today, we have in this country some thirteen million or more organized workers. They represent the labor force of this country, some sixty million people, the very bedrock and foundation of American civilization. When they hold their conventions, politicians of every stripe swoop down upon them to try to instruct them in what is their duty because their decisions are of fundamental interest, not only to the country as a whole but to the world at large. The President opens his presidential campaign at a gathering of union workers. No important political or social step is taken in the country without consulting the wishes and aims of labor by those who for good or ill are supposed to represent them. It is dinned into their ears from all sides that the American democracy is the greatest democracy in the world.

In 1944 labor has dared to form a political organization within one of the capitalist parties, to see that the interests of labor are represented in the political councils of the nation in the same way as, in 1786, the specific interests of those days were represented by political organizations. Forthwith from one end of the country to another, all writers, politicians, publicists, newspaper editors and what-not, seek to assure labor that this exercise of its democratic rights in full harmony with the economic and social developments of the time, is completely opposed to the ideas and principles of American democracy. Not only that. By means of the Smith-Connally Act and the Hatch Act, even those Democratic politicians who are reaping the benefits of the semi-independent organization of labor in the PAC, seek to cripple, obstruct and hinder this reaching out by labor to its own independent political status.

No power on earth can prevent the emergence of an independent party of labor in the United States. In every great European country, the necessities of capitalist production

compelled the workers to organize themselves on the industrial plane and then, politically, as an independent party. Even in backward and autocratic countries, such as Spain and pre-revolutionary Russia, labor organized itself in a politically independent form. Such a development is inevitable in the United States, the most capitalistic of all countries. Hillman has delivered the CIO vote to the Democratic Party. But in the minds of the great bodies of workers who support the PAC, this organization, for them, is a means, as Hillman himself has said, "of implementing labor's program to meet its needs and those of the entire nation..." For the moment, the masses of the workers who follow the PAC do not quite see the necessity or the possibility of constituting themselves into an organization that repudiates not only the Republican but also the Democratic Party itself. We, however, see it. And we consider it the first necessity of those who see this clearly to prepare the workers for it, not only by urging them to repudiate both the bankrupt capitalist parties in words but also to do so in action, by refusing to support them in this or any other election and devoting all our strength and energy to the creation of an independent Labor Party, either by transformation of the PAC or by any and all other means which the historical and political development may present.

It is just here, however, that the Stalinist Communist Party is committing another of its great crimes against the American working class. Claiming to be the representatives of Marxism and of organized labor, yet at the present moment its whole energies are directed toward crushing the emerging aspirations of labor for its own political independence.*

The leaders of the Republican Party are perfectly aware of the dangers which the PAC represents to capitalist society as a whole. In their concentration on the phrase "Clear it with Sidney," they seek to discredit labor organization, the populations of foreign descent, and to raise the specter of bolshevism and communism and socialism as alien isms. But the leaders of the Democratic Party also are perfectly aware of the danger of a PAC. The Southern Bourbons know that the rise of labor inside the Democratic Party means that the position of domination in Democratic councils which they have so long held is now threatened. The city bosses, particularly Kelly and Hague, know that the greatest threat to their corrupt rule is the independent organization of labor. Those cynical capitalist interests who support equally the Democratic and Republican Parties have viewed, not with rhetorical but with genuine alarm the numerous CIO leaders who came to the Chicago convention and the influence exercised at the convention by Sidney Hillman. Their difficulty is our opportunity. But this historical opportunity is to be gained not by truckling to or by threatening the Democratic Party but by the most uncompromising repudiation of it. We must use the opportunity of the election to demonstrate to the masses of the workers the terror of their opponents and the political power that lies in their hands for the taking. The bankruptcy of the two old parties is demonstrated in their lack of program. Labor, therefore, must not only organize itself independently, but must do so with a program. And this program must be a program for the socialist reconstruction of American society.

If there was any possibility for the capitalistic parties to present a program, we can be sure they would have done so. There is none. It is the war that saved the New Deal from a

*Not so malicious but impotent are the candidacies of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party. Norman Thomas has no program, and the Socialist Labor Party has no contact with the developing strength and consciousness of the working class.

catastrophic bankruptcy. By placing before the American people a program which will strike at the very root of the social crisis, labor will be able to draw to it the Negroes, who, more than any other section of the population, are aware of the bankruptcy of both parties as far as their special problems are concerned. As the PAC has already shown in the South, labor will be able to draw into the democratic process for the first time in American history those millions of whites and Negroes whom the Southern Bourbons deprive of the vote. It will be able to pull those millions of rank and file voters in the Republican Party who thought that they saw some solution to the problems of the country in the demagogic words of Wendell Willkie.

These are the perspectives of the labor movement. These possibilities have been posed in embryo by the mere emergence of the PAC, even though as a constituent part of the Democratic Party. The NEW INTERNATIONAL feels confident that the Marxist policy of no support to the capitalist parties is more than ever justified by the existing situation. We urge all our supporters to seize this opportunity to devote their best energies to the clarification of the minds of the working class as to the great opportunities that are now presented to them.

The Workers Party has no candidate in this election, but its transitional program offers a basis for the rallying together of all the forces of labor and for organized labor to place itself at the head of the nine-tenths of the population who genuinely wish an end to the suffering and chaos of capitalist society imposed upon us all by the minority of property-owners and their docile political tools.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS

OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933

Of The New International, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October, 1944.

State of New York, County of New York, s.s.

Before me, a notary public in and for the state and county aforesaid, personally appeared Albert Gates, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the coowner of The New International and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in Section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to, wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are: Publisher, New International Publishing Co.; Editor, Max Shachtman; Business Manager, Mary Bell; all of 114 West 14th Street, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owner is (if owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given): New International Publishing Co., Max Shachtman, Albert Gates, all of 114 West 14th Street, New York, N. Y.

2. That the known bondholders, mortgagees and other security owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for which such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association or corporation has any interest, direct or indirect, in the said stock, bonds or other securities than as so stated by him.

ALBERT GATES, Coowner.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this third day of October, 1944.

JACOB P. KAUFMAN, Notary Public, New York County.
New York County Clerk's No. 335. (My commission expires March 30, 1945.)

Five Labor Conventions:

Politics Among the Auto Workers

One of the outstanding traditions of the American labor movement is summed up in the twin phrase, "No politics in the unions, no unions in politics." Of all the union conventions held this year, the annual convention of the United Auto Workers, CIO, at Grand Rapids was the best example of how this tradition has changed. It showed how far organized labor has gone, actually, if not formally, in discarding a view which, if it ever was valid, is nowadays most certainly obsolete and reactionary. From start to finish the convention was prompted by political thoughts, dominated by political considerations. That its political thinking was still in a primitive stage, that its political considerations did not correspond to its best interests, is another matter. It serves to define more exactly the character and scope of the change, but does not alter the fact that the change has taken place.

A good way to judge the fact is to examine the way the convention was divided. All three forces that could in any way be regarded as decisive or important had a predominantly political character. All of them had a political standpoint—how clear and systematic it was in their minds is secondary for the moment—from which they examined the problems before the union, and political considerations dictated the answers they proposed for these problems. The "pure-and-simple" trade unionism concepts with which Samuel Gompers inspired the old American Federation of Labor did not even have a ghost to represent them at Grand Rapids.

Three Forces at the Convention

To begin with, there was the Communist Party machine. It was far and away the best organized, the most conscious and deliberate and, from the standpoint of the mechanics of operation, the ablest of all three. Politically educated, it knew exactly what it wanted and how to realize an immediate goal as a step toward the main goal. It knew when to strike out and against whom, when to advance and when and how to retreat. It did not come to the convention as a haphazard assembly of individuals, but as a disciplined group prepared in advance not only by organizational measures but by a carefully thought-out program and plan of action calculated for all contingencies. All its actions, all its tactics, were intelligently subordinated to its main goal—the conversion of the labor movement into a political tool of the Russian Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

The largest force was made up of the "native" union bureaucracy. It had none of the "positive" qualities of the Stalinist group. It is still in the kindergarten of the school of faction politics which the Stalinists long ago graduated and to which they have added a good deal of post-graduate instruction of their own. It is divided against itself, not least of all by personal envy and bureaucratic rivalry. It ranges from its left wing—if that much abused term may be stretched several points—represented by Reuther, to its right wing, represented by Addes and Frankenstein, and includes such amorphous and indefinite quantities as R. J. Thomas and R. T. Leonard. What holds it together—to the extent that it does hold together—is a common opposition not to a bloc with the Stalinists (all of them have at one time or another made such blocs,

some of them are still in a bloc, and some will continue to make a bloc), but to the *rule* of the union by the Stalinists. Not even Addes and Frankenstein would work directly and consciously for turning the union over to Molotov's subdivision of the Kremlin. To further their bureaucratic aspirations against such rivals as Reuther, they are not averse to collaborating with the Stalinists. When it comes to preventing a victory of the progressive rank and file, they positively glue themselves to the Stalinists. Which brings us to the second thing that holds the officialdom together: common opposition to the more forthright and progressive demands of a rising rank and file movement. Both these factors, in turn, are determined by the basic common characteristic of the "native" officialdom: it is the representative in the labor movement of Rooseveltism, i.e., of *bourgeois* reformism. This political characteristic dictates—in different degree with each of the "wings" and sectors and individual members of the officialdom—its attitude toward the Stalinists, on the one side, and the genuine progressives and left-wingers, on the other. This political characteristic also dictated its attitude toward all the important *trade union* questions at Grand Rapids.

The Rank and File Caucus

The third organized force was represented by the Rank and File Caucus, challenging the other two. Previous conventions of the UAW have also had rank and file militants, progressives, left-wingers. The Grand Rapids convention was a real milestone in their development and consequently in the development of the union itself. There the militants were *organized*, openly and consciously, for the first time. There the organized militants presented a *program* of their own for the first time, and fought for it in the convention. They no longer trailed along, exasperated but hopeless, behind the Reuther group, but decided policy for themselves and acted as an *independent* group.

The Rank and File Caucus was not a homogeneous group; much less was it a "monolithic" group, which is as it should be. Not all the elements in it were agreed on all the points in its program or agreed in the same way; not all of them saw the full implications of what they were fighting for. But the leaders, inspirers and organizers of the group were politically-conscious people. Among them were left-wing socialists and supporters of *Labor Action*. (We modestly note here, however, that both the *Daily Worker* and the *New York Times* gave us Trotskyists more credit for the splendid fight of the rank and file militants in the convention than we actually merit.) They understood that their fight, representing the urgent needs of the union, meant a break with Rooseveltism, a break with capitalist politics, with bourgeois reformism. The demand of the Rank and File Caucus program for rescinding the no-strike pledge was a demand for breaking the political agreement with the government by which labor was disarmed and straight-jacketed in face of the growing capitalist offensive. It was a demand that implied an end to the paralyzing dependence of labor upon the Roosevelt government and a resumption of the struggle in which labor would rely on its organized strength, that is, on its class strength. **The same**

holds true of the demand in the program for withdrawing the labor representatives from the government's War Labor Board. This, too, was essentially a political demand, a political act. It is no accident that the program of the Rank and File group concluded with the proposal to organize an independent Labor Party.

Given the tremendous size of the convention delegation (some 2,300 of them), the time available for the convention business, and the manner in which the time was organized by the officialdom, it was not possible to bring to the floor and fight out clearly all of the important questions before the UAW. A god deal of the convention time was spent, and wasted, in the now customary flag-waving speeches on the war. Even more time was spent in speeches and parts of speeches to promote the candidacy of Roosevelt. Indeed, these two themes, especially the latter, were dominant throughout the important convention discussions. The political nature of the convention, and of the decisive problems facing the union, was constantly emphasized (and distorted) by every Stalinist who took the floor and by every spokesman for the officialdom's position: How will this or that affect the war? How will this or that action affect the war? How will it affect the election chances of Roosevelt? How will it affect the future of the Great New Deal on which our union was founded (lie), on which it was built (lie), to which we owe our advances (lie), on which we depend for our future (lie)?

The Delegates and Political Action

As a result of these things, plus the fact that the interest of the delegates was centered almost to the exclusion of all else upon the no-strike pledge, the convention did not have the opportunity to discuss seriously the question of independent political action. Roosevelt won in a walk. But even in their endorsement of Roosevelt and of the PAC, the delegates—we have pointed this out repeatedly about the labor movement in general—expressed their growing awareness of the decisively important fact that their economic interests, their class interests, are inseparably bound up with politics, political action. In the past, the kind of government we had was important, in the mind of the worker, to himself as an individual citizen. Hence "no politics in the union, no unions in politics." Now, the kind of government we have is important, in the mind of the worker, to himself as a member of a class organization, his union. Hence, the unions *are* in politics.

The horrified and outraged admonitions of the bourgeois press against labor, through the PAC, "introducing class politics" into the elections (our elections and our political life have never before followed class lines, you see), left no visible mark on the UAW delegates. Harold Ickes, astute demagogue, appealed directly to the "class prejudices" of the delegates in his speech to the convention. He regaled them with the list of munificent contributions made to the Republican Party by America's plutocracy and monopolists (lack of time undoubtedly prevented him from giving the corresponding Democratic Party list). He poured vitriol on those capitalist forces who would prevent labor from participating in the elections as an organized and distinct force (provided, of course, it supported his chief, Roosevelt). And the delegates cheered him passionately.

The fight over the no-strike pledge, which took up most of the time of the convention, was not so easy a victory for Rooseveltism or Stalinism. If the showing made by the militants was better at Grand Rapids than at any other of the important union conventions, it was due not only to the more

advanced position generally taken by the automobile and aircraft workers but to the fact that the militants, while not perfectly organized, were better organized and prepared than they were anywhere else.

The clearest example of how the contending forces in the union acted according to their political lights is afforded by the fight on this question, which became the focal point of all the others.

The No-Strike Pledge Resolutions

The Stalinist resolution could serve as the text for a whole volume. Coolly ignoring their whole record during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact as if it had existed only in a fevered imagination the Stalinists, along with other signers who probably did not understand what they had really signed, proposed to reaffirm the pledge on the grounds of unswerving support of the War for Democracy, the Commander-in-Chief, National Unity, the Interests of Labor and the Cause of Our Allies, one of which, they have noticed, is Russia. The resolution ended with a highly significant provision. Unexpectedly, it called for a review of the no-strike pledge after the defeat of Germany but *before* the defeat of Japan.

No doubt some of those who subscribed to this formula understood it to mean that a door was being left open for dropping the pledge in those industries that will go over to peacetime production when Germany is defeated. Our own view is that the formula, employed here by the Stalinists for the first time, is deliberately ambiguous. If it leaves open a door for dropping the pledge after Germany's defeat, then only in order to leave the Stalinists free to adopt a policy in line with the course that the Moscow régime will pursue toward the conflict between Japan and England-America. Should Stalin find it expedient (on the basis of a satisfactory share of the booty of the Orient) to join in the fight against Japan, that will make it Browder's and Ganley's war, too, and the pledge will be maintained. But if Stalin keeps out because Roosevelt and Churchill do not offer Russia the share of the loot she wants, Browder & Co. may find it necessary to help change Roosevelt's mind by suddenly discovering that... labor has sacrificed enough of its rights, including the right to strike. In a words, the Stalinists at Grand Rapids acted on all "trade union questions" in accordance with their politics, that is, the politics of their Russian masters.

Most of the officialdom supported the all-out pro-pledge resolution of the Stalinists. Not one of them had enough political understanding to grasp the real significance of the CP resolution. They supported it as Rooseveltians. The Reuthers and a few others presented a typical resolution of their own, differing from the Stalinists' only in that it provided for the right to strike where a "reconverted" plant was involved. Attacked, and rightly, from both sides, it went down to the most miserable defeat of all.

What is interesting, however, is that when both pro-pledge resolutions were defeated, and the resolution to repeal the pledge, in spite of a remarkable show of strength (some thirty-seven per cent of the vote), met the same fate, the Stalinists and Thomas and Addes and Leonard and the Reuthers were able to unite in a panic on a simple motion to reaffirm the pledge.

The Reuthers separated again from the Stalinists on the question of a membership referendum. But even here, these most radical of Rooseveltians were true to their political line. They took care that the referendum take place only *after* the presidential election. Why? So that its outcome should not

alienate from Mr. Roosevelt the votes of the conservatives and labor-haters. Even on this "technical" point, politics decided.

That "politics," that is, political interests, political considerations, should be decisive in the labor movement, is not only unavoidable, but entirely good and proper. One of the leading militants in the Reuther group—and there are many there—complained to me confidentially that he was sick at all the political speechifying at the convention, sick of the talk that the union has no other way out but to vote for Roosevelt; that the union (he continued) was built by organized economic action and could only be restored to its fighting strength in the same way. The complaint was understandable and even warranted, but misdirected. It was warranted in so far as the Rooseveltian agents in the union presented support of Roosevelt as a *substitute* for the organized economic action of the workers. It was misdirected in so far as it did not allow for the necessity of directing this economic action and power along clear-cut *independent working class political lines*, with neither of them supplanting the other but rather fusing with the other. *That* is the right road. It is the only road.

The most hopeful sign in the UAW—and given its posi-

tion in the country, this is as much as saying "the labor movement"—was the fact that the militants who organized the Rank and File Caucus understood this. At the very least, they understood enough of it to make a first-rate beginning. They challenged Rooseveltism, bourgeois reformism, subservience of the labor movement to capitalist politics, not only on the "economic" field but also on the political field. They understood that their job will last longer than a half-dozen convention sessions, and they acted on this understanding when they decided to build up the group on a nation-wide basis following the convention. This is precisely what militants have failed to do in the past, thanks to which the Stalinists and the other bureaucrats are still having a picnic in the union.

What the militants still lack in experience—and it is not inconsiderable—or lack in stature, they will acquire in struggle. A lot of that lies ahead. The political understanding of the militants who have organized the new rank and file movement is one of the most encouraging assurances that they will gain ground. Their progress will mean progress for the union itself and for the labor movement as a whole.

MAX SHACHTMAN.

Lewis Keeps Control in the Miners Union

The coal miners came together in Cincinnati early in September for their first meeting since the great strikes of 1943. At the time of the convention, despite the fact that the WLB had rendered its decision on the wage scale, including portal-to-portal pay, and the mines had been returned to their private owners, there were many grievances that had not been adjusted. There were back wages due. The question of mine safety and the passage of a federal mine safety bill was uppermost in the minds of UMWA membership. While the convention was in session a communication arrived telling that more bodies had been recovered from the Powhattan mine in Ohio, where a most tragic "accident" had occurred.

Aside from these grievances the convention convened in the midst of a presidential campaign. The fact that Roosevelt was a candidate for reelection was in itself enough to make the November election a paramount issue. The miners came to Cincinnati bitter and convinced that this Administration had directly and deliberately attempted to wreck their union.

The Issue of District Autonomy

An equally important question was the autonomy issue which this year had been intensified through the activities of Ray Edmundson, formerly the appointed president of District 12 in Southern Illinois. This was really the first event of the convention that could be called a contest. Edmundson had resigned as the appointed president of District 12 and it was reported that he had gone back to work in the mines. He appeared at the convention, held a caucus of his forces and announced that he would withdraw as a candidate for UMWA president against Lewis if Lewis would consent to the restoration of autonomy to the twenty-one districts where today the president and secretary-treasurer are appointed.

I do not know all the facts nor the most important facts in connection with the Edmundson campaign. It is clear however, that it was in no sense a movement primarily to restore autonomy to the twenty-one districts. Two pages in *The New Internationalist* are not sufficient for any details in connection

with this or other important questions, so only the barest outline can be given. There is every reason to believe that the autonomy grievance was seized on by anti-Lewis forces outside the union to wage a reactionary struggle against Lewis and the UMWA. Coal operators may have been involved. Roosevelt Administration forces were probably active in this alleged autonomy move. There is concrete evidence for the position that Browder's Communist Party Political Association had very jubilantly joined the Edmundson caravan and had as its representative the secretary of the committee, a ~~man~~ from West Virginia.

Events at the convention confirmed any suspicions that one may have had in advance that this so-called autonomy movement had other purposes. Edmundson's right to his seat as a delegate was challenged. His eligibility was challenged on the ground that he had not worked in the mines during the period required by the union constitution. His right to a seat was challenged on the ground that he was not in good financial standing in his local. None of these challenges was accepted and no one rose in the convention, not even the secretary of the Edmundson committee, to defend Edmundson's right to a seat. It seemed clear that the "autonomy" movement had been initiated mainly as an anti-Lewis campaign and that the legitimate demands of locals for autonomous districts was used in a way that could benefit only those forces bent on a career of weakening the UMWA.

This created an extremely unfortunate situation for those militants, progressives and democratic elements in the union which came prepared to wage a correct fight for the restoration of democratic rights to the districts and locals. It also gave Lewis the opportunity to use irrefutable facts in the matter of past delinquencies of elected district officials in the most demagogic and undemocratic manner. While no sensible person will deny that the coal industry and the political, economic and social conditions in the coal fields create great difficulties for the union it does not follow from this that the perpetuation of rule by the national officers is the answer to the dilemma. The only cure for this situation is a combina-

tion of vigilance and competency on the part of the leadership, trade union and political education of the membership and the deliberate practice of internal democracy in the union. This is the answer, and neither Lewis nor anyone else will be able to find any other answer to this question. The autonomy question will arise again. It will continue to rise, and this is as it should be. The issue cannot be met by an increase in bureaucracy nor by the perpetuation of economic and political ignorance.

The Miners and the Elections

This was also evident in the discussion around the resolution "On Political Action." Here was a resolution in which Roosevelt was soundly and correctly castigated. But in the same resolution Dewey was just as enthusiastically praised. At the end, however the resolution stated that the union should follow its traditional policy and refrain from making an endorsement. The fact is the resolution did endorse Dewey. But this fact was detected by only a few of the delegates. No delegate rose to question the propriety and the right of Lewis and above all the *UMWA Journal* to come out with an endorsement of Dewey before the convention and without the consent of the membership of the international.

It is a moot point as to whether or not the convention would have voted to endorse Dewey. There were many delegates who were convinced that had the vote been taken, the overwhelming majority would have been for Dewey. We cannot say anything on this except that if Dewey had been endorsed it would certainly not have been a pro-Dewey but an anti-Roosevelt vote. In a measure too it would also have been an anti-PAC vote and an anti-CIO vote. One of the tragedies of this situation is that far too many of the miners have the feeling that the CIO is against them. Many of them actually believe that the sentiment of the rank and file in the CIO is against the miners. Of course, nothing is farther from the truth and the leadership of the miners commits a crime against the UMWA, the CIO and the interests of labor when it does not make every effort to dispel this very dangerous illusion.

Role of the Negro Delegates

It is necessary to say something on the rôle of the Negro delegates at the convention. It seemed that there were fewer Negro delegates than at the 1942 convention. Their main interest seemed to be in the autonomy issue. The overwhelming majority of them were opposed to district autonomy. This was strange and disturbing: Negroes opposed to internal democracy in a union and standing against the democratic rights of a union membership! When the matter was discussed with them, however, the whole problem of Jim Crow in the United States stared one in the face. One was confronted with the results of decades of discrimination, insult and segregation. In the minds of these Negro delegates, their opposition to autonomy was itself a part of the struggle for democracy, that is, part of a struggle for their democratic rights in the union, a struggle against discrimination.

They were not talking about their national officers, their district officers or about the general situation in the international. They know better than that. They know their union and its history on this point. They were talking about individual white members of the various locals and groups of such individuals in the various locals. This attitude was held most strongly by Negro delegates from the South. These Negro delegates said that they would get more, that is, more recognition,

under the present set-up than under autonomy where district officials are elected and where such elected district officials would have the power to appoint people to important paid posts in the district. What they meant was that the white members would, as a rule, confine their support to white men running for office and that white men would be favored in the making of appointments. To what extent this is true I cannot say. All I can say is that the Negro delegates who opposed autonomy were firm in their convictions on this point.

This issue of course is not confined to the miners. It is a problem of the whole labor movement: North and South; AFL, CIO, railroad brotherhoods and UMWA. And just as is the case with all the other crucial problems of the labor movement, it can only be answered by more education of labor, more struggle together on a militant program and more political education and working class political action.

The Question of Strikes

To these adverse criticisms it is necessary to add extremely important praiseworthy considerations. The first is that the convention of the UMWA was the only convention in which no discussion of the no-strike pledge was necessary. The miners had given due consideration to that problem by four strikes in 1943 in which the whole international had participated. Lewis told the convention that on the matter of mine safety it would be necessary for the miners to consider refusing to work in any mine they considered unsafe. The convention instructed the scale committee to include in the coming wage negotiations that: "all explosives, cables, detonators, batteries, fuses and all accessories used in blasting, be furnished by the employers without charge to the mine workers."

Furthermore, "to insert in the next agreement a provision requiring employers to furnish union-made tools and explosives." Also, "that it will not be a violation of the wage agreement for the mine workers to cease work to prevent shipment of coal to a consumer whose employees are engaged in a legal strike."

This, of course, means that the miners are not committed to a no-strike pledge; that if they ever had one they have already repudiated it. It means that the UMWA is committed to proceed with the organization of the du Pont powder empire and other sections of the chemical industry. It means further that the UMWA is committed to the organization of machine tool companies supplying tools to the mining industry.

Finally it is worth while to comment on the fact that Lewis remains the undisputed leader of the mine workers, and with their consent. This does not mean that every miner is fully satisfied with the Lewis leadership or that Lewis is not a bureaucrat. What it does mean is that when the miners look at Murray, Thomas, Green and the rest, they know that Lewis stands head and shoulders above the field. They may be for Roosevelt or for Dewey, but it is always Lewis and Roosevelt, or Lewis and Dewey. It's Lewis first. No one should make a mistake about this or try to fool himself.

DAVID COOLIDGE.

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Behind the Shipbuilders' Fight

The recent convention of the CIO shipyard workers (officially known as the Industrial Union of Marine & Shipbuilding Workers of America) opened a new chapter in the history of that organization. The convention marked (1) the appearance of a small but fighting progressive bloc as spokesmen for the widespread discontentment of the rank and file, and (2) the emergence of the Communists as the controlling factor in the national leadership of the union. In order to understand the significance of the recent developments, it is necessary to understand a little of the history of the union.

The IUMSWA has a history that is unique when compared to that of the average CIO union. Unlike the steel workers, the packinghouse workers or the textile workers, the IUMSWA never went through a period of CIO "organizing committee" control. As a matter of fact, the IUMSWA was organized as an industrial union in competition with the American Federation of Labor even before the Committee for Industrial Organization was set up.

The IUMSWA was organized in 1934 as the outgrowth of several years of intensive agitation and organization among Camden workers by the local branch of the Socialist Party. This branch was quite unlike the average SP branch and was usually referred to, by Old Guard and militants alike as the "Camden SLP crack-pots." The contemptuous references sought to belittle the efforts of the Camden Socialists who were not only fanatically convinced industrial unionists, but were also convinced that the AFL was worse than useless. The Camden Socialists, however, took their views seriously and set to work to do something practical about them. The Camden branch was also quite unlike the average SP branch in that it was composed in the main of industrial workers and any number of experienced trade unionists. Without money, without connections, in the depths of the depression when the number of organized workers was shrinking to a new low, the Camden Socialists, driven by a firm faith in the gospel of industrial organization, started a feverish campaign to organize a "dual" industrial union with a socialist outlook. Despite their small numbers and meager resources, they paid scant attention to the "small potatoes" of Camden industry and went out to tackle such industrial giants as New York Shipbuilding Corporation, Campbell Soup Co., and RCA. Though most of their efforts brought little immediate results, their pioneering work was to bear real fruit in the period of 1935-37, when Camden rode high on the national wave of industrial organization.

However, their efforts did bear immediate fruit among the workers of the Camden shipyards. Here their "dual" industrial union took real root. In large measure the success was due to the indefatigable efforts of two members of the Camden branch of the Socialist Party—John Green, sheet metal worker and an old union fighter from the Clydeside, and Phillip Van Gelder, one of the thousands of depression-ridden college students who joined the Socialist Party. (Green had been one of the leaders of the apprentice boys' strike on the Clyde in the First World War, olang with William Gallacher, now Stalin's personal spokesman in the British Parliament.)

After several hard-fought strike struggles, the New York Shipbuilding Corporation was unionized and the organization won its first great victory. Soon other locals were organ-

ized in the yards along the Delaware and in the New York area. The IUMSWA became one of the largest and most important of the independent unions. Its firm industrial union principles were written into the preamble of the union constitution and when read as a regular ritual at union meetings it serves as a reminder of the pioneer days of the union, when it really acted in accord with its preamble.

Its ability to survive as an isolated industrial union would have been in doubt had not John L. Lewis opened up the fight for industrial unionism at the 1935 convention of the AFL and given encouragement to the industrial union trend. Lewis did more for the IUMSWA than merely give encouragement. During one of its crucial strikes at New York Shipbuilding Corp. the United Mine Workers sent a check of some \$20,000, which looked like a fortune to this struggling independent union locked in combat with one of the Wall Street mammoths. John Green was to repay the miners for their solidarity by joining with Murray and other CIO leaders in stabilizing the miners in the back during their 1943 strikes.

Resources of the Union

When the Committee for Industrial Organization left the AFL and organized itself independently, the IUMSWA affiliated with it. This path to the CIO set it off from the run of new CIO unions and explains much in the course of its later development. On the one hand it enjoyed an exceptional independence from the CIO officialdom and the large dominating influence of the miners and clothing workers' leaders in the early CIO. But on the other hand it also suffered from the lack of experienced local organizers and officers which these older unions supplied to most of the new CIO organizations. This was further accentuated by the lack of trade union traditions in the shipbuilding industry. Aside from a brief period of "back-door" AFL organization during the First World War, the shipbuilding industry was as open-shop as the steel industry, which, by and large, controls it. Other factors, such as irregular employment in peacetime and low wages for hard and dirty work, attracted many floaters and workers suffering seasonal unemployment in some other line. Aside from a few crafts, like ship-fitting, most of the work is similar enough to that in other industries to permit workers to come and go in the industry without learning a new trade (welders, machinists, pipefitters, electricians, boilermakers, riveters, painters, sheet metal men, etc.).

All these factors hindered the development of an experienced and stable union membership which could produce from its ranks first-class union leaders. Though the leadership of Green and Van Gelder compared well with other progressive leaders in the early CIO, the IUMSWA stood in marked contrast to a union like the United Automobile Workers in the development of its rank and file. The IUMSWA had none of those attributes of a really progressive union like a broad educational program, well edited national and local papers, a research department, ladies auxiliaries, social and athletic activities on a large scale, and other activities that make the members union-conscious and aware that they belong to something more than a dues-collection agency. As a result the IUMSWA rank and file was perhaps one of the least union-educated in the CIO. The low level of its national convention discussions and their rowdy character have always attested to this.

With this the situation in the union, the war suddenly inflated the industry to more than ten times its size and with it the union grew from some 50,000 members to close to 500,000. Perhaps no other union experienced quite as large an influx of new members. But even worse, from the standpoint of assimilating these new thousands, was the fact that most of them were not only new to unionism, but they were members of new locals. In unions where the influx of a wartime membership expanded the existing locals, it meant that the new membership was being gathered around local groups of experienced unionists. In the IUMSWA this was not the case. The bulk of the shipyard workers were employed in yards that had been shut down since 1918 or in yards that were built since 1940.

This situation made the locals of the IUMSWA a happy hunting ground for all sorts of fakers and scoundrels. Locals were constantly plagued with dishonest officers who embezzled the funds or in some other manner abused their office to make personal gains. In one local an unknown suddenly appeared as a candidate for president on a program of one-half hour business meetings, free beer for everybody, and a reduction in dues. He was elected by a landslide.

Development of Bureaucracy

This situation required close supervision of locals by the national officers. However, instead of acting as advisers, Green and Van Gelder soon acquired the habit of acting as dictators. They lifted charters, they kicked out this group from the leadership and sent "administrators" to install some other group. They committed crimes against union democracy and local autonomy that rivalled those of the most hidebound AFL bureaucrats.

Meanwhile the national officers were having their hands full with "wildcat" strikes. Though the workers who had streamed into the yards with the outbreak of the war were unfamiliar with union procedure, they recognized injustice when they experienced it and were ready to react at the drop of a hat. Green rushed about frantically pleading and threatening amid boos from assembled strikers. (Green, the union president, was seeing things differently from Green, the apprentice boy on the Clyde.) But just as frequently as he rushed from strike situation to strike situation, he rushed to Washington to deal with Knox, Forrester, Bard and Admiral Land. The sheet metal worker could now pick up the phone and say: "Give me the Secretary of the Navy." He became anxious to please his new "connections." Tea with the Roosevelts left a much greater impression upon him than the innumerable union discussions over open lunch boxes with his fellow workers of the sheet metal department at New York Shipbuilding Corp. His denunciations of loyal union men who had been driven into striking in the interests of the union were filled with fire and brimstone. Following his speech at the 1942 convention of the union, the *New York World-Telegram*, owned by the union-hating Scripps-Howard chain, praised him and held him forth as a model labor leader. (At the same convention, Green kept quiet while the Communists pushed through a resolution calling for the suppression of *Labor Action*.) Green, former left wing socialist, member of the Revolutionary Policy Committee, had come far in this world.

As an old union man and a socialist, Green had learned to distrust the communists long ago. He has never changed this attitude. But being a man who never took principles too seriously when opportunity beckoned, Green was not at all averse

to "playing ball" with the Stalinist forces in the union whenever it suited his purpose. During the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact, when the communists were opposing the Roosevelt Administration, Green had a clause added to the constitution of the union which barred communists from holding office. After the invasion of Russia, however, Green found much use for the communists. They proved the most reliable people in the union when it came to breaking strikes, ramming WLB decisions down the throats of workers, and rounding up votes for Democratic Party politicians. More than that, the communists in the union were, by and large, able organizers and local officers. With the great dearth of the latter during the big influx of new locals and new members, Green was more than willing to overlook the clause barring communists from office and appoint a number of them to jobs on the national union payroll, mostly as field organizers.

