

**The New**  
**INTERNATIONAL**

**LEON TROTSKY**

AN EDITORIAL

*Trotsky During World War I*  
By Alfred Rosmer

*The Assassin and His Crime*  
By Victor Serge

*Verdict on the Moscow Trials*  
By Albert Gates

*Four Portraits of Stalinism—V*  
By Max Shachtman

**KOREA AND U. S. POLICY**  
By J. M. Fenwick

**CORRESPONDENCE BOOK REVIEWS**

**35¢**

**September-October 1950**

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OUR READERS MAY BE INTERESTED in the role THE NEW INTERNATIONAL plays abroad. It is important to bear in mind the fact that throughout the world the weakness of socialist movements which are free from ideological and political dependence on either Stalinism or American capitalism is reflected in the virtual absence of any serious theoretical periodicals.

From Germany a friend writes: "That I, as a socialist mainly interested in theory, appreciate THE NEW INTERNATIONAL very much, is clear. Talking some time ago of an article published in your magazine, I contacted a member of the former 'Left Opposition.' He knew the journal already and asked me to tell you his address with his request, to send him the NI..."

Another friend writes: "With great interest I read of the debate between Shachtman and Browder in *Labor Action*. It would be very valuable to have the factual material presented by Shachtman in print. It is a general lack of our propaganda on the Russian question that the most important data on wages, bureaucratic privileges, prices, etc., are scattered over some dozens of books written in several languages..."

We are glad that the last issue of the NI was able to furnish our friend with some of this material, and we hope to add to it in the future.

The revolutionary socialists in Europe and Asia lack not only good periodical material; especially in the lands once under Hitler's control, all Marxist works are in short supply, and particularly the works of Leon Trotsky and his collaborators.

We are informed that the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin are now available in German, as they have been republished in the Russian zone. But all the independent socialists still are in great need of Trotsky's contributions to socialist analysis and theory.

Any Marxist books sent THE NEW INTERNATIONAL in any language will be promptly sent to Germany. Could you help us in the ideological rearming of the German socialists?

L. G. SMITH, *Bus. Mgr.*

**AN EDITORIAL****Leon Trotsky, 1879-1940**

The same misfortune that befell Marx after his death has befallen Trotsky. Superficial critics and uncritical followers, each in their own way, either hardened Marx into bloodless stone or created a new Marx in the image of their misunderstandings and prejudices. Isolated polemical emphases were converted into the very essence of Marx's teachings; passing judgments into eternal truths; episodic or auxiliary commentaries into infallible universal doctrine. As a result of these gross transformations, the real Marx became all but unrecognizable, and so did his real contributions to modern thought and action. For the real Marx to be degraded to the position of deity was already monstrous enough. It was worse when only a fragment of Marx was set up as the godhead of socialist thought. But Marx was not the only one who sowed dragon's teeth and reaped fleas. Trotsky has suffered from the same fate, even if his fleas sound more like parrots.

A recent critic, who has bought fame with his skill at mixing defamation and forgery, sees in Trotsky nothing but a "pathetic" but envious denouncer of the Stalinist bureaucracy. It is like seeing in all of Marx's work nothing but his attacks upon Bakunin. A recent disciple, who should not be belabored for simplemindedness when it is so self-evident, saw the "heart of Trotskyism" in the theory of the defense of the Soviet Union. It is like seeing the heart of Marxism in Marx's "defense of the First International."

TROTSKY'S GREATEST, UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION was made long before there was a Stalinist bureaucracy to denounce or a Soviet Union to defend. It was his theory of the permanent revolution. In presenting it, he drew heavily upon Marx's writings on the permanent revolution. But just as Marx drew heavily upon German philosophy, British political economy and French revolutions only to synthesize them into a concatenation of ideas uniquely his own, so Trotsky developed, applied and expanded the theory of the permanent revolution in a way that assured its designation as the specific theory of Trotskyism. This theory, as he elaborated it throughout a lifetime devoted to its realization in the class struggle itself, did not require a departure from Marxism and its tradition. On the contrary, Trotsky was able to demonstrate the viability of Marxism precisely by the way it stimulated those of his thoughts—and actions!—with which he so richly broadened and deepened it as no other, except Lenin, had done in almost the whole of the past hundred years.

The full significance of Trotsky's theory has escaped all its vulgarizers,

both the friendly and the hostile. It is not simply the idea that the proletariat must continue its revolutionary struggle until it is triumphant all over the world and that short of this triumph it cannot achieve freedom. There is much more to it, and most of it lies ahead of this idea. The theory is based upon relating the basic social problems of all countries, no matter what form they take, regardless of how advanced or retarded the country in which they present themselves, to the twentieth-century bourgeoisie and the twentieth-century proletariat. Whether the problem in the one country is that of striking the bonds with which capitalism fetters social progress, or in another country that of striking the bonds which feudalism or semi-slavery fetters progress, is not a matter of irrelevance to Trotsky's theory—far from it—but it is reduced to secondary importance.

The primary, indeed the decisive, importance is attached to the question of the living social forces, the classes, and not of the social forms. To put it otherwise, it is precisely because *different* social forms—capitalism, feudalism, and to a certain extent even slavery—are involved in the combination that makes up the modern world, and because of the specific way in which they are combined and interrelated, that the main emphasis is shifted to the question of the classes. The matter of emphasis, at first blush a subtlety, is deep-going and far-reaching in political importance.

From Marx's rich abstractions about how the development of capitalist economy reaches the point of the socialist revolution, most of his followers established a rigid hierarchical order of nations. Only the advanced capitalist nations were ready for socialism, and they would fall to the proletariat one after the other in strict conformity with the stage to which they had advanced technologically. The rest of humanity would have to plod its way obediently through all the stages passed by the advanced countries, with the toilers waiting patiently at the end of the line until they became capitalistic proletarians, passed their novitiate, grew up to parliamentary manhood in bourgeois society and awaited the moment of its irremediable decay.

Trotsky exploded this historical, theoretical and political absurdity. The world of the twentieth century, he showed, does indeed find its component parts at widely different stages of social development. But it also finds a bourgeoisie which is fundamentally different, in one decisive respect, from its ancestors of a century or two earlier. It's is now not only a bourgeoisie that is less and less capable of solving the problem of capitalism in the advanced countries, but which is incapable of providing a radical solution to the problems of feudalism in the backward non-capitalist or semi-capitalist countries, not even to the extent it was able to solve these problems in the days of the great bourgeois revolutions, namely, the thoroughgoing destruction of feudalism, the achievement of real national independence and union, the reformation of agriculture, and political democracy in general. *Nowhere*, not even in the backward countries of the colonial world, can the bourgeoisie nowadays be expected to play even that revolutionary role which it played generations ago in the western world.

TROTSKY'S CONCLUSION WAS AS AUDACIOUS AS IT WAS PROFOUND: While the bourgeoisie of the backward countries may still play a limited progressive part for brief flashes of time, it cannot play the role of carrying out the bourgeois-

democratic revolution. That role falls upon the shoulders of the proletariat of these countries, even though it is still small in numbers and young in capitalistic-years, upon the proletariat leading the great peasant masses. But what if there is no proletariat in these countries, or only a tiny, still unschooled proletariat, which is not yet ready or capable of carrying out the democratic revolution? In such a case, replied Trotsky, the country itself is not yet ready for the democratic revolution—for if the proletariat does not exist to carry it out, no other social force exists that will perform the task. It should hardly be necessary to add that just as Trotsky distinguished between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution, he likewise distinguished between the solutions which a genuine bourgeois-democratic revolution would provide and the half-solutions, or better yet, the quarter-solutions provided by the caricatures recently achieved by the native bourgeoisie of some of the colonial lands of Asia.

But the proletariat of these countries, because it must carry out the bourgeois revolution against the bourgeoisie, will find, exactly as it did in the Russia of 1917, that the clash of the classes drives it, in defense of the elementary achievements of this revolution itself, to deprive the bourgeoisie of its class power and privilege and reorganize society on a socialist basis. A socialist basis is one thing, and it can be laid in one country. Socialism is another, and it requires—the more backward the country the more urgent the requirement—the joint efforts of the proletarian power in other and always more advanced countries. The revolution is permanent. It must continue uninterruptedly until, the socialist economies of at least the most decisive countries in the world having been harmoniously integrated, revolution itself gives way to an organic peaceful evolution of society toward abundance and freedom.

In this way Trotsky's theory assigned to the proletariat of the entire world the mission, exclusive to it, of liberating society from all social forms existing today that are based on class rule and oppression of any kind, and therewith tied the struggle for democracy more closely together than ever with the struggle for socialism. (Worth noting, just in passing, is the irony, if not the outrages, contained in the attacks on Trotskyism as a progenitor or accomplice of totalitarianism, written by that wide variety of varnished democrats who, on other sheets of paper, explain to their public that it is not the proletariat that can—or should endeavor to—liberate itself from all sorts of social iniquity, but that this job will be done *for* them . . . if not by Stalin, then by Truman and MacArthur, accompanied on the mission by Chiang Kai-shek, Adenauer, the Papal Eminence and Franco, not to mention a liberal sprinkling of ex-Marxist intellectuals. Not one of them, as he reads with satisfaction about the growth of the atomic bomb stock-pile, can ever forgive Trotsky for . . . Kronstadt. But this only in passing.)

If the proletariat fails to accomplish its great mission—what then? No analysis of the trends and problems of modern society is worth much which does not draw deeply and carefully from Trotsky's own analysis of the many manifestations of social decay and retrogression. What is defective and inadequate in his analysis, has been dealt with by us on more than one occasion. But it is far outweighed by what remains basic and durable. Trotsky's struggle, not only political but also analytical, against Fascism and Stalinism is by far more lasting and instructive than his theory that Stalinist Russia is still a

workers' state or that it must be unconditionally defended in war. This is all the more the case in view of the tentative character he gave this theory, especially in the very last period of the life which Stalinism crushed so bestially. There is more to learn even from Trotsky's errors on Stalinism than there is from ninety-nine percent of the shallow stupidities that make up the contributions on this theme made by its critics (to say nothing of its supporters!).

TROTSKY WOULD NOT CALL THE STALINIST BUREAUCRACY a new ruling class, but only a "caste," even though he knew quite well and openly acknowledged how unscientific was this designation. He continued to call Stalinist Russia a degenerated workers' state, even though he knew quite well that the further course of its evolution might dictate a radical revision of this view. If he hesitated to revise his view, it was primarily because he understood Stalinism in this sense: it was a decadent product of the failure of the world proletariat to break capitalism by breaking from it, its failure to carry out its mission of revolutionizing the world; and it would be destroyed—this Stalinism—when the proletariat began to carry out its historical task. And in this Trotsky was perfectly correct.

He did not shrink from considering the question of what would happen to society if the struggle for socialism were not continued and expanded. Capitalist society would not produce a flowering of democracy and wealth, but would deteriorate further and further. And Stalinist society, for all its victories over capitalism, would not liberate the masses and advance the cause of socialism. (The theoretician of the permanent revolution, the tireless captain of the socialist proletariat, could not even think in terms of the proletariat being emancipated by this totalitarian bureaucracy—as so many of his unworthy adepts now do—or by any other force than the proletariat itself.) If the working class does not free itself, nobody will be free, and society will decline further to a new barbarism, of which Stalinism, totalitarian servitude, as he called it, is only one of the forms. And if that were to happen, it would be necessary to conclude that the Stalinist bureaucracy was indeed a new exploiting class and the Stalinist state a new exploiting society.

But Trotsky refused to believe that that was the perspective before society. He had seen periods of reaction before in his life—not so deep and extensive as today, it is true, but deep enough—and he had seen them surmounted. These experiences, his knowledge of the slow but irresistible upward climb of society throughout humanity's history, his understanding of the irresolvability of the problems of society save through the fight for socialism, sustained to the end his life-long confidence in the inexhaustibility of the power of recuperation, the resiliency and the eventual triumph of the working class. In this too he was perfectly right, a thousand and a hundred thousand times more right than those pathetic fugitives from socialism who are really fugitives from the real problems of life and the real answers, the men of little hope and less honor who buy the vanishing crusts of today by selling the staff of life of tomorrow. Tomorrow will remember them with contempt, or in mercy forget them altogether. It will not forget Trotsky, the peerless soldier of the revolution who did not bow his head in defeat or despair but held it high where he could see the horizon at its broadest.—S.

## Trotsky in Paris During World War I

Recollections of a Comrade and Co-Worker

We are proud to present herewith a memoir written especially for this issue of *The New International* by Alfred Rosmer, one of the great figures of the modern French revolutionary movement, and for many, many years the friend, comrade and co-worker of Leon Trotsky.  
—The Editors

IT WAS AT THE BEGINNING of the First World War and in connection with it that we entered into contact with several Russian socialists, notably with Trotsky. "We" was the editorial board of *La Vie Ouvrière* [*Workers' Life*], the syndicalist review founded in Paris in 1909 by Pierre Monatte. The rapprochement, which was to become so solid and lasting, occurred fortuitously; it was brought about by the publication of a letter from a Russian socialist to Gustave Hervé. If the contact was easy from the start and proved in the years that followed to withstand every test, it is because the accidental initial cause was joined by others, fundamental ones, which would soon have effected it in any case.

Up to the outbreak of the war, there had been no contact between us. Revolutionary syndicalists and socialists of the parties of the Second International followed two different paths. Even the joint demonstrations organized against the war danger when the peril became definite could not dispel the divergences that made them opponents; they scarcely diminished them. The revolutionary syndicalists pursued their activity and the realization of their goals, immediate or distant, by the direct action of their organizations. They ignored or denounced the parliamentary opera-

tions of the Socialist Party whose leaders inspired no confidence in them.

To be sure, the Russian socialists were exempted from this all-around and conclusive condemnation. They were known to be of different mettle. It could not be denied that they were revolutionists, and the difference with them could only be over method. It was not they who could be reproached for using socialism in order to make a career. But in Paris, they lived apart, among themselves, forming an islet in the large city.

Rare were those, even among the French socialists, who knew Lenin during his sojourn in Paris and the Bolshevik school at Longjumeau. They had their papers, their meetings, their fierce controversies, and it is hardly exaggeration to say that what was known about them above all other things was that they were tough wranglers, merciless polemicists.