The old political truth that it is policy in the end and not the color of a man's necktie that counts, was once more verified. When Green's chief, Roosevelt, became an ally of Velson's chief, Stalin, political logic compelled Green and Velson to play ball. However, Green was still somewhat illogical. Memories of Stalinist treachery caused him to hold them at arm's length. Not so his partner Van Gelder. After being secretary-treasurer of the IUMSWA for nearly ten years, the one-time socialist college student was being consumed with ambitions for bigger things in life. Green's job as president was one of them. Van Gelder was willing to go whole hog with the communists—above all if it landed him in a better berth.

Danger of Stalinism

The 1943 convention of the union was preceded by months of underground maneuvering, knifing, and double-crossing. The communists were greasing the skids for Green and grooming Van Gelder. Green was taking counter-measures. Whether by design or accident, the fight began to center around the fate of Irving Velson, member of the General Executive Board accused of membership in the Communist Party. A group of anti-communists on the GEB were out for Velson's skin on the basis of the union constitution forbidding communists to hold office. Green was willing to remain in the background while they "did a job" on Velson. Van Gelder saw the importance of the case and became Velson's defender. The convention upheld the GEB majority in removing Velson. As a result of this, Van Gelder received a setback. Green, having achieved his purpose of stopping Van Gelder's campaign, now made a deal with Van Gelder and secured his reelection to his old post. In doing this he broke with those who had led the fight against Velson. As a result, Green helped decimate the very forces he had relied upon to stop Van Gelder. From now on Green became to play a delicate game of maneuvering between the Van Gelder-Velson bloc on one side and the anti-communist forces on the other.

In the midst of all this back-stabbing, throat-slitting, double-crossing, Stalinist intriguing, red-baiting and witch-hunting, nowhere was there to be found the voice of a progressive group, standing upon principles and fighting for a restoration of the union to its early pioneer spirit of militant industrial unionism. However, between the 1943 and the 1944 conventions, such voices were being raised ever louder in the locals. As the ranks became fed up with Green's dictatorial lifting of charters his appeasing the Washington politicians and admirals, and his vicious denunciations of members who went on strike, the opposition movement began to grow. In his old Local 1 of Camden, in Local 42 of Philadelphia, in Local 9 of San Pedro, in Local 16 of Kearny and elsewhere, progres-

sive groups were either elected to local administrations or were threatening election. The old anti-communist group in the union bestirred itself and seeing the rising tide of rank and file opposition quickly fell in line on a program of repealing the no-strike pledge and other progressive demands.

Green became thoroughly alarmed. Rather than "lose face" in Washington by having his union be the first to repeal the no-strike pledge, Green was willing to lift the bars to the communists and give them a free hand to round up a convention majority guaranteed to give a majority for Roosevelt, the no-strike pledge and the War Labor Board. The communists did better than Green expected. They could have controlled the convention even without the Local 16 delegation which the communists secured by violating the union constitution and appointing the delegation without a regular convention election. That Green agreed to this was indication that his fears had carried away his common sense. He became not only a partner in policy with them, but also a partner in crime.

Growth of Progressive Movement

The communists were not yet ready to "take over" the union this year. They used their convention majority to grease the skids for next year. Innocent-appearing changes in the constitution, resolutions on red-baiting, etc., plus the election of a GEB that they can handle were considered sufficient as the first step. Toward the close of the convention Green became fully alarmed over his peril. In his closing speech he lashed out at the "intolerance" displayed by the "majority."

If he chooses to fight, he can more than hold his own. Most of the communist stooges on the GEB would cave in under a real fight, if Green chooses to make it. However, finding himself tied to Washington, which is tied to Moscow, which is tied to his union opponents, Green has few issues upon which to fight. He is experienced enough to know that red-baiting more often than not acts as a boomerang.

The only local to send a delegation pledged to a fighting program was Local 42. It found scattered support among several other delegations. However, the fight waged by the progressives opened a new chapter in the history of IUMSWA conventions. It was the first really principled fight over issues and policies instead of personalities and intrigues. It went far to educate the union activists both those at the convention and those who had to consider the question in their locals. As the opening gun it did all that was to be expected of it.

The coming year will see the cards beginning to fall for the progressives. Their uphill fight in the locals and at the convention will begin to bear fruit. Disappointment with Roosevelt policies after the election, continued wage controls, cutbacks, declining hours, increasing strikes, growing militancy among the rank and file will all drive home the lessons that the progressives have been preaching. If the communists think they can put the IUMSWA "in the bag" along with the UERMWA the NMU and other of their hog-tied outfits without a real fight, they will be sadly disillusioned. The progressive winds are blowing these days—and the old IUMSWA spirit of 1934 is bestirring itself.

ERNEST LUND.

What Happened at the U. E. Meeting

There is hardly another union in the CIO quite like the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America. First, there is not another big international so thoroughly dominated and controlled, lock, stock and barrel, by the Communists, like the UE. Its chief officers, those who really count and determine the policies of the union, are well known Communist Party (now politically referred to as the Communist Political Association) members. This control has extended over many years and is the one important reason why the UE represents such a sharp contrast to other CIO unions, even those bureaucratically controlled, in militancy of ideas, program and practice. Developing under Communist domination, the UE has been a laboratory for the changing Stalinist policies on the domestic front. Its political line has varied with the changing line of the CP. Its trade union strategy and tactics has patterned this changing line.

Since this review of its recent convention is limited, let us confine ourselves to the recent policies of the union. It is, without doubt, the most rabidly pro-Roosevelt, pro-war union in the CIO. In sharp contrast to the unbridled hatred of the President by the Stalinists during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact, when Roosevelt was characterized as the outstanding war-monger of the world, Roosevelt is today, next to Stalin, the world's greatest benefactor. Stalin's international interests are paramount to the UE leadership. Thus the union is closely tied to the Administration, and if the Administration has better "fair-haired unions" in the CIO, it does not lack the devotion of the UE leadership.

Does Stalin's alliance with the United States dictate a new

policy for the CP in this country? Then the UE immediately reflects it in this way: it carries out Roosevelt's domestic program to a degree unmatched by other internationals. It signs wage agreements and agrees to union conditions that are a scandal. It manipulates the union with the single purpose of preventing genuine rank and file democracy. The Sperry local in New York is a case in point. By its constitution, membership meetings are held only twice a year! And by the same constitution, nominations for officers may take place only by the steward body!

Issues in the United Electrical Workers Union

Recount the important issues which confront the labor movement and then examine the position of the UE on these issues. There is the question of the no-strike pledge, the wage freeze, post-war planning, the bosses' anti-union offensive, the WLB, and independent labor politics, and you will find that the UE, while in many respects adopting a position which is formally like many positions adopted by other CIO unions, in each case, goes a good deal further more often in a direction which is unquestionably anti-union.

a. On the no-strike pledge, it is not merely in favor of retaining this infamous, one-sided agreement which has aided big business in profiteering from the war, but it is surreptitiously fostering the new Communist policy of extending the no-strike pledge for the post-war period. Why Communist? It is the new Communist line that the struggle for socialism is out; now is the time to cooperate with capitalism (read: big business) to help it prosper and profit, and to help it in its imperialist aims. To pursue that policy in the labor move-

ment means to keep the workers in check, to prevent "labor struggles," to maintain peaceful relations with the boss, who is apparently having a devil of a time trying to make ends meet.

b. Its policy on the no-strike pledge is immediately reflected in its attitude toward the bosses' offensive against unionism. Whereas the ordinary labor bureaucrat recognizes the dangers inherent in the no-strike pledge when carried over into the post-war period, i.e., knows that the unions face a struggle for life against the industrial giants, the UE is now preaching "coöperation" with industry, "unity" and "partnership" with the anti-union employers. All that this does is to develop a policy of glorified company unionism.

c. While formally adhering to the CIO position which demands a revision of the Little Steel formula the UE has really little interest in the matter. It has no wish to interfere with or make difficult the President's attempts to maintain inviolate the wage stabilization law and his seven-point program, none of which has been carried out except the wage freeze. Judging by the wage agreements signed, no one can possibly doubt this.

d. While the crying need of labor is the development of an independent labor reconversion program seeking to aid the workers, the UE has already endorsed Baruch's big business reconversion program.

e. It has rejected independent labor politics and a Labor Party in favor of capitalist politics and adherence to the Democratic Party machine. Grievances of the workers are replied to in typical Stalinist style: elect Roosevelt!

f. The just grievances of labor against the WLB, which is an employers' body shrouded in the fiction that its balance of power is held by the "public," is countered by the UE's unstinted support to that body. For example, in the numerous consent cases of the UE, that is, cases where the company and union reached an agreement, which the WLB rejects, the UE is practically silent. If it is not silent, its protests are practically unheard and no fight is made by it against this infamous anti-labor body.

Is There No Opposition?

Is it then that the UE has no opposition within its ranks? No, there is opposition to the policies of the union administration. The opposition is widespread but effectively bottled up by the bureaucratic control of the administration, by the disorganization and disunity of the opposition. The strangulating control of the Communists could easily be broken, but only on the condition that the opposition was nationally organized and had all the accouterments of a unified opposition with a program. The last convention demonstrated that the possibilities of mobilizing the progressives and militants in the union are present. These progressives and militants need leadership. This leadership will undoubtedly arise, but it is not yet present.

There is no doubt that such a fight could have been made before if the former president, James B. Carey, whom the Communists removed from office, had waged a struggle. It seems inexplicable that one of the founders of the union, its first president and now national secretary of the CIO, could be so divorced from his union. But so effective was his removal that, for all practical purposes, he might never have been a member of the UE or present at any of its conventions. Yet he is known nationally in the UE, is respected by the rank and file, has good standing and a good record in the CIO. The story is that after Carey's removal as president, his re-

ention as CIO secretary was part of a deal. Naturally we cannot vouch for this story, but the facts of life speak for themselves. It is bruited about that Carey's retention as CIO secretary was the result of a deal between Murray and the Stalinists: they guaranteed not to fight him as secretary, to vote for him, if, in turn, Carey would refrain from any interference in the affairs of the UE. Perhaps there is no basis to this story. But if there isn't, Carey conducts himself in the UE as though it were true. Everyone knows he is against the present leadership, is opposed to its administrative methods and its anti-union policies. Yet he regularly attends conventions but hardly makes a peep at them. Often it is at a time when the bureaucrats are in deathly fear of his intervention, knowing that he could, if he so desired, upset their well-laid plans.

The latest convention of the UE showed the rising tide of rank and file opposition to the bureaucratically entrenched leadership. The convention, like all previous Stalinist-dominated meetings, was carefully rigged and so run as to prevent the opposition from presenting its views effectively or following through its opposition to the administration. An examination of the issues in dispute reveals that the UE, despite the bureaucratic control, could not avoid a clash over those problems which are acutely affecting the lives of the mass of workers in this country, especially the militant and class-conscious elements which make up the labor movement. In this sense the UE convention was like all other conventions which the CIO has recently held. Like the other conventions, this one had to take up the question of rescinding the no-strike pledge, the question of the wage freeze and the WLB, incentive pay, the thirty-five-hour week, etc. In each instance, the officialdom was characterized by the reactionary positions it took against the various groupings which opposed it.

The fight against the no-strike pledge in no way resembled the mass uprising at the UAW, or the large minorities in other internationals. But that a fight could be made at all against the no-strike pledge at a UE convention shows definite progress. The proposal to rescind received only five votes, but there is no question that the sentiment in favor of this proposal was many times larger. Only a wild, hysterical, flag-waving campaign of the Stalinists succeeded in damning the wide opposition to the pledge.

It Is Possible to Defeat the Stalinists

In anticipation of an even sharper struggle over the WLB, the resolutions committee was compelled to bring in a fairly strong-worded resolution on the WLB—this, for the first time since the issue became an important one in the labor movement. But the practical day-to-day conduct of the officialdom precludes any effective actions that the union might take to enforce the views of its resolution.

A fight over incentive pay and the thirty-five-hour week also developed. Here the bureaucratic manipulation of the chair by the union's president, the Stalinist stooge, Fitzgerald, prevented the opposition from even speaking up effectively. A similar thing happened on the proposal to increase the salaries of international organizers from seventy to eighty dollars a week. The reaction of the rank and file delegates was unmistakable. And when the vote revealed little support for the administration, Fitzgerald adjourned the session to prevent a rollcall vote. Thus, the measure was passed.

The administration got a real scare when Fitzgerald was opposed for the presidency by Martin J. Hogan, one of the opposition leaders. Running without a program, with practically no organization and no previous plans, Hogan mustered

about one-fourth of the convention vote against the incumbent president. On this issue alone it was possible to see what an effective struggle, program and organization might have accomplished in the UE.

The opposition at this convention was not confined to progressive Local 425 of New York, as in the past. It was joined by other forces from District 4 and from New England. Had these forces been prepared prior to the convention, had they been organized around a progressive program with national ramifications, the fight at the convention would have been ten times as effective, with excellent results. More important, however, it would have laid the necessary basis for the organization to oust the Stalinist union-wreckers at the next convention. In any case, the convention revealed that a struggle for progressive and militant unionism in the UE is

not a hopeless proposition. The Stalinists' control of the union is tenuous. It was obtained essentially because the UE was one of their concentrations and they conducted themselves in the union as a unified, disciplined caucus against an open field. The course pursued by the union under their leadership is so blatantly against the best interests of the labor movement and the rank and file membership that any well-organized opposition based upon a program of progressive unionism could number the days of Stalinist control over the UE. This is indeed the important lesson to be learned from the last convention. The scattered progressives have a big task ahead of themselves: to gather their forces, formulate their program, unify their fight and develop their own leadership in the course of this struggle to oust the Stalinist union-wreckers.

ALBERT GATES.

Progressives at the Rubber Convention

The United Rubber Workers of America was one of the first offsprings of the CIO and was nursed on heroic and violent organizing struggles in the cradle of sit-down strikes in Akron, Ohio. Since the war, the union has expanded to over 180,000 members. While in comparison with the unions of the miners, steel or auto workers, its numerical strength is small, its strategical importance is great. This fact is due not only to its militant record, but to the vital rôle of the industry in both peacetime and wartime.

As a microcosm reflecting the general unrest of the American labor movement over the no-strike pledge and War Labor Board restrictions imposed by the labor officialdom, the rank and file in the "Big Four" Akron locals carried on a five-day strike in May, 1943. The strike, following that of the miners, influenced by it and accompanied by mass picketing and skirmishes at the plant gates, was due to the War Labor Board's refusal to grant the wage increases asked by the union. It was stopped only by the intervention of President Roosevelt. The strike-breaking rôle of Sherman H. Dalrymple and his Stalinist and run-of-the-mill bureaucratic consorts on the International Executive Board in that strike, started an active tide of opposition to him in the ranks of the union which grew with his subsequent actions on behalf of the corporations.

Last January, Dalrymple undertook an action which aroused the entire Akron labor movement. When a strike of the bandbuilders occurred at General Local over company cheating on wages, transfers and other abuses, Dalrymple expelled the strikers, who were then fired by the company. He also expelled two past presidents of the union who took up the fight on behalf of the expelled strikers. The latter were then fired, blacklisted, had their draft deferments withdrawn and were immediately ushered into the army. This outrage moved Goodrich Local to expel Dalrymple from his own union, an action that may have been constitutionally questionable but one which placed Dalrymple in a ludicrous and precarious position. He was reinstated by the General Executive Board and the case was to be brought up by the Goodrich Local under "appeals" at the convention.

A weakness of the fight subsequently waged in behalf of the General strikers was that it was conducted not on the forthright basis of the right of these men to strike for redress of their grievances and in opposition to the no-strike pledge,

but on the basis of "unconstitutionality" on the part of Dalrymple, and the fact that not all the expelled "instigated" the strike. It was an oblique defense of the right to strike, made at a time when the defense should have been a head-on collision with the policies of the officialdom.

The Nature of the Opposition

Goodrich Local, under the presidency of George Bass, then began its campaign for the international convention. This local was the core of progressive sentiment among the big rubber unions and was on record against the no-strike pledge. At the 1942 convention, Bass led a lively minority group opposing the pledge, labor-management collaboration, labor participation on the War Labor Board and standing for a general program of union democratization. He did not challenge the leadership for office, however, nominating Dalrymple instead! At the 1943 convention his fight was not so aggressive, although (and because) he was closer to declaring himself a candidate in opposition to Dalrymple. At the convention just concluded, where he ran finally against Dalrymple, he soft-pedalled all issues.

We are not concerned with Bass' personality save as it is an indication of his politics and a reflection of the movement he leads. A leader who rose from the ranks and still has their interests at heart, he is described, not without justice, by the press of the rubber barons, the *Akron Beacon Journal*, as "a man of whom it never can be said that he is a friend of the rubber companies." Bass responds to and reflects the pressure of his ranks but he lacks a definitive program. At the same time, he has withstood the pressure of the reactionary newspapers, the government agencies and the Stalinists who characteristically but erroneously call him "an agent of the Trotskyites and John L. Lewis." To call him a minor John L. Lewis has some aptness.

This year the opposition to the international leadership spread rapidly in all the Akron locals. It was consciously organized for a fight at the coming convention. Goodyear Local, long languishing under the domination of the Stalinists, overwhelmingly elected a progressive slate for the convention. General, smarting under the blow dealt it by Dalrymple, joined the movement. Firestone was in the majority sympathetic.

In the last stages of preparation for the convention, city-wide caucus meetings were held. The opposition was united

on rescinding the no-strike pledge, opposing the Dalrymple administration with a slate of their own, contesting the reversal of the ouster of Dalrymple, appealing the General Local's cases and a sheaf of demands to curb the bureaucracy and democratize the union. Some attempts were made to circularize the out-of-town locals with the case against Dalrymple involving the General firings and the program of the opposition.

What Happened at the Convention

Came the convention. Dalrymple, in effect, appointed his own trial committee by using his constitutional authority to appoint all committees, including the one on appeals which would hear the case against him. A test vote came in the early sessions over a motion by the progressives to have locals approve international representatives and to prevent international board members from being representatives at the same time. It was defeated, two to one, and this figure became the typical one on all contested questions throughout the convention. The Akron delegation, with one-third—and the most substantial third—of the convention assured in advance, failed with few exceptions to make any inroads on the out-of-Akron locals.

One reason for this failure was the above-mentioned tactic of Bass, to soften his resistance the nearer he comes to power. This was evidenced in the convention by the fact that he did not lead the opposition; rather, he let other progressive spokesmen speak first and exhaust the main arguments on most questions, thereby drawing fire from himself. This was a poor stratagem for a man who was bidding for the presidency on the basis of a program. His device did not fool the waverers, who saw him nevertheless vote with the Akron bloc on all questions. Another reason the pro-Dalrymple locals could not be won over was the amateur and opportunistic corridor and hotel-room procedure employed by the Bass supporters to garner votes for their candidates. With their own ranks critical, the Bassites were out to gain executive board posts, not to discuss the program of opposition to Dalrymple.

Another important factor prejudicing the other delegations against the Akron caucus was the pre-convention campaign of the Dalrymple machine itself against the Akron group. Many of the delegates from other locals refused to speak to the Akron members in the first days of the convention. These other locals, being outside the main center of the rubber union, are more dependent on the international and have its representatives, either Stalinist or machine-men, stationed in their unions. Their delegates also included southern locals and representatives of unions in the "war babies," i.e., plants whose unions were new and inexperienced in the fighting traditions of the labor movement. These things forced the Akron bloc to remain a minority throughout the convention.

Struggle on Appeals

The minority report of the appeals committee, condemning Dalrymple for his action in the General affair, might have gained the Akron candidates some votes in the elections, since the evidence of Dalrymple's high-handedness and flouting of the constitution was amply supported. However, the union leadership had set the time for elections in advance of the report of the appeals committee, a characteristic bureaucratic trick. Also, the two contending sides agreed to a compromise on the two major appeals. Goodrich Local agreed to drop the appeal on the expulsion of Dalrymple. Dalrymple agreed to restore the expelled members to their former status, return

fifty per cent of the fines imposed on the strikers, while back pay claims were denied.

Although it is probable that Dalrymple with his mechanical majority could have made the penalties on the strikers stick and, even more easily, thrown out the appeal on his own expulsion, he could have done it only by having the report on his behavior and the damaging testimony of many of the members against him made public to the convention. The opposition would have lost any restitution for or vindication of the strikers. But the compromise was therefore really weighted in their favor. It was, in effect, an admission of guilt by Dalrymple.

Despite the fact they remained a minority, the Akron delegates did not break ranks throughout the convention. Bass ran against Dalrymple and lost, 394 to 756. There was a high *esprit* and a will to continue the progressive caucus based on the unity of the convention and founded on a progressive program. The defects of the opposition were that it was on the instinctive-progressive level: while it opposed the no-strike pledge it supported the candidacy of him who demanded it—Roosevelt. The idea of a Labor Party is almost totally lacking from the consciousness of the rubber workers. What the opposition in the rubber workers needs is a leavening of *conscious* rather than *instinctive action*, in its *political* as well as its *economic* program. When the rubber workers struck for higher wages, it was Roosevelt, whom they support through the PAC, who broke their strike and upheld the WLB. Inside their union, it is Dalrymple's upholding of the no-strike pledge, supported by Roosevelt and the corporations, which hinders their progress.

What About the Future?

The struggle in the URW is by no means over, for the simple reason that the issues which confronted the convention will remain with the union. No matter how many times votes may be obtained to reaffirm the no-strike pledge and to support FDR, the sponsor of the wage freeze, the Little Steel formula and the WLB, these issues constantly recur. With each passing month the effects of Roosevelt's policies become increasingly disastrous for the rank and file union member. The fight against the policies of the President and his Administration thus becomes a matter of life and death for the average worker.

Dalrymple won a victory over Akron. He succeeded in creating an antagonism between the small locals which dot the country and the large Akron locals which constitute the flesh and blood of the union. Only a little intelligence will reveal to one that in the coming post-war period it will be the Akron unions which will continue to be the strongest defensive and offensive weapon the union has in its fight against the bosses' drive to destroy the labor movement. Without the Akron unions, which make up the strongest single section of the URW, the union would be doomed. Does Dalrymple understand this? Maybe. But he conducts himself as though the Akron militants are the greatest danger to the union, rather than the rubber barons. In the coming struggle, however, the Akron locals will wield the great power in defense of the Rubber Workers Union.

The defense of the union will depend upon the kind of policies that are developed to fight for the maintenance of the union standards won after many years of heroic struggle. This is the decisive question and it is on this question that Bass and his followers present their weakest side. They failed to understand that a clever evasion of a dispute on issues, on

the ground that they might be "unpopular," played into the hands of Dalrymple. This was foolish because, as already pointed out, on the differences which existed between the bureaucracy and the progressives, Bass and his followers voted against the former. But in failing to make a clear and uncompromising struggle on issues, Bass aided Dalrymple in his strategy to present the progressives as a power-mad group seeking only to win offices. That is why it is doubly important for the Akron progressives to wage their struggle around the

important issues which divide them from the conservatives, who, if allowed to continue in their course, will run the union into the ground. A great responsibility rests on the Akron militants, the men who made the Rubber Workers Union and whose struggles have won them the plaudits of the entire labor movement. That responsibility is to prepare now a program for revitalizing the union, for strengthening it in preparation to meet the bosses' anti-union offensive.

MARY BELL.

An Epigone of Trotsky--II

Ignorance as a Substitute for Marxism

(Continued from the August issue)

We have already seen that our critic does not know what the "heart of Trotskyism" is, what are the sources of our criticism of Trotsky's theory of the "degenerated workers' state," and that he does not even know what a trade union is. We have also established that by Frankel's involuntary admission, Trotsky's conception of a trade union (which Frankel attributes to Shachtman alone) "is clear, it is consistent, it is harmonious with the Shachtmanite point of view on the Soviet Union." There remain two of the original five points to deal with: the question of the roots of class rule and the question of the historical place of the Stalin bureaucracy.

The "ABC of Marxism"

Marxists view classes as the product of historical development, in other words, all classes have a *past* and a *future*, as well as the *present*. Shachtman's "new exploitive class" is, in Shachtman's own words, "without a past and without a future." (Max Shachtman, *The Struggle for the New Course*, page 247.)

Lenin insisted that the roots of all class rule are to be found in the productive foundations of society. He said: "The rule of the class is determined *only* by the relationship to *property*." To explain the rule of his "new class," Shachtman points not to the foundation but to the political superstructure. It thus turns out that Shachtman's "indispensable correction" applies not only to Trotsky but to Lenin and Marx as well. But Shachtman simply forgets to mention such trifles.

"Wherein does the rule of the class [the proletariat] express itself?" asked Lenin. And he answered: "The rule of the proletariat expresses itself in the abolition of landed and capitalist property." Not the introduction of nationalized property and planning but the *abolition* of the old property forms sufficed for Lenin.

How does Shachtman get around this? Very simply. He denies that his new class needs either to abolish previous property forms or institute new ones of its own.

Shachtman's class that has no past and no future possesses for its "fundament" not property relations but the "ownership" of "political power." Needless to add, this "ownership" in its turn has neither a past nor a future. Such tripe is, according to Shachtman, "the veriest commonplace of Marxism." (*Fourth International*, May, 1944, page 150.)

This is typical Frankel: x parts ignorance (principal ingredient), x parts falsification (never omitted), x parts insolence (the style is the man), and x parts plain, ordinary, anhydrous muddleheadedness; the solvent is not even tap-water. This chemical analysis requires demonstration. Here it is.

*See "A Defamer of Marxism," by Harry Frankel, in the May, 1944, issue of the *Fourth International*, in which he comments on *The New Course*, by Leon Trotsky and *The Struggle for the New Course*, by Max Shachtman, and the first part of our reply in *The New International* of August, 1944.

Stalinism and the Roots of Class Rule

1. For Lenin, the roots of class rule are to be found in the productive foundations of society; Shachtman, however, who simply forgets to mention (note: "forgets to mention") such trifles, points not to the foundation but to the political superstructure.

That Shachtman, who is in his way as human as Frankel, may forget to mention one trifle or another, is more than possible. But the trifle of which Frankel speaks with that mastery of sarcasm which marks him out from a world of dullards, was not forgotten by Shachtman. Not only was it *not* forgotten, but it is to this very trifle that the origin of the new ruling class in Russia was traced. In *The Struggle for the New Course* it says:

At bottom, classes have risen and come to power throughout history in response to the developing needs of production which preceding classes were unable to satisfy. This is the case, also, with the new ruling class in Russia. The Russian bourgeoisie had ample opportunity to prove that it could not, or could no longer, develop the productive forces of the country. It came upon the scene too late to play the historically progressive rôle it played in the Western countries. . . .

But if the bourgeoisie came too late, the proletariat of Russia came to power, so to speak, "too early." It is of course more proper to say that the rest of the European proletariat did not come to power early enough. The results of this retardation of the world revolution are known. The *isolated* Russian proletariat, in a backward country, could not satisfy the needs of production, either. It could not satisfy them on a *socialist* basis. That was the quintessential point made by Trotsky in his theory of the permanent revolution. It was with this conviction in mind that he combatted the bureaucracy's theory of "socialism in a single country." The bureaucracy won, the revolution degenerated. But not in accordance with the predictions of Lenin or Trotsky. The revolution did not turn to capitalism. (Pages 241f.)

The reader, we think, is getting some idea of who it is that "simply forgets to mention" the "trifles." Let us continue.

"All modern nations," we noted on page 219, "experience the need of an economic organization and strength that will enable them to survive." The Russian bourgeoisie, however, was unable to develop the productive forces, an inability which conditioned its social impotence *and* the triumph of the Russian revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat. (A contrary view is a capitulation to Menshevism.) The proletariat, in turn, was able to develop the productive forces—in Trotsky's words, make possible an "authentic rise of a *socialist* economy"—*only* with the *state aid* of the victorious Western proletariat. (A contrary view is a capitulation to Stalinism.)

The old prediction said: Without the world revolution, Russia will inevitably stagnate and then succumb to capitalism

in the form of foreign imperialist exploitation; also, Stalinism is turning the country in that direction. The prediction, however understandable, was erroneous. A tremendous economic advance was made under Stalin's "planning." It was not a socialist advance—this prediction of Trotsky was absolutely borne out. But neither was it capitalist! It was not accomplished by restoring private ownership in the means of production and exchange or by abolishing the monopoly of foreign trade.

The productive forces were not developed by way of *socialization* (which implies a trend toward socialism) but by way of *bureaucratic collectivism*. The new bureaucracy was born, grew, and took power in response, not to the needs of society as a whole—the world proletariat is sufficiently capable of satisfying those—but to the organic needs of a backward, isolated country, existing in unique and unprecedented world conditions. (Page 242.)

Let us temper the verdict with charity, and say: Frankel "simply forgets to mention" that he wrote his review before reading the book: Impossible! the reader may protest. Impossible or not, the statement has the virtue of mercifully avoiding the right name for Frankel.

Political Power and Property as Fundaments

2. For Lenin, the rule of the class is determined only by the relationship to property; Shachtman, however, tries to get around this by arguing that "his new class" establishes no new property forms of its own, and does not have property relations but the ownership of political power as its fundament.

That looks bad—but only if there lingers in you a faith that Frankel understands what he reads, or even reads what he reviews and condemns. It does not look so bad when you understand that the rule of the class is determined in the same way in Lenin's conception and in Shachtman's. The latter wrote in *The Struggle for the New Course*: "It is of the ABC of Marxism that the fundament of all social relations (that is, relations of production are property relations. That holds for the old slaveholding societies, for feudal society, for capitalist society and for the proletarian state." (Page 233.) "How," asked Frankel, "does Shachtman get around" Lenin's conception? Very simply: by sharing it.

But it is necessary to know what conception it is we share. Lenin speaks of property relations, of the *relationship* of a class to property, that is, to the means of production and exchange. Let us present a little more of the speech by Lenin at the 9th Congress of the Russian party in 1920, from which Frankel takes his quotations.

When the question of property was decided in practice, the rule of the class was thereby assured: thereupon the constitution wrote down on paper what life has decided: "There is no capitalist and landed property," and it added: "*The working class has more rights than the peasantry, but the exploiters have no rights at all.*" *Therewith was written down the manner in which we realized the rule of our class, in which we bound together the toilers of all strata, of all the little groups. . .*

The rule of the class is determined only by the relationship to property. That is precisely what determines the constitution. And our constitution correctly sets down our attitude to property and our attitude to the question of what class must stand at the head. (My emphasis—M. S.)

"And it added"—what Frankel failed to add: The working class has more rights than the peasantry, but the exploiters have no rights at all. "*Therewith was written down the manner in which we realized the rule of our class.*" Class rule is determined only by the relationship to property. "Our constitution correctly sets down our attitude to property and our attitude to the question of what class must stand at the head."

Today, the working class does not have "more rights than

the peasantry." The capitalist exploiters have no rights at all in the Stalinist state, but neither have the workers or the peasants. The working class does not "stand at the head." It is in the prison house that—so Frankel says—Stalin has made out of Russia.

In Russia in 1917, the proletariat first took political power. Then, the proletariat-in-power "did abolish property and abolished it completely." The "rule of the class was thereby assured." The constitution then gave the proletariat ruling rights; it provided that the proletariat "must stand at the head." The means of production and exchange became *the property of the workers' state*. The setting up of a new class state by the Stalinist counter-revolution was accomplished by wiping *all* this out, by establishing *fundamentally different property relations*.

All wiped out? This is where Frankel is baffled. Isn't it a fact that property is still nationalized, still state property? Do not the property forms set up by the Bolshevik revolution still remain? Isn't it a fact that "the *abolition* of the old [capitalist] property forms sufficed for Lenin"? and that these old forms have not yet been restored by the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy?

Here we approach the nub of the problem.

The Nub of the Problem

The "abolition of the old property forms" would not have "sufficed for Lenin" if these forms (capitalist private property) had been burned out in a fire, inundated in a storm, or bombed into rubble by Flying Fortresses. The abolition sufficed because it was accomplished by the proletariat-in-power which converted capitalist property into the property of a proletarian state. By this action, the proletarian state completed (the first stage of) the transformation not only of the old property *relations*. What is the meaning of this distinction between "forms" and "relations"? Does it exist in reality or is it purely verbal?

Under capitalism, property exists in the form of capitalist private property. This simple sentence *already* shows what are the property relations under capitalism. Regardless of the *political régime* (be it monarchical, democratic, militarist, Fascist or even semi-feudal), the capitalist class *owns* the property (means of production, *etc.*) and the proletariat works, as Marx would say, "with conditions of labor belonging to another." That is how we find the relationships of the classes to property. The state exists to maintain these relationships. The minute, therefore, you say "capitalist property forms" you have already said "capitalist property relations." Similarly, under slavery and feudalism, and in general wherever property is *privately* owned. The *class that owns the property* is the ruling class.

But what about the society in which property is not privately but state-owned? Trotsky wrote about the Stalinist bureaucracy that "the very fact of its appropriation of political power in a country where the principal means of production are in the hands of the state, creates a *new and hitherto unknown relation* between the bureaucracy and the riches of the nation" (*Revolution Betrayed*, page 249). Let us reemphasize: a new and hitherto unknown relation. This thought, however, needs supplementation: the seizure of political power by the proletariat in a country where it turns over the principal means of production to the hands of the state also creates a new and hitherto unknown relation between the rulers and the property. For the third time we emphasize: a new and hitherto unknown relation.

Why new? Why hitherto unknown? Because the proletariat, its revolution, and the social order whose establishment is its historic mission, differ fundamentally from all preceding classes, their revolutions and their social orders. The proletariat is not a property-owning class under capitalism; and it does not become a property-owning class when it takes power! When it takes state power, it turns the property over to its state. Its relations to property are then expressed only through its state. It "owns" the property only inasmuch as it rules the property-owning state. That is the *only* way the proletariat ever did own property, ever will own it and ever can own it. It owns it through *its* state, the workers' state, *through its political power!*

That is why there is such lamentable ignorance in the sarcastic question: "Since when did a ruling class have for its fundament not property relations but the ownership of political power? Are the Fascists a new ruling class? Is an absolute monarch a new ruling class?"