The collapse of the Second International on August 4, 1914, was for them what the abdication of the Confederation Générale du Travail (General Labor Federation), the incarnation of revolutionary syndicalism, was for us. It must appear strange today, perhaps incredible: their parties, so differentiated from one another by conceptions and program, reacted similarly, that is, they decomposed in the same fashion. The Bolshevik group of Paris did not stand up any better than the others, Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists. There were "defensists" in all three parties, and since the Russians do nothing by halves, most of the "defensists" went off to enlist in the French army.

In opposition to them, the resisters

of the three parties felt themselves on the same foundation, united by conceptions which were thenceforward determinant essentials as to the origins and the meaning of the war, the defense of socialism and of the International. They had a printing shop at their disposal; they decided to publish a paper which would be a rallying point for all the faithful socialists. Their position was that of the revolutionary syndicalists who denounced the "Sacred Union" to which the majority of the leadership of the CGT had rallied, and who maintained proletarian internationalism against them.

The two new groupings thus formed had to come together. Yet an interval was necessary. We had known Martov first of all by his letter to Gustave Hervé in which the position of the Russian socialists on the war was defined. But relations with him were confined to personal contact and private conversations. We had to await Trotsky, whose early arrival was announced by Martov.

TROTSKY ARRIVED IN PARIS ALONE, some time in the month of November, 1914. He took a room in the Hotel d'Odessa, at the corner of Rue d'Odessa and Boulevard Edgar-Quinet, in the vicinity of the Montparnasse Station. The war had caught him in Vienna where he had immediately become an undesirable enemy alien. Viktor Adler had facilitated his departure, and that of his wife and two sons. The family had made its first stop in Zurich, then Trotsky had left to scout out Paris, for that is where he wanted to take up residence. Immediately upon his arrival he went to the editorial office of the paper that the "resisters" were publishing. Its name at the time was *Nashe Slovo* [Our Word] and it was

a daily, for the Russian socialists performed the miracle of publishing a socialist daily against the war in wartime Paris, and they published it "to the bitter end," limiting themselves only to changing the name when the French government decided to prohibit it.

One of the first effects of Trotsky's participation in the life of the paper and the group was to place on the order of the day the question of the liaison to establish with the French opposition. He himself was appointed to assure this liaison, along with Martov and a Polish socialist, Lapinski. The three of them were supposed to come to our office and participate in our Tuesday evening meetings. After that I often had occasion to see them, but our subsequent encounters have not weakened the very lively memory I still have of the first evening that found them among us. It was an event.

In that lugubrious first winter of the war, faced by the collapse of the Internationals, our thoughts were often somber. Our regular meetings, limited to our own forces, cut down by the mobilization, were an inestimable comfort. But that one took on an exceptional character: a friendly encounter between syndicalists and socialists, each very much attached to its respective doctrines. A war was needed for such a thing to be possible.

A young socialist writer, Raymond Lefebvre, who was to be killed by the war, has so exactly evoked these joint meetings that I should like to present here some extracts from his narrative:

Right near the corner of Rue Grange-aux-Belles and the Quai Jemmapes, in Paris, a little gray shop still stood open in 1914, a *Librairie du Travail* [Labor Publishers]... This shop closed on August 2nd. And yet, on certain evenings of the autumn, along about nine o'clock,

police might have noted that a furtive life sparkled there, that conspirators slipped in one after the other. I participated in it more than once. No more was done than to poke dolefully the warmed-over remnants of the International; to draw up with a bitter memory the vast list of those who had failed; to catch glimpses, with useless clairvoyance, of how the exhausting struggle would last in which civilization would be the only vanquished.

A somber pride was left us. The pride of loyalty to the faith, the pride of resisting the inundation of the stupidity in which, Romain Rolland alone excepted, the mightiest minds were wallowing.

Rosmer, the poet Martinet, Trotsky, Guilbeaux, Merrheim and two or three others whose names I do not know—we were able, right in Paris, to be at once among the last Europeans of that fine intelligent Europe that the world had just lost forever and the first men of a future International about which we remained certain. We were the chain between the two centuries. Aye, those are proud souvenirs.

Let us return to that meeting at which Trotsky, Martov and Lapinski were with us for the first time. As was natural, the conversation remained general at the start, moving from one subject to another. Among our syndicalist friends, some, not many, were still hesitant. The sentimental reaction engendered among them by the aggression of semi-feudal Austria against little Serbia, and enhanced by the German thrust through Belgium, disturbed them, and obscured in their minds the true and profound causes of the war. They were to move away from us later on, but they were present that evening, and one of them exclaimed, when the conversation got around more specifically to the war: "But, after all, Austria is the one that jumped cravenly upon Serbia!"

Then Trotsky spoke up. The liberal paper of Kiev *Kievskaya Mysl* [Kievian Thought], with which he had collaborated, had made him a

war correspondent during the two Balkan wars. He was thus particularly well equipped for a reply. In the friendly tone that had marked the conversation from the beginning, he gave a luminous exposition of a situation that was complicated only in appearance. The Balkan peoples who had fought against one another were all victims of the diplomatic intrigues and maneuvers of the Great Powers who regarded them as their pawns on the European chessboard. There was neither smugness nor pedantry in his remarks: an exceptionally well-informed comrade was dealing with a subject which circumstances had enabled him to know thoroughly, in its entirety and in its regional characteristics.

The conclusion forced itself upon us without any need to formulate it, with no room left for doubts and even less for a serious contradiction. All of us had the impression that our group had just gained a remarkable recruit. Our horizon widened. Our meetings were going to take on new life. We felt a great contentment.

NEVERTHELESS, THESE ENCOUNTERS, so happily begun, had to come to a speedy end. Martov was a sort of official personage in his party. He represented the Menshevik faction of the Social - Democratic Labor Party of Russia in the International Socialist Bureau, the permanent organism of the Second International. His party, like the others, had been broken into three fragments by the war: a defensist section—the one that had supplied the enlisted volunteers; a vacillating center; and an internationalist left.

Precisely because he belonged to the last tendency, Martov deemed that he must maintain a certain prudence, to do nothing that might seem to commit arbitrarily the party as a

whole. Common work with us, who belonged to no socialist party, ran the risk of putting him in a difficult situation, of warranting criticisms by the leaders of the French Socialist Party who did not take kindly to his speeches—to them, he was not a comrade but a nuisance.

As for Trotsky, he had much more freedom of movement. He had broken with the Bolsheviks because he was hostile to their principles of organization, and with the Mensheviks because he condemned their politics. He was at the head of a group that had constituted itself around the conception of the "permanent revolution," which he had worked out in part with Parvus. Very solidly Marxist, he was nonetheless not of those social-democrats for whom revolutionary syndicalism was a heresy to be condemned on every score; neither did the general strike frighten him off, for he already had one, a famous one, to his credit, that of 1905. In the discussions held in the *Nashe Slovo* group he defended warmly the liaison established with us and the possibility of joint work. His point of view, which Martov joined in without too much difficulty, carried.

No sooner had he arranged himself in wartime Paris—he already knew the city, having made brief visits to it on two occasions, but the state of war had created new complications—than Trotsky hastened to bring in his family. He had found a modest boarding house in the vicinity of Montsouris Park, at the top of La Glacière, at the entrance to Rue de l'Amiral-Mouchez. According to a stubborn but fairly harmless legend—ininitely worse ones were forged—he was always seen at a table of the Café de la Rotonde among the chess players.

There is a mixup here. It is Mar-

tov, a bohemian by taste and habit, who was a café frequenter. As for Trotsky, he was the very contrary of a bohemian and he liked neither the atmosphere nor the talk of the café: too much time lost.

The boarding house of Rue de l'Amiral-Mouchez was a very simple two-storied building. There were hardly a dozen boarders. The man and woman who managed it were a rare exception in the category of the usual businessmen. They became friends of the family, especially of the two boys. They continued to meet when the family had found regular lodgings. I went there once a week, generally on Sunday. One of our evenings was exceptionally stirring and I want to speak of it in some detail. Trotsky had asked us, Lapinski and me, to come to dinner and he had insisted that we come early. We had the explanation right away. "I have invited," he told us, "a Belgian anarchist whom I met by chance a while ago. He is an extremely congenial person who, out of impulsiveness, it seems, has reacted violently against the German invaders. He has organized assaults against them in the Liège region, and fled just in time to escape being caught. His reports are therefore very interesting and very instructive. They help understand the Belgian resistance whose violent and spontaneous character has surprised everybody.\* Besides, they also help understand how and why anarchists have been led to behave like frenzied patriots. Naturally, there is no point

\* In the editorial office of *l'Humanité* in the evening of the attempt on the life of Jaurès, Merrheim had met the Belgian socialist Camille Huysmans, deputy and secretary of the Permanent Bureau of the Second International: "What will you do," he asked him, "if the Germans break through across Belgium?" Marking his words with a descriptive gesture, Huysmans replied: "A little corridor for them to pass through."

in discussing the war with him. That would get us nowhere. He has a lively, hot-headed character and, above all, he is not in a state of mind right now to discuss calmly with opponents." We took our oath, Lapinski and I, to behave like men of the world, experts in the art of avoiding explosive subjects.

The dinner went off perfectly. The menu was simple even on gala evenings and there was no danger of either wines or spirits going to our heads. I knew our partner even though I had never met him during my trips to Belgium. I had read the recital of his activity and his writings. He was an attractive figure of Belgian anarchism, which had no few of them. The passage of Elisée Reclus through the New University of Brussels had left deep traces. When we reached Trotsky's room, I opened up the conversation by speaking of memories and friends we had in common. Trotsky and Lapinski spoke up in turn. Our conversation unfolded in an agreeable atmosphere of cordiality and we rejoiced in the thought that the evening would end as pleasantly as it had begun, when suddenly our partner blazed up. What had happened? We were unable to clear up what was to remain a mystery. Was it that our ideas about the war were poorly concealed beneath our unflappable words? In any case, we had to endure the assault of our unbridled companion: we were Germanophiles, cravens, we were against the war out of cowardice, and the fidelity to internationalism that we proclaimed was nothing but a convenient pretext to mask the real reasons. . . . Reply had to be made, but the only result was that voices were raised to the point where the peaceful house was disturbed. We were all displeased.

BEFORE HIS FAMILY CAME TO JOIN him, Trotsky had already organized two big trips in France. His paper did not ask him to go to the front and follow the armies. Besides, the accredited war correspondents did not see very much; they were reduced to spinning out more or less adroitly the official communiqués, and trench warfare marked a lull in the spectacular operations. What was interesting, however, was to cross the country, to question people, to converse with them in order to reveal the real feelings which conventional falsehood concealed under flashy heroism. Trotsky had first visited Marseille and moved down the coast to the Italian frontier. Then, planning to go toward the North, he asked me to accompany him, thinking that I could help him in the conversations with the English soldiers we were going to meet. One of our friends was then in Boulogne; that is where we decided to go first. Mobilized on the first day, he had since found himself completely isolated. He was avid for news, wanted to know what was happening at the rear, in the socialist and syndicalist general staffs. In the end he learned more from us than we from him. From the English, we did not gather very much. During our walk through the city, we had met a company of volunteers—England had not yet resigned herself to conscription. From place to place, a man—a pal—shouted out the question: "Are you downhearted?" and, naturally, all of them responded with: "No!" After the "soup," we saw some of them playing ball in the street. They looked as little like soldiers as they could look and I could not refrain from saying to my companion: "Too bad that they too are going to learn militarism and the brutishness of barracks life." "Not at all," he riposted,

"it's a good thing for them to take their turn in going through it." We saw others in the café to which we had gone to finish the evening with our friend. They belonged to the quartermaster's division and for them the war was not too tough. They had already taken on a fair load of beer; they uttered nothing but common-places.

The next day we were able to get as far as Calais, then the farthest point of the zone open to civilians. It had been foggy all day long and when we arrived there, night had already fallen; we had a time of it finding lodgings in a hotel. We had come close to the front, but there was nothing whatever to see there. Many of the inhabitants had left for the interior. The city was dead. We went to the offices of the local newspaper in the hope of finding someone from whom some authentic information could be gathered about the state of mind in a region near the front. All we met there was a pitiful chap, symbol of the misery of small provincial papers, further aggravated by the conditions imposed on the press by the war: censorship and compulsory buncombe. Our questions astonished him. The idea that he could tell us anything interesting, us who came from Paris, produced a stupor in him that he did not try to conceal: "You know more than we do," he kept on repeating. But as to the threat, the possibility of a German push, he thought himself obliged to play the braggart: "The 'boches' don't scare us, we are not afraid of either their cannons or their planes."

In the train that took us back to Paris, we had a young Belgian soldier with us for a while. He busied himself with notes, sketches and maps, raised his head, looked at us. It was plain that he was impatient to engage

us in conversation. After a few words from us, he replied by telling us his story. He was in the artillery. His battery having been put out of commission by the Germans, he was sent to the rear to rest until further orders. Taking one of his sketches, he told us: "Here's where our piece was when we were attacked. A first shell fell pretty far behind us; a second fell ahead, but the third hit right on the head. We had been betrayed!" This sudden substitution of the convenient conventional lie for the plain and simple reality made us think for a moment that we were dealing with a humorist. But nothing of the kind. Our good Belgian was perfectly serious, for, in order to edify us about the "betrayal," he enumerated for us several exploits of the same kind which he had heard from comrades who had also been sent to the rear. War hatches lies spontaneously, being itself a big lie: it cannot present itself for what it is.

EARLY IN 1915, CHANGES TOOK PLACE in our two groups. A revision of the list of men who had not performed military service made it possible to send the best-known oppositionists into the armies. Monatte was soon mobilized; my turn came two months later. Among our Russian friends, there had been a break between Martov and the editorial board of *Nashe Slovo*. The war, protracted far beyond what the experts had foreseen and the soldiers had been made to believe, engendered important transformations in the state of mind of the draftees as well as the men and women at home. Discontentment became very active. The need to act, to do something progressively eliminated the confident passivity of the early Sacred Union. Martov felt himself bypassed, not so much perhaps so far

as he was personally concerned, but with regard to the center and in fact the majority of his party. Pretty vehement controversies brought him into conflict with Trotsky in particular, after which he decided to settle in Switzerland. A newcomer took his place in the delegation of *Nashe Slovo*: he was Dridzo-Lozovsky. Unlike his comrades, he had been involved pretty closely in the French trade-union movement, having been secretary of a wholly exceptional kind of union, that of the capmakers, all of whose members were Jews. Our meetings were now held fairly often at his place; his wife was a dentist and her office was large enough for us to be at our ease.

The Parisian life of Trotsky was thenceforth well ordered. In the morning, he read the papers. A born journalist, loving, as he reports in his autobiography, to sniff the smell of printer's ink, of freshly moist proofs, he had easily oriented himself among the Parisian press, which was yet so different from what he had been used to in Vienna. The French newspapers of the time were extremely poor. The censorship hardly left them the freedom to embellish upon the official communiqués. The papers were thus, in form and substance, put together from the same pattern. For this reason, Trotsky found *l'Action Française* of the Maurassian neo-royalists interesting. By the side of the not always harmless buffoonery of Léon Daudet, the "doctrinary" snarling of Maurras sprawled over massive columns, while Louis Dimier cut up Germany into morsels every day—into serpent's fragments—before he quit the house and revealed its secrets. It maintained an incontestable originality, due in part to the fierce campaign that it conducted at the time against Clemenceau, which earned it favor-

able censorship treatment. He saw soon enough, however, what there really was behind this surface originality: "Why, these interminable articles of Maurras," he said to me, "they're always the same thing, and the famous verve of Daudet is no doubt amusing only in peacetime."

Toward eleven o'clock, he left the house to go to the *Nashe Slovo* printshop, where the editors would come together to discuss and prepare the paper. By their connections with their emigré comrades in Switzerland, England, Scandinavia, America, they were able to gather together, in those days of penury, an exceptional informational service which enabled them to understand better and interpret more exactly the events of each day. The commentaries were accompanied by discussions and important studies that the censor treated with a certain respect, doubtlessly judging that this paper, confined to a small circle of emigrés, represented no danger to the French. In the afternoon and evening, Trotsky wrote, or participated in the debates that the various Russian groups organized. He excelled in enlivening the debates. But he always found the time to occupy himself with the school work of the two boys who, having hardly had the time to start on French, attended a Russian school on the Boulevard Blanqui.

In the course of my visits, he initiated me into the life of the Russian parties and the lively controversies that agitated them. He, on his part, had nurtured them by the publication of an important brochure written in Zurich during his short sojourn, which appeared there in German under the title, *Der Krieg und die Internationale* [The War and the International]. This brochure had a strange fate. At the beginning of 1915, the German government or-

dered its confiscation. The court that sat in the case pronounced sentence upon the author for the crime of *lèse-majesté*. It was to reappear three years later, in New York, in English, under a new title, *The Bolsheviks and World Peace*. An enterprising publisher had made a book out of it—there was no lack of substance for that—and Lincoln Steffens wrote an introduction to it. Appraising pretty accurately Trotsky's position toward the war, he wrote: "Trotsky is not pro-German. . . . He is not pro-Allies; he is not even pro-Russian. He is not a patriot at all. He is for a class, the proletariat, the working class of all countries, and he is for his class only to get rid of classes." But the most astonishing thing is that the book aroused a lively interest in another man, a much more important personage in American society of that day than Lincoln Steffens — President Woodrow Wilson, whose ambition it was to arbitrate the conflict. But for the peace that he intended to realize, he came into collision with the ill-will of the Entente statesmen. So, while he could not, of course, approve of the entire contents of the book, he did find in the peace program set up by the author several points of his own: no reparations; the right of every nation to self-determination; the United States of Europe — without monarchies, without standing armies, without ruling feudal castes, without secret diplomacy. All this was not of a kind to frighten off the liberal American intellectual who was more at home with it than were his compatriots of Europe. He commented on the book, recommended it, made it a success. Trotsky was not to know about this interesting adventure until years later, but he was informed of it by the publisher himself, Charles Boni, who visited him in Prinkipo.

MY VISITS TO THE BOARDING HOUSE on Rue de l'Amiral-Mouchez ended in the month of May, when I was mobilized and sent to the provinces. At the beginning of August, I was able to take advantage of a service provision to return to Paris, where I arrived just in time to participate in the last meeting at which we were to discuss and define the attitude of our delegate to the international conference that was soon to meet in Switzerland. Through Merrheim, I learned what had happened to the leadership of the C. G. T. in my absence, and Trotsky recounted in detail the preparatory work of the conference. An Italian socialist deputy, Morgari, had come to Paris, credentialed by his party to sound out the leaders of the socialist party and get them to participate in the conference. At the same time, he was supposed to raise the question of an international conference in the Bureau of the Second International which claimed that it was already too late to convoke the representatives of its sections. He had had no success among the leaders of the French party, nor any more among those of the Second International. Vandervelde had dismissed him brutally, even boasting of preventing any attempt at an international socialist get-together.

For France to participate in the conference, it was evidently necessary to be content with oppositional groups which we would endeavor to make as representative as possible. Conferences of the socialist party and of the C. G. T. had taken place. It was not possible to pretend any longer to ignore that oppositions existed. The most important of the trade-union organizations was the *Fédération des métaux* [Metal Workers' Federation] and all told it already represented a third of the general fed-

eration's membership. In the socialist party, one of the most solid departmental federations, that of Haute-Vienne, had proceeded to distinguish itself publicly from the attitude of *l'Humanité* and the party leadership. Through the medium of Morgari, contacts were established between the Russian group of *Nashe Slovo*, the trade-union opposition and the socialists of Haute-Vienne. Several joint meetings had been held; they remained without positive results. The deputies of the minority were satisfied with the moderate and harmless form of the opposition they had adopted. They feared before all else to make a gesture which would have opened them to the accusation of imperiling the unity of the party. The urgent arguments of the Russian socialists which should have been decisive for them did not succeed in pushing them ahead an inch toward a consistent attitude; throughout the war and afterward they never went further than Kautsky. So, nothing was gained from this side and since it was necessary above all to keep the enterprise secret, it was decided to be satisfied, so far as French representation was concerned, with two absolutely sure delegations: Merrheim, secretary of the *Fédération des métaux*, and Bourderon, an old militant of the socialist party who was in addition the secretary of a trade-union federation, that of the coopers.

This last meeting which I was able to attend by chance was, intentionally, not large in numbers. Merrheim and Bourderon were there and, from the Russian side, Trotsky and Lozovsky. The resolution on which the syndicalist minority had united at the national [C. G. T.] conference of August 15 was very clear in its opposition to the war, its denunciation of the Sacred Union, in its proclamation

of the principles of revolutionary syndicalism; it remained vague about the specific action to be undertaken. Trotsky and even Lozovsky, who was always very moderate, insisted that it be supplemented by a fairly precise program of action. But Merrheim and Bourderon replied invariably that they considered themselves bound by their own resolution and did not have the right to change it. In reality, both of them, highly prudent, aimed to reserve to themselves complete freedom of movement. A few days later, Merrheim, Bourderon and Trotsky left for Switzerland.

The secret had been well kept. Brief repercussions appeared in the papers when the conference had already concluded. Trotsky notified me of his return, making an appointment with me at the *Nashe Slovo* printshop. His family had just moved into a small house in Sèvres which a friend, the painter René Parece, being out for several months, had placed at its disposal. A long afternoon and part of the evening were needed to exhaust the report of the conference. Trotsky had followed its developments and incidents close at hand; he knew personally the score of men who had come together in the alpine hostelry of Zimmerwald; and he was the one assigned to draw up the text of the document on which there could be unanimous agreement. He was in a position to make the best and completest report. I must confine myself here to underscoring the two salient points of the debates which were very vehement at times. Lenin wanted the deputies present to commit themselves to voting against war credits upon their return home. He harassed mercilessly Ledebour who refused to make a definitive commitment, and he upset the Italians who, not yet having abandoned the hope of win-



ning over Bernstein and Kautsky and starting up the machinery of the Second International again, absolutely refused to hear anything about a new International.

EVEN THOUGH LENIN WAS DISPLEASED at not having been able to carry his point of view, he gave his approval to the manifesto adopted at the end of the conference, and those who supported his thesis, forming the left wing of the conference, signed along with him. He entitled the article in which he analyzed the debates and the reasons for his attitude, "The First Step." The Zimmerwald conference, such as it was, was one of the important events of the first world war, perhaps the most decisive one, for this "first step" inevitably dictated others. It marked the reawakening of the labor and socialist movements; the scattered oppositions which had till then more or less ignored one another now had a center for mutual contact. Each one now knew he was not alone, that he had comrades in France and in all the countries. There was the certitude that proletarian internationalism, betrayed or scoffed at, had not been wiped out of the consciousness of the workers. It was alive and it would triumph. For confidence was reborn and with it the need to act. New groups were formed or came together: socialists, syndicalists, anarchists, foreshadowing the composition of the new International which was to emerge from the war.

In France, where the workers were particularly exploited, strikes broke out. Taking advantage of circumstances, the employers had imposed "war wages." The workers in the fashionable clothing houses were the first in the fight under the slogan, "Down with war wages!" The employers had to give in. Then, what

was infinitely more important, the agitation reached the munitions plants. The special manufacturing processes, notably in the case of shells, allowed the employment of ordinary labor and specialized laborers, and the employers resorted to female labor which they exploited relentlessly. Work was paid by the piece; speed-up production was pushed, but as soon as a certain wage was reached the employers reduced the base rate of pay, so that every day the workers exhausted themselves more and more physically only to get the same skimpy wage. A strike broke out in a plant of the Paris suburbs. Supported by the unions and by a solidarity movement in which the oppositional groupings participated, the women workers triumphed over the resistance and the threats of the government and the employers. The first trade-union sections of women workers were created.

In Paris, following meetings at the Labor Exchange where Merrheim and Bourderon set forth the work and the conclusions of the Zimmerwald conference, the Committee for the Resumption of International Relations was constituted. Now the opposition had at its disposal a center of information and action. The Committee published pamphlets and tracts and even though its material means were feeble, its mere existence disturbed the socialist and trade-union leadership which hastened to disavow and denounce it. A similar movement developed throughout the country. The Bulletin published by the International Socialist Commission set up by the Zimmerwald Conference could soon publish a list of 25 organizations which had approved the manifesto and, as a consequence, the Commission decided to convoke a new conference which was able to

meet during the last week of April.

Everything was now clearer, but for us the problem of direct participation was a hard one to solve. The government which had been accused of weakness and severely criticized by the fireside warriors, refused to grant passports to every one of those who might have represented us. The *Nashe Slovo* group, likewise unable to send one of its own people, proposed to us to prepare a common declaration and manifesto for the conference which would be published in the pre-conference Bulletin and would thus assure our participation. Trotsky was assigned to draw up the documents and when they were ready he asked me to come discuss them with him. This time the preliminary declaration put the questions clearly. The events of the past five months had fully confirmed the conceptions expressed at Zimmerwald. Now it was necessary to move more resolutely along the road marked out. The problem of national defense had to be settled categorically without preoccupation with the existing military or diplomatic situation, and the accent was placed on the intensified revolutionary struggle of the working class against capitalism, for it was only in that way that the peace conception formulated in Zimmerwald could be realized. Our documents appeared in No. 3 of the Commission's Bulletin, February 29, 1916; a complete English translation of it can be found in the work of Gankin and Fisher, *The Bolsheviks and the World War* (Stanford University Press, pp. 390-394). While I approved the draft worked out by Trotsky in everything that was essential, I asked him to make a change, to eliminate the passages concerning the "centrists" (their leader in France was Jean Longuet). One of the conse-

quences of Zimmerwald was to push these people to organize themselves because they wanted at all costs to distinguish themselves from it and at the same time to keep their hold, by means of an intermediate position, on as many as possible of the socialists who were ready to join it. Trotsky attacked them, denounced their ambiguous and timorous attitude. That did not shock me, quite the contrary, I would rather have added to it. We knew them well and had no illusions about them. But we had always so harshly forbidden them any intrusion into the trade-union field which we defended jealously against them, against the efforts they tried to make to turn the unions off the right road, that we considered it natural, in return, not to mix into their internal dissension. Trotsky was not very happy about amputating his document in this fashion, but in our common work he always showed himself very understanding, defending his ideas as only he knew how but ready nevertheless for necessary conciliation. Thus the documents could appear under the double signature of *Nashe Slovo* and *Vie Ouvrière*.

NEVERTHELESS, THERE WERE three Frenchmen at this second conference which likewise met in Switzerland, in Kienthal, from the 24th to the 30th of April, 1916; three deputies who made the trip in the greatest secrecy. They had no contact with the Committee for the Resumption of International Relations and did not seek to get any. They wanted to carry on their opposition in their own way, afraid to link themselves with more resolute and consistent elements. All three of them were teachers; Brizon, a high-school teacher, was the most capable and it was he who acted as their spokesman at the conferences. He was an impul-

sive, uneven, capricious person. On occasion, he could be utterly unendurable—which is precisely what happened from the very first sessions of the conference where he showed his disagreeable side and provoked unpleasant incidents. But with him the business ended better than it began: he was the one entrusted with drawing up the manifesto and, back in France, he did more than had been expected, voting against war credits the first chance he got, followed only by the other two pilgrims to Kienthal, defying the clamor, the insults and the threats of almost the entire Chamber, particularly of the majority socialists who were not among the least furious. Besides, he thereafter made a “communist” use of the parliamentary tribune by reading off the newspaper articles which the censorship had prohibited and which were then to appear in the *Journal Officiel*, in the report of the debates. The Committee for the Resumption of International Relations immediately reprinted them in the form of tracts which fostered and expanded its propaganda.

The opposition became stronger, more conscious, more aggressive, while the situation of the governments of the belligerent countries worsened: at the beginning of 1916 there seemed to be no way out for them; the tiredness became more general; privation became harder and there was all the less inclination to accept it because there were no more illusions about the outcome of the war. Seeking to obtain a decision, Germany had unleashed a terrible offensive against Verdun. There it wore out its forces, but it also wore out those of France. As is customary, the frenetic patriots spoke of treason, manufactured newspaper novels, melodramatic stories to capture the at-

ention of the peoples and to dupe them. Every morning they demanded that the government crack down upon the “defeatists.”