No, the monarch was not a ruling class; the feudal lords were, because they owned the landed property. The fascists are not a ruling class; the bourgeoisie is, because it owns the means of production and exchange. The proletariat, however, is not merely "another" class, but a fundamentally different one: It does not and cannot own property. It can only "own" the state when it takes power. By that "ownership" it establishes state property which it organizes and operates so that it ceases to be state property and becomes social property. The state itself ceases to be.

Property Relations Under Stalinism

The *complete* expropriation of the political power of the working class by the Stalinist bureaucracy only makes this point clearer. The property forms seem to be the same as they were before: property exists in the form of state property. Therefore, cries Frankel triumphantly, it is still a workers' state, even if politically degenerated!

But hold on a moment: What are now the property relations in Russia? That is, what are the *relations* of the various classes (or, let us say, the various social groups) to the state property? We have been told by Lenin, through Frankel, that the rule of the class is determined only by the relationship to property. Granted. But just how shall we now determine what the relationship is?

In a society where property is privately owned, the question answers itself: this class (or social group) owns the property, this class does not. Such an answer is obviously impossible in a society where property is not privately owned but state owned. To determine then the relations to property of the various social groups, *is it not clear that we must first find out what are their respective relations to the state-which-owns-the-property?*

"From the point of view of property in [ownership of] the means of production," wrote Trotsky, "the differences between a marshal and a servant girl, the head of a trust and a day laborer, the son of a people's commissar and a homeless child, seem not to exist at all." (*Revolution Betrayed*, page 238.)

That's just the point, although Trotsky did not draw the right conclusion. If you look at Russia from the standpoint of ownership of the means of production in the same way you look at a society in which these are privately owned—the trust head and the laborer have exactly the same property relations. Yet, in reality, their respective relations to property are as fundamentally different as the respective relations to property of the bourgeois and the proletarian under capitalism (except

that in Russia the gap between the classes is so much greater!) The bureaucracy is the ruling class. It has *all* the political power, the proletariat has *none*.

That is why Frankel's "irony" about Shachtman because the latter "points not to the foundation but to the political superstructure," is so utterly out of place. He does not understand the historically unprecedented nature of the proletarian state power, the peculiarity of the proletariat as a ruling class. He does not understand what is unprecedented about the class rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy. He derides its "ownership" of "political power" as something quite secondary, because he cannot grasp the simple idea that *where property belongs to the state, the "ownership" of the state power means the monopolization of all economic and social power*. The bureaucracy is the ruling class because its "mere" political power makes it the *owner of the conditions of production*. It is always the relation of the owners of the conditions of production to the actual producers that shows us the real basis of a class society and establishes the true class character of the state. The Stalinist state is no exception to this rule.

What Depends and What Determines?

This is the nub of the problem, we said. Without understanding this essentially simple idea, the Stalinist counter-revolution will remain an enigma and a source of confusion. We wrote that our criticism of Trotsky's theory "introduces into it an indispensable correction." The key to this correction is given by Trotsky. If we quote Trotsky himself, this may be of help to Frankel, whose Marxism consists, in Lenin's excellent phrase, of "swearing by God."

In the *Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky shows how bourgeois society has maintained itself and developed in spite of different political régimes and bureaucratic castes. "*In contrast to this, the property relations which issued from the socialist revolution are indivisibly bound up with the new state as their repository*. The predominance of socialist over petty bourgeois tendencies is guaranteed, not by the automatism of the economy—we are still far from that—but by *political measures* taken by the dictatorship. *The character of the economy as a whole thus depends upon the character of the state power.*" (Page 250. My emphasis—M.S.)

Our whole difference with this basically unassailable statement of the problem lies in the fact that we draw the consistent conclusion. *The new state is the repository of the property relations and is indivisibly bound up with them! The character of the economy depends upon the character of the state power! And that in contrast to bourgeois society!* Once this is understood, the rest follows.

It is this conception that lay at the heart of Trotsky's first theory of Russia as a degenerated workers' state: the state is the repository of the property relations; the character of the economy depends upon the character of the state power. In this first theory, Trotsky, as Frankel would put it, "pointed not to the foundations but to the political superstructure." That is why Trotsky used to repeat and repeat that Russia is still a workers' state because the political power can be reformed, "that the proletariat of the USSR has not forfeited the possibility of submitting the bureaucracy to it, of reviving the party and of mending the régime of the dictatorship—without a new revolution, with the methods and on the road of reform." (*Problems of the Development of the USSR*, page 36.)

With the abandonment of the program of reform and the adoption of the view that the Stalinist bureaucracy can be overthrown only by a revolution, Trotsky was compelled also to

abandon his first theory and to develop an altogether different one, namely, Russia is still a workers' state because property is still nationalized. This complete change has been demonstrated by us in detail and in several places, including *The Struggle for the New Course*. Frankel just acts as if he never heard of the point. His silence encourages the belief that our demonstration is irrefutable.

The second theory of Trotsky is radically different from the first. Originally, the state was the repository of the property relations; now the "property relations" (nationalized property) are the "repository" of the state. Originally, the character of the economy was determined by the character of the state power (Frankel's "political superstructure"); now the character of the state power is determined by the character of the economy.

If you understand and hold to the first, and only correct, conception of Trotsky, you understand why the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy, in conquering state power and establishing itself as the new ruling class, did not need "to abolish previous property forms or institute new ones of its own," at least not in appearance. By completing its conquest of state power, the bureaucracy established *new property relations*. Thereby (will Frankel ever understand this?) it established property forms of its own, if by that is meant *social property forms*. When the proletariat was in power, property existed and was exploited in Russia in the form of property-of-the-workers'-state. With Stalinism in complete power, property exists and is exploited in the form of property-of-the-bureaucratic-collectivist-state. Stalinism has wiped out *all* the conquests of the proletarian revolution.

The trouble with Frankel, at bottom, is that he accepts and his party repeatedly disseminates *the fundamental sophism of the Stalinist doctrine*, which, in the new Russian constitution, legalizes the lie that state property equals "the possessions of the whole people."

A Ruling Class Without a Past or a Future?

3. A ruling class without a past and without a future? In a terse, but all the more devastating reply, Frankel says: "Such tripe is, according to Shachtman, 'the veriest commonplace of Marxism.'"

Neither the commonplaces nor the complexities of Marxism are made up of tripe. This we will grant. But only if we are allowed to add that discussions of Marxism should not be made up of forgeries. In the chapter on the bureaucracy as a new ruling class, Shachtman analyzes the hopeless contradiction into which Trotsky's theory drove him in 1939 when he presented us with a proletarian revolution carried out in Russian-occupied Poland by the "counter-revolutionary workers' state." (Brave Frankel, like his friends, has *not one word* to say in defense of Trotsky on this point!) At the end of his analysis, Shachtman writes that "*In comparison with this*, our theory of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a new and reactionary exploitive class, and of Russia as a bureaucratic-collectivist class state, neither proletarian nor bourgeois, is the veriest commonplace of Marxism" (page 241). Several pages later, at the end of the volume, Shachtman writes, *in an entirely different connection*, about "the new bureaucracy, without a past and without a future" (page 247).

Frankel, who belongs to the "only moral people," simply cuts away the couple of thousand words that separate the two quotations, pastes together the two unrelated clauses with a little trip, and passes it off on the public as a genuine check written "according to Shachtman." Following right after this

clumsy little forgery appears a sub-heading over another one of Frankel's stern indictments of us. It reads (O Coincidence!): "A Petty Bourgeois Counterfeit." The only comment this requires is two punctuation marks: !!

However, we did speak of the Stalinist bureaucracy as being without a past and without a future. It is a question that is best dealt with—in so far as it can be adequately treated in an article*—in connection with the final point raised (i.e., muddled up) by Frankel:

According to Marxists, the historical justification for every ruling class is the ability under its particular system of exploitation to raise the development of productive forces of society as a whole to a new level. Does Shachtman grant this ability to Stalinism, i.e., his own "new exploitive class"? . . .

The gist of Shachtman's 128-page argument boils down to a representation of the crimes of Stalinism as the birthpangs that marked the rise of a new class to power. No more, no less. It is an elementary principle of Marxism that ruling classes rise in society through the operation of forces beyond the control of men's consciousness, reason or will. The rise of new ruling classes can be retarded or facilitated but never prevented—until and unless these classes have exhausted their historic mission. In the light of this, what is Shachtman's version of the evolution of the Soviet Union if not an attempt to supply an historical justification not for the ascendancy of a new class but actually for the abominations of the Kremlin?

Ex ungue leonem—you know the lion by his claws. Another species of animal, however, you know by its bray. From the braying, we gather that Shachtman is not only trying to provide an historical justification for Stalinism, "but actually for the abominations of the Kremlin." Obviously a detestable creature this Shachtman. Much deeper he cannot sink.

However, if we fumigate the air a little and reflect a little, things look more cheerful.

The Historical Justification of Stalinism

In the first place, the two accusations are in conflict: Shachtman says the bureaucracy has no past and no future, *and* he gives the bureaucracy an historical justification. If it is historically justified, it has both an historical past and an historical future.

In the second place, Shachtman nowhere speaks of an historical justification of Stalinism, nor does he suggest that it has one. Here we have not a forgery, but an invention.

And in the third place, the only one in our movement who *ever* spoke of an historical justification of the Stalinist bureaucracy was—Leon Trotsky. As in the case of the definition of a trade union, Frankel does not know where Trotsky ends and where Shachtman begins (this is his only qualification for writing on either one of them)

On December 28, 1934, Trotsky wrote: "Indeed, *the historical justification for the very existence of the bureaucracy* is lodged in the fact that we are still very far removed from socialist society." (*The Kirov Assassination*, page 10.) Further, he notes that the Stalinist dictatorship is both a heritage of past class struggles and an instrument for preventing a new class struggle. "In this and in this alone rests *the historical justification for the existence of the present Soviet dictatorship*." (*Ibid.*, page 11.) Again, in the same work: "It would be criminal to deny the progressive work accomplished by the Soviet bureaucracy." (*Ibid.*, page 25.)

(This Trotsky pamphlet was translated by J. G. Wright. Wright is editor of the *Fourth International*. Without a murmur, he prints Frankel's ignorant and venomous observations on "historical justification." What does it matter? Who will

*It can only be touched on here. It really requires and warrants ampler treatment. We hope to deal with it another time.

read the answer to it? Is it against the "petty bourgeois opposition"? Is it true and harsh and tough and vicious? Well, so much the better! That's how we rough-and-tumble proletarians (i.e., J. G. Wright! i.e., H. Frankel! i.e., J. Hansen!) write, and if you don't like it you can lump it! Let's print it, damn-it-all!)

In a sense, we are able to accept Trotsky's characterization of the bureaucracy. That is why we are able to speak of the new class without a past and without a future—that is, without an historical past or future. If Frankel had resisted his penchant for tearing phrases out of their context, the meaning would have been clearer.

We say the Stalinist bureaucracy is a new ruling class because it is the "owner of the conditions of production." Despite similarities in certain aspects with other class societies (the capitalist, for example), it differs basically from all of them in its own unique mode of production, in the "specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labor is pumped out of the direct producers," in the distribution of the means of production and of the products of economy. As a result of unforeseen historical circumstances, it arose out of "the needs of production"; it did develop the productive forces in a way that no other class could under the given conditions.

We say this class is without a past. We seek thereby to distinguish it from the great and durable classes of history which, for various objective reasons (economic, geographical, etc.), went through a long evolution and decisively directed the course of social development. What Frankel says about "every ruling class" is true only in a manner of speaking, that is, with the necessary historical limitations. In other words, it is not true as an absolutely valid dogma. History is studded with the record of classes under whose rule society stagnated and which could not be fitted into Frankel's rigid formula. Whoever does not know this had better rush to a serious history before he even pretends to speak about Marxism.

Marxism does not say that the world, and everything in it, marches straight from primitive communism to slavery, then to feudalism, then to capitalism, then to the proletarian dictatorship and communism, with no reversions, sideleaps, combinations or "oddities" whatsoever. This is an utterly primitive conception of Marxism.

Marxism is No Supra-Historical Dogma

"My critic," wrote Marx to the Russian Populist, Danielson, "must needs metamorphose my outline of the genesis of capitalism in western Europe into a *historico-philosophical theory of the general course, fatally imposed upon all peoples, regardless of the historical circumstances in which they find themselves placed*, in order to arrive finally at that economic formation which insures with the greatest amount of productive power of social labor the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon. He does me too much honor and too much shame at the same time. . . ."

"... Strikingly analogical events, occurring, however, in different historical environments [lead] to entirely dissimilar results. *By studying each of these evolutions separately and then comparing them, one will easily find the key to these phenomena, but one will never succeed with the master-key of a historico-philosophical theory whose supreme virtue consists in being supra-historical.*" (My emphasis—M. S.)

Marx often repeated the same thought. All classes and all ruling classes are not the same and do not always have the same characteristics. They cannot always be measured by the same criteria. The same obviously holds true of all societies,

for in each of them, as Marx points out, the "prevailing element" is a different one. To apply the same criteria to the present ruling class and the present social order in Russia as is applied, for example, to feudalism, simply makes no sense from the Marxian or any other standpoint. "By studying each of these evolutions separately, and then comparing them, one will easily find the key to these phenomena." This is what we have sought to do in our analysis of Stalinist Russia. A supra-historical master-key does not exist. Not even a thinker of Frankel's stature can, if we may say so, forge one.

We say, further, that this new class has no future. Why? Because it arose at the stage of the final decay and crisis of class society. It has given no sign of an ability to resolve the crisis which the combined forces of world capitalism have failed to resolve. It is *historically* conditioned by the concrete circumstances of its origin. One of these circumstances is the existence of its origin. One of these circumstances is the existence of a modern proletariat which, *on a world scale* (but not on a national scale), is capable of breaking the fetters on the productive forces, on social development, on freedom, and thus resolving the last social crisis of humanity.

That is how it stands *historically*. *Theoretically*, it is conceivable that this new class may have "a future" and that on a world scale. Such a perspective might open up for it *if*, for example, it was conclusively demonstrated that the proletariat is *organically* incapable of resolving the crisis, of taking and holding power and employing it to inaugurate a classless society. Nothing of the sort has yet been demonstrated, much less demonstrated conclusively. There are some dilettantes and ex-radicals who confine themselves to just such speculations, and even make them their program of "action." We for our part find little interest in them, and less need for them. Our task is the mobilization of the working class for the revolutionary assault against decaying capitalism. Our task is not ponderation over the growth and "future" of Stalinism, but the struggle against it for the future of the proletariat.

Successful struggle against a foe requires an understanding of his nature. That Frankel and his like do not understand, is already bad. That they refuse to understand—and a precondition of understanding is intelligent and *loyal* discussion, be it ever so vigorous—is worse. Frankel is only a minor epigone of Trotsky. Trotsky's whole *New Course* is an instructive protest against the type of methods, outlook, procedure that Frankel and his friends represent. That is why Frankel speaks so cavalierly of Trotsky's work. That is why he does not give the reader as much as an inkling of its contents. We have already suggested that he does not know much. But he knows enough to see that what Trotsky wrote in 1923-24 is a timely and thorough indictment of what he stands for. In this sense, a reading of *The New Course* may be recommended all over again as an excellent preparation for a fruitful discussion of "the Russian question."

MAX SHACHTMAN.

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The Anti-Marxian Offensive--II

On Some New Critics of Scientific Socialism

[Continued from last issue]

III—PROGRAM

Third, the critics assure us that the state is not, as the Marxists contend, an organ of class oppression, but merely a "broker," negotiating among various groups. In democratic countries it has a "usable" tradition and is responsive to "democratic" pressures. The Marxian theory of the state, moreover, has no validity especially today when we are already living under a "transformed" economy.

(1) This supra-class concept of the state explains the politico-economic "plans" which the critics present as alternatives to the Marxist analysis and program. The "plans" are labeled with such titles as "mixed economy," "permanent NEP," "pluralistic economy," etc. In essence, the critics deplore the contemporary fusion of political and economic power and the presence of monopolies; some recommend a "partnership" of all classes in a "mixed economy" of private and public enterprise; others, the conversion of monopolies into public corporations under a "people's" or "functional socialism."

The "plans" of the former group, of course, are actually proposals to freeze the status quo, since a "mixed economy" is already in existence, the automatic result of capitalist development. Just how a country which now consists of small and large business, public utilities, government ownership, co-operatives,⁽⁸⁾ viz., the "pluralistic" ideal, can move toward a fuller "democracy" is never made clear. The anti-statists repeat their nebulous formulations of "decentralization" and "regionalism" associated with the schemes of Borsodi, Mumford, Huxley and various members of the SP, but never do we hear of anything concerning the socio-economic and political relationships existing among the "pluralistic" units of the economy or the possible future of such units in an era of rapidly-developing statism. Or, how the private (competitive) and public ("socialized") sectors of the country are to be compartmentalized so as to prevent conflicting encroachments not only in terms of economics but of class and group interests.

(2) The "pluralistic" economy is offered as a "democratic" alternative to socialism which in its alleged state control of political and economic power possesses a "totalitarian potential." Russia, of course, is always used, especially by the revisionists, as the historical example of "socialism." It is interesting to note that the very anti-statist critics who are recommending "permanent NEPS" have overlooked the minor detail that the NEP was introduced by those who had first captured state power and who were, therefore, in a position to command the economy. (What the Bolsheviks, incidentally, considered a retreat, necessitated by internal and international factors, the proponents of "pluralism" present as a progressive "plan.") The "totalitarian potential" as a by-product of socialism has never been historically validated. What has been proved is that it is an inherent tendency of capitalist development. The "decentralizers," for all their apprehensions of statism, are merely preoccupying themselves with derivative, economic minutiae without ever coming to grips with the fundamental nature of the state. Only those who divorce politics from economics and are, therefore, unable to locate the locus of power or to comprehend its functions write sterile "plural-

istic" programs;⁽⁹⁾ those who own and control the corporate interests of the capitalist state formulate the practical strategies projected, for example, by the NAM, the WPB, the CEC, the Federation of British Industries, and by men like Swope, Baruch, Batt, Sloan, et al. "Pluralists" permit themselves the luxuries of constructing utopian blueprints, for instance, of hemispheric democracy and abundance, whereas monopoly power establishes an Inter-American Developmental Commission or an Anglo-American Caribbean Commission to perpetuate its rule. Not only do these utopians seem to be oblivious of contemporary predatory politics but they seem to have no comprehension of those historical forces which have shaped the world in which we are living. They would do well to consult the factual data (not necessarily the political conclusions) assembled in the works of R. Brady,⁽¹⁰⁾ K. Simpson,⁽¹¹⁾ F. Neumann,⁽¹²⁾ O. Nathan,⁽¹³⁾ S. Haxey,⁽¹⁴⁾ etc., where they will find incontrovertible proof—if proof can convince them—that economic power means social oppression and political domination.

(3) In spite of their own avowed anti-statism, the "pluralists" reveal another bit of characteristic petty bourgeois inconsistency. Not only do they call upon the "government" to perform its alleged functions of "arbitrating," "co-ordinating," etc., but to supplement the economic mechanism whenever the "automatism" of the market ceases to function.⁽¹⁵⁾ Since, according to the managerial-technical theoreticians, control and not ownership is the paramount factor today, government "planning" and "control" are logical procedures in our "transformed" economy. Thus, the Marxian contention that planned economy and the private or state ownership of the means of production are contradictory categories is refuted by the simple device of inventing new classes, new productive modes and relations. And for further proof that what is necessary today is socialization not of the means but of the "purposes" of production, the critics appeal both to authority and to fact.

In the first case they find support in the Keynes-Hansen proposals of governmental controls in savings, investment, low interest lending, tax programs, public works, social services, etc. This super New Deal-WPA which collapsed even under the most propitious conditions and had to be superseded by a war economy is now intended to solve the crises of post-war capitalism. But even the "pluralists," like some Brookings Institute economists, at times have their less sanguine moments. The anti-Marxists of *The Nation*, for example, following the Laski group in England, propose a revolution "by consent" to the Union Leaguers who are warned that if they do not follow Keynes they will have to "choose" Marx and, what is still worse, they may not be here to do the "choosing."

In the second case, those who justify governmental intervention in our economy point to the war as proof that capitalism can under similar "peacetime" co-ordination provide full employment. Even such "left wing" capitalists as Senators Bone, Kilgore and LaFollette argue along these lines. Since the purpose of an economy, according to these men, seems to be full employment—which, by the way, is not achieved even under war conditions—there is nothing wrong with a system

which implies intensive exploitation, huge profits and disparities in living conditions. The constant references, therefore, to such abstractions as "democracy," "justice," "freedom," etc., goals with which the "pluralists" are ostensibly concerned, would appear to be entirely irrelevant, if not superfluous. Contrary to these people, a war economy does not prove capitalism's ability to plan but merely to co-ordinate and control in the interests of the capitalists as a class, to preserve, in other words, existing property relations even if individual capitalists have to be "disciplined" and small business driven to ruination. The war economy also necessitates the release of those scientific, technical and managerial skills which under "normal" conditions are restricted in the interests of a scarcity economy. Measures, however, are already under way to suppress the inventions released by the war demands in order to protect investments in pre-war products and technical methods. The capitalist conscience knows no imperative but that of profit. Patriotism is of secondary consideration, as was strikingly illustrated in the cases of productive restrictions dictated by such interests as aluminum, synthetic rubber, magnesium, etc. The fundamental error, of course, in the idea of a war versus peace economy consists in treating war as an unfortunate interruption of "normal" functions instead of viewing it as an integral part of the capitalist system, let alone as capitalism's major industry. From the standpoint of humanistic values, war is naturally the most catastrophic aspect of capitalism; from the standpoint of political economy, however, it is the most illuminating manifestation of those capitalist categories, which under less dramatic conditions, appear to possess "freedom," "autonomy," "fluidity," viz., wage-labor, the market, class interests, property rights, and state coercion.

(4) The state, according to the anti-Marxists, exhibits protean qualities. Not only can it be an equal partner in a "mixed" economy, but it can assume the rôle of a disinterested judge.⁽¹⁶⁾ Just how or under what conditions these functional reshiftings take place is never explained. What appears to be possible, if one is to accept bourgeois political science, is that fundamentally the state or "government" is a mechanism delicately balanced above all classes.⁽¹⁷⁾ Thus, what the Marxists would describe as Bonapartism or crisis-government is considered by the bourgeois theoreticians to be a political principle underlying normal societal functions. A natural corollary of this concept is the "democratic" society with its "functional" groups not classes. Whereas it was easy for the ruling classes during the early days of expanding capitalism (class fluidity, territorial expansion, sectional differences, etc.) to perpetuate this ideology, it becomes relatively difficult today to continue the same theme without necessary variations. If, as the different national polls reveal, the average American seems cynically indifferent to Atlantic Charters and Four Freedoms and dubious about post-war security, perhaps new formulas must be found. And who, after all, can provide better formulas for the bourgeoisie than renegades like Corey or Hook with their "people's" or "functional socialism."

(5) Corey, for instance, advises us to utilize our "democratic, usable tradition" in behalf of socialism. "Democracy" naturally is never defined in terms of class or group struggle but in terms of vague, hypostasized concepts. At no point does he ever differentiate between the "democratic tradition" of the bourgeoisie, whose "democracy" has always meant freedom to conquer markets, to exploit and to defend property; and working class democratic rights, by-products of class struggle in opposition to that bourgeoisie. Which "tradition" is to be exploited? He argues against socialism which allegedly so-

cializes all property; he, on the contrary, proposes (besides the conversion of monopolies into public corporations) the preservation of private enterprise in agriculture and small business. If his proposals are to be considered as something more than a refurbished popular frontism or "folk socialism" (a Sollman-Jaksch variety) within the petty bourgeois framework of a Jeffersonian democracy, then Corey is actually calling for a peaceful cessation of the class struggle, since he is asking the bourgeoisie to liquidate their own monopolies.⁽¹⁸⁾ Just what we are to do in case they refuse to be expropriated (or "compensated" perhaps?) or, as is their wont, even take the offensive while Corey's liberals are educating the "public" is not made clear. It comes with rather poor grace from him to castigate German Social Democracy for not having employed more resolute measures; they also prattled about "democracy" in general, about the intangible line of demarcation between capitalism and socialism, and about not "alienating" the middle classes, the very classes who should have been won over to an audacious socialism and not abandoned to fascism, whose demagogy was expressedly designed to "cater to" petty bourgeois ideology. Corey's strictures, moreover, against the absolute socialization supposedly advocated by Marxists is pure renegade rationalization. He knows, of course, that even under such complete statification as exists in Russia, small peasant property is permitted.

Marxists have always considered the practicable aspects of socialization and of other economic measures as part of a *post-revolutionary* situation, related, therefore, to such factors as the development of technology; the state of the economy under conditions of civil war, counter-revolution, and intervention; the class psychological relationships, mass political development, etc. Corey's appeal to Kautsky's statement that "in a socialist society there can exist . . . the most various forms of economic enterprises" has relevance only if we assume *first*, the capture of state power by the working class and its allies (not, incidentally, by itself, as the anti-Marxian distortion insists upon repeating). All other problems become derivative after that important fact. Corey's appeal for small business and farm support is based upon arrant deception, and lends support to the possessive-competitive impulses of these people. In pure *a priori* and fascist manner he is guaranteeing them complete inviolability of their property interests under his type of static "socialism." The Marxists, on the other hand, attempt the more difficult but necessary task of showing these classes, first, that during the transition periods subsequent to the capture of power varieties of economic "pluralism" will always be theoretically permissible, provided society keeps developing in the direction away from an exchange toward a use-economy, and second, that only under such use-economy can these and other classes competely fulfill themselves, by ceasing, in other words, to be classes altogether.

(6) The *reductio ad absurdum* of the "open arena" concept of "pressure" politics upon the state is to be seen in the most recent position of Sidney Hook. His first basic revisionism of Marx with regard to the state (which provided him with a rationale for supporting the war) stated that no one could ascertain the nature of the state—or anything, for that matter—by merely defining it. One could determine that only by studying its specific "functions" within given historical contexts. The state, according to this Deweyan "instrumentalism," must be approached on the basis of what it "does," and since it does what "pressure" forces it to do, it is anyone's state. If a ruling class yields to pressure, says Hook, this is "just as significant to understanding the nature of the state as its reason for yielding."

(a) This is a logical confusion of the general and the specific. A state defends the propertied interests of the ruling class; the kind and extent of its "yielding" depends upon the given nature and intensity of its opposing class forces. If Hook is offering this epigrammatic gem in order to draw a distinction between the "pressurable" democracies and the "non-pressurable" totalitarians so that he may feel justified in defending the former, he still has to prove the absence of class struggle in the latter. To Hook, Nazism is a counter-revolution against the principles of the French Revolution, which we are now defending!

(b) All those who disagree with him on the nature of this war are labeled as "mad," psychopathic, "cowardly" and "socially irresponsible." (Eastman calls them "bigots.") This kind of belligerency need fool no one. Neither is it to be interpreted as bad manners. It is merely a psychological defense to conceal a collaborationism, made doubly suspect by repeated references to Marx's alleged pacifism and gradualism. Part of this defense, for example, are Eastman's unctuous warnings about the necessity for a return to "moral character and principle" and Hook's challenge to Marxists to "subject their methods of achieving democratic socialism to serious and scientific criticism."

(c) Apparently dissatisfied with his gross revisionism, Hook has decided to refine it still further. He has now decided that even "pressure" upon the state is not necessary to get us what we want. All we have to do is to "pressure" President Roosevelt himself and all will go well. Proof? Why cannot the democratic forces do what the Catholics did during the Spanish Civil War when the President showed himself to be amenable to suggestion by refusing to send aid to the Loyalists? President Roosevelt, in other words, could just as well have shipped arms to Spain, even though there was a *civil* war raging which could have, with those very arms, as well as with developing revolutionary forces, brought the working class to power. The President, a mere automaton, will no doubt defend *any* social system, depending upon who brings most "pressure." Such is the political wisdom of "instrumentalism," for example, with regard to the international scene.

(d) On the home front, it can show similar successes. None of your Marxian united fronts for the Hookses, Deweys, Kallens et al., in order to combat reaction and fascism. This is to be accomplished by cooperating with those very forces themselves in order to preserve "democracy." Just as the "instrumentalists" have refined their "pressure" theory, they have also improved upon that of the "open arena." Under the latter concept all groups compete ideologically with the hope of winning adherents to their particular programs. But even this method apparently smacked too much of "sectarianism" to the philosophers, so they decided to combine forces with their competitors (shades of the Red Referendum!). True, Hook had been accusing his opponents continually for subscribing to "authoritarianism," "reaction," "corporate thinking," "faulty logic," "fundamentalism," "irresponsibility" and "obscurantism," and Kallen had warned that tolerance of illiberalism would spell "suicide," but that did not prevent these doughty "instrumentalists" and their followers from participating in the conglomerate "Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in Their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life."¹⁹

At this assemblage Mortimer Adler, contrary to Hook and his associates, took the initiative by drawing what he thought to be a line of demarcation between his own group and that of his adversaries. Thinking probably in terms of eventual

institutional practices and political programs, he labeled Hook's group "atheistic saboteurs... more dangerous to democracy than Hitler." Hook at this point defended himself and called upon the "democrats" to leave the conference. Had Adler, in other words, not taken the offensive, the "instrumentalists" would still probably be attempting to effect "democratic" programs with reactionary totalitarians "Humanistic" clergymen and academicians of "good will." After all, as Kallen concluded, the "democratic way is the way toward equal liberty for different doctrines."

(e) These priggish "instrumentalists," constantly admonishing the Marxists in the name of "means and ends," do not even possess the virtue of logical consistency. Their "open arena" concept applied specifically, for example, in the case of civil liberties would seem to imply that all contestants, like competitors in any fair game, use the same procedures, obey the same regulations, and aim for the same goal. The arena should be a place where only accurate data are presented, where only one method is employed in such presentation, i.e., sober logic, and where only one democratic goal is involved, viz., the liberation of the human spirit. Free speech, for instance, under such conditions, would be "free" because it utilized democratic means for the realization of democratic ends. It would release human potentialities, not degrade and enslave them. If the "arena" concept means this, then no rational mind could quarrel with it. But the "instrumentalist" is not content to defend this as an ideal; he looks at present reality and offers his approval, since he sees "democracy at work." Kallen's "equal liberty for different doctrines" in actuality means the liberty of one class to monopolize the means of propaganda and to alienate the majority from the means of livelihood; the liberty of totalitarian groups (tools of class rule) to employ lies against racial minorities; the liberty of vested interests to inculcate the virtues of regimentation and slavery.

No, it is the Deweyites, not the Marxists, who are the metaphysicians superimposing abstractions upon a recalcitrant reality. They can afford the dubious privilege of the "open arena" ideology only because they never knew or have conveniently forgotten its historically-conditioned class roots. In the struggle between capitalism and feudalism this ideology served as a weapon. In terms of a new class morality it stressed the superiority of reason over faith and of man's "natural" goodness over the corrupting institutions of church, monarchy, and nobility. If the "instrumentalists" need further proof that within their "open arena" the civil and political "rights" of the working class now as always have to be fought for in opposition to and not alongside of the bourgeoisie, they can study the contrasting opinions handed down by the U. S. Supreme Court on the one hand in the Minneapolis Labor Case and on the other in the Nazi-Hartzel-Baumgarten cases. The decisions in connection with the latter are already being hailed by our liberals as a "brilliant new chapter" in our juridical history. In this they are consistent, because, according to their "democratic" assumptions, rule by myth, fraud and coercion is also part of the "arena" concept.

(7) As far as John Dewey himself is concerned, he too has counterposed his own "scientific" reasoning to Marxian "metaphysics." According to him, the Marxian theory of the state and of class struggles as the motivating forces in history is almost animistic. The Marxists are guilty of not employing the inductive-experimental method to ascertain causative factors but of merely assuming in a priori fashion that class struggles exist and then proceeding to read these back into history.

(Max Eastman seems to have earned quite a reputation for many years by peddling this and similar gibberish.) The whole concept of class struggle, to judge from Dewey's caricature, is an outmoded theory of mechanical "friction" which it is the Marxist's duty to aggravate into a state of classless harmony. The trouble, for instance, with the Bolsheviks (liberalism, like Nazism, also needs its scapegoats, the Bolsheviks having introduced all the sins into the garden of our "democratic" Eden) was that instead of first exploring possible avenues of cooperation with the peasantry, they dogmatically assumed that these were reactionary classes and acted accordingly. Marx, as well as his followers, you see, never studied history; only Dewey has done that. They simply awoke one fine morning and decided to invent a class-struggle theory, the result of which is that they have subscribed paranoically to it in the face of refuting realities.⁽²⁰⁾

The whole experimental-pragmatic approach to societal problems of the Dewey-Hook-Eastman school is, of course, another figment of petty bourgeois imagination. The ideal of objective experimentation is possible only in a truly democratic community and not in a class society whose science is subverted to specific vested interests. Under present conditions, therefore, promulgation of such an ideal can only provide a philosophic rationale for class collaboration and "peaceful" mediation. "Instrumentalism" is perfectly explicable in terms of an earlier expanding capitalistic technology. It also developed its own political philosophy, expressing itself in various forms of social meliorism championed by the Deweys, Beards, and Parringtons. What these men failed to recognize was that their tangential tinkering was actually concerned with the by-products of a more fundamental class struggle whose reality they always denied.

JAMES BARRETT.