I was then in Paris and I had resumed my visits to Trotsky and his family in their lodgings in the Gobelins where they had moved when they had to leave the house in Sèvres. One evening, I found Trotsky sad and preoccupied. He participated regularly in the meetings of the Committee for the Resumption of International Relations. His remarks were highly regarded, all the more because they expressed the feelings of the great majority of the members who, like Trotsky, desired to expand the activity of the Committee on the outside. Toward this end, he had insisted at the last meeting of the Committee on the need of giving the Committee an organ, of publishing at least a Bulletin that would establish connections between Paris and the rest of the country. This proposition had irritated Merrheim, who had also fought against it and, carried away by anger, he had reproached Trotsky for “lacking in tact.” Trotsky had not replied to this surprising accusation on the spot; he did not want to aggravate the incident, being certain that Merrheim would come off second best. What could be the meaning of this? Only that Trotsky, being a “foreigner,” was supposed to maintain more reserve than the other members of the Committee, to refrain from taking the initiative and to content himself with approval. But precisely because he was a “foreigner,” Trotsky was more exposed than anyone else, and events were soon to prove that.

At the meeting of the National Council of the Socialist Party on August 7, the majority had denounced the opposition in new language. Minister Sembat had declared: “I consid-

er it the duty of the majority to react against the propaganda that the minority is organizing with tireless activity. We must not allow the continuation of this sort of corruption of the mind of the public in general and of socialists in particular.” Echoing him immediately, the man who then figured as the leader of the party, Renaudel, asserted: “I have in my pockets letters from soldiers who write me: ‘We are sent letters that give us the blues,’ they say; and this is no time for that.” The reactionary press, that is, the whole of the Parisian and provincial press, immediately picked up these words, adding the conclusion implicit in them but which the two “socialists” had not dared formulate openly in a party conference: the government must gag the corruptors of the public mind. It was an appeal to repression and the preparation of it. Trotsky was to be its first victim.

Frightened by the mounting figure of its losses in men, France had decided to appeal to Russia and its “inexhaustible reservoir” to send contingents of Russian soldiers to fight on the French front. The operation was to prove disastrous and shortly after the first disembarkments a grave incident occurred. Russian soldiers stationed in Marseille mutinied; their colonel, unable to mollify them by his eloquence, struck one of them, who turned on him and killed him.

According to the first accounts, the explanation of this tragic affair seemed simple. The Russian soldiers were subject to a severe discipline, they were absolutely forbidden to walk through the city, which was an all the more intolerable regulation when they could see other soldiers of all colors, English, Indian, black, move about freely after their day’s military work. Irritation, added to expatriation, was more than enough

to explain the fight.

However, disturbing signs appeared. The inquest had disclosed, said the newspapers, that the killer had copies of *Nashe Slovo* in his possession. Thereafter the affair took a different turn: Russian journalists who went into the matter particularly, established the fact that an active role had been played by an *agent provocateur*. All sorts of documents were then recollected. Gustave Hervé, then still a member of the Administrative Commission of the Socialist Party, had demanded of Ministry Malvy, since 1915, to throw out of France all the Russian refugees guilty of revolutionary internationalism. On the other hand, Professor Durkheim, chairman of the commission appointed by the government to take care of the Russian refugees, had informed their representative of the coming prohibition of *Nashe Slovo* and the expulsion of its editors. The hour of application had come: on September 15, 1916, the government suppressed *Nashe Slovo*; on September 16 it notified Trotsky of its decree on his expulsion.

THE EVE OF THE DAY set for the expulsion I went to Rue Oudry to greet Trotsky. He received me with a smile: “I am not leaving,” he said. Minority socialist deputies had intervened with Briand, then president of the Council, and reminded him that no French government to date had consented to turn over a Russian revolutionist to the czar. Briand denied any such plan; he granted a delay so that a country could be found to admit Trotsky. After he had given me these explanations, Trotsky added that his friends of *Nashe Slovo*, who had arranged a farewell party, had decided not to call it off. There could be no illusions about the outcome of the affair; it was only postponed. Natalia

then joined us and we left for the Russian canteen on Rue Broca where the "banquet" was to be held, with a Russian menu on which only tea was in abundance. Even though there was scarcely reason for rejoicing; good humor prevailed from start to finish and so late into the night that I had to leave before the end. The Russian revolutionists present that evening had all passed through stiff tests and the weightiest threat now seemed removed.

If there had been any illusions, they would soon have been dispelled. From that time on, Trotsky was subjected to rigorous police surveillance. Police were installed in an empty shop at the mouth of the Rue Oudry from which no movement of Trotsky could escape their watch. However, Trotsky succeeded one day in outsmarting them. He had been summoned to the police prefecture for noon, and since he could not stand having the police trail him, he left the house before daybreak, resolved to wander around the city throughout the morning. At the stroke of noon, as he approached the office of the commissioner, he had time to perceive the tormented face of the policeman, upset at having let him escape. Shortly after this interlude, the order for his immediate expulsion arrived, this time definitively. That day, when I appeared at Rue Oudry, I found only Natalia and the two boys, who were preparing to leave for Spain; two new police agents, more important ones, had presented themselves that morning.

When Trotsky understood that the expulsion measure was definitive, he prepared a letter addressed to Jules Guesde. For the Russian socialists, Sembat was an amateur, a dilettante amused by the socialist game. But Jules Guesde had been a pioneer,

he had known Marx. Up to the war, he had retained so much prestige in their eyes that all of of them remained more or less "Guesdists." So it was to him that Trotsky wanted "to express some ideas which will probably be of no use to you, but which may at least be useful *against* you." Then, after having recited in detail the "Marseille affair," the pretext for the repression, he wrote:

At the beginning of the war, when generous promises were distributed with an open hand, your closest companion, Sembat, gave Russian journalists a glimpse of the most beneficial influence of the democratic Allies upon the internal regime of Russia. In addition, this was the supreme argument with which the government-socialists of France and Belgium sought, perseveringly, but unsuccessfully, to reconcile the Russian revolutionists with the czar.

Twenty--six months of constant military collaboration, of communion with the generalissimos, diplomats, parliamentarians, visits of Viviani and Thomas to Tsarskoye Selo, in a word, twenty-six months of uninterrupted "influence" of the Western democrats upon czarism, have strengthened the most arrogant reaction in our country, modified only by administrative chaos, and have at the same time brought the internal regime of England and France extremely close to that of Russia. The generous promises of M. Sembat are cheaper, as you can see, than his coal. The hapless fate of the right of asylum thus appears only as a striking symptom of militaristic and police domination on both sides of the Channel.

... Is it possible for an honest socialist not to fight against you? You have transformed the Socialist Party into a docile choir accompanying the coryphees of capitalist banditry in an epoch when bourgeois society—whose mortal enemy you, Jules Guesde, once were—has disclosed its true nature through and through. Out of the events prepared by an entire period of world pillage, whose consequences we foretold more than once, out of all the blood spilled, out of all the suffering, the misfortunes, all the crimes, all the rapaciousness and felonies of the governments, you, Jules Guesde, draw but one single lesson for

the French proletariat, namely, that Wilhelm II and Franz-Josef are criminals who, unlike Nicolas II and M. Poincaré, do not respect the rules of international law!

... The socialism of Babeuf, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Blanqui, the Commune, Jaurès and Jules Guesde—yes, of Jules Guesde too—finally found its Albert Thomas to deliberate with Romanov on the surest way of seizing Constantinople; its Marcel Sembat to parade his dilettante's I-don't-give-a-fig over the cadavers and ruins of French civilization; and its Jules Guesde to train with the others behind the chariot of conqueror Briand.

And you thought, you hoped, that the French proletariat which, in this idealess and fruitless war, is being bled white by the crime of the ruling classes, will support silently to the end this shameful pact drawn between official socialism and its worst enemies. You were mistaken. An opposition arose. In spite of the state of siege and the furor of nationalism, which always preserves its same capitalist substance under divers forms, royalist, radical or socialist, the revolutionary opposition is advancing step by step and is winning ground every day.

*Nashe Slovo*, the paper you have strangled, lived and breathed in the atmosphere of reawakening French socialism. Ripped out of the Russian soil by the will of the counter-revolution that triumphed thanks to the aid of the French Stock Exchange—which you, Jules Guesde, are now serving—the *Nashe Slovo* group was happy to reflect, even as incompletely as your censorship allowed us, the voice of the French section of the new International, arising out of the midst of the horrors of the fratricidal war.

... Perhaps you draw consolation from the thought that we are few in number? Yet we are more numerous than think the policemen of all ranks. They do not perceive, in their professional myopia, that spirit of revolt that is rising in all the centers of suffering, that is spreading throughout France and all of Europe, in the workers' suburbs and the countryside, the shops and the trenches.

... Step down, Jules Guesde, from your military automobile, get out of the cage where the capitalist state has shut you up, and look about you a little. Perhaps fate will one last time take pity on

your sorry old age and you will hear the muted sound of approaching events. We await them; we summon them; we prepare them. The fate of France would be too frightful if the Calvary of its working masses did not lead to a great revenge, *our* revenge, where there will be no place for you, Jules Guesde, nor for yours.

Expelled by you, I leave France with a profound faith in our triumph. Over your head, I sent a fraternal greeting to the French proletariat which is awakening to great destinies. Without you and against you, long live socialist France!

AS TO THE INFLUENCE that Trotsky exercised in France, outside of Russian circles, during the first two years of the First World War, I can give no better evidence of it than by reproducing here some passages from an address drawn up at the moment when, having been accused by Kerensky and his socialist ministers of being "agents of the kaiser," Lenin had to hide in Finland and Trotsky was arrested and imprisoned. It was signed by militants and organizations belonging to the anarchist and syndicalist movements, among them: Hubert and Barthe, of the excavators' union, Péricat, of the Comité de Défense Syndicaliste, Decouzon, of the chemical products union, Millerat, secretary of the clothing union, Beauvais, for the ceramics workers' union, Vaulop, for the electrical workers' union, Barrion, for the Socialist Youth of the 13th Ward, the Comité d'Entente des Jeunes Syndicalistes of the Seine, Gontier, of the bricklayers' union, Barday, for the chauffeurs Action Group, Thuillier and Broutchoux, trade union militants.

We did not await the triumph of the Russian Revolution to affirm to Lenin and to Trotsky and to the other Maximalist comrades our sympathy in order to protest against the slanders with which the entire press drenches them, especially *L'Humanité* through the voice of Renaudel, and *La Bataille* through that of Cornelissen. These men are sure-

ly great criminals; they do not play the socialist comedy; they have written as socialists, they have spoken as socialists, they act like socialists. Their extreme sincerity shows up pink socialism, hypocrisy and falsehood before the eyes of the socialist and sympathizing masses of France. The masks are falling.

... The revolutionary French proletariat will not be duped by the slanders. We know the men that are being insulted, who they are and what is their worth. Many of them, like Trotsky, lived among us. We admired their courage, their abnegation, their lack of self-interest.

... The crime of these men lies in having remained faithful to their ideas, their convictions, to that program of internationalist and socialist action which others, who now rage against them, acclaimed with them at Zimmerwald and Kienthal.

... They did not think that the change in governmental personnel of March, 1917, was sufficient reason to abandon these ideas and this program. They wanted the Russian Revolution to realize: peace imposed by the workers, emancipation of the working class.

Four years later, describing the beginnings of the opposition in France, Amédée Dunois wrote (*Bulletin Communiste*, March 3, 1921):

We knew Trotsky. He had just arrived in Paris. We were suffocating. Trotsky brought us the exhilarating air of the open spaces; he apprised us that the protests were everywhere legion, that treason affected only the general staffs and that socialism having remained alive the main question was to reconstitute the International.

If there is a bit of exaggeration in these lines as to the remarks ascribed to Trotsky on the subject of the oppositionists who, at the beginning, were nowhere legion, there is none in the scope of new strength that Trotsky brought us, our group in particular and the movement in general. His ascendancy among the revolutionists was to increase to the degree that we learned to know him from his writings and his actions, and also to the degree that we learned of his past activity, of his role in Russian socialism, in the revolution of 1905, of his audacious escape from the icy steppes where czarism sought to confine him — of all those things about which he spoke only when he was questioned.

ALFRED ROSMER

Paris, July 11, 1950

## Verdict on the Moscow Trials

### Accused Indicts Accusers Before Dewey Commission

#### I

IF THE SERIES OF INFAMOUS MOSCOW TRIALS organized by Stalin and his secret police, which took the lives of the outstanding leaders of the Russian Revolution, has receded from the thoughts of men, it is understandable. The pages of modern history turn swiftly. Social upheaval follows upon social upheaval with such unusual rapidity that historical occurrences of tremendous political import are seemingly buried under the weight of the new. This is especially true

when the events of the day are a world war, an armed peace and the opening phase of an impending atomic war.

Yet the events of the present have their deep roots in the decade of the Thirties. It was not the triumph of Hitler alone (for which Stalin bore heavy responsibility) that influenced so drastically the course of recent history. The Moscow Trials, beginning with the Kirov assassination and ending with the legalized murder of Bukharin and his comrades in 1938 ex-

ercised similar influence on this history.

The Trials sealed the victory of the Stalinist counter-revolution, enhanced the power of the new ruling class, helped to defeat the Spanish Revolution, laid the groundwork for the Hitler-Stalin pact as the prelude to the Second World War and guaranteed the subsequent rise of the new Russian imperialism. Moreover, they set a precedent, which is repeated in all the Stalinized lands; frame-up trials are part of the system of Stalinism.

The Stalinist counter-revolution which began with the defeat of the Left Opposition in Russia in 1927 required ten years for its completion. Organizational and political victory over the various opposition groups, through a reign of terror in the party and the state institutions, was not enough for this modern Genghis Khan. He had to destroy the living representatives of the Russian Revolution, that great host of Lenin's collaborators whose very existence, even as broken men, he could not abide. With cruel cunning and diabolic purpose Stalin organized a series of frame-up trials to vanquish these men morally and physically.

A reign of terror accompanying the Kirov assassination in 1934 preceded the trial of sixteen in August of 1936 in which Zinoviev, Kamenev and Smirnov were the leading defendants. In January, 1937, Piatakov and Radek were the leading defendants in another trial involving seventeen. Between these two trials Stalin beheaded the leading staff of the army, executing the brilliant Tukachevsky, Garmarin and other generals and officers as agents of the Gestapo! The big trials closed in March, 1938, with the conviction and execution of Bukharin, Rykov and nineteen other defendants.

These trials were only the public manifestations of the terror imposed from above which gripped the country. Actually, tens of thousands of worker-militants who were dissatisfied with the regime, and genuine Trotskyists who would not and did not confess lost their lives as "enemies of the state."

ALTHOUGH NOT NAMED as a defendant and never indicted by the state, the real defendant in all the trials was Leon Trotsky. He was charged with being the spiritual and practical organizer of the various plots and fanciful incidents cited by the GPU prosecutors and narrated in the bizarre confessions of the defendants. It was Trotsky, exiled to Turkey in 1929, living in France in 1933-34, in Norway in 1936 and in Mexico in 1937, whom Stalin wanted most of all to destroy.

How could he do this, if Trotsky was abroad? The cunning Stalin, his horizon limited by his insularity, possibly believed that the world would so revile Trotsky for the inhuman crimes for which he was charged that he would be turned over voluntarily to his Russian executioners.

His very cunning was Stalin's undoing. The principal defendant became the relentless accuser. From the moment the first Moscow Trial began, Trotsky challenged its authenticity, declared the endless confessions false and extorted, and insisted that the GPU had staged them for the purpose of murdering Lenin's comrades and himself. He demanded his own extradition from Norway as a means of forcing a public trial of the charges. But this Stalin dared not accept.

Let us recall for a moment what the defendants were allegedly guilty of. They were accused of conspiring

to assassinate Stalin and his aides, wrecking trains, poisoning children, sabotaging industry, plotting war against Russia, acting as the agents of Great Britain, France and the United States at one time, and then of Germany, Italy and Japan at another (depending on the diplomatic orientation of the Russian Foreign Office) and of working for the restoration of capitalism in Russia.

Trotsky met these accusations with an array of facts from the lives of the defendants and arguments from the long political history of Bolshevism, all of it documented to prove that the trials were political in origin and purpose and that the indictments were the product of clumsy preparations by the secret police. He called for the creation of a world commission of inquiry on the ground that the trial affected the international labor movement. And he alone, by vigorous and indefatigable activity, rallied honest, democratic world opinion to an organized effort to seek the truth.

Trotsky knew that it was not enough merely to ridicule the Moscow Trials; it was necessary to *prove* the charges false and thereby to clear the names of the accused and to safeguard the integrity of socialism. The bourgeoisie was making sport of the trials: this was the inevitable consequence of socialism, the "revolution devouring its own children." To Trotsky, the mobilization of world opinion along concrete lines through a world commission of inquiry was the only avenue toward establishing the truth. He was prepared to testify freely, to give all the evidence he had, to open his archives and to demonstrate by all manner of documentary evidence that the trials were political in purpose, that the indictments were false, that the defendants could not

be guilty and that he and his family were likewise innocent of the charges made.

## II

The establishment of the Commission of Inquiry into the charges made against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials was initiated in March, 1937, by the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. The Commission received mandates from the French *Comité pour l'Enquête sur le Procès de Moscou*, the English Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky and the Czechoslovak *Internationales Komitee für Recht und Wahrheit*.

The creation of these committees was not easily accomplished. Every forward step in this direction produced the fiercest counter-struggle from the Stalinists, directed by the experienced hand of the GPU and the Russian embassies. Committee members were promised unusual benefits if they broke with the commission or refused to serve its high purpose. They were threatened in a variety of ways if they persisted in their mission. Commissioners would be awakened at night by mysterious phone calls and others not so mysterious, demanding that they withdraw. The Stalinist press denounced the commission and its aims. In the United States, the Russian ambassador, the former Menshevik Trotsky, asserted that the aims of the commission and the planned hearing of Trotsky in Mexico were a farce.

Behind the Stalinist phalanx stood an assortment of confused liberals led by *The Nation* and *The New Republic*. With its characteristic ambivalence, *The Nation* would raise grave doubts about the justice of the Trials at the same time that it conjured up the enormous dangers to progress if one really believed the great "Soviet

leaders" to be frame-up artists and common gangsters. Truth was a secondary consideration in the wisdom of its editors, who earnestly believed that the interest of "collective security" of the Allies against Hitler outweighed the rights, reputations and lives of the defendants in the trials. In their minds it was a danger to world peace to prove that the Moscow Trials were a frame-up, thereby discrediting the Russian leaders who were fighting so sincerely for peace.

The role of *The New Republic* was even more ignominious than that of *The Nation*. Its editors found it quite easy to swallow the trials, incredible though they seemed. For they, who fought for years against the power of the American state, who defended Sacco and Vanzetti, and Debs and Tom Mooney, could not believe that a man like Stalin would resort to gangsterism against political opponents.

The trials were genuine! That is what the King's Counsellor, D. N. Pritt, had said. And the American Ambassador to Moscow, Joseph Davies, was there and he thought that the Stalin government had done only what any other government would have done under similar circumstances. He even wrote a book called "Mission to Moscow" to add weight to the charges of the Moscow Trials! And the facts? These were unimportant. What was important was the acquisition of an ally in a threatened war with Germany. Ah, the morality of Bolshevism, the dirtiness of politics! What a lesson these liberals taught us about morality and politics! No wonder that Dr. John Dewey, the eminent chairman of the Preliminary Commission of Inquiry which heard Trotsky in Mexico, was led to say of these liberals:

The Commission of Inquiry, I repeat,

is not trying to discover who is right and who is wrong in their political ideas and policies, the "Trotskyites" or their opponents. It is engaged in trying to get at the truth as to the specific charges upon which he was convicted in the Moscow Trials. This work is one of evidence and objective fact, not of weighing theories against each other. Either Leon Trotsky is guilty of plotting wholesale assassination, systematic wreckage with destruction of life and property; of treason of the basest sort in conspiring with political and economic enemies of the U.S.S.R. in order to destroy Socialism; or he is innocent. If he is guilty, no condemnation can be too severe. If he is innocent, there is no way in which the existing regime in Soviet Russia can be acquitted of deliberate, systematic persecution and falsification. These are unpleasant alternatives for those to face who are sympathetic with the efforts to build a Socialist State in Russia. The easier and lazier course is to avoid facing the alternatives. But unwillingness to face the unpleasant is the standing weakness of liberals. They are only too likely to be brave when affairs are going smoothly and then to shirk when unpleasant conditions demand decision and action. I cannot believe that a single genuine liberal would, if he once faced the alternatives, hold that persecution and falsification are a sound basis upon which to build an enduring Socialist society.

Despite harassment and sabotage by the Stalinists, the Commission of Inquiry was set up. It was composed of such well known persons as John R. Chamberlain, Alfred Rosmer, E. A. Ross, Wendelin Thomas and Carlo Tresca. In addition to these, the Preliminary Commission, acting as a subcommittee of the above body which was to take the testimony of Trotsky, consisted of John Dewey, Chairman, Carleton Beals, Otto Ruehle, Benjamin Stolberg and Suzanne LaFollette, Secretary.

One can only imagine the atmosphere of the Kremlin in the knowledge that they had failed to stop the formation of the Commission or its determination to take Trotsky's testi-

mony. It tried another tack. The Mexican Stalinist movement, with Lombardo Toledano in the van, threatened strikes and demonstrations if the hearings were actually to occur. The campaign against Trotsky reached new levels of viciousness. The Stalinists demanded that Trotsky's right of asylum be ended. They charged him with interfering with Mexican affairs (we will soon see how this charge was introduced into the hearings in another form). But the Mexican government under Cardenas, to its everlasting honor, refused to be stampeded by the Stalinists and made certain that the hearings would take place with no interference.

### III

The Preliminary Commission gathered in Mexico City before the scheduled opening of the hearings to prepare for them. They rode out to the lovely suburb of Coyoacan to open the hearings on April 10th, 1937, which were held in a large room off the patio of Diego Rivera's home at 127 Avenida Londres. Given the size of the home, not more than fifty people could be accommodated. These included Trotsky, his wife and comrade Natalia Sedova, his secretaries and guards; the Commission and its counsel, the prominent liberal lawyer, John F. Finerty; Trotsky's attorney, Albert Goldman; the court stenographer, members of the press and observers and visitors. This small body, meeting in a private home but observed by the entire world, was to make history; for out of its session came the indictment of Stalin and his regime as political gangsters guilty of the murder of the founders of the Russian Revolution.

The Stalinists, having failed to stop the hearings, turned to ridicule as a means of discrediting the Dewey Com-

mission. How was this tiny gathering to alter in any way the verdict of the Moscow Trials attended by great personages, accompanied by endless press releases, played up by drummers the world over, featuring one abject confession after another? But they did not reckon with the real defendant in the Moscow Trials, for when Trotsky finished his testimony, one could conclude that Stalin had concocted a stupid frame-up and, with all the power at his command, failed in his essential purpose. (For those who doubt this, bear in mind that if it was merely a matter of taking the lives of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Piatakov, Bucharin and Rykov, Stalin did not need the trials; he could have accomplished his purpose in the same way that he caused thousands of others to disappear.)

The Sub-Commission came neither as a prosecutor or judge. It did not regard Trotsky as a defendant, not merely because Trotsky did not regard himself as one, but because, as we have already written, he was never indicted in the trials. The sub-commission came to Mexico City as an investigating body, to take testimony, to examine and accept documents submitted as evidence, and to determine whether Trotsky "had a case warranting further investigation." It was then to report its findings to the Commission of Inquiry.

The scope of the sub-commission's work was already determined by Mr. Vyshinsky in the trials. The latter declared that there would be two types of testimony: "First there is the historical connection which confirms the theses of the indictment on the basis of the Trotskyites' past activity. We have also in mind the testimony of the accused which in itself represents enormous importance as proof." Moreover, Vyshinsky in his closing plea

in the trials, falsified the whole history of the Russian Revolution and Trotsky's part in it, and distorted and misquoted Trotsky's writings. The sub-commission therefore divided its tasks into three parts:

(a) The biography of Mr. Trotsky, with special reference to his relations with the defendants in the Moscow Trials.

(b) Factual material relating to the decisive accusations against him.

(c) His theoretical and historical writings as they bear upon the credibility of the accusations, the testimony, the confessions, and the summations in the two Moscow Trials.

The hearings lasted from April 10 to April 17, 1937 and took 41 hours, divided into twelve sessions of three hours each, and a final session of five hours.

Thus developed a "trial" unique in history. The prosecution was absent; it would not avail itself of the invitation of the Commission to be present and to examine Trotsky. An impartial investigating body sat in hearing to listen to a man who was convicted but never indicted in the bloodiest trials in all history, by the strongest totalitarian regime known to man. The Commission was under continuous attack and even sabotaged from within.

The opening statement of Dr. Dewey drew immediate attention to the uniqueness of the hearings being held in Mexico, so many thousands of miles away from Russia and other powerful nations of the world. "The fact that hearings are being held in which a foreigner will defend himself before foreigners on Mexican soil," said Dewey, "is an honor to Mexico, and a reproach to those countries whose political system or current policy bars the holding of our meetings on their soil. It is fitting, indeed, that representatives of several continents meet on this soil, which has

granted asylum to many of the Old World who are prosecuted for political views. This Commission, like many millions of workers of city and country, of hand and brain, believes that no man should be condemned without a chance to defend himself. It desires at the outset, therefore, to congratulate the Mexican Government on its broad interpretation of the meaning of political democracy, which makes our meeting possible."

There followed a preliminary statement by Trotsky made in English, the language of the hearings. For Trotsky, who begged the indulgence of Commission for his English, declaring it to be "the weakest point of my position," this was indeed a difficulty. He was compelled to think and speak in a language which he had seldom used in any form and to answer questions swiftly. This made it impossible for the answers to be premeditated, for no one could foretell the ramifications that might be produced by any given question. The interrogation of Trotsky was undertaken by Albert Goldman in presenting Trotsky's case. The Commission's turn came after the presentation of Trotsky's case, although throughout the hearings any commissioner could and did interject questions which in his mind were made necessary by Trotsky's answers.

The first part of Trotsky's testimony concerned his political biography and makes absorbing reading for anyone interested in the history of the Russian Social-Democratic movement (Menshevik and Bolshevik), the defendant's participation in the international socialist movement and his relations with the defendants in the trials. Thereafter, Goldman led Trotsky through the maze of charges made by the Russian prosecutors which were refuted one by one. And

finally came the portion of Trotsky's testimony which dealt with his theoretical and political positions as they evolved over a period of forty years. The Commission on its part continued with a minute examination of the material produced by the confessions and the prosecution.

The hearings produced sufficient evidence, if not to refute the findings of the Moscow Trials, then to create a thousand and one doubts even to the most credulous persons. However, despite the fact that they had no official court status, we will find that their results in the court of public opinion did more than anything else to convict Stalin of being guilty of a frame-up.

How would Trotsky meet the "evidence" produced in the Moscow Trials which was based entirely upon confessions? There were no corroborating witnesses produced. There were no written documents introduced. There were few factual occurrences capable of being checked by cross examination. In fact there was no cross examination. The judges made no effort to check the confessions to determine whether they were true or false and thus to protect the defendants against themselves. After all, civilization has known more than one case of false confessions.

Everything was pre-arranged: the particular defendants, their confessions, the verdicts.

Professor Charles A. Beard, for example, after a "careful study of many documents in the case, including the official report of the last Moscow trial" decided not to participate in the work of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, because he felt from his knowledge of history that "confessions, even when voluntarily made, are not positive proof." He took the position that the

accused must be considered innocent if no objective proofs are produced to prove guilt. And he added, ". . . it is almost, if not entirely, impossible to prove a negative in such a case; namely, that Mr. Trotsky did not enter into the relations of a conspiracy charged against him. . . . In my opinion it is not incumbent upon Mr. Trotsky to do the impossible—that is, prove a negative by positive evidence. It is incumbent upon his accusers to produce more than confessions, to produce corroborating evidence to specific and overt acts."