[Continued in next issue]

(8) The revisionists persist in their pre-war enthusiasm for the cooperative movement as a panacea. Recent articles by Chamberlain, Barnes and others point once more to the glories of the Scandinavian middle way without realizing the huge differences which separate the predominantly agrarian economies of Sweden and Norway from a highly industrialized organization like ours, viz., Scandinavia's politicalized trade union movement, her favorable trade agreements and large profits resulting from not having been involved in the last war, her relative social stability based to a great extent upon territorial compactness and cultural homogeneity, etc., factors, however, which in no way have circumvented the class struggle. As for the cooperative movement itself, not only can it offer no solution to the problems created by capitalism, but it contributes to their aggravation by adopting, of necessity, the commercial techniques of all other huge business concerns (wages, profits, competition, management, etc.). To expect the cooperatives by themselves (as so many pseudo-socialists imply) to effect an emancipation of the working class behind the back of society, as Marx stated, is to subscribe to sheer Utopia.

(9) The works of Beard, Hazlitt, Nevins, Commager, etc., dealing with the crisis in our governmental machinery, represent a similar schizophrenic tendency in the field of political science.

(10) **Business as a System of Power.**

(11) **Big Business, Efficiency and Fascism.**

(12) **Behemoth.**

(13) **The Nazi Economic System.**

(14) **England's Money Lords.**

(15) They show a tender regard not only for the middle classes but for the working class as well. An interesting corollary of their decentralizing propaganda is their attack upon centralized union leadership which, like the state, deprives the worker of liberty. The solution, of course, is a democratic union whose leadership shares responsibility not only to its members but to management and government as well. Thus under the guise of this happy family pattern the pluralists, among whom are to be found our younger progressive union leaders, are helping to tie the trade unions closer to the state.

(16) John Chamberlain, who prefers the term broker, has committed something in the nature of a Freudian slip. In attempting to show how the state in subjecting itself to group pressure can therefore become anyone's state (John Doe's apparently as well as Alcoa's, du Pont's or Standard Oil's), he refers to the democratic state as a

"limited racket." Such terminology is more than sprightly journalism; it aptly expresses, in spite of the writer's intentions, the inherent gangster ethics of a competitive society. Another terminological revelation along similar lines is afforded by Lippmann's definition of "legitimacy." Drucker, Chase and Chamberlain, who are disturbed about the problem of "legitimate" versus "illegitimate" powers, especially in connection with our "managerial" societies, need worry no longer. Lippmann assures us that any group or nation which can "rule" or "hold power" possesses "legitimacy." Others writers prefer the euphemism, "realistic," in place of "legitimate." Fortified with quotations from Talleyrand and Clemenceau, they urge the necessity for curbing "unrestrained power," which is the alleged cause of present world chaos.

(17) This synonymous use of these terms is not merely semantic confusion. The failure to define the state accurately as an historically conditioned type of government, to differentiate, in other words, between administration and coercion, is a rationalistic device to circumvent the harsh realities of a class society. It is much more comforting to speak of a "mixed" economy of harmoniously "functioning" groups including "management, unions, consumers and government" (emphasis mine).

(18) It is interesting to note that Corey unexpectedly adds as a self-contradictory after-thought, "justice, in the final analysis, is not simply a product of institutional arrangements." I. Lipkowitz, who in *Monopoly and Big Business* also argued some years before Corey for the public corporation, admits that the "corporation can be a means of controlling an industry provided we have a truly democratic form of government." Corey, somewhat like Jesting Pilate, does not remain to clarify "justice," while Lipkowitz's profound remark can be paraphrased to read "We could have democracy, provided we had democracy."

(19) Q. v., *The Humanist*, autumn, 1942, spring, 1943. This conference, as well as its published reports, is only part of a larger ideological movement of "democratic reaffirmation." The variations of the intellectuals' pronouncements are many but the motivation is the same, panicky whistling-in-the-dark. One variation consists of an appeal to shibboleth (the conference just mentioned, *The American Idea*, by the Colgate faculty, etc.), another to symposiums and anthological quotations (*Fountainheads of Freedom, Freedom—Its Meaning, A Treasury of Democracy*), still another to classical guidance and religious dogma (the Hutchins-Buchanan group of educators) and finally there is an appeal to charism, faith, "spiritual" values (W. Frank, Mumford, Agar, Sorokin, MacLeish, Van Wyck Brooks, et al.). Arthur Koestler has recently offered us his reaffirmation by means of an escape into the future. All we have to do is to retire to our various sanctuaries during the coming black interregnum and await the democratic renaissance.

(20) As a recent example of Dewey's own historical analysis, the reader is referred to the new essay incorporated in his reissued *German Philosophy and Politics*. On a somewhat higher plane but in essence similar to the many attempts at explaining Nazism by tracing its alleged roots to the statist philosophy of Kant, Hegel, etc., Dewey's approach is open to serious objections. (a) There is a fallacy of selected emphasis so prominent as to dwarf almost the other great contributions of those philosophers, e.g., Kant's world federation for peace or his association with the Enlightenment; Hegel's championing of the French Revolution or the dynamic quality of his thinking which interpreted the world as process and the social institutions as historically-conditioned. (Incidentally the vicious attacks upon Hegel very well). (b) The rich potentialities of Hegelianism as attested to by the Nazi theoreticians do not seem to substantiate Dewey's theory by its various schools: the critical atheist (Strauss, Bauer), the positivists (Feuerbach), the radicals, (Ruge, Lasalle, Marx), not to mention the English and the American variations (Green, McTaggart, Royce, and Dewey himself). A similar point can be made in connection with the Kantian tendencies within Germany, some of which even encompass the socialist ideal, e.g., the works of Fichte, Cohen and Nator, as well as those of other Europeans such as Jaures and Max Adler. (c) Dewey also neglects still other ideational forces within Germany besides those associated with Hegel and Kant, and he fails to take proper cognizance of non-Germanic totalitarians whose statist doctrines also influenced German thinking. This latter point is important because once Dewey is forced to agree that nationalism, racism, militarism, messianic compulsions, etc.—characteristics ostensibly unique to Germany—have also been found among other nations, then he must admit that either there are also non-philosophic factors to explain German politics or that Germany is merely part of the general culture pattern of European capitalism. Since he has overlooked the important socio-economic factors of causation and has failed to evaluate even the philosophic ones within the framework of class ideologists he can well afford to consult the historical works on modern Germany written by that "metaphysical" Marxist, Leon Trotsky. Eastman informs us that one of Dewey's great regrets is that he never devoted sufficient time to a study of Marxism. Judging by his remarks on the alleged failure of Marxists to utilize the experimental method, *Theses of Feuerbach* must be one of the works which he obviously overlooked.

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Supplement to The New International

October, 1944

CAPITALIST BARBARISM OR SOCIALISM

*On the Development of Declining Capitalism, and On the
Situation, Tasks and Perspectives of the Labor Movement*

By

The International Communists of Germany

INTRODUCTION

We welcome the opportunity to publish the study of our German Fourth Internationalist comrades. It merits the closest attention of every reader who is interested in the question of the evolution of capitalist society and of the problems it raises for the working class and revolutionary Marxian movements.

In past issues of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*, and in the political documents of the Workers Party, we have set forth and developed the theory that decaying capitalism, of which fascism is only the most brutal yet logical expression, is hurling society back to a new barbarism.

In this process, nations and peoples which long ago solved the problem of national independence and political democracy are once more faced with the need of fighting for national freedom and democratic rights. For millions of people in the modern parts of the world, class oppression becomes multiplied by national oppression, or, more accurately, becomes fused with it, and the economic and political status of these people is brought closer to the status of the peoples in the "classic" colonial and semi-colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The relentless tendency in capitalism of a decreasing number of monopolists ruling over an increasing number of the oppressed, is coupled with the tendency of a decreasing number of imperialist nations ruling over an increasing number of oppressed nations. These tendencies manifest themselves in a general restriction and destruction of democratic rights and institutions, directed primarily at paralyzing the working class, or rather at aggravating a paralysis which permitted the development of these reactionary tendencies to take place without effective resistance.

However, precisely because class rule over the proletariat is intensified by the fusion of class and national oppression, it is not only galvanized into action once more but is able to proclaim a program which can rally all the oppressed classes around it more easily than ever for an assault upon the ruling state power. This tendency, too, has been amply and conclusively revealed in the growth of the revolutionary "underground national" movements of Europe during the war. The Marxian vanguard can be reconstituted and become a decisive force only in so far as it becomes part of such movements, becomes the most vigorous champion in the fight for

democratic rights, infuses the masses in these movements with revolutionary class-consciousness, makes the proletarian class method of struggle prevail in them, and demonstrates in practice how the genuinely popular aspirations for democracy are fully realizable only in a socialist society.

The views of the German comrades, as elaborated in their document, are in fundamental solidarity with those summarized above. As the reader can see, the Germans present a motivation of their own. To be sure, the establishment of a common standpoint between us on the tasks of the proletariat and the revolutionary vanguard in the present period—and this is now decisive—does not necessarily imply literal agreement with every single word in the German document. Indeed, so far as the section on Russia is concerned, our differences with the views of Trotsky, which the German comrades still seem to accept, at least by implication, are too familiar to need special emphasis. However, as the authors write, they are not "proclaiming unassailable truths," and, like ourselves, they are ready to participate seriously in a serious discussion.

The same cannot be said, unfortunately, for the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, which has found pretext after pretext, each less subtle than the other, for not bringing the German contribution to the attention of its membership and the readers of its press. We publish it gladly, and thereby maintain the tradition of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* with respect to the discussion of the problems and tasks of revolutionary Marxism. Upon those to whom Marxism is a closed book—in both senses of the term!—the contribution of the German comrades may have as little effect as have other serious contributions to the development of Marxian thought and action. Happily, they are in a minority among the supporters of the Fourth International. One of our aims is to keep them in that state.

◆
THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.

The reader will note that we reprint in this supplement the first section of the document, which was first printed in last month's issue of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*. This is done not only to make the entire document conveniently available, but because we have had the opportunity since last month to make a number of corrections in the translation that make for clearer reading.

Capitalist Barbarism or Socialism

FOREWORD

The following study on the development taking place in declining capitalism and its significance for the labor movement was written between the end of May and the beginning of September, 1943. The presentation revolves around certain opinions that we have of the essence of imperialism, and which (for the purpose of speedy mutual understanding among us and because everything must be given a name) we have called for the past twelve years "the theory of the retrogressive movement." By this we mean: In the last stage of imperialism, the economy, the politics and so forth of bourgeois society develop *backward* in a peculiar manner. The course, the results, the perspectives of this "backward development"—these are the themes with which we deal.

Originally, this presentation was directly bound up with the discussion over the so-called "national question." Two years ago (in the December, 1942, issue) our "Three Theses" appeared in the *Fourth International*. Comrade Max Shachtman referred repeatedly to these "Three Theses" in *The New International* (they were reprinted here in London too by the then still "unofficial" group of the Workers International League). When they were finally published in the *Fourth International* (they actually date back to October 19, 1941) they were accompanied by a criticism of Comrades Morrow and Morrison. In his article, Comrade Morrow explicitly called upon us to answer his criticism and to think out our position "to its ultimate implication." Although belatedly, as a result of unfavorable conditions, we fulfilled his request gladly. In this sense, consequently, our work had its origin in the request of Comrade Morrow. After its completion, however, we abbreviated it considerably and eliminated the entire polemic for the most variegated reasons (obstacles placed in the way of its translation, difficulties encountered in publication, daily increasing gulf between the criticism and the reply, etc.). In so far as certain objections are still dealt with in general, they are of an anonymous, general, illustrative, and not particularly polemical nature. In

brief: we confine ourselves here to presenting our position as a whole as well as we can. The entire document should be considered simply as an essay, such as may be written at any time in the interests of theoretical orientation.

That the questions dealt with here are of the greatest importance for the socialist movement, is beyond doubt. Naturally: we lay claim neither to the perfection of the presentation, nor to having proclaimed "unassailable truths." Our views may be wrong, mistakes of fact may have occurred, etc. But on this score, we can be instructed only if we submit to open criticism. In this respect, a few words remain to be said:

Thirteen months—the period between the termination and the publication of our study—is a long time. The leadership of the Socialist Workers Party could not be persuaded in this period to assist us and to take over its publication. For our part, we have no intention of breaking out into loud complaints about the "bureaucratism" of the Socialist Workers Party leadership. Rather, we are of this opinion: Bureaucratism is always the symptom of a great political weakness and can be overcome only *politically*. Events are placing on the order of the day political decisions of the greatest purport. Whoever wants to remain behind must take the consequences upon his own shoulders. The SWP leadership's superciliousness toward the stepchildren of the movement in Europe who are weighed down by "defeat," is no proof of its ability to endure the trial by fire. In any case: we have no more time to lose and we hand this manuscript over to *The New International* all the more gladly because Max Shachtman was practically the only American comrade who (a) recognized the importance for the International of the questions raised in the "Three Theses" as far back as the time when they were written down (that is, in the autumn of 1942); and (b) pursued these questions energetically and worked out what is in our opinion a correct position. And that is all that is involved.

COMMITTEE ABROAD OF THE IKD.
(International Communists of Germany.)

London, September, 1944.

I—DECLINING CAPITALISM OR...?

Imperialism is declining, disintegrating, rotting, agonizing capitalism. The purely verbal acknowledgment of this definition is general. If, however, it is taken for what it is, i.e., a declaration that is concrete, well defined in content and weighty in consequences, substantial difficulties are most often immediately encountered. The most common objection that is then raised against a formula like "retrogressive development of economy," sounds something like this: "*Retrogressive* development is nonsense—the development goes further and thereby creates ever new forms."

Stagnation Equals Retrogression

The thoughtlessness that dominates this argument is obvious. Nobody of course conceives of the retrogressive development as a "dissolution" of capitalism into pre-capitalist forms of production. But taking this for granted, the mere assumption of a stagnation already embraces within itself a retrogression. With the famous grain of salt of the ancients, Marxists should speak of the "retrogressive development of capitalist economy" if only because the decay of capitalism in no wise takes place "without rule or regulation," but is subject to the same laws that were immanent in its rise as well as in its highest development.

As a matter of fact, every organism, upon reaching maturity, brings along with it out of its midst also those conditions that disintegrate it, that bring about its decay and putrefaction, and "re-develop" it more and more toward its original state. In the course of this process, to be sure, it brings certain features more plainly into relief again; and while, on the one hand, these features had never left it, on the other hand they were more characteristic of the period of its birth, its early age or childhood. Such *features* (nothing more) sometimes even go back into the distant past, and that means here: back to already overcome economic forms. This is determined by the mere fact that there never were and never will be any pure economic forms in general and "pure" capitalism in

particular. It is precisely from the impossibility of pure economic forms that arise the two laws regulating everything else and decisively influencing both the rise and decline of capitalism. We refer to (a) the law of uneven and (b) of combined development. For the moment, it suffices to say: It is unmistakable and most significant for capitalism that the violent-catastrophic character of the period of its origin predominates in it almost exclusively again in the period of its decay.

The Question of the Quality of the New Forms

In view of the neglect of economic questions, this point is important enough to scrutinize a little closer.

Lenin's definition of imperialism is affirmed; the "overripeness" of capitalism is spoken of in a thousand articles and resolutions; documents (written by Trotsky) are sworn by in which may be read: "Capitalism has ceased to increase the material wealth of humanity; after the seizure of power, the proletariat will have to pay for the work of economic destruction of capitalism," etc. This and much more already enjoys the status of the commonplace and—therewith everything apparently *seems* to be in the best of order. For when the attempt is made not to leave the "work of destruction" simply to itself but to grasp it as a retrogressive development or "retrogressive movement," you run right into the pedantic-schoolmasterly forefinger in the shape of the "ever new forms."

Due deference to the new forms. They have their place and their significance. The question is *what* position do they occupy and can they alter the situation? If they could, then everything would be very simple.

"As is known," however, the superiority of Marxism over bourgeois science is based precisely upon first disregarding apparent or real exceptions from the rule, upon considering the process as a whole, and only then showing how the observed deviations are nevertheless subject to the fundamental laws.

What is taking place before our very eyes and slipping into "ever new forms" is nothing but the "daily practice" (if you please) of the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation that Marx de-

scribed. All that must be remembered is that this description, like all schematic illustrations, represents the so-to-speak "ideal" and not the real course of development. In reality, Marxism, in conformance with the dialectical method, is a doctrine of quality which explains the development as well as the decay of the capitalist mode of production by its internal contradictions. In doing so it endeavors constantly to fix the point where the quantitative growth of a phenomenon becomes decisive for the appraisal of the situation as a whole, that is, where quantity turns into quality.

Negative Definition

This other quality does not necessarily have to be of a "positive" nature.¹ If, in the investigation of a given organism—in our case, of imperialism—we come to the conclusion, anticipated in general by Marx and concretely drawn at least by all Marxists, that monopoly has become a fetter on the mode of production which bloomed with it and under it, that therefore the "productive forces have ceased to grow" (Trotsky), then we are obviously confronted with a turn of things on the "negative" or declining side. To put it differently: The definitive disintegration, putrefaction, stunting or "retrogressive development" of the organisms starts at the very moment when they have passed their highest degree of maturity. The antagonism inherent in them then experiences its uttermost accentuation and must destroy them.

Applied to capitalism this means: If in its "transformation period" it cannot be delivered at the right time from its antagonism and carried over into socialism, then its further existence must be considered and evaluated solely and exclusively from the standpoint of its *inner* decomposition. And what is then to be studied, and provided with practical conclusions, are only the forms in which the decomposition is carried through and consummated, despite the frequently contrary appearances.²

Retrogressive Development and Two Objections

In point of fact, there will be a great difference in conceptions, depending on whether the theory of imperialism as *capitalism in decline* is more one's firm foundation, or one simply does without foundations altogether.

We proceed resolutely from the *self-decomposition* of monopoly capitalism and arrive first of all at the recognition of those economically and politically equally important phenomena of decay that were already enumerated (even if far from completely) in

1. The ridiculous representatives of the "theory" of state capitalism in the various emigrant groups are known particularly for their juggling with dialectics and the transformation of quantity into quality. The "transformation" is supposed to show that in countries like Russia and Germany (with some of them the United States, too), an economic form has come into power, a state capitalism which is free from economic crises and subject only to "political" crises, if any, and which is "classless" into the bargain. From their scribbles, which teem with solid thoughtlessness and absurdities, you cannot tell just what quantity is actually supposed to have been transformed into quality. In any case, it was enormously increased confusion that was transformed into the "theoretical" egg-dance and presented precisely these absurdities as the "contradictions" belonging to the dialectic.

2. Misled by the contrary appearance, an opponent may come forward at this point with a "better" argument and declare: The assertion of an "unequivocal," unexceptional decomposition is "undialectical." In retrogression is found also progression, as is demonstrated practically by a whole series of accomplishments (for example, the synthetics industry).

This argument has at least a glimmer of justification in so far as the decline, just like the rise, is not at every given moment a transparent, rectilinear, uninterrupted process, but a complicated, contradictory, relapsing and skipping process. Examined more closely, it stands exposed, however, as a tactically modified attempt at inconsistency and to save the "development in ever new forms" through a corruption of the dialectic. For, however much every advance can and even must be regarded as a retrogression in another connection, and in the same way every retrogression also is an advance, all this tells us very little about the self-movement of a thing itself. There is certainly more genuine dialectics than is dreamed of in the "common sense" of a Burnham, in an ordinary sentence like: "With his conception, Man takes the first step to his grave." Such general knowledge has practical value precisely because it gives us a better approach to the essence of the becoming of Man (birth, maturity and death). However, anyone who is incapable of going beyond "outline knowledge" and keeping in strict touch with every step to the grave that only makes up Man as a whole—who does not understand how to concentrate upon the thing itself, upon the given stage of its development and its quality (embryo, child, youth, man, grayhead, graybeard turned child again, etc.), will also grope in the dark with respect to the tendency of his future development. He may succeed in making his way through daily life with great effort and difficulty, or without difficulty and by means of much routine. But faced with essential questions, he will remain just as helpless as the "common" Burnham.

the "Three Theses." To illustrate our position, let us take the following sentences from the first thesis:

"The prisons; new ghettos; the labor, forced labor, concentration and war-prisoners' camps are not only transitional political-military establishments, they are just as much forms of an exploitation which accompanies the economic development toward a modern slave state and are intended as the permanent fate of a considerable percentage of mankind. . . . The economic ruin is accompanied by a callous destruction of human lives and values and a migration of peoples of colossal extent. 'Resettlements,' transfer of workers, etc., which amounts to hundreds of thousands, follow the movement of armies of millions. . . . So mechanization with progressing capitalist application leads itself *ad absurdum*. The methods of destruction which are supposed to solve the crisis and lead to a solution, force production of further means of destruction and cause tremendous economic disproportions which subject the whole world. England and America answer German expansion with a rearming which is to surpass any previously known and again set back the production of consumption goods. . . . Uneven development is recapitulated in the whole world and along with it, agricultural production decreases constantly."

Among this and other descriptions, it then says explicitly: ". . . All this is the result of a process which began a long time ago and only increases in intensity in the present war. Far from being 'planned organization,' this process follows laws of compulsion and seeks to break through by force, where it cannot shake off, the competition on the international scale."

First Objection

Against this one can raise two objections, the treatment of which carries us a step further even though they rest upon well-known quibbling. The first objection refers to the expression "slave state." We are given lectures on the Egyptian slave state, which go right past the mark for the sufficient reason that, in distinction from the Egyptian and other slave states, we talk about the *modern slave* state. However, we will make a preliminary concession. Cross out the words "modern slave state" and simply read: ". . . forms of an exploitation which accompanies the economic development and is intended as the permanent fate of a considerable percentage of mankind."

What has been altered by this manipulation? Nothing! A designation, for which one may find a better, has disappeared—the thing itself has remained. Here, too, the inherent difficulty will be overcome only if we think back upon the impossibility of pure economic forms. The minute the proletarian (for that matter, not he alone), who is rightly characterized under capitalism too as a "wage slave," loses his right to strike, his freedom of movement and all political rights, he ceases to be the classic "free" proletarian whom rising capitalism required for its development and whom it "established" with the crudest methods of violence in numbers sufficient to its purpose. Although it continues to remain capitalism, putrefying capitalism nevertheless strengthens in its decline all the features which make up its "impurity" and point back toward its early stages. It transforms itself, the state and the proletarians to a substantial degree. Capitalism turns from progression to regression, the state becomes totalitarian, the proletarian becomes a *modern slave*.

The modern slave differs much less *politically* from the slave of antiquity than appears at first glance. Deprived of his political rights, robbed of his possibilities of organization, the lash-turned-revolver at his back, chained to a prescribed place, he no longer appears as the free seller of his labor power (this becomes increasingly the exception to the former rule). He is either barracked or subjected to direct state exploitation on a mass scale (and only because this is the case can the phenomenon of the modern slave tell us something about the character of the state and the economic development), or else "placed at the disposal" of private exploitation under state compulsion and at compulsory rates set by the state.

What is involved is an inescapable consequence of the whole preceding development. Do not imagine that this "feature of enslavement" that was long ago established in Europe will simply come to a halt before the gates of the U. S. A. The virginal American workers (and again, not they alone!) have already lost a great deal. They should be taught that within the framework of the general retrogression they are nevertheless being shoved along the solid, well-grooved European roads. In other words: the development toward the modern slave state is a *world phenomenon* which arises out of capitalist putrefaction. You can call this phenomenon

whatever you judge best—but that will definitely not rid you of the matter itself.

Second Objection

The second objection is an attempt to get rid of it nevertheless. It is directed against the economic-political significance of the concentration camps, the forced-labor camps, the war-prisoners' camps, etc., themselves. The existence, and even the "significance," of these phenomena cannot be denied. But they are treated as what they are *not*: only transitional political-military establishments, simply measures and institutions for war preparation. They have nothing to do with economic development—at most only as war preparation. The contention that they are intended as the permanent fate of a considerable percentage of mankind, is ridiculous. As usual, an "exception" is discovered which, in the imagination of the naïve, annuls all. The alleged exception is the word "war prisoners." Because there were already war prisoners in the previous war; because they were utilized for labor at that time too; because the war-prisoners' camps were nevertheless dissolved at the end of the war and the prisoners sent home... therefore we are refuted, and the contention of exploitive forms as concomitants of the development to the modern slave state, including the contention of its "durability," is absurd.

The story of the war prisoners is, to be sure, one which is promptly liquidated by showing that it does not terminate at the point where the schoolbooks give no further answer. We have seen how the development to the modern slave state takes place *also* quite independently of the particular phenomenal forms out of which we adduced it (as conspicuously concrete proof). In exactly the same way, the special forms of exploitation and enslavement exist now quite independently of whether we were mistaken about the "war prisoners" or not.

Cross out the war prisoners. What has been altered by this manipulation? Nothing! One of the forms has disappeared—the phenomenon and its significance for the "enslavement" remain.

It is known that the German "economic miracle" (primarily the elimination of unemployment) was accomplished as a preparation for the Second Imperialist World War, by means of the extension and construction of the so-called *industry of destruction*. It is known that America, in the course of the same endeavors since its entry into the war, has almost succeeded in making unemployment "disappear." But on the one side, much too little attention is paid to the importance of the rôle that the German camp-system played precisely in the matter of eliminating unemployment. On the other hand, however, it would be a crass blunder to regard the German camp-system as a specifically *German* affair. On the contrary! Germany had many models (in Italy, in the Balkans, in Russia) for the *modern* methods of oppression and exploitation. It is a question of forms, appearing after the First World War and taking on an ever greater *mass character*, which have spread throughout the earth and like everything else *only increase in the present war* (as, for example, in America, where the measures taken against the Japanese appear as a direct consequence of the war).

We live in the epoch of imperialism, which is, *par définition*, the epoch of wars, revolutions and (unfortunately also) counter-revolutions. We can explain absolutely nothing and only move in the familiar "vicious circle," if we deny the "permanent" character of the camp-system, as well as its growing significance as a future form of exploitation, and depict it as a measure taken for the *preparation* of the war or else as a *purely war measure* in general.

A fine circle indeed: to refer to the war for the measures, and to the measures for the war! It follows from the mere definition of imperialism why counter-revolution and war become ever more exclusively the "normal state" of humanity, the further the putrefaction goes as a consequence of revolutionary weakness. Right after the First World War, which sped the general breakthrough of the "great sickness," imperialism reproduced and increased everything that could be explained up to then as mere war measures or as occasional, isolated political measures.

The social antagonisms are always operative, war is always their consequence; hence, measures and their abolition, pressure and counter-pressure, follow in constant succession. However, it is only imperialism that brings both measures and pressures into a special system (fascism as an *international* phenomenon belongs under this heading) and inundates the earth more and more with "phenomena" such as concentration camps, political prisons, solitary prisons, labor service, forced labor, forced migrations, punitive expeditions against workers and peasants, mass executions, extermination of all (and therefore also of *bourgeois*) oppo-

sition, eradication of all rights, bureaucratic command and bureaucratic arbitrariness, spydom and stoolpigeonry, police-military surveillance of the people, etc., *ad infinitum*. These phenomena may be distributed in accordance with the state of the (always uneven) development or the national coloration of the different countries. They are nevertheless omnipresent, and short of the socialist revolution they can no longer be conceived of as non-existent in the life of the modern nations. What were formerly "measures" or isolated cases now become lasting institutions and mass phenomena. They are equally significant from the political and economic, the social and military standpoints, and can be separated from each other, at most, in the "mind," but no longer in the reality.

It is a veritable transformation of quantity into quality that has occurred. For just as the war becomes the "mode of existence" of the peoples and is ever more total, universal and intensive, so naturally also do the measures that prepare it, the consequences that accompany it, the far-reaching changes that it produces. "With reasoned understanding and understanding reason," it will therefore be necessary also to count precisely the war-prisoners' camps among those institutions that are becoming permanent and whose economic significance has been transformed profoundly in comparison with the First World War. The war prisoners nowadays are put at the service of total warfare in an entirely different manner than in the previous World War, when they were almost exclusively employed for mere auxiliary services.

II—THE HISTORICAL TENDENCY OF CAPITALIST ACCUMULATION IN PUTREFYING CAPITALISM

The next step in the elucidation of our position consists in the treatment of a point which plays an enormous rôle in the "Three Theses" as the "quintessence" of our conception. This point is theoretically anchored in the question of *capitalist accumulation*. It will permit the basic tendency to appear clearly and so bring the "retrogressive development" and the feature of enslavement into the proper light.

In this we simply assume that the more specific problem of accumulation has been clarified. The dispute over this problem has, it is true, continued unabated since the appearance of Rosa Luxemburg's book. But for Marxists there is good reason for this (regardless of the absolute necessity of participating in the discussion). It is a complex problem for all its simplicity, and the conscious and unconscious lackeys of the bourgeoisie (the Stalinists included) have been hard at work to muddle it up. We will yet strike the trail of the mystery when we turn to the "historical tendency of capitalist accumulation" described by Marx, and follow it concretely.

Marx's Presentation of the Question

In the famous, and therefore all the less understood, passage on the subject, Marx says:

"As soon as... the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet... the further *expropriation of private proprietors takes a new form*. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the laborer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many laborers. This *expropriation* is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of *capitalist production itself*, by the *centralization of capital*. One capitalist always kills many... Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital... grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. *The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production*, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. *The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.*"

As always with Marx, these apparently "abstract" sentences enclose a tremendous concrete content, and are formed by an incomparable genius which, on the one hand, constructs the definition of the tendency vaguely enough in order to be able to encompass all "unforeseen" intermediate links,³ but, on the other hand, definitely enough to *exclude radically* any other development but

3. In the first place, all those associated with "state-capitalistic" plunder.

the one given. The center of gravity of the investigation lies, with Marx, in the following assertion: "Capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation."

Marx rightly sought to fix the "knell of capitalist private property" naturally, and placed the negation at the point where, in his own words, a handful of usurpers confront the masses of the people. And in the historical reality, the development has indeed long ago reached the point where not only does one capitalist kill off many, but where the point of negation "ideally" defined in Marx's analysis likewise finds practical confirmation in the victory of the Russian Revolution.

The question arises: What happens if, in this stage of monopoly-capitalistic maturity, the *world revolution* is crushed or—regardless of what the reasons for it—cannot be accomplished? Does the development stand still then, or does it proceed in undefined directions?

The mere putting of this question is sufficient to show the absurdity of all attempts to resist the conception of the "retrogressive movement." For it is then that the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation forces its way through in a new stage of development (which Marx was neither required to foresee nor to take into consideration in the theoretical analysis) with an even greater brutality and intensity which makes everything that went before it look like mere prelude, because everything that hitherto hampered its "blindly operating average" is now trampled under foot by a bourgeoisie conscious of its mortal peril.

In considering this new stage—it is the stage of imperialist putrefaction and agony that generally preoccupies us—we can less than ever overlook the fact that Marx traced the collapse of the capitalist mode of production to *accumulation itself*, by demonstrating that it is this accumulation that constantly narrows the living space of capitalism *out of its own self* (independently of the question of the extension of the market). It is therefore no foreign force that devours capitalism, but (to use a term from Hegel) "its own nature."

Only when this is grasped and held to firmly can we avoid the most common mistake, which rests upon a complete misunderstanding of Marxism, and which consists in *conceiving the negation of capitalism only as the task of the proletarian revolution* (although capitalism "generates" it, to be sure). The creation of an industrial proletariat by capitalism, called upon to overturn it, is certainly part of the material premises, through which and with which the capitalist mode of production also generates its own negation. But this is only one side of the question. The expropriation of the capitalists that *accomplishes itself* through the interplay of the immanent laws of capitalist production; the monopoly of capital as a *fetter* on this mode of production, which flourished with it and under it; the natural necessity of the process of *its own* negation, etc.—these are the other sides, which must be understood entirely in the *material sense* as just so many premises of the *self-negation*.

This means: *capitalism generates its material negation even if the proletarian revolution fails to take place*. It is precisely this deepest aspect of the nature of capitalism (with the grasping of which we have also caught up with the mystery, revealed by Marx, of the specific problems of accumulation) that puts the proletarian class before the categorical imperative: Accomplish the revolution—or suffer the penalty of ruin! It is not arbitrariness, but an all-embracing perception that makes Marx emphasize in this passage, next to the growth of misery and exploitation, the growth of *oppression, slavery, degradation*.

Self-Negation in the Historical Reality

In the historical reality, the material *self-abolition* of capitalism is already prepared for concretely by that *new form* of the expropriation of the private proprietors which has as its content the centralization of capital and the killing off of the many capitalists by the few. Marx's presentation can now be resumed from the start and followed up in correspondence with the new stage of development. Then it must be said:

As soon as this *process of transformation* has sufficiently decomposed monopoly capitalism in depth and scope (and that has been taking place from the outbreak of the First Imperialist World War up to the Second), the further *expropriation of the private proprietors once more takes on a new form*. What is now to be expropriated is no longer the capitalist exploiting many workers, but the nation exploited by a handful of monopolists. This *expropriation* is accomplished by the interplay of the immanent laws of *monopoly-capitalist development itself, by the centralization of the most important industries in the highly-capitalist countries*. One

capitalist nation kills off many. Hand in hand with this centralization or the *expropriation of many nations by the few*, the state-compulsory-regulated form of the labor process develops on a constantly growing scale. So does the conscious technical application of science for the purpose of limiting and destroying certain branches of production in favor of others, the planfully contracted exploitation of the earth (in the first place, by the devaluation, effected by the progress of science, of such sources of raw materials, and the industries based upon them, that make up the wealth of other nations; in the second place, by contracting, shutting down and destroying precisely those branches of production that threaten the maintenance of monopoly on this level at home and abroad); the limitation of means of work that can be employed only in common, only to means of work *permitted by the state*; the economizing of all means of production for the production of means of destruction, defense and domination; the entanglement of all peoples in the net of capitalist decomposition; and therewith the internationally destructive character of imperialist rule.

Accompanying the constantly declining number of monopoly-capitalist nations, which usurp and monopolize all the advantages of this transformation process, is a further growth of the mass of misery, of oppression, of bondage, of depravity, of exploitation, which are joined by the wiping out of political freedom, physical extirpation, subjugation and enslavement. The industrial monopoly of a few countries becomes the *direct source of destruction* of the mode of production, which flourished with it and under it. The masses of the people in these countries, like the masses of the other peoples, are violently thrust back by it into those conditions from which the development of capitalism once redeemed them (in great part by the use of violence): *out of slavery, bondage, lack of national independence, industrial dependency and backwardness, into industrial backwardness and dependency, lack of national independence, bondage and slavery*.

The rebellion of the working class, which has been hurled back by the mechanism of imperialism into a state of unorganization, dismembered, atomized, split up, counterposed to each other in its various strata, politically demoralized, internationally isolated and controlled (and whose organizations have been eviscerated, corrupted, paralyzed, decimated with the aid of their imperialistically-degenerated leadership, and which are finally smashed and extirpated along with every kind of bourgeois organization and opposition), likewise assumes a new form under the new conditions. It becomes more comprehensive and general; it finds a mighty prop in the rebellion of the peoples and nations who are suppressed, thrust back, oppressed, enslaved and levelled through the monopoly of the few nations, but by the same token also united against this monopoly and schooled by its mechanism; and it restores the shredded internationalism of the movement upon a more universal plane. Still more: it prepares the ground for the "classic ideal" of the labor movement, for the accomplishment of the proletarian revolution as a simultaneous world-revolution. The centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labor reach a point where they invade the foundations of the capitalist mode of production itself, where the capacity of accumulation collides with its *internal limits* and convulses the whole social structure from top to bottom. They become incompatible with the co-existence of developed capitalist nations. They burst their international integument and prepare a further step in the material self-abolition of capitalism by "transplanting" the important industries of the subjugated nations to the subjugating "motherland" and converting capitalist nations into a "hinterland" in a colonial and semi-colonial sense. The knell of monopoly-capitalist private property sounds. The monopolistic expropriators are expropriated. The capitalist mode of production *begets* its own negation with the inexorability of a law of nature *even if the socialist revolution fails to come*.

Next Perspectives

This is the deepest essence of the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation. It is from this essence alone that the alternative is derived: socialist revolution or barbarism. The end of all civilization is no puerile bugaboo; it is a scientific prognosis which has already assumed terrible reality and yet is merely at its inception. With every passing day it will only become a more terrible reality, for (once more to summarize in Marx's way): the transformation of capitalist nations into industrially dependent countries, into colonies and semi-colonies, is of course a process that is incomparably more violent, sanguinary, cruel, destructive and difficult than the transformation of liberal capitalism into imperialism. It is a process that appears before us as the horrible battle for

self-preservation of a society doomed to death, and 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. In those days it was a question of smashing an outlived economic form and of winning the independence of nations—now it is a question of abolishing independence and of shoving society back to the barbarism of the Middle Ages.

It is not for nothing that the "Three Theses" begin and end with the assurance: "This is a war of long duration, which must completely destroy all human culture, if the rebellion of the masses does not end it." The socialist revolution has always been placed before the proletariat as a task whose solution was to save *humanity* from ruin. As a result of the "half-way measures, weaknesses, paltriness of its first attempts" (Marx), impeded in its course, the socialist revolution receded before the counter-revolution and therewith did its share in paving the road for the putrefaction of society. But with the accentuation of the problem, and the international collapse of capitalism, there is also once more a sharpening of the conditions which contain within themselves the solution. *Putrefying capitalism is counterposing itself to the entire world.* It simplifies the problem of the proletarian revolution by its accentuation: it now appears as the saving solution, which is the direct task of humanity itself.

The war has "in ever-increasing tempo changed the economic, political and social face of the earth." Thus the "Three Theses." Profound convulsions follow profound changes. Woe to those who remain stuck in traditionalistic half-way measures, weaknesses, paltriness and who understand the living spirit of the times as if it were (in Goethe's words) the miserable "Gentlemen's own spirit, in which the times are reflected as in a mirror." For the last time, guided by Marx: There it is a question of the expropriation of the monopolists of many nations by the few monopolists in the "usurper nations"; here it is a question of the expropriation of a few monopolists in the usurper nations by the masses of the people from India to America, from Africa to Norway, from Australia to Germany, from China to the Balkans, from Russia to England. . . .

III—THE ECONOMIC-POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RETROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT

In so far as we have followed the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation in decadent capitalism, we have also already described a part of the "retrogressive movement," which is theoretically founded on the knowledge that the development of capitalism, on the grounds presented (the laws of motion of the capitalist mode of production), inevitably returns to its points of departure. That is, despite all the alterations of the foundations, and the preservation of the connection with what has already been achieved, these foundations narrow. And from the attained (through which the whole process receives its peculiar lawfulness and its specific stamp) it must nevertheless create conditions in economics, politics, social relations, etc., which are like the conditions of the epoch of the origins of capitalism, at first in a highly condensed form, only to assume in its further development ever more explicit, ever more general, ever more backward-reaching features. The theory of the retrogressive movement is therefore no more than the theoretical grasp of the laws of motion of the capitalist mode of production *at the point of transformation into their opposite, in the reversal determined by its contents, in which they become concretely demonstrable laws of its collapse independent of the proletarian revolution.*

We have not separated the basic theorem for a single instant from the combined and uneven development. Hence, we have always conceived the retrogressive movement as being uneven and *combined*. Hence, we have made the proletarian revolution, as a factor which is both objective and subjective, both positive and negative (necessarily unleashing the counterrevolution, if it stops half-way), a part of the laws of motion of the capitalist mode of production itself. Hence, we have fixed the beginning of the retrogressive movement quite concretely *in the Russia of the victorious October revolution.* Hence, we have incorporated the victorious October revolution in the retrogression, considering it in its inner contradiction as an *isolated* revolution in its counter-revolutionary transformation. Hence, we have explained the collapse of capitalism independently of the proletarian revolution as only a *theoretical* independence, which appears in its *historical* form as dependence upon the revolution. (To define it even more exactly: the capitalist mode of production breaks down independently of its overthrow by the revolution, but the revolution enters as an integral part in the *historical* process of its collapse.)

The bewilderment which in our experience usually overwhelms the reader confronted with such unusual formulations resolves itself as a rule into positive understanding upon more detailed observation.

Basic Direction of Capitalist Development

Historically, capitalist development begins with the compact unevenness which contains all the economic, social and political formations from primitive communism to feudalism, *both in independently preserved and combined forms.* Capitalism now continues to preserve them in part, and in part to develop them unevenly and in a combined form. Broadly speaking, capitalist development itself proceeded on these existing foundations from the West to the East, from England through France to Germany and Russia; just as in general the capitalist mode of production subjugated the world from Europe, and its destiny *was decided in Europe.*

For, what takes place outside of Europe—say, in America and Japan—is no more than a vastly-dimensioned epilogue of a drama which in its main outlines has been finished. The epilogue introduces no really original feature, not a single essential alteration, into the picture. It does not even reach the level of the new technological revolution in Germany; it *imitates* it. It only sets its seal upon the real drama and introduces itself from the beginning as a mixture of the most extreme unevenness and the most extreme combination, of the most extreme backwardness and the most extreme technical progress,⁴ of skyscrapers and caves, of high capitalism and semi- or complete feudalism, of man's devastation of nature and national parks, of "complete" democracy and disfranchisement in practice, of agriculture and industry, of science and superstition, of swindling and bigotry, etc.—a mixture which, with all its social and political peculiarities (Negro question, etc.), had disappeared from the life of the advanced capitalist countries of Europe, except for comparatively trivial remnants, and which was once again reinforced in all Europe only after the great crisis of the system emanating from America.

The rest of the world, its largest part by population and area, was never "capitalist." It was *subjugated* to the rule of capitalism as a colony or half-colony but was never able to taste the blessings of an independent industrial development—or else was forcibly repressed in this development (e.g., India by England). The further we go from the *dominating* advanced capitalist countries of England and Germany, and the especially favored countries like France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, the greater grows the *universally persisting* "impurity" (combination) or the mixture especially characteristic of America and Japan with its political-social infirmities, vanishing in ever greater backwardness and finally in purely pre-capitalist conditions.

The Role of the Undeveloped Countries

Political development, the development of *bourgeois* freedom (democracy) and of the labor movement naturally reflects everywhere the economic situation. The more undeveloped the country, the less the bourgeois tasks (agrarian reform, etc.) are solved—the greater the lack of political freedom, the greater the semi-legality or illegality of the labor movement, the more pronounced the medieval forms of rule. In Spain, Italy, throughout the Balkans, etc., the labor movement does not emerge from semi-legality or illegality at all, or else only for the short span of the revolutionary assault which is paid for by intensified misery. But all these countries are in no way decisive for the development. Their significance is episodic and is absorbed in larger processes (e.g., Poland and Czechoslovakia as independent political miscarriages by the grace of imperialism in its weak hours after the First World War). Or, they have more significance as "objects" in the very early capitalist efforts criss-crossing with the still earlier "bequeathed" efforts to hinder the independent development of such countries and keep them down (here again Poland, Czechoslovakia, Balkans, etc.). On the basis of the *attained* imperialist decay which excludes any higher development on this foundation, all these countries fight the political *vanguard battles* for imperialist political reaction, in accordance with their position and significance as the *rear-guard* (the retarded) of capitalist development itself. As we have repeatedly shown, the whole development preserves during its rise a complete connection with all the past (from the most primitive forms of

4. It is highly interesting how America also reproduces the European structure. The further one goes from north to south the greater the general backwardness, in all its forms and concomitant phenomena.

society through slavery and feudalism) and it preserves during its decline the same connection with what is already achieved. This is why the assertion that nobody has conceived of the retrogression as the dissolution of capitalism into pre-capitalist forms of production, must be understood only as a denial of an *absolute* dissolution. The law that no connection can ever go lost is a general dialectical law of *every* development in general, which progresses through quantitative and qualitative increase (alternatively and simultaneously) and under certain conditions turns into its previous opposite.

Historical Limits of Capitalism

Thus imperialism finds already at hand the political prototype for rule over large masses in those places where its *inner* ability to disturb the economic "sleep of the world" has ceased to exist. We do not need to go far to seek this prototype. It is already there in the sphere of interests of British imperialism, in those parts of India which British imperialism could never *actually* subjugate, being restricted not least of all by the instinctive fear of unfettering forces which would prepare its own premature end. Here England and the other imperialisms have nothing to seek economically or only something *very indirectly*. Here (and in other areas of the world) nothing has changed economically qualitatively, and the *old political forms remain* which correspond to economic conditions of a thousand years ago. Nevertheless, these areas provide the *general* background for the retrogressive movement. They are the *historical* limits in which the *inner* limit of the capacity to accumulate, growing out of the essence of capitalism itself, runs its course and manifests itself, precisely *historically, concretely and actually*, as the inability to *colonize the world thoroughly*. As we have seen, the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation is the executor of the breakdown of the capitalist mode of production, which it carries out in *historically concrete ways* long before the abstract-theoretically conceivable extension of capitalism all over the world is reached. Thus these "untouched" areas are a symbol of the future of capitalist humanity. They are the reverse image of capitalist development which must lead to the same *putrefaction* in the forms of private property, if humanity does not find the way out through the abolition of private property which capitalism has for the first time *made possible*.

Undeveloped Countries as Precursors of Fascism

Against this general background of the retrogressive movement (its historical pivot in the framework of uneven development) its concrete forms stand out all the more distinctly, the closer we move from the prototype of economic-political petrification, to the highly capitalist countries. In the colonies and semi-colonies there persist the direct and indirect methods of suppression, or methods of suppression combined with the "primitive" forms of rule (they are strengthened according to need and often relaxed under pressure of the conditions, but never altered) which *capitalism introduced* there from the beginning for the purpose of *petrification*. Coming back from the colonies, the undeveloped capitalist countries, on the basis of the existing "mixture" and of what has been achieved at any given time, carry on the already defined vanguard battles for the form of rule which corresponds best to declining capitalism. Each in its way in a blind alley, each economically disintegrating its peculiar conditions, they seek to stabilize the putrefaction by recasting the feudal-monarchical system, with or without royal approval, support and toleration, into open military dictatorship, into semi- and wholly fascist systems.

All the Balkans, Hungary, Poland, the Baltic countries and Spain are overlaid with such dictatorial systems. The noble "democracy" of Masaryk keeps to an intermediate course, living on Allied help and the suppression of the national minorities, until these minorities, like those in the Saar region, throw themselves in desperation into the arms of German fascism and the rest of Czechoslovakia can be annexed. In this way, profound devastations are heralded, forcing the ruling classes to "overcome" the hopeless economic situation by political measures which in their turn are again directed to the transformation of social and economic life, i.e., which allow of no other way out save by the road back.

The Position of Italy

In the chain of these countries, a country like Italy assumes a position highly characteristic of the lawful consequences of the retrogressive movement. It was the earliest precursor of capitalist production (which first became definitive and world-transforming in England) and then was thrown back by the further development

and transformed into the eternal imperialist camp-follower. Too important to content itself with the pretensions of small nations, too insignificant to realize greater pretensions, this neck of land sticking out of the south of Europe leans like the index on the scales to the momentarily stronger with the purpose of getting an appropriate share of the booty. Always disappointed, always deprived of the fruits of its efforts, always the betrayer betrayed, always hurled back, like no other European great power, Italy was the first to face the decadence of capitalism in the post-war imperialist era. In this situation it again assumed among the great European powers the position of precursor of a development which this time flowed in the opposite direction, clearly backward, into the past. That is, Italy inaugurated the narrower or special retrogressive movement and typified the political system, which is, on the one hand, the political expression of economic decline in the *advanced capitalist countries themselves*; on the other hand, the special form of rule which imperialism now needs above all also for the solution of the actual *imperialist problems*. However, the second imperialist war did not yet stand in the foreground but rather the social question which arose before the ruling classes in a series of revolutionary uprisings and heralded the "natural end" of capitalism. It is the social question whose counter-revolutionary "solution" forms the lawfulness of the retrogressive movement down to the last detail.

IV—FUNDAMENTAL MOMENTS IN THE TRANSITION TO THE RETROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT

In order to be able really to understand the whole process, a simultaneousness of thought must be presupposed which is guaranteed only by the dialectic and the ability obtained thereby to see everything at any given moment and yet to select, to abstract and yet to generalize. In the preceding sections, we have practiced this kind of thinking, and we now add the attempt to sketch a simultaneous picture. The development in the period of rising capitalism and of imperialism "in its prime" is formed concretely by three basic moments.

Division of the World

First, by the necessity to divide the world among the capitalist nations. In this again, uneven and combined development plays the major rôle and gains for the stronger or especially favored nations (e.g., Holland) an appropriate cut. The division obviously does not proceed without force. In addition to colonial conquest and the economic arm of competition, the competition with arms appears from the beginning, asserting itself in a series of wars and building up the relation of the *stronger* nations among each other and toward the weaker nations. But, in this whole period, which lasts till the first imperialist war, there is a growth of the productive forces which *increases the material wealth* and the line of ascent is, on the whole, maintained.

"Regulation" of the Labor Movement

The second moment is the necessity of holding down and rendering innocuous the proletariat and its movement, produced by capitalism as the living negation of itself. In the ascending period this is achieved not so much by force but rather through a system of "accommodations" (concessions, social legislation) and by material and ideological corruption which, on the whole, advance capitalism, for up to a certain point the labor movement is as necessary for the development of capitalism as are national independence and political freedom. As soon as the bourgeoisie, with the help of the proletariat, has attained enough freedom of movement for itself and for the development of free competition, the problem is restricted more to liquidating the labor movement's aspirations to political independence and power, and to confining the matter within administrative-trade-union limits.

In England, the question was resolved more easily because of the material wealth of the Empire, i.e., by virtue of the politically-corrupting participation of broad sections of the workers in the so-called surplus profit: present and future seem equally assured, and exert a debilitating political effect.

In France, after the war with the stronger rival, Germany, and the heroic intermezzo of the Paris Commune, the situation was likewise stabilized on the basis of agriculture and the luxury industries which opened up a broad perspective and also infected the labor movement with the petty-bourgeois "ideal of the coupon-clipper." Socialism in France is more a rhetorical threat (the pre-

vailing syndicalism) than a *politically* organized power.

In Germany, on the other hand, the problem was already more difficult. After the overcoming of the initial obstacles on both sides (founding years and anti-socialist law), the problem was mastered by virtue of the imperialist perspective that appeared at the time, mastered mainly ideologically, with the help of revisionism. German revisionism was predominantly a postdated note on what was current exchange in England. The corrupting kernel of this ideology was: capitalism will grow and with it the power of the labor movement, which, in the person of its leadership (for the most part also already materially corrupted), will grow into the state and conquer it peaceably (guarantee: freedom of suffrage). It was the invasion of petty-bourgeois thinking into the labor movement and, as such, a typical reflexion in the heads of the labor leaders of young German imperialism at its optimistic beginnings.

German revisionism was the theoretical culmination and systematization of all other "methods of paralysis," done with German thoroughness and joyfully greeted internationally as the "supplementary" method for the "regulation" of the labor movement. Everywhere it found its corresponding expression: In Russia in "economism," in France in Millerand's "ministerialism," in England among the Fabians, who, with deeper significance, called themselves a "society."⁵ But only in Germany did it have a decisive and fatal function. In Russia, neither the one nor the other method caught on. There all relations were so sharp that the *revolutionary* method of the proletariat could rout all other forces from the field and make the solution of the problem impossible for the ruling classes.

Free Competition Among Workers and Capitalists

The third moment is generally determinant: Free competition among the capitalists and workers. Competition among the workers is used both as a means of paralyzing and of splitting the labor movement, but it is temporarily decreased both by further development (which produces leveling as well as differentiation) and with the aid of trade unions, until it rises again in its most horrible form in the world crisis following the First World War, when the million-headed army of the unemployed splits the working class into, so to speak, an active and a passive section. Under mass unemployment, competition among workers already assumes the form of a split of society as a whole. For wide layers of the petty bourgeoisie, of the independent artisan, of the intellectuals, etc., are drawn in and confront society threateningly. Out of the declassed elements of the intellectuals, petty bourgeoisie and workers, out of the slum proletariat, fascism recruits the storm troops with which it threatens the demands of the workers, strikes down their movement and stabilizes, organizes and systematizes the decay.

Free competition among the capitalists is likewise temporarily mitigated by the formation of monopolies, i.e., so long as the development progresses upward. But free competition persists by the side of and above monopoly (nationally and internationally, as on the other hand it is further constituted above and by the side of free competition out of which it grows).

From the co-existence of free competition and monopoly, from the competition of monopolies among themselves, develops a "series of especially crass and harsh contradictions, frictions and conflicts" (Lenin), which react powerfully upon all social institutions. For the anarchy of social production under the rule of free competition is deepened by the devastating economic disproportions which monopoly creates.

The highest expression of such disproportions is the armaments industry whose development becomes compulsory with the development of monopoly because the whole capitalist development, propelled by free competition, drives toward the most violent conflict of monopoly, the imperialist war. The relation of the *stronger* nations to one another is shifted by the course of industrial development, especially in heavy industry, which becomes obsolete in the "more saturated" countries and therefore makes their industrial basis too weak for their foreign possessions.

5. The historical succession and the national peculiarities of revisionism agree exactly with the capitalist development in the four most important countries (England, France, Germany, Russia). In England the Fabian Society was founded, if we are not mistaken, between 1883-85. In England trade unionism is more characteristic of revisionism than the Fabian appendage. Revisionism in England is *organic*. In France, Millerand became Minister of Commerce in 1889. There revisionism is *political-practical*. In Germany, Bernstein began the revisionist campaign in 1896. There revisionism is *theoretical*. Then for the first time Russia followed, already under the direct influence of the Bernstein controversy. There revisionism is *impossible*.

The disproportion which arises in this way is extended by the *industrial* camp-follower, Germany, which utilizes all the advantages of its position, immediately speaks the *last word* in industrial development, and, paradoxically, becomes rich and powerful enough as the "armaments factory of the world" to be able to climb up the back of its English competitor equipped with the most modern weapons.

Intervention of the Social Question

The social question, in its modern form, not as bourgeois reform, etc., but as proletarian revolution, is already essentially involved in the constitution of this inherently unavoidable development. England regards the growing power of Germany with mixed feelings, but its forces remain bound by the question which henceforth is a weighty element of its "balance of power" policy. What will the *now revolutionary* party of the proletariat and the strong German working class, in general, do, if its immediate demands cannot be satisfied and its "taming" is frustrated? The answer is clear, and wisdom of class interests demands that the day of reckoning be postponed to a more favorable time. Growing tolerance of German industrial and military armament is the price which England pays for the taming of the German labor movement.

Meanwhile the disproportions grow in length and breadth throughout the whole world. The industrial and agricultural development in North and South America press down upon conditions in Europe and deepen the industrial and agricultural antagonisms. The undeveloped and dependent countries, especially the Balkans, groan and ache under a development which makes them the football of imperialist interests and involves them in the armaments race as dependents of the great powers.

All the especially crass and harsh contradictions cut into and cut across the Balkans—all the frictions and conflicts stemming from industrial monopoly with a compactness which has justifiably given them the name "power keg of Europe." When the sparks catch fire and England, with the knife at its throat, decides to fight, it is, however, already certain that the German working class will *not intervene*. This main danger temporarily excluded, the war itself makes the disproportions unadjustable and incurable.

Depending on the social question which rises again revolutionarily as the result of the especially crass contradiction between possible well-being and actual destruction, the disproportions become autonomous and drive in the direction of the Second World War which is to solve all of the now intensified problems on which the First World War broke down internally. They bear down again upon the whole of economic life, upon competition among capitalists and workers, and create that situation which splits the population into employed and unemployed (including the rural population and even the peasants). The epoch of war, revolutions and counter-revolutions is opened, the impossibility of capitalist society is proved: Marx's prophecy has been fulfilled that it will bring itself to the point where it must feed its slaves instead of being fed by them.

V—ASCENDING DEVELOPMENT IN CONTRAST TO RETROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT

The historic limit for the ascent of the capitalist mode of production was supplied by the building up of the British Empire. The position of England as the classical country of the capitalist mode of production in agriculture and as the early industrial monopolist (a position which for its part it attained in the framework of uneven and combined development) influenced the whole development of capitalism. This occurred in a manner which proved decisive in the last analysis, in all spheres of economic, social and political life, if we disregard all modifications, setbacks, interludes, etc. The latter were engendered by the English development itself and introduced concrete ramifications into the whole line of development. By that very fact, they prepared the collapse of capitalism in its seed, or better, contained it embryonically.

Question of Method

Here, where we are considering all sorts of concrete facts and forms almost only in so far as they are important for knowing and presenting fundamental characteristics, for the rest deriving the concrete forms (deductively) from the general laws, let us disregard all correlative phenomena. Let us present the scheme of the retrogressive movement as a result of a general development, which occurred actually and historically *in this manner and in no other*.

Thus, in the presentation, we derive the general lawfulness not so much from the historical result, as we do the particular historical result from the general lawfulness. It may take this or that historical phenomenal form but in the essential result it is always inevitable. The so-called inductive method, however, much as it belongs with the deductive, tells us little about the tendency of development because it is lost in a mass of details and accidents. The deductive method, however, derives the tendency from the laws of motion themselves, puts the details in their proper place and works them in as unessential modifications of the one basic tendency.

The historical result of the retrogressive movement is, to be sure, realized in the concrete ways which capitalist development has once taken. Therefore it has the ascending development of capitalism as its historical premise and its exact counterpart.

We summarize the ascending development in a series of historical facts which need not be proved anew. What the adducing of such facts makes necessary and fruitful for our investigation is the simple fact that in their mere succession they yield qualitative variations in the basic moments which lead to the transformation and call forth the retrogressive movement.

England

In this sense: Only one drop of genuine capitalist blood sufficed to permeate the world organism and to establish the reign of the new mode of production on land and sea, in the air and under the earth. An island realm, a spot in the seas and oceans, stretching before the European continent like a watchdog, came by means of that capitalist blood to attain an empire of unprecedented dimensions and to assure itself strong points, spheres of influence and markets throughout the world.

France

A second drop of the same blood was already enough to saturate the organism. The French attempt to get the upper hand over British imperialism went to pieces. Thereafter, France's rôle was limited essentially to filling the gaps which the previous development had left and no longer to endanger seriously England's interests. From the fall of Napoleon to the second imperialist world war, France can no longer escape dependence on England and must—*bon gré, mal gré*—rest content with playing second fiddle to English politics.

Germany

The third drop already brought the world organism to the fever stage of *super-saturation*. Industrial competition found the important channels clogged and permitted no other significant sideline development (as in France). A sideline remained—industrial armament on the basis of the arms industry. The products were taken by the whole world, not least of all by England which needed them to consolidate its world domination and thought she would utilize them one day against their dangerous producer.

Thereby the fever rose. The side-line became the *main line* and posed the problem of imperialist capitalism for the first time in history, i.e., war on the basis of industrial competition. Germany faced this problem from the time of national unification on (which incidentally was accomplished almost simultaneously with Italian unification and permitted Italy to appear as third or fourth ranking power among the imperialist countries). Her entire domestic and foreign policy revolved around the way out by means of capitalist expansion through imperialist war.

Russia

The fourth drop, as a capitalist country, is far less the product of its independent development than a product of capitalist saturation and super-saturation. The developed capitalist countries (primarily France) forced the development of Russia through capital export which "acquired outstanding significance" and for that reason also was already up against the practical limits of capitalist accumulation. The most powerful survival of medieval Europe (itself the product of a development which was uneven and, besides, combined with Asia) is combined through uneven development with industrial development; its industry is grafted on to it in more centralized form than in Europe itself. The whole development is led into a blind alley. The only way out is the proletarian revolution: capitalism is exploded for the first time and destroyed over a wide area of the earth. This area is now likewise transformed into one of the historic limits and is withdrawn from total capitalization.

Recapitulation

It is self-evident by now that the same picture may be drawn for the development of political freedom, of the labor movement (it is undeveloped in England, second-rate in France, threatening in Germany, decisive in Russia), political economy, theory, etc., etc. Summarizing the sequence presented here: From whatever side we may regard the life-course of the capitalist mode of production, its laws of motion are always and everywhere also the laws of its collapse. Of the large industries especially, we can say: Industrial monopoly, from which modern capitalist development proceeds, appears as the predominance of one country over all the others. In it is imbedded therefore from the beginning, "like a nut in its shell," the *ultimate* problem of capitalist development, to which it must return after full development. We shall see later what form the return takes, following the temporary dissolution of monopoly.

VI—INNER CONTRADICTION OF THE FIRST IMPERIALIST WAR

When the imperialist war is placed on the order of the day, further qualitative alterations appear which are all affected by the mass of preceding processes. "The division of all the territory of the earth among the greatest capitalist countries" is practically concluded.⁶ This division, no sooner completed, is already outlived. It is economically "unjust" and corresponds in no way to the industrial and other significance of the four *strongest* capitalist countries, which have the economic leadership, and direct the war with their allies (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, etc.) for the notorious *redivision* of the world which could not but be the logical result of the war.

However, here logic strikes a snag. The course of the war shows that in the general state of things the problem can not even be attacked, let alone solved. The contradiction of industrial monopoly which rests upon free trade and free competition, is at the same time the contradiction of free competition. It thus abolishes the industrial monopoly of one country over others and leads to the formation of monopolies in industry in other countries. The result was the international contradiction of monopoly, and it led to the imperialist war. So far everything is in logical order. But now at one stroke the war reveals that monopoly has called forth a new contradiction, which is more essential than the old, and has transformed the war for the redivision of the world into a contradiction in itself, into an absurdity *par excellence*.

Effect of the International Division of Labor

On one hand, capitalist economy had long outgrown all national boundaries and thereby first established the international capitalist world market in all its scope. In strict dependence upon the old forces, which lie at the basis of all class society and operate to the fullest extent in capitalist commodity economy, the social division of labor has been broadened into the *international* division of labor and has become its ruling form. Moreover, the anarchy of social production and uneven development assume the explicit form of industrial and agricultural disproportions, and drive the national economies into all the greater dependence upon the international division of labor, or what is only another term for it, upon their international connections.

On the other hand, the transcending of the national boundaries which has practically taken place, raises the distantly visible sign of international trusts. The indubitable progress which lies in the formation of a super-national economy through trusts, with its increase of the productive forces, shows a catastrophic converse side when private property is maintained in the means of production. The international trusts have the peculiarity of *organizing the disproportion* to the utmost, of which the disproportion arising out of the arms industry is the most prominent. Scientific progress is the direct servant of this disproportion. Through the changed significance of the so-called basic industries (coal, for example), it produces another disproportion which operates in favor of the war industries. As soon as coal becomes scarcer instead of a plentiful article (and it becomes such through the development of heavy industry, particularly the chemical industry), a struggle flares up for this industrially vitally important substance.

The competition for coal ends naturally in a victory of the most powerful heavy industrial and chemical enterprises which mono-

6. "Practically" means: except for areas which are economically unassailable and inaccessible to capitalist division.

polize this "article of use," thus establishing a particularly profound disproportion in its consumption and driving forward the disproportions in heavy industry, etc. The whole process reveals its effects in the international trusts which thus, first, reproduce the contradiction of competition on a higher level (competition of international trusts among themselves, running vertically and horizontally through all countries), and second, disclose the incurable contradiction between the international character of the economy and the national-state character of the war today.

False Posing of the Problem

"The entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market and therewith the international character of the capitalist régime," are so great in this stage of complete imperialist maturity which brings the line of ascension to an end, that the economy, like the conduct of the war, is already wrecked on the very premises on which it is based. All countries are in large degree dependent upon one another, and the international trusts are the personification of this dependence. The *redivision* of the world among the *strongest* capitalist nations is under such circumstances a Utopia. For it is posed practically as the problem of the final "division of the world among the international trusts," which, with all the will in the world to gain the upper hand, must see to it that their material bases within the individual nations are not undermined.

How is this problem to be solved in the framework of the national state without abolishing the national boundaries? In the nature of things this would be the only "logical result" if there were anything else in capitalism besides the logic of contradictions and their disastrous admixture. For this is how absurdly the whole problem is posed: The war of economic competition is to be fought out within the framework of the national states, without eliminating the economic domination of the *international trusts* in the individual countries. In practice this is the attempt to solve the economic problem of monopoly capitalism with predominantly *military measures* (predominantly military because while the military machine, the economic measures and pressure of blockade, etc., also paralyze the opponent economically and force him to his knees, they are not intended to *destroy* his economy). It is war on the borderline dividing maturity and collapse, a mixed form of war which already foreshadows all the elements of the transition to total war but does not yet itself have, nor can it have, the radical character of total war. It is the squaring of the economically self-enclosed circle—an impossible problem whose impossibility is proclaimed in certain striking features.

First Characteristic

Whichever may be the areas "intended" for annexation by the warring countries, conquered *capitalist* terrain can, in reality, not be incorporated completely into the economic life of the conqueror. What is certainly beyond serious discussion is reorganization, industrial transplantation, shutdowns in the interests of industrial centralization, resettlement of the population in remote areas, production changes in industry and agriculture, etc., over and beyond war measures.

By and large, the aim of conquest is the achievement of superiority; there is no *a priori* aim to change for the sake of destroying and to destroy for the sake of change. By and large, the efforts are confined, with the necessary "excesses," to extracting what can be extracted under conditions of war. This apart, the hallmark of the war is forbearance (especially industrial)—the whole status is "provisional," "pacts" are concluded in the midst of the war—the "peace-dictate" will make the final decision. Everything still rests too much on "normal" international economic, legal, and financial relations, on the gold currency, the creditor-debtor relation, etc., whose destruction would cut off the countries hopelessly from imports, shatter the whole apparatus and result in the immediate collapse of economy.

Second Characteristic

In consequence, nowhere is a serious effort made to abolish the national-state boundaries. The national boundaries are to be shifted but not eliminated; the national, political, social, economic, juridical and societal situation is maintained in general—the "rights of war" and the military administration alone concern themselves with the encroachments which are necessary but which are not at all *organic* to the goal set. And just because this is so, and because the war cannot in any respect jump out of its economic skin, it is conducted chauvinistically and is felt by the people chauvinistically (despite "racism" the Second World War separates the "peoples"

from their "leadership," is characterized more by complete economic "practicality"). It ends, regardless of the aims of all participants, with a *substantial increase in the economically and politically effective national-state boundaries.*

Third Characteristic

The labor movement as such *remains intact even in the conquered areas*; it remains a factor that cannot be eliminated. (We give this point a special mention, because it has capital significance which speaks for itself. In the second world war German imperialism "solves" the question of the labor movement in those countries, as in France, where the bourgeoisie, due to its internal weakness, could not itself destroy it. In different forms, America seeks to maintain the German achievements wherever it comes as "liberator.")

Fourth Characteristic

Despite the blockade the international economic interdependence expresses itself by a regular commerce between *all* countries. Country supplies and trades with country; business remains in full swing; there are no business interruptions but only interruptions of delivery as a result of—torpedoing. The international trusts in the warring countries enjoy a boom. Here the "sharing of the market" may best be perceived. Across the mass of neutral countries (more important at such a moment and in a different position than they are today) moves direct and indirect trade between the belligerents, bringing to a head the phenomenon that has scandalized humanity under the name of the "bloody international of the armaments industry." Toward the end of mutual "holding-out" which yields enormous profits and strengthens the international trusts, they supply each other in the very midst of the war with fabricated and raw materials for the direct conduct of the war. This prolongs the war and most certainly postpones the military decisions. Therefore, the war very soon becomes static, stagnant and reflects perfectly the stagnating character of monopoly in the stage of its maturity (on this point see the next section), where it can have neither the courage nor the possibility to make *radical* decisions. It should be noted in addition that the trusts are no less active in the almost "normal" activity of diplomacy (namely, secret diplomacy).