Trotsky's reply to Professor Beard was cogent. "Indeed, public opinion," he said, "seeks above all to resolve the enigma: is the charge proved or not? . . . Professor Beard declares that he personally has already arrived at the conclusion that the charge has not been established, and *that is why* he does not join the Commission. It seems to me that a correct decision would be the following: 'I enter the Commission in order to test the accuracy of my conclusion.' . . . Professor Beard's conclusions, with all their importance, are incomplete, however, even in their material essence . . . dozens of people have been shot . . . dozens of others await execution . . . the fundamental question, consequently should be formulated in this manner: Who organizes these inquisitorial trials, these crusades of calumny, why, and for what purpose? . . . However, I also have more direct and, moreover, quite positive proofs of the 'negative' fact! That is not very unusual in jurisprudence . . ."

#### IV

After the assassination of Kirov, his assassin and friends were executed. Zinoviev and Kamenev were arrested and imprisoned following a long investigation by the G. P. U. on the

grounds that as critics of the regime they were morally responsible for the murder. But immediately after the murder and the quick apprehension of Nikolayev, (the assassin) the regime linked him not with the Opposition but with White Guards from Poland, Roumania and other border states. According to the government, 104 "White Guards" were shot. This White Guard version was abandoned only after the sixteenth day. Nikolayev and thirteen others were tried and executed, and yet they apparently had nothing to say about Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bakayev or any other "Trotskyite." The trials were held in secret; the G.P.U. could have invented any story. Yet it did not occur to them, who knew beforehand of Nikolayev's adventure and could have stopped it, to implicate any of Stalin's political opponents. That was an afterthought.

In the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev in 1936, they were charged with being the "Trotskyist Center" in charge of oppositional work in Russia. At that time, in their trial, no mention was made of Radek-Piatakov or the existence of a "parallel center." Yet in the Radek-Piatakov trial a year later, the prosecutor, with great dramatic flair and cynical regard for the truth, obtained the confession from the chief defendants that they were the heads of the "parallel center," which would begin operations in the event that anything happened to the center of Zinoviev-Kamenev, and these were organized at the instructions of Trotsky for the purpose of directing "criminal, anti-Soviet, espionage, diversive and terrorist activities . . ." The men who figure in this drama are not the same in the two trials but are intermixed to the point where the whole affair begins to look like a Marx brothers' picture. Not a

single "fact" produced by the leading actor on the stage, Vyshinsky, could stand any light thrown upon it.

What facts, then, were produced? E. S. Holtzman, one of the accused, said he acted as a liaison man between Smirnov and Sedov. He testified that at Sedov's suggestion he arranged to meet him in Copenhagen during Trotsky's stay there in autumn of 1932. The testimony:

Sedov said to me: "As you are going to the U.S.S.R. it would be a good thing if you came with me to Copenhagen where my father is . . ." I agreed but I told him that we could not go together for reasons of secrecy. I arranged with Sedov to be in Copenhagen within two or three days, to put up at the Hotel Bristol and meet him there. I went to the hotel straight from the station and in the lounge met Sedov. About 10 a.m. we went to see Trotsky.

Trotsky then gave him terrorist instructions and was to prepare a letter he was to give Smirnov, one of the defendants. But as Holtzman was leaving that day and no letter was written, ". . . I accepted it in verbal form and communicated the exact sense of it on my arrival in Moscow." During his interview with Trotsky, "very often Trotsky's son came in and out of the room." Again, "at that moment Sedov came in and began hurrying us to finish the conversation . . ." Now, then, much of the "evidence" in the trial rested upon this testimony by Holtzman. How much was it worth?

There was no Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen in 1932. A hotel by that name was destroyed in 1917. Sedov was not in Copenhagen in 1932. He had never in his life been to Copenhagen. You might ask, did the G.P.U. concoct such a foolish tale? First, it *assumed* that Sedov, who was then living in Berlin, would undoubtedly go to Copenhagen to meet his parents.

They never checked to ascertain it as a fact. The fact was, however, that Sedov could not get a visa to Denmark because there was no certainty that he could return to Germany. How could proof be established that he was not there? Did he get there by illegal means? Fortunately, documents did exist. Since Sedov could not get to Copenhagen, Natalia Sedova-Trotsky wired the French Premier Herriot, to grant him a visa to visit France for five days in order to see his parents. A reply telegram from the French Foreign Office giving authorization was received. These telegrams are now a matter of public record. And what about the Hotel Bristol business? Trotsky concluded that the G.P.U. must have used an old Baedeker!

A second "fact" produced in the Moscow Trials was that Piatakov went to see Trotsky while the latter resided in Norway. The testimony was that Piatakov took a plane from Berlin to Oslo in the middle of December, 1935 and there received instructions from Trotsky. Trotsky addressed thirteen questions to the Moscow tribunal pertaining to the visit while Piatakov was still alive, for the purpose of obtaining from Piatakov details of the visit in order to establish the veracity of his testimony. Did Piatakov stay at Trotsky's residence? What was the exact date of his arrival? What kind of passport did he have? Was Trotsky's wife at home the day he met Trotsky? Was anyone else present? Was he served food? How was the house furnished? From what airdrome did he leave Berlin? What kind of plane? How long did it take him? These questions were not answered.

But Trotsky did not need to rely on the G.P.U. or Vyshinsky's interest in the truth. Depositions by the peo-

ple in the household where he stayed were introduced by him at the hearings, asserting that Trotsky had no visitors at this time; that no visitors could have come without their knowledge; that any visitor arriving then and desiring to return to Oslo would have to stay over night at a hotel.

Why didn't Prosecutor Vyshinsky examine Piatakov about his trip along the lines demanded by Trotsky? Because he knew the whole story was a fabrication invented by the G.P.U.! The conservative Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, made an investigation of its own, the day after Piatakov's testimony, on January 25, 1937 and declared that in December, 1935, *not a single foreign airplane landed in Oslo!* Director Gulliksen of the Kjeller deposed that only one plane, Norwegian, without any passengers, landed during the month of December in this ice-and-snowbound airport. The last plane to land there prior to December, 1935 was on September 19th, and the first one after that was on May 1, 1936.

Konrad Knutsen, at whose home Trotsky lived, and a member of the Norwegian parliament, sent the following telegram to Vyshinsky in the midst of the trial:

I inform you that today it was officially confirmed that in December, 1935, no foreign or private airplane landed at the Oslo airdrome. As Leon Trotsky's host, I also confirm that in December, 1935, no conversation could have taken place in Norway between Trotsky and Piatakov.

—KONRAD KNUTSEN, *Member of Storting.*

It may be said that Knutsen was a "friend" of Trotsky's and self-interest dictated his telegram. But what about *Arbeiderbladet*, which printed an article on Piatakov's alleged flight to show that the whole incident could not possibly have taken place? *Arbeid-*

*erbladet*, organ of the government party, approved Trotsky's internment by the Norwegian Government and continually published articles hostile to Trotsky.

Director of the Kjeller airport, Gulliksen, in response to a request from Trotsky's Norwegian attorney, Andreas Stoeyle, wrote the following letter:

Sir: In reply to your letter of the 10th instant, I beg to inform you that my

statement in *Arbeiderbladet* (to the effect that no plane landed there in December of 1935) was published accurately . . .

*Yours very truly*  
GULLIKSEN, *Director,*  
*Kjeller Airport*

What can be deduced from this "fact" about Piatakov's alleged visit to Trotsky? The whole thing was a fabrication.

ALBERT GATES  
(*Concluded in next issue*)

## Korea and U. S. Foreign Policy

### *A New Stage in World Politics*

HARDLY HAD THE DISAPPEARANCE of the frontier been assimilated mentally and the preponderance of the city over the town established as a fact when, in the late twenties, the United States was ravaged by an unprecedentedly severe depression. The problems raised by the depression were destined to remain unresolved right up to the time that the United States began to be drawn into World War II, from which it emerged as the undisputed leader of the capitalist world bloc.

Seldom had a modern world power been more ill-equipped for world leadership. In terms of world necessities capitalist political thought in the United States evidences a cultural lag greater than most other major capitalist countries. This lag has its historical roots: an enormous internal market which has, in an absolute sense, not been exhausted up to the present moment, an internal market which undercut the necessity for the acute drive for colonial markets which possessed European capitalisms and gave an authentic patina to their domestic and foreign policies; a conse-

quent isolation from the tensions of twentieth century European politics, where the almost daily crises of capitalism in decline mandated the acquisition of political sophistication, an isolation which was reinforced by simple geographical facts; and an enormous, highly developed, industrial plant which up to and including World War II permitted United States capital to resolve most internal and external problems by means of its crushing economic superiority.

The limitation of this relatively simple reliance upon economic strength to the detriment of political considerations periodically broke through the placid surface of allied and home front collaboration during the campaigns against Germany and Japan. Such was the nature, for example, of the flurries surrounding the Darlan contretemps, the dispute between England and the United States over the location of the second front, the Badoglio brief encounter, the slogan of unconditional surrender, the Morgenthau proposals for the deindustrialization of Germany, the discrimination against Negro troops,



and the decision to use the atom bomb.

BUT THE REAL DEFICIENCIES of Allied and, particularly, United States policy began to become apparent in the latter phases of the fighting in Europe and the Far East. It then became obvious that concentration upon simple military objectives, formalized at secret meetings at Casablanca, Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam had left the Russian colossus straddling huge areas in Europe and Asia of an extent, power, and dynamism which Czar Alexander I, who in the turmoil of the Napoleonic debacle likewise thought to mediate Europe, could only have envied.

The naivete, the political backwardness and the characteristic, if diffused, responsiveness of bourgeois democracies to public opinion—of which the rapid demobilization was a typical example—placed the United States at a disadvantage in the face of Russian expansion in Europe and Asia following the war. The result was a series of victories which even the whole pre-war Marxist movement had discounted as unthinkable.

Since the United States does not understand the laws of motion of capitalist society or the structure of Stalinism in any long term sense its reaction was *sui generis*—that is to say, it reacted with characteristic economic empiricism. It saw with more or less clarity that if the influence of Stalinism was to be destroyed in Europe the economic prostration which is one of the preconditions for its development had to be overcome. First-aid was administered in the form of UNRA supplies. Then the economic organisms next received extensive Marshall Plan transfusions. Capitalism had indeed traveled far since the Cobden epoch!

These transfusions, complemented

by the remaining recuperative powers of the organism, helped see European capitalism through a bad crisis, though England and Italy, each in its own way, showed how unstable this Marshall Plan recovery really was. None of the contradictions of capitalism having been eliminated by these operations, however, the inherent imbalance of world capitalism began to assert itself on the world market. The fact of the matter was that debilitated and outmoded European capitalism could not compete with the United States in the field of foreign trade. The most obvious symptom was a dollar shortage which threatened to slow down the whole system of European foreign trade and production. A new world crisis loomed, which led capitalist and Stalinist court economists to speculate upon an economic collapse in the United States.

Fortunately for both the capitalist and Stalinist ideologues, the limits of elasticity of their various economic doctrines were not to be tested further. One of the variables in the equation had begun to assume a new value. This was the war danger, provoked in the immediate sense by Stalinist political and military successes in Europe and in Asia. This took on sharpest form in the Orient, where the stunning successes of the Chinese Stalinists finally provoked Washington into a belated recognition of the seriousness of the Stalinist menace.

The United States record in China has been an inglorious one. Prior to the present, three phases can be distinguished in United States policy. The first, founded upon the immediate post-war euphoria, consisted of the attempt to effect a Stalinist-Kuomintang coalition government. It expired in a few days. The second phase con-

sisted of something less than wholehearted aid to Chiang Kai-shek. When Chiang proved successful only in multiplying defeats the third phase ensued: Chiang and China were in effect written off and the liberation of China was more or less vaguely viewed as a semi-automatic function of disenchantment with the Stalinist regime. In so far as such matters were ever explicitly formulated in Washington, Korea and Formosa were similarly written off. There were those who were, by a process of strict logic, willing to do the same for Japan and the Philippines. It was an embarrassing confession of bankruptcy but it was a fact.

THIS WAS THE STATE OF AFFAIRS when the North Koreans invaded South Korea and United States forces were thrown into combat. The proportionate role played by the various factors motivating this abrupt reversal of policy is difficult to assess and may never be known. But the following are certainly the major elements: a desire to inhibit the immediate expansion of Stalinism to the extent that this expansion is the product of test probings and is abetted by the failure to take demonstrative action; fear of the guaranteed loss of prestige in the Far East and the correlative further heightening of the prestige of Stalinism were the forces in South Korea to be defeated; the similar fear of a loss of prestige in the more important arena of Europe and the consequent paralysis of will before totalitarianism which could ensue there; the knowledge that Russia possesses the atomic bomb and that every day that passes nullifies much of the effect of United States superiority in this weapon; the knowledge that the long post-war indoctrination of the population of the United States as to the

inevitability of war with Russia has not been without effect, thereby permitting stepping up the tempo of intervention in Stalinist-threatened areas; the uneasiness over the ominous decline in employment last year, which made a limited transition to war production not unpopular even, unfortunately, in certain labor circles; and the needling of the present administration's meanderings in foreign policy by the uncontrollables in the Republican Party.

The power of self-deception is practically infinite, but upon the significance of the Korean war there can only be one opinion: it is the prelude to all-out war directly with Russia.

To the degree that relative peace or all-out war depends upon the intentions of the present administration it can be said that there is no immediate danger of World War III breaking out. This condition is, of course, not the product of humanitarian considerations on the part of Washington; the governing cadres are, as one of their favorite phrases has it, faced with a condition, not a theory. And the bald fact is that the United States is in no wise prepared from the point of view of manpower, modern materiel, adequately armed allies, and new tactical doctrine for a large-scale war. Whatever impressions may have been created in the past months by some of the blowhards in the Department of Defense have been dissipated by the harsh realities of a war in a small and up to yesterday obscure country.