Victory of Economy Over War

Nevertheless, the war and the productive forces do not develop in accordance with the logic of the capitalist magnates and the stock exchange; they bring everything to the point of collapse. War is above all the destruction of the sources which nourish it, a sharpening of all contradictions and disproportions which unleash it. Following its own unfettered lawfulness and succumbing to the dynamic of its own premises, it must nevertheless tear apart the carefully preserved international connections and turn against its own foundations. For a time it stagnates, hangs "in mid-air" as if it were an end in itself, without perspective, and exhausts itself in its own inner impossibility.

Nothing is more characteristic of the dependence of Europe upon international economy than the fact that all countries at the end of the war were also at the end of their resources and on the brink of the abyss (e.g., Russia, bled-white, was able to defend itself successfully against the attack of the whole world). There is some truth in the statement that Germany emerged from the war militarily "undefeated." That has so penetrated into the general consciousness that Americans speak with great assurance of this day of the breakdown of the German people which "tore the heart out of the military resistance of Germany." A clear military decision was lacking, and the actual victory fell to the country that best understood how to take advantage of the *economic problem* of the war.

America, strengthened by the "war prosperity," by supplying needy Europe, held off from the battlefield as the primary world economic power—oddly enough without participating in the problematic "redivision of the world." It was a victory of definite economic relations over the war itself, which in a few years changed America from a sorely indebted to a great creditor nation.

When America entered, the war was already in full disintegration. Russia had already withdrawn and had set a definite limit to the war. The principal participant, Germany, withdrew a year later, leaving the "victors" in a situation and an entanglement of interests which forced them to keep her alive at any price and to give in to her constantly. The absurdity of the way the problem was posed by the first world war cannot be shown more clearly than this. To be sure, the "incident" that touched it off—a conflict of subordinate significance in itself—automatically broadened into

the question of the "redivision" of the world. But the economy was more surprised by this than prepared for it.

Result of "Redivision"

The result therefore corresponds exactly to the premises. The incident that occasioned the conflict, entangled in the fight for national independence of the oppressed nationalities in the Balkans (with the dissolution of the Turkish Empire as a background) has a greatly disproportionate weight in the imperialist result. In the Versailles treaty, Europe appears less *divided up* among the most powerful and developed capitalist states than "splintered" within itself. There are now more "new" states, boundaries and problems in East and South Europe than before.

In this way the economy revenges itself for the violation of its laws through the dismemberment and weakening of Europe. The arena for monopolistic competition is made smaller by the withdrawal of Russia. What is more, two dangerous non-European competitors, Japan and America, are loaded on its neck.

The "mixed form" of this war in transition from capitalist maturity to disintegration is revealed best in what emerges from the "redivision." All that is actually divided up—no, "apportioned"—is that which belongs to Germany. Of the German colonial empire, England and France pocket the lion's share; Alsace-Lorraine and some important German areas fall to France, Belgium and Poland. Italy comes out empty-handed, America does not profit by territorial acquisition. Under Anglo-American pressure, Japan must relinquish a great deal of her booty in the Far East. And for this miserable result (doubtful "gains," political-national differentiation, economic destruction, revolutionary danger, general weakening, a more unstable situation than before, greater dissatisfaction and ferment) Europe lost its political equilibrium and its economic mastery in the world. Never did an Esau sell his birthright more cheaply.

To be sure, such a result was neither desired nor foreseen: an insoluble economic problem seized everybody by the scruff of the neck and merely extended the "vicious circle" of capitalist economy to Japan and America. Glad to have emerged only slightly bruised, England and France move all the more inexorably to ruin in their "victory." They are seized by a debilitating concern for their possessions, the more the real redivision of the world is subsequently conscious planned by Germany, planfully prepared, and placed upon the economic, political and social foundations necessary for this purpose; and the more, on the other hand, America and Japan accelerate the "vicious circle" by their specific gravity.

Historic "Mission" of America

We said earlier that America (the same goes for Japan) introduces no essential alteration into the picture, and can only seal the fate of capitalism which was already decided in Europe itself. "War prosperity" and the succeeding years of so-called "false prosperity" were therefore sufficient to upset the "relative stabilization" of the post-war years, to throw the world economy completely off its tracks, to bring about a crisis of unprecedented dimensions, to give the necessary impulsion to the dissolution and inversion of all previous relations and—to facilitate materially the carrying out of Germany's task.

Although America, as a capitalist economy, is in no way "original," it is still worthwhile to ascertain every deviation of the elements in the amalgam of which this terrible epilogue of capitalism is composed. We must keep in mind what has gone into the formation of this country: Joy of discovery and need for trade; adventure and greed; colonization efforts and emigration; all races and achievements; all advantages and disadvantages; all virtues and vices; all race and class antagonisms of Europe, Asia and Africa; all the advances, backwardness, combinations, unevenness, and—crimes, abominations, crudities and atrocities of the whole world.

For its part, America developed on a broad, existing foundation of unevenness extending from primitive communism to the old highly-developed culture of the Aztecs. Like a vandal it exterminated all these forms and the aboriginal population. Yet it dragged them along as the problem of the native population, in the form of the industrial and cultural backwardness of vast areas, of the national and economic oppression of South America, and not last, as an "import article" (the disgrace of the Negro question). It understood how to get rid of its former masters and to make itself independent.

On a continent by itself, suspiciously stalked by the watchdogs of Europe and Asia (England and Japan), the men of "rugged American individualism" were able to utilize the advantages of the

situation more freely and decisively than any one else. Ever since America, in the first world war, again came into larger-scale direct contact with the rest of the world, it was clear that it would assume a key position in the coming imperialist disputes. The fact that America continues the work begun in the first world war, and again pours out the blood of the whole world over the whole world, is only part of the circle of capitalist life which, on the whole, is already closed. Whether as the rival or the "ally" of England—the "historic mission" of America always boils down to being the gravedigger of the British Empire and to intensifying the self-destruction of capitalism. It has, and can have, no other mission.

VII—THE FIRST IMPERIALIST WAR AS A PREMATURE HISTORICAL "MISFORTUNE"

If we glance back at the first world war and the total constellation at the time, we must recognize that the first world war, despite all causal connections which led to its outbreak, was no more than a *historical misfortune of capitalism*, an *accidental event* which staged the collapse of capitalism within the framework of historical necessity *earlier than historically necessary*. Thus we defend the thesis: There was no inner or outer necessity which stood theoretically or practically in the way of the assumption that capitalism could remain for a considerable time on the plane of its "maturity"—or even expand.

Causality and Historic Necessity

If the "iron chain" of causal connections is taken for historic necessity, necessity is understood wholly and completely in the ordinary bourgeois sense which believed it was refuting Marx by the question: "And do dynastic ambitions, reason, knowledge, bad blood, crime, personality, etc., play no rôle in history?"

Naturally, the bourgeois does not know (or at least he does not want to know) that he is addressing himself not to Marx but to certain "Marxists" against whom, unfortunately, he is in the right. Statesmanlike wisdom, knowledge of the actual situation on the part of the Germans, insight into economic conditions, experience, perspicacity, etc., might have been able to isolate the "local incident" and postpone the world war without in the least altering the destiny of capitalism.

For Marx, only the collapse of capitalism was historically necessary, not this or that accidental or dispensable circumstance which concretely delays or hastens it. On the other hand, accidental circumstances, once operative, set a whole chain of causal compulsions into motion, which flow into the absolute necessity of the negation of capitalism and prescribe the future concrete course of its collapse. The German bourgeoisie at all events perceived the misfortune of the first world war so well that it introduced "guarantees" and conditions for the second which are already directly adapted to historic necessity in all its aspects. The guarantees and conditions of its "salvation" already coincide directly with its collapse. That is the tragedy of the bourgeoisie, which, for all its efforts to secure itself and ward off accidents, is the trailblazer of its historic destiny and is all the less capable of escaping it the more it drives itself within the narrow conditions of its own existence.

Decline of the Proletariat as a Politically Organized Class and the Corruption of Traditional Consciousness

We would not, however, insist on our thesis if it did not have an important reverse side. What was a historic misfortune for the bourgeoisie, was a stroke of good fortune for the socialist revolution. The bourgeoisie passed up an opportunity to prolong its life. The proletariat (or rather its leaders) likewise passed up a "series of opportunities to seize power" (Trotsky). The bourgeoisie thereby imposed upon humanity more gruesome suffering and bloodier sacrifices than ever before, for henceforth it declines under conditions which in their totality (economically from the standpoint of material wealth, politically from the standpoint of total social relations) are the conditions of its past. Socialism, however, is sucked into this past because of its guilt of omission: in a certain sense, the proletariat has already suffered the "penalty of its own destruction" because in most of the world it has been destroyed as a *politically-organized, self-constituted and freely-associated class*.

The proletariat has again, as formerly, become an amorphous mass, the characteristics of its rise and its formation have been lost. Politically and to a large extent also already economically, it lives under the conditions and forms of slavery. Its class-conscious-

ness is now only class-consciousness in the sense of *limitation*, through belonging to a class. It is *bourgeois* consciousness and (not to speak of revisionism) is doubly reactionary in so far as it has received in *Stalinism* its most perverted, repulsive, detestable, vulgar, mendacious, hypocritical, disgraceful and perilous form.

The example of Italy shows, and will show more clearly with every day, the fatal results of the retrogressive development of the *independent*-political proletarian class-consciousness into the most corrupt *bourgeois* consciousness through Stalinism (on the basis of the Russian and other retrogressive development). In Italy the masses instinctively find their way to red flags and to slogans corresponding to their needs. It is striking how these slogans revolve around the *organization* of the masses, whose every step is made impossible without organization. It is characteristic how American imperialism bears down on everything that might lead to the formation of the class. But *political* consciousness, which can become *genuine class consciousness* only through the knowledge of *all* class relations, is lacking, or else is furnished by revisionism and Stalinism, which provide the scum of bourgeois slops, that is, the most falsified consciousness of these relations.

VIII—GOOD LUCK AND BAD LUCK IN HISTORY AND RECAPITULATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Bad luck and good luck are in historic balance. We must recognize the one and will the other. The misfortune of the bourgeoisie was the salvation of the Russian revolution; the "salvation" of the Russian revolution was the tragic fate of the (missed) world revolution (and vice versa). The problem now is to assess the situation correctly and to exploit the new "good luck" which restores the historical balance.

The bourgeoisie must develop a new mode of production in the womb of the old society, and on the basis of this, accomplish a *political* revolution which makes the bourgeoisie master of the situation. The proletariat, on the other hand, must prepare a *social* revolution in the womb of the old society and make itself master of the situation in order to be able to develop a new mode of production. In so far, however, as the Russian revolution and bourgeois society degenerate and move to the brink of dissolution, they compress the development into the one from which they emerged: into the problem of the *democratic political revolution*, without which neither the Russian nor the European proletarian can advance.

History has here created one of those (already unavoidable) episodes which are a "stroke of good luck" for the revolution. The episode not only forces a return to what was "apparently accomplished" in the Russian revolution and the world labor movement, and to the opening up of a struggle for it again; it not only simplifies the problem by sharpening it and creating a situation which contains the solution in itself—but to the same degree it also supplies the indispensable formal means or the key to the solution of the whole question.

The situation of Russia, like the situation of the world labor movement, poses itself as if it were a matter of repeating all over again the bourgeois development and therewith (because this development included the labor movement) the history of the labor movement, on the basis of the decay of *all*. And in fact, it is nothing but a matter of this repetition in rapid tempo and telescoped form, i.e., in a form in which everything that was once achieved remains preserved in its essential contents, its quality and potentiality, and is reconquered in its breadth, its quantity and materiality. Thereby the road is first cleared for the higher development.

Formulation of the Task in Accordance with the Retrogressive Movement

Before Europe can unite itself into "socialist states," it must first separate itself again into independent and autonomous states. It is entirely a matter of the split-up, enslaved, hurled-back peoples and the proletariat constituting themselves again as a nation ("although not in any way in the sense of the bourgeoisie"); the devastated nationalities, just as the internationally and nationally devastated and disintegrated economic connections, just as the severed connection between scientific socialism and the labor movement (which now exists almost only as a spontaneous, but no longer as a politically-organized movement), must be reconstituted under new conditions.

We can formulate the task in the following way: To reconstruct the whole screwed-back development, to regain all the achievements

of the bourgeoisie (including the labor movement), to reach the highest accomplishments and excel them. The recoupling of socialism with the labor movement is the point here around which everything revolves.

Scientific socialism is in the same situation as at the time of its emergence, with only this difference: it has been enriched by the experience and the theoretical illumination of imperialism, the victorious October revolution and its degeneration, the defects and shortcomings of the labor movement and its downfall, etc. Otherwise there are only isolated and decimated propaganda groups, exactly as at that time (then emerging, now residual), which must endeavor to expand, to link themselves to the masses, and to arouse the political labor movement to life again.

Political consciousness lives only in these groups and individuals—the alleged tradition of the masses is (with qualifications for Russia) the true-bourgeois tradition of revisionism and its Stalinist perversion, under whose influence the masses have stood for more than forty years and which is responsible for today's situation. Parenthetically: nothing of this is altered by the activity of the German Left—to say nothing of their miserable epigones!—who, as a result of their theoretical-practical failings, never actually broke through the revisionist ring.

However, the most pressing political problem is the century-old problem of the springtime of industrial capitalism and of scientific socialism—*conquest of political freedom, establishment of democracy* (also for Russia) *as the indispensable precondition for national liberation and the founding of the labor movement.*

International Application and the "Formal Means"

With appropriate modifications this problem exists for the whole world; for China and India, Japan and Africa, Australia and Canada, Russia and England. In a word, for all Europe, North and South America. Nowhere is there a country that does not have a *powerfully intensified democratic and national question, nowhere does there exist a politically organized labor movement.* In every one there are only fragments, splinters, remnants, appendages. England and America form only *apparent* exceptions, just as they are the apparent economic exceptions in the decline of the capitalist economy. As a result of the subversion of the October revolution, the reactionary bulwark of Stalin juts out everywhere *against* the proletariat and the world revolution, as was formerly the case with Czarism. Everything and everyone has become retrogressive. England retains only a more privileged and favored position with regard to the labor movement precisely because of this retrogression. On the other hand, America, as the "epilogue," has experienced a political labor movement even less than favored England. Even with the existence of trade unions (which keep everything in the framework of *bourgeois*, trade union consciousness), the socialist "propaganda group" there works, and rightly so, for the formation of an independent labor party.

The new "bad-luck" for the bourgeoisie and the unprecedented "good luck" for the revolution now consists in the fact that the retrogressive movement has on a large scale compressed all the problems posed in the rising development of *the whole of bourgeois history and its pre-history*, has fused them into an indissoluble unit, and has loaded them with irresistible revolutionary explosive force. Everywhere, the masses will have to, and will, get into *revolutionary motion as never before.* And the retrogressively provided, indispensable formal means for the solution of the *world crisis* of capitalism and socialism—the means for which the revolutionists need only stretch out their hands—is called: *national freedom.* By this, we mean to say: the national question is one of those historic episodes which *necessarily* become the strategic transition point for the reconstitution of the labor movement and the socialist revolution. Whoever does not understand this historically necessary episode and does not know how to use it, knows and understands *nothing* of Marxism-Leninism.

The Revolutionary Counterpart of Historical "Episodes" in the Framework of Necessity

With reference to the revolution and "episodes" in general, Trotsky in the preface to his well known 1905 remarks brilliantly: "Whoever does not understand how to find elbow room for talent, initiative and heroism in the framework of historic necessity [we cite this from memory and add for ourselves: planfulness, organization, perspicacity, spiritual audacity, accidents, etc.] has not penetrated the philosophic mystery of Marxism." There would, however, be no "elbow room," and all that remained would be the empty mechanical unfoldment which the Philistine, finding in himself

nothing but mechanical notions, considers Marxism, if the accidental and possible could not turn into the compulsory, inevitable and necessary.

To round out the present theme: Over and above all laws of motion and of compulsion of the capitalist mode of production, hovers the inner *nature* of capital itself, which creates many historical "episodes," that can become doubly fateful to it if conscious socialism seizes upon them and sinks its teeth into the sore-points made by capital itself. The reader may well enjoy the brilliant presentation which F. J. Dunning (cited by Marx in *Capital*) has given of the inner nature of capital:

"Capital is said by a *Quarterly Reviewer* to fly turbulence and strife, and to be timid, which is very true; but this is very incompletely stating the question. Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as Nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain ten percent will ensure its employment anywhere; twenty percent certain will produce eagerness; fifty percent positive audacity; hundred percent will make it ready to trample on all human laws; three hundred percent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged. If turbulence and strife will bring a profit, it will freely encourage both. Smuggling and the slave-trade have amply proved all that is here stated."

It is—and what would Dunning say now if he were living in the day of the percentages of monopoly!—as if the dialectic incarnate had come among us and called to us; Turbulence and strife which capital encourages are breaches which it makes in itself. Turbulence and strife introduced in order to enslave humanity for a thousand and more percent, rebound as the turbulence and strife of hundreds of millions of slaves against capital. Conscious socialism has "only"—to widen this breach planfully, in order to bring capitalism to the gallows.

IX—QUALITATIVE CHANGES FROM THE FIRST IMPERIALIST WAR TO TODAY

We can appraise the development from the beginning of the first imperialist war to today only if we understand it as a reversal, prepared before and during the war, of all relations, foundations and conditions valid for the ascending development of capitalism. Of the qualitative changes in the total relations, we consider only those which are important for the question before us for treatment, and leave aside all the more specific problems (finance and currency questions, foreign trade, capital export, etc.).

The Law of Breakdown in Monopoly

The continental wars preceding the imperialist world war ("chemically purest" example, the wars of Prussia with France, Denmark, Austria) which established the boundaries of the European states in the fight for their independence, were conducted in far-reaching independence from international and (within generally valid limits) even from national economy. The army, its equipment, its training, the strategy and tactics of the conduct of the war, etc., reached a certain independence—the war remained "mobile" and always ended after a relatively short duration with a clear military decision, after which the economic development could start again. The whole development leads now to monopoly as the qualitatively prevailing phenomenon, which entangles itself in the "mixed form" of the first world war, stagnates in it, breaks, and here too forces through fundamental changes. More exactly: On the basis of the disintegration, the old relation is re-established in reverse. Why monopoly exactly?

The stagnating and parasitic character of imperialism has often been established; and—strange as it may seem at first glance—so has its "irritability," its aggressiveness. Whence this aggressiveness? Does it arise out of monopoly itself? We do not think so. Aggressiveness cannot stem from monopoly, if monopoly is stagnating, parasitic and (indubitably in the cartel form) seeks peace, like someone who, after hard labor, want to enjoy its fruits in the greatest possible security. The "dual character" of monopoly capitalism must arise out of the inner nature of capitalism itself, it must have a common root. The explanation is simple, if we understand monopoly as a phenomenon in the transition from the maturity of capitalism to its decline, embodying and revealing both features within itself. In fact: It is the law of collapse of capitalism that is operative in the aggressiveness of monopoly capitalism, that robs

it of its fruits and its "peace," and that makes it transvaluate all values, transform all forms.

"Finance Capital"

For a time capital believed that it could "freeze" its essence and established its independence as *bank capital* in order to be able to control the economy and rule in security. The brilliant days of bank capital have passed, and it falls back into its rôle of industrial assistant just when it had moved into its "dominating" position. It was the midwife of big industry and was able to raise itself temporarily to power during the transition from free to monopoly capitalism. But industry reconquered the mastery in monopoly capitalism and reinstated the old relationship which has as its basis *industrial capital*. In this "retransformation," so to speak, of bank capital into industrial capital, the transformation which it underwent itself is important: industrial bank capital became monopoly capital. As monopoly capital it gives capitalism a new dynamism and sets in motion the mechanism of the collapse which must follow the relative stagnation during maturity. The war and its consequences (inflation, plundering of the people) are important levers of the super-concentration which the new dynamism of the collapse produces.

Militarism and Nationalism

Militarism and nationalism likewise had an indispensable function. They were the midwife of progress, they created economic unification, cultural and political freedom, freedom of the capitalists and of the labor movement. In the course of development toward monopoly capitalism, they first became a permanent and ever more significant institution in the advanced countries (promoting industry and promoted by industry). Then they developed in the words of Rosa Luxemburg, "from motor of capitalist development into capitalist disease" (in pronounced form in the first world war). Finally these were converted into their direct opposite: they became the motor (cranked by monopoly in industry) of destruction of all (even their own) freedom, of all progress, of all nations. Just as important as in the case of bank capital is the transformation here of relatively independent militarism and nationalism into industrial militarism and nationalism, the reestablishment of their rôle of assistant *dependent* upon monopoly.

Social Factors (Primacy of Monopoly)

The relative independence of all social factors (art, science, religion, denial of religion, philosophy, ideology, politics, propaganda, organization, labor, conduct of the war, leisure, etc.), belongs to the past and coincides with the disappearance of parliamentary democracy. The state which in bourgeois democracy coordinated and adjusted the various interests in the interests of the ruling class and would occasionally set itself up as arbiter (Bonapartism), now centralizes but one interest: the interest of the monopoly capitalists. The primacy of politics over economics, proclaimed by National-Socialism, has no other meaning than this—to bring the whole machinery of the state into the possession of the monopolists and to make their economic policy the one and only political principle.

National freedom, the right of self-determination of nations and all other phrases which National-Socialism retains (preserving the connection with what was once achieved while leading society back, even ideologically, into the past on whose shoulders the bourgeoisie rose to its height), mean only the freedom and the right of this one industrial nation to rule over the world. Its racial superiority means only the superiority of this one industrial race, rationalized through and through, down to the leisure time of the workers, etc., etc.

Law of Life of the Bourgeoisie

The bourgeoisie, says Marx, cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and with it the production relations, and through them all social relations.⁷ The "theoreticians" of state capitalism stand helpless before processes in which they see the "disappearance" of the bourgeoisie, but in which in reality one of the most important laws of motion of capitalist society takes its fatal course. We can also express it in this way. The bourgeoisie must complete what it destroys and it must destroy what it completed.

Let us take the changes which are presented to us as "autarchy"

⁷ Citing from memory, we hope we have the exact sense of Marx's thought, if not the literal quotation.

and "bureaucratic collectivism," and which, along with other changes (overcoming of unemployment, enormous increase of production and development of new industries, disappearance of the "free proletariat," etc.), are newly interpreted as "classless state capitalism." To go into all the particulars would take a book and cannot be the purpose of a work which is limited to the fundamentals in order to find a political platform.

It should be perfectly clear that the colossal economic, social and political changes that have taken place since the first world war and are constantly advancing, are nothing but those revolutionizing changes which Marx had in mind in the above-cited passage and without which the bourgeoisie cannot exist and not—go under. If we admit, for example, the astonishing increase of production (which is accompanied in Germany by an equally astonishing productivity of labor), then what Marx says elsewhere remains entirely valid: With accumulation and the concomitant development of the productivity of labor, grows also the capacity for sudden expansion of capital.⁸

With this capacity the overcoming of German unemployment may be explained quite "capitalistically," if we understand the rôle of the "industrial reserve army." On this, Lenin says: "Inasmuch as accumulation accelerates the displacement of the worker by the machine, and produces wealth at one pole and poverty at the other, it also produces the so-called 'industrial reserve army,' the 'relative surplus' of workers or 'capitalist over-population,' which assumes extraordinarily variegated forms and creates for capital the possibility of exceptionally rapid expansion of production." (Our italics)

We have already met the industrial reserve army in the form of mass unemployment and first classify its liquidation systematically along the line of Marx-Lenin when we say: In case there is a change in the method of production, it necessarily includes qualitative changes in the social organization and social relations which are capable of "swallowing up" the capitalist over-population and giving it "new forms."

X—REMAINING RELATIONS WITH REGARD TO ALLEGED "STATE CAPITALISM"

Changes together with their entanglements and contradictions have occupied us throughout the preceding sections (the reading of which can simply be recapitulated from the standpoint of the *revolutionizing activity of the bourgeoisie which cannot free itself from this condition of its existence*). We observe them now in some remaining relations, which will definitely disclose their true essence.

With regard to those phenomena which disturb Burnham and consorts to the point of soothing flight to state capitalism⁹ the summary declaration of the first section still holds: "Putrefying capitalism, although it continues to remain capitalism, strengthens in its decline all the features which make up its 'impurity' and points back to its early stages. It transforms itself, the state, the proletariat to a substantial degree, i.e., capitalism turns from progression to retrogression, the state becomes totalitarian, the proletarian a *modern slave*." And particularly the greatest marvel that the apologists of "state capitalism" have produced, namely, the alleged replacement of *economic* exploitation by *political* (in which the exploitation of the workers is no longer supposed to be the result of the position he holds in the productive process as the seller of his commodity, labor power), is no more than a striking revolutionizing of the social relations and of the production relations by the bourgeoisie.

In tracing the course of the revolutionizing work of the bourgeoisie, we have especially classified the abolition of the freedom of labor (freedom of movement, freedom of labor contract, end of the "free" proletarian), the prisons, ghettos and the whole camp system, and characterized them as forms of the "development toward the modern slave state." This development is an inherent tendency of capitalism, always present and always operative in it. Through imperialism it becomes ever more strongly pronounced in the capi-

8. See footnote 7.

9. Just think of all the crude stuff about the alleged elimination of the private entrepreneur (by the "managerial bureaucracy"), the abdication of the profit motive (in favor of the "power motive"), the end of the technological revolutions *transforming* the social structure ("self-evident" with the retention of technical innovations which not only do no go "so deep"), the annulling of the market, of prices, of wages (to be sure with unfortunate "relics" of all), the miraculous transformation of exchange values (into "pure" use values), etc.

talist countries themselves and must be evaluated as a characteristic of capitalist "contraction."

The theory of state capitalism is worthily christened not only by its name (if the capitalist economy is dead, why then is it still "capitalism" at all?) but also by the mistake that *one* phase of capitalism (that of liberal or "free" capitalism) is confused with the *whole* of capitalism (imperialism, decline). Not only is the constant revolution in the social relations, in the social organization, etc. overlooked, but even more so the "extraordinarily variegated forms" which the industrial reserve army and its "sudden" utilization assume.

Thus we must once more underline: Under imperialism production is carried on in a capitalist manner from A to Z, but all relations from A to Z are *qualitatively* altered. The "camp system," labor and forced labor service, prisons, etc., become, by the massive extent and the manner of their utilization, first, special forms of slave labor, and beyond that, imperialist forms of utilizing the capitalist overpopulation. Under imperialism, such labor becomes simple slave labor with all the emblems pertaining thereto, as soon as capital is able to expand itself "suddenly" in the midst of changed social relations, i.e., as soon as it has equally "sudden" use for it on the basis of changed methods of production.

Sudden Expansion for War

An opportunity for sudden expansion and for extraordinarily rapid expansion of production is afforded monopoly capital (which, as a result of unevenness, can at the same time be "stagnant," saturated and timid), inasmuch as, after antecedent concentration, rationalization, establishment and construction of new industries, and in general after improvement of the methods of production, it *alone* usurps the state power, establishes the primacy of monopoly politics, and steers toward a way out in imperialist expansion through war. Precisely at this point arises the tendency to overcome competition among the workers (we have in mind the specific forms that split society and threaten its existence) by applying the same measures which are supposed to level competition among the monopolists.

The champions of "state capitalism" naturally and rightly proceed from Germany and Russia, where they perceive a puzzling change in things and then discover traces of it in every country. They rightly see here the establishment of a decisive quality (only they don't know which) and the most "serious" among them do not even think of disputing that the German economic, political and social development coincides with the complete subordination of economic activity to the needs of the conduct of the war. They thereby implicitly admit that the methods of production in the old and new industries have been transformed for the *war*. They thus admit that the powerful concentration, monopolization, cartelization, etc., both in the economy and in the social relations and social organization, move completely along the line of disproportion, on the basis of such industries as are decisive for the conduct of the war and monopoly politics, i.e., by systematizing the disproportions, they make them catastrophic for society.

In the qualitative changes which we have considered, there are therefore necessarily also included *quantitative* changes in the individual branches of production. There is no end to the revolutions in every conceivable sphere. War and peace become a unity like politics and economy. War infects peace and peace war. That is no arbitrary play on words. It is the formula for the grim fact that *imperialist* peace declares war in permanence. What are the "technicalized armies of millions in the economic system of imperialism if not the employment of the industrial reserve army for the "sudden" expansion of monopoly capitalism, in the course of which they "consume" themselves as well as the industrial product?

The Hunger for "Surplus Population"

If we realize how quickly England and America have "consumed" their unemployed and yet are little satisfied, then we get an idea of what is actually going on. We must straightway say that imperialism creates a wolfish hunger for "surplus" population, which may be best compared with the hunger for the "free proletarian" in the epoch of primitive accumulation. The methods of satisfying this burning hunger are the same now as then: force, betrayal, enticement. With this difference, to be sure, that the movement always goes in the reverse direction and the field of recruitment has been broadened. This time it is not slaves and serfs who are led into unguaranteed and propertyless "freedom," but the propertyless freeman, the expropriated and the coerced (in a word, all who can somehow be made "available") are led into what is for

the most part also unguaranteed and propertyless slavery. The field of recruitment is no longer any old "primitive" area, but, so far as the modern methods of force are involved (the transitional feature of free emigration, etc., is something else), the world.

Germany's position in the retrogressive movement must assure it also in this respect (i.e., by the backward transformation of the surplus population, created by accumulation, into regimented serfs and slaves) the leading rôle which fell to England in the "classical" primitive accumulation. A "classical" country is always sufficient to give world capitalism its prevailing character, and one and the same thing has as many sides today as it had then. The backward transformation of the industrial reserve army and the increase of slaves through robbery all over Europe, etc., is for its part identical with the backward transformation of the industrial nations into agricultural countries with a colonial and semi-colonial status. In addition there are other aspects.

The "Migration of Peoples"

Although woven into the thick mesh of the other relations, the "migration of peoples," for example, is a complex of questions in itself. Foreign and native workers and peasants, who, by force or "voluntarily," are sent all over Europe from their homeland or from the allied and defeated countries and are "resettled," form the material substance in the system of Greater German imperialism of a procedure that consists in "establishing" (wherever necessary) surplus populations in certain areas and—in using them in other areas. The "Three Theses" speak of resettlement, deportation of workers, etc., which involve hundreds of thousands. That is an incorrect point in the thesis. It should have said deportations and resettling of many *millions*. Operations like this involving millions are fully qualified to disintegrate disastrously the national composition of Europe. Nations are decomposed; minorities and majorities and their problems are "created" (and added to the old) as botanical species are bred in a laboratory. The pride, the wealth, the specific culture, the tradition of the peoples are thereby destroyed. The great flower and vegetable gardens, the vineyards of France, Holland, Belgium, true "cultures" of human labor, the experience of many generations, perfume and the solace of civilization, belong with the French way of life to the golden past which only yesterday was the living present. In place of the old splendor appear ordinary corn and potatoes—over and over again the potato, whose widespread use is the surest sign of the spread of poverty, of a sinking standard of living.

No wonder that the nations fall apart from within and a tendency grows up which can lead easily, in perspective, to a point where parts of the nation oppose each other, fight for their release from the national bond, just as if it were a matter of reestablishing the dismemberment that existed before national unification. But all processes start from and enter into the industrial process. As the concentration of capital and the centralization of the means of production develop to their highest point, they pull the development back. As capital drives self-expansion to its peak, it narrows down the expansion of its component parts and of itself, and keeps everything in the conditions of decomposition which it produces. We must understand how to follow it closely in the modern development.

"Managerial Dictatorship"

The advocates of state capitalism have obviously failed to offer proof of why the German economic system, which is characterized by all the peculiarities here described, is "not capitalist." Practice has given their "system" many headaches and they are forced to degrade the undeniable "remnants" of capitalism to factors "without fundamental significance." In so far as they refer to Marx in this connection, that is, construct a "model" of state capitalism which the raw reality of capitalism must—as they say—rapidly approach, their method is all topsy-turvy. Marx constructed "models" in order to explain the indubitable reality. He found at hand all the "tendencies" in the raw reality of finished capitalism but he never went beyond the *capitalist reality*. He strictly rejected on rigid scientific grounds (as Lenin after him so often stressed) the idea of opening up "specific [socialist] perspectives of the future." And so (as up to now) the secret of the "managerial dictatorship" will be unveiled without state capitalism—in spe!—by capitalism itself.

Property in the means of production has always been *power* and the power which this specific property exercises over the workers, the consumers, the state and in all social spheres, increases to the degree in which the means of production and the productive forces

grow. If the relations are shifted in the course of development from free to monopoly capitalism, and then, within monopoly capitalism, in such a way that the industries of destruction in an advanced capitalist country (which draws the others after it) gain the quantitative preponderance and becomes the sole determining factor, then all remaining relations must necessarily assume not only "another" quality but the definite quality which is integrated with *destruction*. All we have to deal with is a *reality* which brings to pure expression the *self-purpose* of the capitalist mode of production, and turns the quality of capital *producing only for itself* into the quality of *self-destruction*.

But under capitalism no one is "free": neither the "reformer" nor the bureaucrat, the politician, worker or capitalist can "choose" his road. Whoever does not obey the laws of capitalism or "misunderstands" them, is automatically thrown overboard, finished, crushed, imprisoned, driven into exile—be he the "labor leader" most devoted to capital, Thyssen or Strasser.