It is, in general, in the light of this unpreparedness that the temporizing of the administration in almost all fields must be viewed. This fear of spreading the war motivated the decision not to employ Chinese Nationalist forces in Korea for fear of involving Stalinist China—a task

which the United States is by no means able to assume at the present time. A second factor is the total absence of a long-term strategic plan for the campaign against Russia. The indecision regarding the disposition of the Western European complex, for example, is in part a reflection of this absence of perspective. A minor element preventing the hammering out of a policy flows from the jockeying for the November elections.

FOR THE MOMENT THE KOREAN WAR is delimiting the extent of the war preparations. The character of the economic and manpower mobilization (including the role to be assumed by organized labor) is an index of this, for the contemplated controls are by no means total in character and in many instances have been planned on a contingency basis, to be implemented at the President's discretion. The military mobilization as it is currently evolving hardly exceeds what is necessary for the Korean war, including replacements, reserves, forces with which to mount an offensive, and what is necessary for the creation of forces which can be used on a stop-gap basis elsewhere in the world. United States capitalism badly needs time not only to produce war materiel but, as the Korean events have showed, to design and get into production new weapons. In World War II quantitative superiority on the part of the United States sufficed; in World War III a similar, comforting institutionalized mediocrity will not be permitted by events. The goal, at least, must be both quantitative *and* qualitative superiority.

The ideal of a small, neat war in Korea is menaced not only by the Stalinists who can, for example, commit Chinese troops in Korea or create diversions elsewhere, such as in Form-

osa, it is resident in United States policy itself. To answer only the following questions successively in the affirmative is to approach the point where the commitment of United States forces in the Far East itself becomes so large as to begin to threaten what must remain the major focus of activity—Europe! Shall United States troops, whatever the outcome of the current fighting, eventually be sent across the thirty-eighth parallel? Shall they drive to the Manchurian border? Shall a large army remain in Korea to occupy the country and defend it from attack from outside the borders?

Napoleon was able to gain crushing victories on the European continent because his military operations were supplemented by important political ones—the abolition of the residues of feudal property relations, the liberation of the peasantry. His *failure* to appeal to the serf accounted in great measure for his shattering defeat in Russia. Because the United States can not today transcend bourgeois property relations it finds itself unable to supplement its inadequate military strength with political weapons. Stalinism, this monstrous historical deviant, is hemmed in by no such limitations. Its power, far from resting on capitalist property relations, derives from their abolition. Therefore, in the Far East through policies of land reform, tax reduction, education, “social reforms,” and the curbing of the old corruption it has secured the allegiance of native masses in a manner that is absolutely denied to the United States. This permits the Stalinists to create native communist parties which can put Russian policies into action, while the United States is always forced to appear as the foreign, white imperialist intervening from the outside.

The Stalinist “socialist” demagogu-

has proved less successful in Europe, where powerful and educated ruling classes have existed throughout the capitalist epoch, and where the level of misery of the working class has not been as low as it has been in the Orient. Here during the past decade Stalinism has been forced to achieve most of its major ends by military means or extra-legal violence. Nevertheless, by means of its social character it has been able to create mass communist parties in many of the leading countries of Europe. These parties are able to exert political influence among the working masses in Europe—and thereby in the chancelleries themselves—which United States capitalism, possessing but few rags of propaganda to hide its capitalist nakedness, cannot duplicate. This is the mysterious secret of Stalinist dynamism, which congressional illiterates and their editorial confreres can ascribe only to the use of brute force and to the irrationalism of uneducated foreigners—or, on the other hand, to some equally mysterious semantic failure on the part of The Voice of America—a name which in itself must be an affront to any number of South Americans.

The United States, then, must seek to obtain its objectives by almost solely military means. But to cast up the possibilities of confronting Russia and her satellites on the manpower level alone reveals exceptionally depressing perspectives. None of the bourgeois ideologues seem to have pursued such an analysis to the end. France and Italy both possess a manpower pool. But who would guarantee the political and thereby military efficiency of an army drawn from these countries where Stalinism is especially strong among precisely those who would make up its ranks—the workers? England is an exhausted world power

with limited possibilities. It is not surprising, therefore, that for manpower and for strategic reasons eyes are being cast upon the resources of Western Germany and Spain.

BUT CAN THE POLITICAL, economic, and military difficulties involved in recruiting these countries to the United States cause be resolved in time? There is a school of thought in Europe—aided in its reflections by Stalinist propaganda—which does not think so. Members of this school would prefer to remain neutral. They find the prospect of Stalinism less terrifying than that of another, and atomic war. Others would like to remain neutral but independent of the two major combatants. In either case United States imperialism has to overcome great apathy toward participation in another war. Evidence of this is contained in what has obviously been the ridiculously small response of the allied nations when asked by United States capitalism to provide troops for the manufacture of a UN fig leaf for the operations in Korea. The same lack of manpower is driving the United States to rearm Japan, which is one of the few remaining available sources of manpower in an Orient more than cool towards United States intervention in Korea, with its mass bombings of civilians, its ravaging of the country, its contemptuous, manipulative attitude toward Asiatics, and its open support of English, French, and Dutch colonialism. The meaning of the shameless pressuring of nominally independent India is not lost upon the colonial mind.

The prosecution of a war on who can say how many fronts also means tremendous drains upon the United States economy. This drain can be enormously augmented by the possibilities inherent in the atomic epoch,

when huge industrial areas in the United States can be destroyed in a very few days and commensurate damage inflicted upon Russia only with great difficulty because of the dispersion of its industry, its location underground, and the lack of information concerning its location. Russia is in a much better position to control the timetable of the war than is the United States. Were she to decide at some point in the moderately near future to drive to the Atlantic before allied forces could be built up to oppose her successfully the attempt to reinvade Russia under conditions of atomic warfare would be exceptionally costly in terms of manpower and war equipment, and perhaps impossible.

What this all signifies is that the possibility of the United States being able to stabilize the world through military means is drastically reduced and the possibility of being able to do it through political means is nil. We will yet be witness to more blunders resulting from a foreign policy which necessarily consists in great measure of improvisation dictated by the initiative which Russia still exercises. Even by analyzing events in its own terms it is difficult to escape the conclusion that United States capitalism is rising to meet a mortal challenge with something less than minimal consciousness of the full implications of the struggle which has been so inauspiciously blundered into. It is a reflection of the historical insufficiency of capitalism in general and of United States political and military amateurism in particular.

This is not to infer that the future belongs to Russian bureaucratic collectivism. It will find the defeat of the United States and its allies hardly less difficult. Short of the socialist revolution, which alone can undercut Stalinism as well as capitalism, the most probable outcome of a struggle

between the two world powers would be the destruction not only of a great portion of the material wealth amassed by mankind but the utter debasement of the conquests of the rationalism which emerged from the Renaissance and received such finished expression in the analysis and perspective offered in the works of Marx and Engels.

Whatever the temporary vagaries of United States and foreign policy may be, the main line of development is clear: the trend is gradually but inexorably toward authoritarianism. This will not be a simple repetition of the World War II experience. The demands which must be met are too great to permit the latitude which was extended labor in the last war. The Korean war is more than a passing summer storm, it is a warning of the fury that is to come.

The century which began with such great confidence in the forward movement of society is entering its second half cringing under the threat of atomic annihilation. It is the price which humanity pays for the continued existence of reactionary capitalism and reactionary Stalinism.

JAMES M. FENWICK

August 26, 1950

### French Periodical Reprints Debate

Our readers will be interested to learn that the text of the debate between Earl Browder and Max Shachtman on "Is Russia a Socialist Community?" (May-June issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL) has been reprinted in full in the French revolutionary syndicalist journal edited by Pierre Monatte, *Revolution Proletarienne*, Nos. 3 and 4, August-September, 1950.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

## Four Portraits of Stalinism—V

### A Critique of Deutscher's Work on Stalin

We come finally to Isaac Deutscher's biography of Stalin. The author's credentials entitle him to a serious hearing for a serious work. He was a militant in the old Polish Communist movement, then in the Polish Trotskyist movement which seems to have left either just before or after the outbreak of the second world war. He is obviously at home in the history of the Russian revolution and of the revolutionary movement in general. His book is free of those bald errors, grotesque misunderstandings and falsehoods which swarm over the pages of most of the current literature about the Bolshevik revolution. His appraisal of Stalinism does not aim, as do most others written nowadays, to discredit that revolution and with it the fight for socialism.

Because he refuses to regard the Bolshevik revolution as the Original Sin from which all the evils of our time flow, and because he endeavors to present an objective sociological, even Marxian, analysis of Stalinism, free of the primitive diabolism which is generally substituted for analyses, an assortment of Menshevik and turncoat-communist reviewers has treated his book as the work of a Stalinist agent, a characterization which is meant to be taken literally. The only "evidence" that can be adduced for this charge is the firmness of the author's defense of the Bolshevik revolution as the great socialist emancipation act of our century. This appears to be enough to warrant the label of Stalinist in the eyes of these reviewers. Apart from this the book

\*"Stalin, a Political Biography," by I. Deutscher. Oxford University Press, New York, 1949. 570 pp. \$5.00.

offers no worthwhile evidence to sustain the charge, even if it offers it in abundance, as will be seen, for a charge of a distinctly different kind.

DEUTSCHER DRAWS HEAVILY from the Stalin biography by Souvarine and very heavily from all the works of Trotsky, which he has evidently checked independently and added to from most of the available original sources. Except for minor discrepancies, to which other reviewers have already called attention, and which result from the author's predilection for softening the more sharply-drawn lineaments of Stalin, the portrait that emerges of Stalin's role in the revolutionary movement and of his personal characteristics, is substantially the same as the ones drawn by Souvarine and Trotsky—leaving aside their respective political judgments. The inconsequentiality of Stalin's role in the early Bolshevik movement is again documented and reaffirmed. The fraudulent official claims about Stalin's outstanding role in the Bolshevik revolution are refuted with the same finality that Trotsky's real role is reestablished. Every one of the important Stalinist falsifications of history is again exploded with quiet contempt. The fact that Lenin adopted, in 1917, the essential points of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution, is made clear. The story of Lenin's violent break with Stalin from 1922 to 1924 is retold, if not fully, then adequately enough to confirm Trotsky's version and destroy Stalin's. The Moscow Trials are placed in the category of infamy and monstrosity to which they belong. These are the outstanding examples

and not the only ones. On the face of it, it is preposterous to believe that any sort of Stalinist could write one-tenth of these things about Stalin. Stalinism allows its authentic fellow-travelers a certain amount of a certain kind of criticism, and if they exceed these highly-restricted limits the viciousness of the assault upon them is immediate and unmistakable. What Deutscher has written about Stalin automatically excludes him from friendly treatment by the Stalinists. More plainly, the GPU has shot men for writing or even unwittingly suggesting less—far, far less—than Deutscher here sets down deliberately.

That's one thing. An entirely different thing is Deutscher's sociological analysis of Stalinism, as well as the conclusions which follow from it no less significantly because they are more implicit than explicit. Because the analysis really comes to grips with what has become *the* key question of our time, it is infinitely more interesting and important than the political pornography of boulevard hacks or the contrived literary juxtapositions of demoralized ex-communists we have had to deal with up to now.

WHAT IS STALINISM? Deutscher finds the basis for understanding it in what he sets forth as the fundamental development that "has been common to all revolutions so far." This, essentially, is the development:

Each great revolution begins with a phenomenal outburst of popular energy, impatience, anger, and hope. Each ends in the weariness, exhaustion, and disillusionment of the revolutionary people. In the first phase the party that gives the fullest expression to the popular mood outdoes its rivals, gains the confidence of the masses, and rises to power. . . . Then comes the inevitable trial of civil war. The revolutionary

party is still marching in step with the majority of the nation. It is acutely conscious of its unity with the people and of a profound harmony between its own objectives and the people's wishes and desires. It can call upon the mass of the nation for ever-growing efforts and sacrifices; and it is sure of the response. In this, the heroic phase, the revolutionary party is in a very real sense democratic, even though it treats its foes with dictatorial relentlessness and observes no strict constitutional precept. The leaders implicitly trust their vast plebian following; and their policy rests on that trust. They are willing and even eager to submit their policies to open debate and to accept the popular verdict.

But this relationship hardly survives the civil war. The party emerges weary and the people wearier. "The anti-climax of the revolution is there." The fruits of the now secured revolution ripen too slowly to permit immediate fulfillment of the promises made to the people by the party.

This is the real tragedy which overtakes the party of the revolution. If its action is to be dictated by the mood of the people, it will presently have to efface itself, or at least to relinquish power. But no revolutionary government can abdicate after a victorious civil war, because the only real pretenders to power are the still considerable remnants of the defeated counterrevolution. . . . The party of the revolution knows no retreat. It has been driven to its present pass largely through obeying the will of that same people by which it is now deserted. It will go on doing what it considers to be its duty, without paying much heed to the voice of the people. In the end it will muzzle and stifle that voice.

The chasm between the rulers and the people widens, without the former having a full understanding of what is happening as they "acquire the habits of arbitrary government and themselves come to be governed by their own habits." The party divides in two.

Some of its leaders point in alarm to the divorce between the revolution and the people. Others justify the conduct

of the party on the ground that the divorce is irremediable. Still others, the actual rulers, deny the fact of the divorce itself: for to admit it would be to widen further the gap between the rulers and the ruled. Some cry in alarm that the revolution has been betrayed, for in their eyes government by the people is the very essence of revolution—without it there can be no government for the people. The rulers find justification for themselves in the conviction that whatever they do will ultimately serve the interests of the broad mass of the nation; and indeed they do, on the whole, use their power to consolidate most of the economic and social conquests of the revolution. Amid charges and countercharges, the heads of the revolutionary leaders begin to roll and the power of the post-revolutionary state towers hugely over the society it governs. . . .

It is in this broad perspective that the metamorphosis of triumphant Bolshevism, and Stalin's own fortunes, can best be understood.