Just as, however, the centralization of capital and of the means of production kills off many capitalists and monopolists, centralizes power and shifts the total relations by the transfer of preponderance, in the same way the makeup of the personnel of the ruling monopolist class can and must be "shifted" in part, without doing any damage to capitalism as an economic system. In the whole "managerial revolution" it is once more a question only of an inherent tendency of capitalism, which, in imperialism and with the help of Fascism, is driven to its climax and to its point of transformation. Conceived as a theoretical "ideal," the whole capitalist class to the last man, could, for example, be strung up on the gallows and be *replaced* by the robber band which monopoly capital raised up and financed to save itself. That would only prove what was long ago deduced from capitalist reality and analyzed:

First: The democratic state which gave expression to various interests, disintegrates to the degree to which the productive forces of monopoly capital grow and give it mastery over the state.

Second: The centralization of capital necessarily coalesces with the more and more expanded economic function of the state. (Fascism has above all also the purpose of fusing into *one* channel the channels separated and differentiated in the democratic-parliamentary system—the channels through which the ruling class exercised and knew how to conceal its economic and political power in the period of free competition).

Third: The whole process is united in the fusion of monopoly capital with the state, which Marxism has long recognized as the necessary result of the function of capital.

Intervention of History

In this process it is only and solely history which prevents the realization of any kind of "ideal model" (be it, to name a good and a bad example, Bukharin's model for "state capitalism" which in his view *remains* capitalist, or Hilferding's preposterous "general cartel"). History is always uneven and combined. Hence, it is only natural that competition also brings it about that (as a result of the division of labor) specialists and politicians who have performed "services" in behalf of production and the rule of capital, move up socially and use their position and their political power to make substantial industrial "acquisitions." If social-democrats, former anarchists, even "communists" and other rabble have had no trouble reaching ministerial posts and directorships of banks and industrial enterprises (they also "fuse" with the nobility by marriage)—there certainly is no trouble for the "most meritorious" of the highwaymen, the Fascists!

Anti-Semitism

The expropriation of Jewish capitalists in the interests of monopoly concentration is as if made to order for the "self-acquisitions" of the fascist führers. That is one of the reasons for the obdurately consistent anti-Semitism in Germany. Another reason is: Where monopolist development is as pronounced as it is in Germany, and where war preparations demand it, the *residues* of finance capital (in Hilferding's sense), certain branches of industry, of trade, of small shops, of science, etc., must be ruthlessly eliminated.

The Jews everywhere have substantial positions in these branches. Fascism "storms" these positions and thus prepares the way to sacrifice other middle class strata. Hatred of the Jews is further incited, kept alive and practiced mercilessly because the Jews (historically and politically conditioned) express more easily the ineradicable "impurity" of capitalism, i.e., they are traditionally more capable and more compelled to reproduce private prop-

erty daily and hourly, and on a large scale (as Lenin says in another connection). Hatred of the Jews in general, and the crudity of German anti-semitism in particular, are perpetuated by the irremediable inclination of capital to reproduce its own history.

Anti-Semitism always has an economic function. Whenever developed capitalist countries, in which it has declined to insignificance because of the "blessed effects" of capital in the springtime of its life (it *never* could quite disappear, any more than all other features of class society), return to the *practice* of it in the gruesome forms of the Middle Ages, this too is merely a part of the retrogressive movement. It is a sure sign of economic retrogression which forces the political repetition of everything that took place *before* the nineteenth century.

Significance of the Change in the Personal Composition of the Ruling Class

Since not even the most extreme expression of the alleged "state capitalist" features contradict capitalism, and history stubbornly refuses to admit "ideal cases," we are only interested in the concrete opposite of what the "state capitalists" contend. It has long been clear that the so-called "managerial dictatorship" and the actual dictatorship of monopoly capital constitute the state which is identical not with progress but vast economic disintegration or retrogression. But it is not concrete enough—this state resembles that centralized, absolutist and uncontrolled power which the bourgeoisie and the proletariat marching behind it had to assault in their youth and against which they fought brilliant economic, ideological and political battles. What the "state capitalists" assiduously avoid analyzing is the skeleton of the social hierarchy corresponding to the "magnitude of the capital." Capital itself remains divided into organizationally clearly distinguishable units; the position of the individual within this unity corresponds to the magnitude of the capital he represents. The whole social organization has a fatal similarity with feudalism, where within the same group of feudal lords the greater also towered over the smaller in plenitude of power.

In this connection, the shift in the personal composition of the ruling class has in turn a special function. The more a society disintegrates, the greater are the opportunities open to mendacious people ambitious for possessions and honors, blackguards of every kind, to offer their services to capital, to climb up into the ruling class, to occupy state positions. Not only this, the whole band of upstarts also substitutes fresh blood for the worn-out dynasties, parliamentary institutions, etc. With whatever "ideology" or demagoguery they climbed up, once at the top, all ideology breaks down, is maltreated, and the erstwhile "opponent" becomes the "partner" in the firm he pretended to fight. Its goals are henceforth *his* goals, its reason for being is the reason for his being. The psychology which their rise produced in them continues to cling to them and makes them blind tools of history, which prepares in them the instruments, the human transmitting mechanism, for the new dynamism of the decline. Nobody *hates* the revolution and the claims of the class from which he "arose" more than an Ebert. Nobody has workers shot at more easily than a social-democratic Reichswehr or Police Minister. Nobody brings to the unfettering of the destructive energy of monopoly capitalism more unrestrained energy, less conscience, more resolute brutality, more unbroken will, more open cynicism, more colossal self-confidence, more concentrated drive for power and pelf, etc., than the fascist soldiers of fortune, who force the people into the organizational system of coercion of the rule of monopoly capital. They inspire fresh courage and new self-confidence in the functionaries of capital, rendered "cautious" and crippled by tradition, training, routine and experience.

Reproduction of the Historical Past

And here the retrogressive movement becomes compact: an apparent confusion of old and new features, of tendencies pointing simultaneously in different directions and criss-crossing, a combination of all characteristics and unevenness of previous class societies (of the history and pre-history of capitalism in particular)—in reality a strictly lawful disintegration of bourgeois society. In its downfall it can do no more than demolish its own history and kick up the checkered dust of the past—and do it all the more furiously, the more rapidly it sinks back into the past, i.e., the longer the death struggle, the more unequivocally must it assume the form in which all class society is brought to an end.

Because the development preserves its thoroughgoing unevenness, the disintegration appears on the one hand in highly con-

densed and combined form (for no feature of development, no attribute, no law, etc., can ever go lost)—and it appears on the other hand as a broad process of levelling (for it adapts everything to the conditions of those countries in which more primitive, original, older features of uneven development prevail). To use a metaphor: A building, resting on pillars, which collapses, leaves less empty space and compresses all the building materials in a dense heap. At the same time, it falls below the level of the pillars that bore the weight. As a place of human abode it is no different from a desert or a cave. Further, under certain conditions (the influence of long-lasting convulsions, etc.) the cave *can* sooner be the point of departure of a new development than a magnificent building can be reconstructed out of its materials.

Thus considered, the new tyrants honored in Byzantine fashion are called (in Russia and under fascism) Il Duce, the intuitively gifted Führer, the "Sun of the Peoples," the Only One, the Great, and the Genial. They brutalize everything which is suspected of progress, freedom, culture and humanity. They surround themselves with their own Prætorian guard, in addition to an army, police, espionage and juridical apparatus. They have their St. Bartholomew nights, fratricides, pogroms of Jews, public burnings, their witch trials of enemies and accomplices. There is not a gloomy image out of the past that has not been conjured up by Stalinism and fascism and imprinted on the picture of present society as its most predominant feature.

The Masses and "Mass Psychology"

All this, to be sure, is "known"—it would not need special mention did it not have an unknown, falsified, misinterpreted, dangerous reverse.

The masses, those on whose backs and at whose cost the economic, social and political process of transformation is carried out, have become, because of what preceded the erection of fascism, even more than ordinarily incapable of defending themselves in the right way. As soon as fascism comes to power, the economy is "cranked up" for the imperialist aims of monopoly capital, the corresponding social changes are carried out—the unbelieving-hopeful, fearful-expectant, restless-trusting attitude of the masses must pass into the disillusionment of their belief in the former political and social institutions, only to be transformed finally, with all the waverings engendered by the process of transformation itself and faithfully accompanying it, into complete submission to an ineluctable destiny.

The power of economic facts is in Russia (on the basis of the nationalized economy and of the productive forces released thereby) and in Germany (through monopoly capitalism carried out to its ultimate consequences and the economic "security" which it not only seems to offer but which for a certain period of time it actually *offers*)—this power is so great that it allows the collective consciousness no other way than to pass through the cleansing fire of time, and then—whatever the aspirations of the various strata of the population may be—to see what "develops further." The decline of the Russian Revolution, the collapse of the international labor movement, the state of world capitalism are, in addition to all other factors, first-rate factors which blockade the consciousness of the German, Russian and European masses in general into very narrow limits and deprive it of any "better" perspective. We can say with certainty that German mass consciousness will be turned in other directions only to the extent that Germany is *economically* destroyed and its *economic* power appreciably diminished.

An investigation of the so-called "mass mood" is thus possible only on the general basis: When economic realities are established or evaporate, mass consciousness follows them for good or ill. The more overwhelming and pronounced the economic realities, or their atrophy, the more unequivocal the effect on the two basic forms of mass reaction to their social environment: active and passive support, active and passive rejection. Whoever does not understand this, still understands *nothing*; and whoever pretends to be able to say more about "mass consciousness" is (objectively) a charlatan.

To express ourselves still more clearly: We must turn energetically against the "mass psychology" fraud and mischief which has become fashionable in recent years and to which certain "Marxists" also incline. We must not permit the shamelessness which falsifies the crimes of social-democracy, of Stalinism, of rotting bourgeois democracy, and unloads on the masses the guilt for the crimes of this whole gang. The longest whip should be reserved for those who make the *masses* responsible for their enforced behavior in a situation into which they have been driven by the blatherskiting sneaks

of the bourgeoisie,¹⁰ who drape themselves, according to need and circumstance, as revisionists (neo-Kantians), "state capitalists," mass psychologists, etc.

If we must use alchemist "psychology," then it is this: Nobody has transformed the milk of the pious way of thinking into the fermenting dragon's poison of fascism-Stalinism, and accustomed them to monstrosities more than those gentlemen themselves.¹¹ "Mass psychology" (even in Freud) is the last pseudo-scientific rubbish which the bourgeoisie in the democracies still tries to peddle. It is the worthy supplement of pseudo-scientific "racism" cut to the needs of Anglo-American imperialism, which finds in these "sciences" the ideological justification for the "reeducation" of the European masses. It gives them the "psychologically" motivated pretext for world domination under whose wing the demoralized "leadership" of Europe thinks to reinstate itself. These people will and must deceive themselves. The most aggressive position conceivable must be taken against the latest attempt at fraud by the bourgeoisie who are the ideological trail-blazers for fascism in the "democracies." The line of struggle is defined by the insight: There is and can be no "mass psychology" (with or without Freud)—that is only a *political psychology, political behavior* of the masses. What we can say about this behavior is completely exhausted by the recognition that a *couple of differences in degree in the economic relations produces in every case a wholly different—soul*. Whatever goes beyond that is (to put it precisely) swindle; more politely, self-deceit.

"Autarchy"

We come thus to the last point that interests us: the "theory of state capitalism," which is no more than the pseudo-scientific supplement to the "millennium" and (like mass psychology) a true ideological precursor of fascism in the "remaining democracies," a means of obscurantism, and as such a weapon against German competition. The point in question is the swindle of the economic "autarchy" of Germany or Russia, without which the "system" of state capitalism naturally cannot exist, and which therefore makes it in *reality* the theoretical nonsense that it is. Nothing could be more characteristic of the political psychology of the masses (especially in Germany and Russia), of the decline of capitalism, the retrogressive movement, the posing of the problem of the Second World War, etc., than what is hidden behind this alleged autarchy. In it, all rays are, so to speak, united as in a reflector which radiates them back to the rest of the world (under different conditions in Russia, but in the same way).

Capitalism has transcended the national limits economically, without being able to abolish them. The result was the economic disorder of Europe, marked by the socialist revolution in Russia and the shift of economic weight to America. The monopolistic tendency bound up with the once created disproportions drives with iron necessity further along this direction and attains, along with its most extreme consequence, also—it inversion. As a result, both Russia and Germany (there are reflexions everywhere) try to exploit the disorder of the international economy, i.e., to turn the international division of labor into quite definite directions. The constellation of the Second World War and its conscious posing of the problem announce themselves: Russia, which wishes to defend herself against attack, Germany, which wishes to attack and to expand, must both subordinate everything to the conduct of the war and therefore make themselves as independent as possible of the international division of labor. The conscious imperialist posing of the problem (whereby Russia, in defense as in economic construction, follows only the laws of the capitalist environment) means: to get absolute economic preponderance in order to conquer. *Capitalist* terrain, both in preparation for and during the war, is to be incorporated completely into the economic life of the conqueror—they wish in advance to change by destroying and to destroy by changing. Both Russia and Germany move thereby along the line of the greatest possible self-sufficiency and self-provisioning (the whole construction and reconstruction is not "bought" from the people but squeezed out of it with enormous sacrifice and reprisals). But this is not accomplished "autarchically," beyond the interna-

10. Whoever, for example, considers the "forty-three per cent" of German votes, which was the highest Hitler ever received, as an actual measure, overlooks and has no idea of how this result was attained in a situation that was absolutely hopeless and issueless for the masses.

11. Note for the English reader: Schiller has William Tell say against Gessler: "Into fermenting dragon's poison have you transformed for me the milk of the pious way of thinking, you have accustomed me to monstrosities."

tional division of labor, but *by means* of it: by planful hoarding of everything which establishes preponderance, by creating definite proportions in the international division of labor. "Autarchy" (so far as it can be reasonably spoken of at all) is thus only a planful method of preparing imperialist expansion, and as such the attempt to overcome the international division of labor without being able to abolish it.

Return of the National Question

Both sides of this effort are explicit features of the breakdown of capitalism, the historic road of the capitalist mode of production circulating within itself and progressively contracting. In these are revealed not the establishment of "state capitalism," but the inversion of all relations which characterizes the decline of capitalism. The establishment of an economic unity useful for the conduct of the war (the absence of which caused the internal collapse of the first imperialist war) is accomplished by ways and means which present, as always, the direct opposite of the ascending development.

The creditor-debtor relationship is characteristic and essential for ascending capitalism, vice versa for declining capitalism. Whoever wishes to decline (*cum grano salis*: is called upon to achieve his ruin) must, contrariwise, become a debtor, force back the development in the weaker countries and precisely thereby bring them into dependence upon himself. The collapse of capitalism is introduced as a process of industrial concentration in a very few countries (moreover of very different specific weight), to which the industrial remodelling and disarmament in other countries correspond. It is not the bad politics of the "state capitalists," it is the inherent nature of the "capital producing only for itself" which provides (to paraphrase Marx) that not only must the situation of the workers necessarily worsen but also the situation of all nations, however high or low their share of exports or imports.

The indestructible nature of capital shows itself precisely in the fact that its inner contradictions are carried over into the international arena with all the more explosive force the more they *appear* to be subdued on a national scale; thereby indicating how futile remains the attempt to abolish the international division of labor "autarchically." The effect of the effort not to abolish it but to overcome it in a prescribed direction, i.e., to shift it, is its consolidation on the level of disintegration. With this consolidation, Russia, (whose revolution degenerates and whose economy gravitates toward the capitalist side) and Germany (which expands imperialistically) have abolished the political boundaries only to reestablish them as an economic-national problem (in Russia, e.g., the Ukrainian question). Seen in all its aspects, the development returns to its points of departure. The imperialist and Stalinist atomization of the individual corresponds to the national conglomerating of the impoverished, hurled-back countries, degraded to colonies or politically subjugated—and returns as the national question.

The "Correct" Posing of the Problem for the Second World War

While capitalism thus proves to be absolutely incapable of removing a single one of its contradictions and of escaping its destiny (the sharpening of these contradictions in the retrogressive movement of the collapse), one thing is nevertheless sure: the problem of the imperialist war is this time at least posed correctly according to capitalist logic. The end-result of capitalist development, monopoly industry, becomes the *foundation* of the war and the *military problem* is now to be solved by it with *economic measures* (on economic foundations). Hopeless though the venture remains with regard to the solution of the capitalist problem itself—premises and conclusions now again coincide. Industrial militarism therefore regains its relative independence in strategy, tactics, etc., *in a new way*, because it is dependent upon monopoly: the war can be conducted totally; what is not conquered is ruthlessly destroyed.

The attempts of the "bloody international of the armaments industry" to pursue its activity as it did in the First World War are reduced mainly to England and America (due to their position in the retrogressive movement) and quickly lose significance. The war itself becomes "mobile" again. Fronts and alliances can be interchanged. The war assumes (like a falling body increasing in speed) the form of ancient expeditions of conquest in which clear military decisions also decided the enslaving of a population, the "use" to which they were put, the dragging off of the population and of wealth, political independence, etc.; and which always aimed at the destruction of the economic power of the opponent. The relatively short duration of former continental wars is in this war only the

brief stage of the overthrow of weak capitalist nations (among them, France). Otherwise it is like the long-drawn-out and ever-renewed attempts of ancient kingdoms to conquer world mastery. Under such efforts, the "civil population," both at that time and now, suffered more than the soldier himself. Nevertheless, the "grandeur" of the attempt and its material foundation is the reason why mass consciousness cannot escape it and the prospects are blocked up.

Historical Meaning and "Progress" in the Retrogressive Movement

Our conclusion is: the "psychologist" is far blinder than the masses, who are another tool of the historic breakdown of the capitalist mode of production and follow its iron laws. History never makes "arbitrary" but always revolutionary jumps. And humanity, according to Marx, not only poses just such tasks as it can solve, but (as we have made clear in former works) it resolves upon their real solution only when all illusions have disappeared and no other way out is left. That is just as true of the Russian Revolution as of its decline, and the historical meaning of the retrogressive movement consists in exhausting the ultimate possibilities of capitalism—the historical-practical possibilities of its self-destruction. There is no other meaning than the historically *developed* meaning. If anyone asks us about the *progress* which must necessarily be contained in the historical retrogression, and whose disclosure is a political act, we would answer in this way:

The enormous progress which the retrogressive movement must bring into existence in the unfolding of its inner contradictions lies in the creation of a situation which drives the consciousness of humanity unavoidably to the last possible solution. The conditions which grow more intolerable each day press toward the revolutionary solution of the crisis of humanity and thereby also serve to collapse the last illusion of Stalinist revisionism, namely, that the *world revolution* can be avoided.

In the retrogressive movement there comes to an end the life's course of revisionism, which accompanied the ascending development with the illusion of a capitalism having an unlimited capacity for expansion, and its complement, the illusion of "socialism in one country." In both its forms, it ends with capitalism's decline. The proof of this, and of the opening up of the revolutionary perspective, is obtained by investigating the special form of the retrogressive movement which, in addition to the features already observed, it possesses in strict opposition to the ascending development.

XI—SPECIFIC RETROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT

The disintegration of the British Empire supplies the historic framework of the retrogressive movement or the downfall of the capitalist mode of production.

The breaking up of the British Empire set in at the same time that it received its juridical coronation through the Versailles Treaty. England's position as industrial monopolist belongs definitely to the past. Her economic and military basis is ultimately too narrow for her colossal possessions; her wealth (which, like France's wealth, is co-responsible for the obsolescence of her industry in comparison with Germany and America) is the source of her weakness. Since America and Japan broke into her sphere of influence, she has taken up a line of defense in the post-war period from which she slowly but steadily retreats. This line in turn influences the whole development in a corresponding manner. In the English "balance-of-power politics" of the post-war period—the social question which shakes the world from Russia and Germany to China and India and back again to the Spanish Revolution, has become a dominating element. It now participates decisively in the shaping of the development.

It might therefore appear that it is not the British Empire but the rest of the world which provides the framework for the disintegration of capitalism. But that is a mistake. The rest of the world provides the framework for the construction of the British Empire as much as it does for its dissolution, and it is this dissolution which gives concrete ramification to the whole declining line of development. England's strength is still great enough, in its retreat and defense, to exert influence upon the decline of the Russian Revolution (among other means by systematic strengthening of Germany and later the Stalinist bureaucracy), and to exploit for the "solution" of the social question the policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy in China, in the Anglo-Russian committee, in the victory of fascism in Germany and in the Spanish Revolution, etc. Without Stalin, no Hitler. But without the English policy there would not be so rapid

a rise of Stalin and so successful a foreign policy for Hitler, which was made possible by the systematic weakening of France and the Little Entente. England, dominated on the other side by the antagonism to America, cannot do otherwise than contribute to the concrete history of the decay of capitalism which it contained embryonically in itself on the basis of its position as industrial monopolist. The point is that this is the historical result of the movement generated by the capitalist development itself. The point is not how the development *might* have occurred under other premises. The destiny of capitalism *has been* decided in Europe.

The Transition

We have said that a "classical" country is always enough to give world capitalism its prevailing character and the prevailing character of the ascending development was free competition, controlled by the industrial monopoly of England and the building up of its world empire. The development goes from West to East, and produces monopoly in industry out of free competition. Capitalism appears in the imperialist stage of its full maturity and poses the problem of the redivision of the world. Because the real situation was misjudged, this problem was *falsely* posed: Capitalism reaches its decline at an early date and goes under in Russia, which is especially a product of capitalist super-saturation and is the weakest link in the imperialist chain. In Russia the uneven and combined development of capitalism is broken, proceeds at first beyond it, and yields its highest historical product to date, the victorious October Revolution and the nationalization of the means of production as the basis of socialist economy. The last and weakest country in the rank of imperialist development had the most irresistible labor movement, the densest interweaving of the latter's interests with the bourgeois-democratic interests of the whole people, especially with the interests of the peasantry, and the most conscious conjoining of all these interests for the victory of the proletarian revolution through the Bolshevik Party. Therewith the lifeline of capitalism is *broken*. History proves that it is the destiny of its mode of production to be overthrown by the proletarian revolution and to be the material premise of a higher mode of production, of a more human society. In England's industrial monopoly, whose abolition threatens its empire and becomes the cause of the first imperialist war, the collapse of capitalism was included in advance.

But socialism can be achieved only if it builds further on the basis of capitalist world economy, i.e., evens out the uneven development, draws all people into technical progress, brings material wealth and technical progress itself to a height at which it is possible to speak of overcoming the social division of labor in its *class-producing* and *politically-oppressive* effect and form. The problem of the proletarian revolution is therefore posed by Lenin and the Bolsheviks as the problem of the *world revolution*, and it is unmistakably asserted that the *isolated* Russian Revolution must inevitably perish. Apart from the fundamental consideration of the impossibility of a "national" socialism, the highest product of uneven development is at the same time the lowest product of capitalism, a backward country whose general level lies far beneath the level of the advanced capitalist countries.

Italy

Russia, after warding off all the imperialist attempts at intervention and ending the civil war, made allowance for the world situation and drew back to the NEP with full maintenance of the revolutionary line. New revolutionary crises ripened in Europe and the hopes of the Bolsheviks for help through the revolution in other countries (Germany is the most important) awaited fulfillment. During this period, Italy assumed the position of precursor of an imperialist disintegration which seeks in fascism the form or rule of monopoly capitalism corresponding to this disintegration.

Italy thus introduced the specific retrogressive movement into the *imperialist* countries, and laid bare a political vacuum unparalleled in modern history. After the murder of Matteotti, political power literally lay in the streets. Only after nobody else would take it did Mussolini seize it again. It was the vacuum in which capitalism and the labor movement turn somersaults and stagger back.

Nevertheless, it is Italy's destiny to be in no way decisive, and always to be only a special case of the anticipated development. Having just leaped to the top, she sinks back again to fourth place and looks toward the stronger. This time she finds the stronger in Germany. But she enters the great conflict, in accordance with her tradition, only when the fortunes of war seem to be decided and the moment has come to assure herself of at least petty spoils. Musso-

lini's expedition to Abyssinia and his expedition into the desert on the eve of the Second Imperialist World War are symbolic of Italy's destiny. Her power is just about big enough for her to test out the effects of collapse in the desert. History avenges itself fearfully for the vacuum into which fascism leaped: it is Italy's economic and political history which makes the Italian people skeptical, unsuited for employment in the service of foreign interests and makes them (in the mass) "bad" soldiers of capital.¹²

The war has not yet ended and already the Italian bourgeoisie sees itself rewarded appropriately for its effort to outwit history. It stands again as the betrayer betrayed. With this, the development in Italy is once again broken: she becomes the precursor of fascist collapse, and her whole body experiences, on one hand, imperialist decomposition in war, and on the other, the democratic-political problem.

Russia

Since Italy decides nothing, the development must leap from this precursor, not over to England again, but to where its main line was broken: to Russia.

The German revolution was shattered on the theoretical, political, organization and tactical mistakes and weaknesses of the German Left. They were incapable, during the war as well as later, of filling up the gaps torn by revisionism and making up for lost opportunities. The weaknesses of the German Left are, on the contrary, the direct product of the incompleteness of their struggle against Revisionism, which carried the day and left the Russian Revolution isolated.

Into the political vacuum thus created sprang Russia, where reaction to isolation after the defeat of the German revolution and Lenin's death set in all along the line. This reaction is, in terms of its content, the result of inner difficulties and the pressure of capitalist surroundings to which the masses and a part of the Bolshevik Party succumbed. It is thus also the product of the inner contradiction of the Russian Revolution, to be an isolated revolution, especially in a backward country weakened by war and civil war. In the actual historical course, the Russian reaction is identical with "being lost," identical with the downfall of the revolution, which Lenin had regarded as "certain" in the event of its isolation. Again, the Philistine can naturally picture the doom only as a "smooth" one, whereas history as usual decisively refuses to admit "ideal cases." In historically concrete terms, the foretold defeat of the revolution takes on the form, therefore, of a *process of degeneration* which is long-drawn-out, full of contradictions, retrogressive, etc., wherein the inner difficulties and the pressure of the capitalist environment gain more and more influence and carry through the retrogression toward the capitalist side.

Therewith the uneven and combined development breaks in its highest historical product and demands corresponding ideological expression. The gap in consciousness is filled by the new revisionism with the "theory of socialism in one country," which is put in circulation by Stalin himself as a direct product of the halfway-ness of the German Left immediately after the defeat of the German revolution and Lenin's death. If German revisionism was the theoretical climax and systematization of *all other* methods for holding down the labor movement, and, as such, was the effort to avoid revolution in *every single country*, revisionism of the Stalinist observance is the climax of the halfway-ness of the German Left which permitted German revisionism to perform its fateful function to the full. This halfway-ness is the medium through which German revisionism is carried over into Russia and appears as the effort to avoid the world revolution on the basis of the revolution already accomplished.

With this, the theoretical development is broken in accordance with the economic development by inversion of the revolutionary concept (the "peaceful growing" of Russian society into socialism). And therewith is broken also the democratic and national development, whose broad line up to that point had moved upward and had stepped beyond bourgeois limits. Proletarian democracy, just achieved in the fight against Czarist absolutism, gave way to the most hideous absolutism history has ever seen. The national question, correctly solved for the first time in history, arises again in its bourgeois form as a consequence of Stalinist policy. An unparalleled disintegration sets in; the transvaluation of all values, which

12. For Italy's campaign against Greece, we can vary the beautiful anecdote which made the rounds after the First World War with regard to the war of Austria against Russia. "The brave Italians held out against the blows of the enemy until the arrival of . . . troops."

serves capitalism as decisive prototype, is utilized by it decisively and clears the road for its self-disintegration.

The revisionist "peaceful growing into" socialism is always identical in practice with the growing together of the labor bureaucracy with the bourgeois state, which it supports in the interests of the bourgeoisie, in order to unburden it of a more or less large part of its business of suppression. Where *all* capitalist development has landed in a dead end, has progressed beyond bourgeois accomplishments and has then been inverted on a revolutionary basis, the labor bureaucracy *usurps* the state and monopolizes political power for itself alone. It directs the state externally as well as internally *against* the proletariat and the revolution, and draws increasingly upon *bourgeois* elements for support against the proletariat and the revolution (as contrariwise, the bourgeoisie in the democracies draws the labor bureaucracy to its assistance).

Further: Since social consciousness permits no gaps and there is no middle ideology between socialist consciousness and bourgeois ideology, it is *bourgeois* consciousness which returns in the degeneration of the completely isolated revolution. And because all combinations and unevenness, including the revolutionary ones, are carried over from West to East and have broken in Russia, *all* fundamental features of the revisionist development also reappear in combination and inversion. Stalin's revisionism has four aspects:

It remains or becomes:

1. *Impossible*, in so far as it can come forward *only* as reaction and counter-revolution; can *only* suppress the proletariat and deliver it over to bourgeois atomization; can *only* intensify class differences; can *only* undermine its own foundation; can *only* worsen the situation of the masses as contrasted with the reformism of the ascending development.

2. *Theoretical*, because it re-systematizes all methods of holding down the labor movement, is a post-dated note on the fruits of "growing into socialism" (from which the world working class is also supposed to profit), and therefore takes over the fateful function of German revisionism, to corrode the revolutionary will and spirit of the great movements by this "perspective."

3. *Practical-political*, because it is the direct state practice of the autocratic bureaucracy and is just as directly engaged in counter-revolutionary activity in Russia as in China, England, Germany, France, Spain and the whole world.

4. *Organic*, because it is identical with all the wishes, goals and aspirations of the autocratic bureaucracy and the whole process of retrogressive development.

Historical Accomplishments of the Bolshevik Opposition

(On the acknowledgment and evaluation of the situation of the labor movement and of conscious socialism)

Because, however, nothing can go lost in the development, not even with regard to the consciousness achieved; because the revolution was victorious and the revolutionary concept was sufficient, complete and consistent—a consistent revolutionary Marxist wing split off and the retrogressive movement of the *revolutionary* political emigration set in.

The actual Bolshevik emigration was, for Russia, diminishingly small in extent, overwhelming in quality, and restricted almost exclusively to the exile of the family of Leon Trotsky, which was the greatest obstacle for Stalin. He persecuted it with the parvenu's burning hatred of the revolution, he hounded it westward with the support of the bourgeoisie from one country, from one "democracy" to another, and did not rest until he had killed every male member of this family; and finally, in a backward country on the other side of the ocean, he killed with a pickaxe the second genius of the Russian Revolution, the last political, literary and military genius, the last genius of socialism and of humanity. With Trotsky murdered, the whole élite of the Russian Revolution, the whole Bolshevik leadership, the flower of the Red Army, of the revolutionary working class and of the intelligentsia is physically murdered, imprisoned, exiled, cut off completely from the world, or else hopelessly corrupted—like Stalin himself—in the tiny and low-ranking remnants that survive. In connection with this, the history books are rewritten, the truth turned upside down, falsification, slander, intrigue and deception are organized into a system of which the most demoralized bourgeoisie before Stalin had not even a faint inkling, and compared to which Czarism was a highly civilized institution.

It is of the utmost importance to acknowledge and evaluate correctly the historical accomplishment of the Bolshevik Opposition in the struggle against Stalin and the new revisionism, for without this premise an acknowledgment and evaluation of the situa-

tion of the labor movement, or better still, of scientific socialism, are impossible.

Historically, there fell to the Bolshevik Opposition the enormous task of resisting the disintegration of the Russian Revolution, of explaining it theoretically, and of re-forming the forces of the world labor movement for its salvation. The conditions under which they had to accomplish this task were the following:

a. Terror of the Stalinist bureaucracy; material and ideological corruption of the Comintern; isolation, falsification of history, slander, deception in Russia and in the International.

b. Everywhere, defeated labor movements which had "missed" their opportunities; had never emerged from the inherited mistakes and weaknesses of both the revisionist and the revolutionary wing; could learn nothing from its defeats as a result of Stalinist theory, policy and tactics; standing as a mass wholly and completely under the influence of mutually complementary revisionism and petty bourgeois ultra-left or opportunistic sects.

c. Capitalist disintegration which curbed the spirit of the labor movement and had the general effect of depression; (where the development, as a result of special conditions, still moves upward, the labor movement is still young, as in China, politically undeveloped as in England, improvised as in France, and in every case it is killed by Stalin's long arm, which when other methods fail him, turns Russian weapons directly against the Spanish revolution and has the revolutionists butchered by his GPU).

d. Continuing fascization of Europe, to which reformism and Stalinism render assistance and thereby permit the betrayal to be carried out to its end.

Under such conditions history itself reduces the task of the Bolshevik Opposition (which, moreover, is really able to take up its international task only in 1929) to covering the retreat of the labor movement, to maintaining the consciousness of the inter-connection of things and of the Russian reality, and to assuring the continuity of the movement in every branch of work. This problem absorbed Trotsky's time and energy completely. Its carrying out is a life or death question for socialism. Without Trotsky, who embodies a whole epoch in himself, nobody would find his way, and there is no one who could have accomplished the colossal job in his place. He devoted himself to it with a spirit of sacrifice, consistency, fearlessness, devotion and a consciousness of responsibility which make him one of the sublimest prototypes in the history of all mankind. He saved the honor of the whole movement and its revolutionary incorruptibility under the most difficult circumstances. If ever there was a martyr to the cause who, despite a complete consciousness of the murderous danger, did not flinch for a moment, it was he.

The task itself is posed by the inversion of all relations in such a way that this time the *revolutionary* wing must begin with the demand for the *reform* of the Soviet state and the Comintern, in order to go over gradually to the recognition of the necessity for a *political* revolution for Russia, and the struggle for a new, the Fourth International of the *world revolution*. Also with regard to the International and the labor movement, the retrogressive development remains inexorable and does not rest until it has not only arrived again at the demand for a revolutionary international but has driven back the free labor movement to the place from which it once began: England. We will see this when we consider England. With regard to the Bolshevik Opposition, we conclude:

The last period of Trotsky's life was filled in the main with a sharp struggle over the question of the character of the Soviet Union, and the writing of a biography of Stalin. Because of the harsh necessity to defend to the last the first workers' state, in spite of its horrible degeneration, for the sake of its fundamental achievements, and to participate in the struggles for the consolidation of the Fourth International, what was perhaps his most important theoretical work, the biography of Lenin, remains unfinished. History awaits the day when the work of both is completed and millions lower draped flags in memory of the great dead.

Russia as the Political Model for Germany

The economic, social and other content of the Russian retrogressive development and its significance have been comprehensively presented, commented on and analyzed in the extensive literature of the Fourth International. At this point, where the economic development lies behind us, we need merely adduce what Trotsky, in June, 1939, summarized as the political development of Russia:

"The realities of Soviet life today can indeed be hardly reconciled even with the shreds of old theory. Workers are bound to the factories; peasants are bound to the collective farms. The freedom

of movement has been completely restricted. It is a capital crime to come late to work. Punishable as treason is not only any criticism of Stalin but even the mere failure to fulfill the natural duty to get down on all fours before the 'Leader.' The frontiers are guarded by an impenetrable wall of border patrols and police dogs on a scale heretofore unknown anywhere. To all intents and purposes, no one can leave and no one may enter. Foreigners who had previously managed to get into the country are being systematically exterminated. The gist of the Soviet constitution, 'the most democratic in the world,' amounts to this: that every citizen is required at an appointed time to cast his ballot for the one and only candidate handpicked by Stalin or his agents. The press, the radio, all the organs of propaganda, agitation and national education are completely in the hands of the ruling clique. During the last five years no less than half a million members, according to official figures, have been expelled from the party. How many have been shot, thrown into jails and concentration camps, or exiled to Siberia, we do not definitely know. But undoubtedly *hundreds of thousands of party members have shared the fate of millions of non-party members.*¹³

"It would be extremely difficult to instill in the minds of these millions, their families, relatives and friends, the idea that the Stalinist state is withering away. It is strangling others, but gives no sign of withering. It has instead brought the state to a pitch of wild intensity unprecedented in the history of mankind... The party, the government, the army and the diplomatic corps have been bled white and beheaded. Things had gone so far that Stalin at the last Congress was forced, in order to calm his own apparatus, to promise that he would not in the future resort to wholesale purges. This is, of course, a lie. The Bonapartist state will find itself compelled likewise in the future to devour society physically as well as spiritually."

It is sufficient to sketch again the situation of Germany after the war to recognize that this, and not inadequate Italy, is the political model that the German bourgeoisie must imitate in pursuit of its corresponding aims.

Germany

The industrial straggler, having become the most modern monopolist in industry in a world ruled by England, having got the short end in the dividing up of the world, and having been the first to overcome "finance capital," saw itself punished by still narrower confinement for its attempt to dispute for place with England. Its collapse ended first of all, exactly as in Russia, with a victory of democracy and of the long-sought freedom of vote over the monarchy of Wilhelm—against the will of Ebert. The ascending line of democracy is brought to an end, and its "natural" sequence is established: bourgeois democracy in England, France and Germany, more far-reaching proletarian democracy in Russia.

The development now could have and should have proceeded back from Russia on an ascending line, i.e., the completion of the least bloody of all revolutions, or later at least, the proletarian revolution on the Russian model, were it not for revisionism and the mistakes of the German Left. The German working class was master of the situation in fact and possessed sufficient support in the rest of the population. But from the first day onward mastery was consciously wrested from it by its own bureaucracy which, from the outset, summoned to its support against the workers the bourgeoisie and the same reaction which was later to give it the deserved knockout blow.¹⁴

The German Left, although it had a correct knowledge of *this* aspect and was inspired with real revolutionary will, mistook the situation in the labor movement and did not understand how to destroy the illusions of the workers (who rightly felt themselves

13. We have emphasized this issue in order to say another word about the development of the modern slave state. We know that Hitler and Stalin have used political prisoners and forced labor for canal-building, drying up marshes, building highways, etc., and that on a mass scale. It would be difficult to call these workers anything but state slaves. Under Hitler they are actually hired out to private entrepreneurs, taken back at the end of their work and given to others on the morrow. We no longer have here a meeting between the free worker and the "possessor of money... in the market, entering into relations with each other as equal possessors of commodities" (Marx). Rather the worker is transformed from a "possessor of a commodity into a commodity."

14. Whoever experienced German history of the post-war period and concerned himself with the "mood" of the population, including the religious-minded workers, can cite countless witnesses from all layers to show with what bitterness people spoke, even under Hitler, of the fact that the Social Democrats covered their betrayal under the phrase: We must proceed "humanely" against our foes.

masters of the situation) by using these illusions as its point of departure.

The moral and political prestige of the German Left was great. They too saved the honor of the movement in a difficult situation—the names of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and Leo Jogiches were legends around which new legends were spun every day. Their reputation was spotless and commanded the respect even of mendacious opponents. By misunderstanding the real situation, this prestige was squandered in a series of premature and artificially forced actions. “Radical” slogans and tactics took the place of what was organically necessary. The leadership was thereupon murdered,¹⁵ the movement was left in a state of hopeless confusion; the German working class was delivered to the counter-revolution all the more easily because the young Communist Party continued its “radical” practices, and also because it flung away the prestige of the October Revolution and soon thereafter landed in the swamp of Stalinism. Lenin’s attempt to help the German party and to transmit to it the tactics of the Bolshevik Party remained unsuccessful. Lenin’s *Infantile Maladies* was his most popular work, so far as its title goes, but in every other respect it was his most unpopular and least understood work.

Revisionism in Germany became for several years the organic and political practice, as a phenomenon of crisis and with explicit counter-revolutionary functions. Then, the retrogressive movement set in from Russia. Revisionism finally became impossible with the extension of the world crisis. The democratic development, the development of the labor movement, was definitively broken under the régime of Brüning, Papen, Schleicher, who finally yielded to fascism, which, as in Russia, broke every development, and in the very first place dispatched into the void the German labor movement, the mightiest in the world. In part, history at least avenges all crimes on earth: the reformist labor bureaucracy on the whole is treated by Hitler as offal despite its “readiness to collaborate.” The blood of the murdered falls upon the murderers.

Under Fascism

The German bourgeoisie, with the help of fascism and an extensive technical transformation, brought industrial monopoly to an unexpected height. In the conversion, i.e., proceeding from its own and no longer from the English development, German industry soon speaks the “last word” again and can be set in motion for the alteration of existing relations. On a broader industrial foundation the bourgeoisie again take up the problem at the point where the collapse of the first imperialist war had dropped it. The ambiguity of the earlier posing of the problem disappears: there is to be no *redivision* of the world, but only the dismemberment of the world under the leadership of German industrial monopoly by means of the destruction of England.

However much England and her allies or Germany and her allies tried to avoid this posing of the question—primarily at the expense of Russia—the logic of things remained stronger than all of them and at the end of countless efforts nobody was able to leap out of the framework set up by the rise and fall of the British Empire. The Versailles Treaty was treated by Hitler for what it was: a scrap of paper which certified England’s weakness. The “separation” of German areas established in it was annulled without danger, or else was over-compensated for by occupation and incorporation of more important areas. The ridiculous “re-division” was surpassed by the helplessness with which England had to look on while the “new division” was made and to countenance it.

The “re-division” had not been the result of a clear military decision but the result of the victory of economy over the war; it was thereupon corrected by the economy. This was shown most clearly in the Saar Region, which France didn’t even know what to do with and which strove with all its strength to return to Germany instead of voting for France. German monopoly rules capitalist continental Europe and subjects it economically (it is also extremely successful at the same time outside of Europe, in South America) before a conflict in the East, of subordinate significance in itself but no longer isolatable, again brings England to the limit of possible appeasement and, with the knife at her throat for the second

15. Again: the grief for the murdered leaders was a true, popular grief. Whoever looked into the face of men at that time could read the indescribable things in them. Voices were lowered in speech; the liberal, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish press bowed at least before the purity and the “noble purposes” of the murdered who had “not deserved” this death. Nobody except the blackest reactionaries displayed the crude, swinish opinion of the *Vorwärts*, which regretted in its renowned-notorious jingle that Liebknecht, Rosa Luxembourg and Radek had not been sent to join the murdered workers earlier.

time, she girds herself for war a second time. And again she is sure in advance that the working class throughout Europe cannot intervene; again Germany deceives herself about the limits of English appeasement.

It is truly amazing with what stubbornness the development remains retrogressive even in its details. In spite of all efforts, Germany does not succeed in avoiding the two-front war. While at first she heaps success upon success in the rest of Europe and completes the economic subjugation by the military, her impact is first broken, in contrast to the First World War, in Russia.

Only when the outcome of the Russian adventure begins to take effect does she fall back more to the defensive against the West—and clears the road for combinations which, like the inner development, go beyond the narrower retrogressive movement. The national question, latent up to that time, appears in the foreground, receives a mighty impulse from the successful Russian resistance, and is posed retrogressively as the re-conquest of national and democratic freedom. In practice, the national question contains all the elements of a break which is capable of inaugurating a new epoch and again reversing the retrogressive movement.

France

The side road which France was forced to travel in the capitalist development and through which it arrived at its relatively favorable second rank, is its fortune and its fate. This nation, which has endowed modern bourgeois society with dramatic effects, the fireworks of history, the Great Revolution and the Paris Commune, rhetoric and bourgeois criticism, the press and the paradoxical operetta, comedy and satire, irony and serene catholic sentimentality, pathos and passion, eroticism and the luxury industries, wine and the gourmet’s kitchen, spirit and fashion, naturalism and impressionism, military technique and the Republic—for all this and more France is “classical,” because economically second-rate—is imbued like no other with a feeling for life in which the consciousness of the evanescence of all earthly things vibrates perceptibly.

The feeling for life of the French nation is pessimistically grounded, but it has nothing of the burrowing despair of Northern pessimism or Eastern nihilism, nothing of the struggle of Faustian man over an eternally insoluble problem.¹⁶ The plant grows, blooms and must die. On such crystal-clear grounds, which no brooding can surpass for depth and balance, sprouts the incomparable flower of French “*sérénité*,” a word so untranslatable that it can only be conveyed or paraphrased, like the transplanting of the French feeling for life into other cultures. The marvelous, and in its perfection unique, mixture of both components, the consciousness of the nothingness of all efforts, and the priority of existence that makes an active life obligatory, gives rise to the ideal of “clarity,” the living readiness of the “*Qui vive?*,” to be bold and to fight, to guard life, to empty the cup in the even flow of life, but also to plunge into the stream and be consumed when the great hour has struck. The world for hundreds of years has rightly regarded France with admiration and pampered it disgracefully. Its vices and weaknesses are as emblematical as its strength and virtues. Nowhere has civilization borne a more beautiful flower on its broad vulgar stem, nowhere have liveliness of temperament and “*laissez-faire, laissez-aller!*” transmitted an inkling of better humanity than in France. Where sureness, composure, unaffected humanness appear, one is on the trail of great traditions which—condition their naturalness.

It is only natural for the flower to wither before the stem is

16. When favorable circumstances permit, it would be highly revealing to write a study of how the uniqueness of the French feeling for life arises out of history and is consciously formed in literature from Rabelais through Diderot to Edmond Rostand (to mention arbitrarily some unequally noteworthy names). Next to Diderot’s “*Jacques le Fataliste*,” the most genial, classical and freshest work of the French spirit is, in our opinion, the little novel by Claude Tillier, “*Mon Oncle Benjamin*.” We say this with openly “provocative” purpose against the bloodless, decadent snobs who at least in post-war France laughed pityingly at Tillier and called “*Mon Oncle Benjamin*” a “*bêtise*.” Such snobs, who were also found in the French movement, have naturally done nothing which could give them a natural respect for an immortal masterpiece. Tillier, born on April 11, 1801—and if our memory doesn’t fail—died of consumption at the age of thirty-three, is a restorative for the living. His style is pure and, in the best sense of the word, popular; his temper, his humor are bubbling, his art of characterization masterful, concise; his wit cutting, his irony pertinent, his sympathy with the cause of the people undisguised, his serenity and the pessimism underlying it indestructible. No wonder he has “nothing to say” precisely to those literati grown lukewarm in the labor movement. The whole people has nothing to say to them and the best expression of their inner emptiness is Thomas Mann.

dried up; only destiny if France molds in the English embrace; only the broken energy of a people instinctively sure in good as in evil, if, though accompanied by the anguished cry of all its governments, it obdurately refuses to reproduce itself and increase its numbers. The "doom of the gods" of imperialism, which is ruining humanity, is not symbolically-musically anticipated by France but objectively felt, described in detail,¹⁷ and experienced physically as a shrinking of its population. That is as it should be for a great nation, which could never reach first place; which has exhausted itself in the dramatic effects of politics and precedes the doom of the British Empire; and whose fall is prepared by the merciless gods only to be accompanied by their own.

France Between the First and the Second World Wars

In the First World War, France bled itself white. Its reputation of having emerged out of the struggle as victor and as first military power on the continent, is benevolent legend and fiction. It is in reality the victim of England and lives thereafter more by the favor of circumstances than by its own strength. Exhausted as it is, it has but one need: recovery from the fearful blood-letting, protection from a repetition of the same operation. And the fear for its security makes it no wiser.

Hindered or called to heel by England in all measures which aimed at keeping the "favor of circumstances" and its security, it sought an understanding with all and reached it with none. Its will to understanding which extended right inside the general staff—for it was dictated by circumstances and was the only possibility of salvation—was utterly sincere. It was a national necessity, to avoid "radical" measures and to spare the people. Its capitalism stagnated in a manner which permitted the maintenance of the "rentier ideal": it succeeded in avoiding the inflationary raid on a German scale because it lacked the corresponding economic driving forces. Revisionism became organic in France, in so far as everything was attuned to reconstruction, reform, appeasement, etc. The crisis remained latent until 1933 and first began to take effect after the victory of German fascism. From that time on, it acquired a convulsive character which accurately registered the spasms of the organism.

The number of unemployed grew in France, but that offered no special difficulties to the Jewish and political emigrants who were retreating further to the West. The Daladier régime even made a last grand gesture and granted Trotsky asylum. It did not at all lie in the "bad will" of Daladier that his courage disappeared with the untenability of his position and his democratic conviction capitulated before the growing difficulties. Nevertheless, the gesture was there, and he fired on those fascists—unthinkable for a social-democratic German minister—who ventured their first assault in 1934 with the help of the Communists.

In the crisis of 1936, the German situation of 1918 was repeated. The bourgeoisie sat in every mousehole. Police, army, farmers and petty bourgeoisie sympathized with the workers. A revolution could have been carried out almost bloodlessly and been made irresistible together with Spain. France could have been saved, the wheel of history turned. The Communists, and they alone, succeeded in strangling the great movement and the Spanish Revolution by the "Popular Front" policy. This all the more so as the Fourth International did especially badly on French soil. It remained politically maladjusted and without influence. The pressure was nevertheless so strong that France, on top of all this, was forced to take a spasmodic revisionist step forward and give itself something like social legislation.

Here we have another outstanding feature: the earlier the people achieve political democracy, the later they complete it in this or that respect (e.g., with regard to woman suffrage), and the later it is overthrown. Revisionism finally became impossible in France, too, but what to put in its place? The country literally rotted away on the foundations on which it had grown: they no longer sufficed for life, but they were still too stable for death. The labor movement was disoriented completely by the Popular Front policy, demoralized and robbed of its last hopes. A fascist movement cannot and will not thrive.

For the first time there is also announced among the claimants to the post of fascist dictator a parvenu from the "Communist" Party. He is Jacques Doriot, the mayor of the workers' suburb, St. Denis, who, proceeding from the Communist workers in his district, tried to call into life a fascist mass movement. The Comintern directly prepared this creature for his rôle with its "national-

17. We refer to French impressionism, the brilliant autumn of art. This phenomenon should have its place in the study mentioned.

communist" policy; with Radek's glorification of the anti-Semite Schlageter; the subsequent fraternization actions of the German Communists with the "Völkischen" (the later Nazis), the joint People's Referendum of Nazis and Communists (to the honor of the German workers be it said that in practice it was supported only by the most stupid followers of Communist demagogy) against the Social-Democratic Prussian government; the action of the French Communists at the same time with the fascists against the Daladier government in France, etc. Doriot arose organically out of this policy, for the *political essence* of Stalinism is fascism. The renegade Doriot met with no success either. He had to content himself in the end, after France's fall, with concluding a little "Stalin pact" with Hitler, but France is delivered from its dilemma by the Second World War.

France is just about as well "prepared" for this war as a sheep that is led to the slaughter. The bourgeoisie is split, and its fascist wing—including a part of the military leadership, renegades of the labor movement like Marcel Déat, Doriot, etc., who had come out for an understanding with Germany—plays into the hands of Germany. The will of the whole country is paralyzed and an overwhelming majority of the people are no more friendly to the war than one would be to a strong dose of poison. Every Frenchman knows inside him, and every other one says it aloud, that England was ready to fight the First World War "down to the last Frenchman." This time the war can "be fought down to the last Englishman—but without us" (without France.¹⁸). This reversal is good, and the "soul of the masses" exactly reflects the general situation.

The Last Stage

Poor France! Horrible how it has broken up since the First World War, how its magnificent feeling for life has sunk to mere banal need for rest, how its balanced optimism has crept down to trivial affirmation of the status quo. The true war cry of France sounds: "*Je veux mon beefsteak*" (I want my beefsteak) and "*Foutez-moi la paix!*" (go to hell!). The French talent for improvisation, confirmed for the last time in the sitdown strikes of the workers in the 1936 movement, fails completely in the war and gives way to the slogan: "Débrouillez-vous!" (Get yourself fixed up!)

"Débrouillez-vous!"—the negative turn of the winged verve of "*Qui vive?*," that is in fact the only possible slogan for France after every better solution has been rendered impossible for it through the betrayal of the Popular Front politicians.

What it was scolded for—its "pacifism," its unwillingness to let itself be sacrificed once more for a hopeless cause, the cause of England—is what it should be praised for. Though it sank far—and its positive characteristics have become lost in triviality—yet in the refusal of the French people is preserved a remnant of these characteristics: in it is hidden political instinct and historic genius. Closely examined, its kernel is the formula of revolutionary defeatism: "The defeat of one's own bourgeois is the lesser evil," which at a certain point goes over quite of itself against the government. If France finds itself in complete disintegration, chaos become general, billions fly to the South, and the "*Débrouillez-vous*" expands into "*Sauve qui peut!*" (Save himself who can), France stands literally on the brink of revolution, which begins to flare up sporadically.

To be sure, it is true that democracy and the labor movement of France failed even more ignominiously than in Germany, and were not even exterminated by the fascists but simply decreed away. But capitulation is an affair of the *leadership*, which thoroughly corrupted the taste of the workers, flung them into the hopeless adventure of the war—in so far as it was "communist"—changed position from one day to the next, i.e., for the sake of the Stalin-Hitler pact transformed its previous war-baiting of Germany into the baiting of the "peace-disturbing democracies." The French people, the working class, refused to follow this leadership anyhow, and gave it the negative answer which the masses always have ready for mistakes: passive rejection. Should they now, with the example of Spain and their own experience behind them, and in this hopelessly bungled situation—where *was* the "leadership"?—plunge on their own hook into a second dead-end adventure?

The whole truth is this: it was not to old General Pétain that

18. Literally: "Cette fois, on peut mener la guerre jusqu'au dernier des Anglais—mais sans nous." That was the expression of a French soldier with whom we, as internee in the forest of Chambord, were making charcoal. It would naturally be absurd to cite him as symptomatic, if ninety out of every hundred Frenchmen did not think in the same spirit and—act accordingly.

democracy and the labor movement had to capitulate—his régime could only be transitional—but to Hitler. France itself was too weak for *anything* and could only preserve its sure instinct for historic necessity. The deed fell to German monopoly capital which cannot for long tolerate any democracy, any, even if only potential, labor movement, any opposition to itself.

The French people, the working class, felt and suspected where the real enemy was, and that it must be beaten on better grounds and with better methods. What Germany had already demonstrated, namely, that the political mass party on the "classical model" is no good whatsoever for the political purposes of the proletariat, that the trade unions are questionable in the highest degree and that especially in critical times a one-sided orientation of political work upon them is catastrophic, etc., is, as always, practically experienced in France and carried out to the end. Scarcely beaten, the political genius of France is confirmed anew and gropes a way for itself beyond the old organizations and traditions, moving step by step to that form of struggle which is adapted to the new situation. It is the national question around which the political activity of France is oriented, and it is anything but an accident that France, as always in political history since the Great Revolution, should give the signal for Europe. It poses the national question as it must be posed today, and it would be disastrous not to see it: as a movement of the people and not nationalistic—whatever may be the phrases or ideologies pasted on it.

The old France is dead and will never be able to establish itself again "capitalistically." It is this which the French people feel and have lived through in the most inward sense. Whether in the Great Revolution, should give the signal for Europe. It poses the national question as it has been shaken from top to bottom. Again and again it has carried its conflicts to exhaustion, collectively and individually. Again and again it has wrenched from itself dramatic experiences which make its blood well up and leave behind the true taste of things.

It therefore had to be this way: Finished economically as an imperialist country, France could do nothing else but anticipate the fate of humanity in the capitalist disintegration and hold this mirror before the world. The hopelessness of all efforts becomes under imperialism the gray reality of the day, and burns in the consciousness of a people which has lived through history like no other and has learned from it. History is (to quote Theodore Lessing) "making sense out of the senseless," or, better yet, the effort to purge the senseless of the demony which it bears within it in its crude natural state. It is the great misery of life under unmastered nature which sets history in motion, and through it seeks to restore the pure, unrestricted course of the senseless (waxing, blooming and waning) free from the demony of the unconscious. History is the formal means in the struggle for the freedom of humanity and must abolish itself with its completion. A great people, whom imperialism deprived of historical perspective earlier than it did any other, had to feel its actual essence earlier than any other people. France has proved authentically that imperialism ruins humanity, breaks its life's energy, and drives out its spirit, will and instinct of propagation.

Interlude

Toward midnight of the last July 14 which Paris celebrated, a taxi swung through the Place des Fêtes, one of the squares where the people amuse themselves. It was packed full of English sailors, members of the delegation which England had sent to the celebration in order to take part in the traditional morning parade. They stood in the taxi, these sailors, they hung on the sides, swinging on the running board. And while the car went slowly along, one of them, a young chap, his blond hair on end, swung himself, holding on the door of the car with one hand, his cap in the other; and, his face reddened by blissful drunkenness and his eyes sparkling, called out to the crowd of bystanders: "*Vive la paix!*"

Vive la paix! Seven weeks from that day the catastrophe will have broken over the youthful head, *car c'est toujours la belle jeunesse qui tombe sur le champ de la bêtise humaine.*¹⁹ The Anglo-French alliance seemed unbreakable—and in less than a year France is through with her dependence on England, England is chased back across the channel, the situation is fundamentally altered. Europe lies in fact at Hitler's feet and the German armistice conditions are dictated to France under a painfully exact restoration of the same scenery which formed the stage for the conclusion of the armistice of 1918.

19. A Belgian said during the flight to the South: "It is always the flower of youth which falls on the field of human stupidity."

An interlude occurs which is worth dwelling on for a moment. Is it accidental or has it deeper meaning, a historical parallel or one of history's tricks of imagination? We do not know and do not want to risk an interpretation. We see only the desired theatrical effect and what there is about it that meets the eye.

Hitler, the corporal of the First World War, enters the "Dôme des Invalides" and stands before Napoleon's beautiful resting place. We note:

It is certain that the corporal, after the dictate in the Compiègne Forest, holds Europe in his power like the "Little Corporal"—whom France has laid out here in state—when he dictated the Tilsit Peace. (By the way: Napoleon dictated it to a reactionary Prussia, a reactionary Germany dictates it to France.) It is certain that Napoleon could counter the English plans for world mastery only by subduing Europe, and that Hitler could break England's power only in the same way. Finally, it is certain that Napoleon did not conquer England, that the invasion of England was not carried out, that he proceeded against Russia and returned from there broken.

What is the corporal from Braunau doing at the grave of the Corsican? Does he seek "intuition"? Is he asking the Little Corporal whether to turn to England or Russia? All that is certain is that the new military tactics of Germany seem as irresistible as the Napoleonic, that the invasion of England is not tried, that Hitler turns to Russia and the new tactic exhausts itself before the gates of Moscow. On the purely *military* plane, the outcome of the war is completely certain after the first Russian winter. England-America win time to adjust themselves to the requirements of the conduct of the war and to learn the new tactics. Considered from a purely military viewpoint, America-England will triumph in alliance with revolting continental Europe, slowly releasing itself from German bondage.

England-America

Nevertheless, the purely military observation is inadequate—the interlude only brings two conquerors together, of whom one came forward at the cradle of modern bourgeois society, the other at its grave. History cannot simply repeat itself—from west to east, from east to west, in reverse sequence. At that time, England was in her capitalist youth and was on the point of building up her modern world empire. The French Revolution and Napoleon's wars shattered feudal Europe and gave a mighty impulsion to bourgeois and national state development. Today, England is in her capitalist dotage and her empire is cracking at every joint. The fascist reaction and the war of Hitler are destroying capitalist Europe and are turning back the bourgeois and nationalist development. But having arrived in England, the retrogressive movement must come to a halt. On the same grounds which were valid for the upswing, the decline must get stuck *politically*, where the upswing began, not in order to begin the same game all over again but in order to give way to the socialist upward movement. It *must*, otherwise mankind can bury its hopes for a long, long time.

England had the earliest democracy and the earliest revolutionary labor movement, and she is becoming—beyond the epoch of the most organic revisionism²⁰ which lies between the rise and fall of the British Empire—the country with the last democracy and the last revolutionary labor movement. Up to here the "natural order" is strictly in line with the retrogressive movement and the movement itself is therewith at its end.

That revisionism has become impossible in England was shown unambiguously in the general strike of 1926. While the German working class is finally beaten and can no longer wrench loose from the hangman's hand of Stalin, the disintegration of the Empire presses on the English working class and it wants to "go forward again" at last. Nevertheless, strict retrogression temporarily rules

20. Lenin collects in his *Karl Marx* the "countless references of Marx and Engels" which are valid for this epoch as indications of "how industrial prosperity calls forth efforts 'to buy the proletariat' ... to distract it from struggle; how this prosperity in general 'demoralizes the workers' ... how the English proletariat is 'bourgeoisified' so that this most bourgeois of all nations (the English) seems to aim at finally getting to the point where it possesses a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat besides the bourgeoisie! ...; how the 'revolutionary energy' 'evaporates' out of it; how one must wait more or less until 'the English workers free themselves from their apparent bourgeois virus' ...; how the English labor movement 'lacks the mettle of the old Chartists'; how the English labor leaders become a kind of in-between 'between the radical bourgeois and the workers' ...; how as a result of the monopolistic position of England, and so long as this monopoly is not destroyed, 'the British working man just does not want to go further.'"

the field. Just as Russia degenerated because of the failure of the world revolution, so the world revolution degenerated step by step because of Russia. The Anglo-Russian Committee kills the general strike and Stalin reveals himself in all his breadth before the eyes of the world as—the direct savior of the bourgeoisie. From now on the bourgeoisie summons up new self-confidence. Its ideologists begin to regard Russia with wide-opened “different” eyes. The number of joyous discoveries, of “Friends of the Soviet Union,” of critical well-wishers, of articles and books about Russia, all grow to gigantic proportions. The bourgeoisie breathes with relief and feels itself saved. With lures and threats, with baiting of Trotsky and praise for the “unromantic, realistic,” Stalin,²³ Stalin’s counter-revolutionary work is completed and he himself is incited to produce ever more proof of his reliability for the bourgeoisie.

England’s working class is beaten, but the radicalization process continues. It is caught up and braked by the “Independent Labour Party”—one of the reasons why the Fourth International has less favorable ground, produces no unified organization and consequently does not thrive. (How great an influence is exerted upon consciousness by apparently “unlimited” possibilities may be seen from the development of America. Today it has arrived, not at an Independent Labour Party, but at the demand for a—Labor Party.) The crisis in England remains latent and simmers under the surface.

She remains constantly on the defensive and under growing difficulties falls back once for all on America—Ireland, China, India, Japan, America, South Africa, Naval Conference, Munich, etc. Since the outbreak of the war, the sale of the British Empire to America is plainly palpable. Churchill may give assurances that he has not become Prime Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire, but he is doing it anyway. Canada, Australia, India, China, islands and bases which England sells or leases to America, or turns over for its use, etc., are living evidence against him. As a capitalist country, England has only one perspective left: to “win” on America’s side, to divide world mastery with America and—to divide miserably.

Evidently the English bourgeoisie decisively prefers this perspective to the “victory of bolshevism” with which Germany successfully frightened and blackmailed it, for above all considerations stands the international solidarity of interests of capital. Nevertheless, besides Churchill’s logic, the logic of things works unrelentingly. Much-feared Bolshevism established itself in England with England’s flight from France, and is eating away at its vitals. England is the only country of Europe that went into the war with an open opposition, and to this day she cannot get rid of it. The opposition is confused, petty-bourgeois-pacifist (ILP), contradictory, weak, cowardly, treacherous, but at the same time it is clear, decisive, energetic, unambiguous, revolutionary. The conditions are turning at last in favor of the Fourth International. It develops far better in wartime than in “peacetime.” It is heard, it has foreseen something, press and Parliament must concern themselves with it, it has defended the honor of the movement, other organizations must protect it in the interests of their own freedom. Its newspapers are read in many thousands of copies, it is uncompromised, it pillories the bourgeoisie unsparingly and more plainly than anywhere in America, it is gaining among the workers, gaining experience. In short, it is going forward, and the work of the Fourth International, which seems “hopeless” to the Philistines, fellow-travelers, the weak and faint-hearted, the obstinate and deliberate “swimming against the stream”—this Herculean achievement is bearing its fruits.

And powerful forces are working along with it. On one side stands ravished Europe which has drained the capitalist cup to its bitter dregs. On the other side stand Africa, China, India, the thrice-ravished colored peoples of the earth, who are passing quickly through their experiences with the new rulers, America and Japan. The development is retrogressive, but in return it brings new things to the surface and has also produced “unruly” offspring, which although afflicted, nevertheless stand outside the “narrow” family. For the first time in history a semi-colonial country is intertwined in the imperialist war and has offered an imperialist power bitter resistance for many years. It is impossible that China has forgotten the “Opium War” and does not remember the endless abominations of imperialism—whose last great act was the closing of the Burma Road by England, leaving China in a grave situation for three months without reinforcements. It is impossible

21. One should not forget this: Even Carl von Ossietzky incontinently repeated the miserable slander of Stalin that Trotsky, in the struggle against “Stalin,” was driven to the side of... England.

that India and the colonial slaves are not waiting for the moment when they can shake off the gruesome, life-destroying yoke. It is impossible that Russia has lost the memory of the October Revolution. It is kept erect by its economic foundation, making it—despite Stalin—an “unruly” child for capitalism.

Yes, the disintegration of capitalism opens up a broad revolutionary perspective. There is much evidence that the English people themselves will get into motion when Germany wavers. Consciousness, will, clarity, boldness must see to it that the perspective is brought forward and acquires an irresistible attractive power. We have long held that with “classical” German fascism, fascism itself has reached its limit and lost its power of attraction. This is not contradicted by the fact that the enslavement of mankind is unavoidable if the revolution fails again. Around this point—the leadership—revolves everything. The birth of the new society is a difficult operation. It is not a matter of cheap optimism—in every crisis it is a matter in the last instance of the operating physician. Boldness and elasticity, the overcoming of paralysis and of habit-forming phrases without concrete ideas, are what the revolutionary movement needs most. A philosophy, a doctrine, an ideology which conveys no enthusiasm and no impulses is worthless and must fail.

It is not necessary to linger over the “frenzied epilogue” of imperialism, America. It is necessary that the American revolutionists arrive at an all-sided system of political propaganda and activity, that they thwart the “epilogue” and hasten to the aid of the English working class, the colonial peoples and Europe. Then there can be no doubt that:

Churchill will fall and with him the colossal structure of the British Empire. Then will the seed come up which England everywhere sowed and it will grow over its grave.

The Final Problem of Imperialism

In the general average the quantitative changes in imperialism mean: Significant preponderance of the use and production of means of destruction—preponderance of production for the sake of production—over the use and manufacture of means of life or necessities.

The proposition: “The bourgeoisie must complete what it destroys and destroy what it completes,” has as its content the history of the bourgeoisie and the law of the capitalist mode of production as self-purpose. They destroy the old society and are completed in their destruction. Arrived at their culmination, they destroy their completion and direct themselves against the society which they bury beneath themselves.

From now on all progress has ceased. Monopoly groups with their satellites confront other monopoly groups with their satellites. From this “height,” capitalism plunges down upon itself, upon its past, its social, economic, cultural, spiritual, political, national, international achievements, which it tramples under in the interests of its self-preservation. The final problem of capitalist development, which is contained from the very outset within industrial monopoly and toward the solution of which it now steers, is: *Rule of the world through a single monopoly-capitalist country.*

It is provided that the trees do not grow to heaven. This problem is certainly the squaring of the circle. An impossible task, which coincides on this historical plane with the self-abolition of capitalism. If it could at any time complete itself it would leave nothing of its wonder-structure save a single capitalist tower, rising in the desert of the same world in which all the slaves of the world worked together for its erection and ruined themselves.

The circle will never be squared. Independent of the completely identical plans of Berlin and Washington, which are distinguished only by more sincere or more mendacious language, capitalism must conclude the course of its life in itself. If capital comes into the world “dripping blood and dirt from head to toe, out of all pores” (Marx), it must go under despite all its illusions about human satisfaction, freedom and progress, its whole body rotting from head to toe, stinking from every pore, dripping blood and dirt. It is not, however, history which produces this result, it is the inner nature of capital which produces its historic course, and flows into the infinite fraction of the circle—eternal pi. This fraction consists in the fact “that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and closing point, as the motive and aim of production; that production is merely production for capital, and not vice versa, the means of production mere means for an ever expanding system of the life process for the benefit of the society of producers” (Marx).