That, according to Deutscher, is the law of revolutions, it is the "general trend of events; and this has been common to all great revolutions so far." To make his analysis more specific and to round it out, we must go further with Deutscher. Although Stalinism represents a "metamorphosis of Bolshevism," it is not its negation. In Stalin, there is still the Bolshevik, but no longer in the more or less pure state, as it were. His puzzled opponents ask: "What is Stalin, after all? The architect of an imperial restoration, who sometimes exploits revolutionary pretexts for his ends, or the promoter of Communist revolution, camouflaging his purpose with the paraphernalia of the Russian imperial tradition?" Deutscher answers: *Both!* Stalinism is revolutionism *and* traditionalism, stranded in strange interplay; or as he puts it elsewhere, in Stalin there is the "conflict between his nationalism and his revolutionism." As a result of this duality (in Stalin or Stalinism), he carried out, five years after Lenin's death, Soviet

Russia's "second revolution." It is true that

The ideas of the second revolution were not his. He neither foresaw it nor prepared for it. Yet he, and in a sense, he alone, accomplished it.

It is likewise true that the cost was "the complete loss, by a whole generation, of spiritual and political freedom," but the "rewards of that revolution were astounding"—namely, the rapid industrialization, the modernization of agriculture, the reduction of illiteracy, the bringing of Asiatic Russia nearer to Europe even while European Russia was detached from Europe. Yet the Stalinist revolution differs from the Bolshevik revolution, and the most important difference

. . . lies in the method of the revolution. Broadly speaking, the old Bolshevism staked its hope on the revolutionary momentum of the international labor movement. It believed that the Socialist order would result from the original experience and struggle of the working classes abroad, that it would be the most authentic act of their social and political self-determination. The old Bolshevism, in other words, believed in *revolution from below*, such as the upheaval of 1917 had been. The revolution which Stalin now carried into eastern and central Europe was primarily a *revolution from above*. It was decreed, inspired, and managed by the great power predominant in that area.

The movement connected with his name, "at once progressive and retrograde," shows Stalin to be of the "breed of the great revolutionary despots, to which Cromwell, Robespierre, and Napoleon belonged" (elsewhere Deutscher adds: Bismarck and Czar Alexander).

Like Cromwell as Lord Protector or Napoleon as Emperor, Stalin now remained the guardian and trustee of the revolution. He consolidated its national gains and extended them. He "built socialism"; and even his opponents, while denouncing his autocracy, admitted that most of his economic reforms were indeed essential for socialism.

But the fact that Stalin can take his place by the side of Napoleon and Bismarck is not accidental. Here Deutscher finally rounds out his analysis so that the conclusions are clearly implicit in it. Stalin's role

... results from one peculiar parallelism between the bourgeois and the Socialist revolution in Europe, a parallelism that has come to light only since the Second World War. Europe, in the nineteenth century, saw how the feudal order, outside France, crumbled and was replaced by the bourgeois one. But east of the Rhine feudalism was not overthrown by a series of upheavals on the pattern of the French revolution, by explosions of popular despair and anger, by revolutions from below, for the spread of which some of the Jacobins had hoped in 1794. Instead, European feudalism was either destroyed or undermined by a series of revolutions from above. Napoleon, the tamer of Jacobinism at home, carried the revolution into foreign lands, to Italy, to the Rhineland, and to Poland, where he abolished serfdom, completely or in part, and where his Code destroyed many of the feudal privileges. *Malgré lui-même*, he executed parts of the political testament of Jacobinism. . . . The feudal order had been too moribund to survive; but outside France the popular forces arrayed against it were too weak to overthrow it "from below"; and so it was swept away "from above." It is mainly in Napoleon's impact upon the lands neighboring France that the analogy is found for the impact of Stalinism upon eastern and central Europe. The chief elements of both historic situations are similar: the social order of eastern Europe was as little capable of survival as was the feudal order in the Rhineland in Napoleon's days; the revolutionary forces arrayed against the anachronism were too weak to remove it; then conquest and revolution merged in a movement, at once progressive and retrograde, which at last transformed the structure of society.

Now the reader has all he needs to know about Deutscher's analysis of Stalinism. It is not identical with Trotsky's analysis, but only because it is an extreme and one-sided presentation of it. Yet the similarity between

the two leaps to the eye. To the extent that Trotsky incorporated it into his own analysis, he drove himself, toward the end of his work, into a theoretical and political blind alley, in which his sightless followers have since milled around with such calamitous consequences. Deutscher himself does not follow the practice that his theory entails, for reasons that are not clear but which cannot possibly be objective. His book ends with a tentative sort of advocacy of what Trotsky called the "supplementary revolution" against Stalinism. But this half-hopeful note does not even modify the fact that Deutscher has worked out *the theoretical basis for a socialist capitulation to Stalinism*. To the extent that the working-class and socialist movement shares this theory, any progressive struggle against Stalinism is doomed and with it the struggle for socialism itself. The socialist movement can rise again to a full consciousness of its problem and how to resolve it *only*—we stress it again: *only*—if it understands the root-falsity of the theory to which Deutscher has given such utterly tragic and disorienting expression.

THE CRUX OF DEUTSCHER'S DISASTER lies in his "peculiar parallelism" between bourgeois and socialist revolutions. Historical analogies are by their very nature seductive. There is especially good reason for comparing the socialist revolution with the great bourgeois revolutions of the past two centuries. Indeed, unless they are compared, and their similarities established, the socialist revolution becomes incomprehensible or, at best, is cast back to the utopias of pre-scientific socialism. But this is no less important: unless they are contrasted, and the fundamental differences between them clarified, the socialist revolution becomes impossible! Deut-

scher's treatment of the two revolutions suffers from two defects, but those two suffice: he does not deal with their differences at all, and he presents them as similar precisely in those respects where they are and must be different, decisively different, so different that they cannot be compared but only contrasted to one another.

The aim of every bourgeois revolution was simple: to establish the economic supremacy of the market, of the capitalist mode of production. These already existed to one degree or another under feudalism. But feudalism impeded their full unfolding, it "fettered" them. Its outlived laws, customs, traditions, regulations, estate-ish and geographical divisions, privileges—all blocked off the "primitive accumulation of capital" required for the full expansion of the new mode of production; all were constricting clamps upon the winding and unwinding of that mainspring which is the stimulator and regulator of capitalist production, namely, the free market. The removal of these fetters, blocks and clamps was all that was *essentially* required for the triumph of the bourgeois revolution, and not necessarily the complete destruction of feudalism in all its forms or even of the feudal lords themselves. Indeed, in many (if not most) countries where the fetters of feudalism were finally broken, the new mode of production could and did co-exist, either at home or within their world empires or both, with the old feudalists and their economic forms, intact or more or less capitalistically transformed.

But because social progress required the victory of the bourgeois revolution, it did not follow that the bourgeoisie was everywhere the organizer and leader of the revolution. In our Marxist literature, the bourgeoisie of

the period in which feudalism was generally replaced by capitalism is often referred to as having been "a revolutionary class" or "the revolutionary class." This is true, but only in a very specific, distinctly limited sense. The capitalist mode of production, even in its incipiency under feudalism, to say nothing of its post-feudal days, was inherently of a kind that constantly revolutionized society, that constantly required expansion, and was therefore an intolerant rebel against the feudal fetters upon it. The bourgeoisie was revolutionary primarily and basically only in the sense that it was at once the agent, the organizer and the beneficiary of capital, in the sense that it was the bearer of the new mode of production which was irreconcilable with the supremacy of feudal backwardness and stagnancy. But never—more accurately, perhaps, only in the rarest of cases—was the bourgeoisie revolutionary in the sense of organizing and leading the political onslaught on feudal or aristocratic society. That would have required either a radical break with the feudalists for which it was not prepared, or the unleashing of "plebian mobs and passions" which it feared—or both.

The Great French Revolution was great—the greatest of all the bourgeois revolutions, the classic among bourgeois revolutions—precisely because it was not organized and led by the French bourgeoisie! It was the work of the Jacobins, of the lowly artisans and peasants and tradesfolk, the plebian masses. The Cromwellian revolution was far more the work of the small independent landlord, the artisan, the urban tradesman than the work of the then English bourgeoisie—in fact, Cromwell's Puritans had to fight bitterly against the Presbyterian bourgeoisie. Napoleon, who extended

the bourgeois revolution to so many lands of feudal Europe, based himself not so much upon the bourgeoisie of France as upon the new class of allotment farmers. In Germany, it was not the bourgeoisie that unified the nation and leveled the feudal barriers to the expansion of capitalism, but the iron representative of the Prussian Junkers, Bismarck. He carried out the bourgeois revolution in the interests of the feudal Junkers, and made his united Germany a powerful capitalist country, but without the bourgeoisie and against it. Much the same process developed in distant Japan. As for that late-comer, czarist Russia, the bourgeoisie remained a prop of the semi-feudal autocracy to the last, and the bourgeois revolution was carried out in passing by the proletariat and only as an episode in the socialist revolution.

Yet in all the countries (except of course in Russia) where the bourgeois revolution was carried out—always without the bourgeoisie, often against the bourgeoisie—it did not fail to achieve its main and primary aim: to assure the social rule of the bourgeoisie, to establish the economic supremacy of its mode of production. This was all that was needed to satisfy the fundamental requirement of bourgeois class domination.

IT CANNOT BE UNDERLINED TOO HEAVILY: Once the fetters of feudalism were removed from the capitalist mode of production, the basic victory and the expansion of the bourgeoisie and its social system was absolutely guaranteed. Once the work of destruction was accomplished, the work of constructing bourgeois society could proceed automatically by the spontaneous expansion of capital as regulated automatically by the market. To the bourgeoisie, there-

fore, it could not make a *fundamental* difference whether the work of destruction was begun or carried out by the plebian Jacobin terror against the aristocracy, as in France, or by the aristocracy itself in promotion of its own interests, as in Germany.

Neither the revolutionary French plebians nor the Napoleonic empire builders could replace feudalism with a special economic system of their own, or create any social system other than bourgeois society. In Germany, no matter how exclusively Bismarck was preoccupied with maintaining the power of the Prussian king and the Junkers, with modernizing the nation so that it could defeat its foreign enemies, the only way the nation could be united and modernized was by stimulating, protecting and expanding the capitalist economic order. A prerequisite for this was of course the removal of all (or most) feudal and particularist obstacles in its path. If Bonapartism and Bismarckism prevented the bourgeoisie from exercising the direct political influence that, ideally, it prefers, this was more than compensated by the fact that they suppressed or curbed an infinitely greater threat to the rule of the bourgeoisie—the plebian and later the proletarian masses. And if the bourgeoisie gives up or allows the curbing or even destruction of its own representative parliamentary institutions, under a Bonapartist or Bismarckian regime, or under its most decadent manifestation, fascism, it only admits, to quote the famous passage from Marx, “that in order to preserve its social power unhurt, its political power must be broken; that the private bourgeois can continue to exploit the other classes and rejoice in ‘property,’ ‘family,’ ‘religion’ and ‘order’ only under the condition that his own class be condemned to the

same political nullity of the other classes.” But its social power is preserved “unhurt” just the same, and the evidence of that is the prosperity that the bourgeoisie enjoyed under Napoleon, Bismarck and Hitler.

When, therefore, Deutscher stresses the fact that east of the Rhineland the “popular forces arrayed against it [moribund feudalism] were too weak to overthrow it ‘from below’; and so it was swept away ‘from above,’” he is as wide of the mark as he can possibly be if *this fact is adduced to show the similarity between “the chief elements of both historical situations,”* namely, the spread of Bonapartism and of Stalinism. The absurdity of the comparison is clear if we bear in mind the equally incontestable fact that whether feudalism was swept away “from above” or “from below,” the difference in the result was, at the very most, secondary. In both cases the victory of capitalist society was secured and its growth guaranteed. Once the feudal fetters on capitalism were broken—whether by Cromwell’s Ironsides or Napoleon’s Grand Army, by Robespierre’s Jacobins or Bismarck’s Junkers—capitalism and only capitalism could be solidly established.

According to Deutscher, feudalism could be swept away and the rule of capitalism installed by a revolution carried out, from above or below, by the plebian masses, the petty bourgeois masses, the bourgeoisie itself, even by feudal lords themselves (and even by the modern imperialist big bourgeoisie, as we know from their work against feudalism in some of the colonies they penetrated.) For the comparison to be less than ludicrous, it would have to be demonstrated that today “moribund capitalism” can also be swept away and the rule of socialism also installed by a revo-

lution carried out by the petty bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie, and any other class, in addition to the proletariat. It would also have to be demonstrated that, just as it made no essential difference to the bourgeoisie how its revolution was effected, so today it makes no decisive difference to the proletariat whether it makes its own socialist revolution or the revolution is made by a GPU which enslaves and terrorizes it. To demonstrate that would be difficult.

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION does not even lend itself to the kind of comparison with the bourgeois revolution that Deutscher makes.

The emancipation of the working class, said Marx, is the task of the working class itself. To which we add explicitly what is there implicitly: “of the conscious working class.” Is this mere rhetoric, or a phrase for ceremonial occasions? It has been put to such uses. But it remains the basic scientific concept of the socialist revolution, entirely free from sentimentality and spurious idealism.

The revolution which destroys the fetters of feudalism, we wrote above, assures, by that mere act, the automatic operation and expansion of the new system of capitalist production. (We stress the word “new” to distinguish capitalism in the period of its rise and bloom from capitalism in its decline and decay, when the automatic regulators of production break down more and more frequently and disastrously. But that period is another matter.) Conscious direction of the capitalist economy plays its part, but at most it is secondary or, better yet, auxiliary to what Marx calls the “self-expansion of capital.”

It is *altogether* different with the socialist revolution. In this case we cannot say that regardless of what

class or social group destroys the fetters of capitalism, the act itself assures the automatic operation and expansion of socialist production. Socialist production and distribution will take place automatically, so to speak (each will give what he can and take what he needs), only decades (how many we do not know or need to know) after the revolution itself has taken place, only after civilized socialist thinking and behavior have become the normal habit of all the members of the community. But immediately after the socialist revolution takes place, production and distribution must be organized and regulated. The bourgeoisie can no longer organize production, since it has just been or is about to be expropriated, and thereby deprived of the ownership and control of the means of production. The market can no longer regulate production automatically, for it has been or is being abolished along with the other conditions of capitalist production; in any case, it disappears to exactly the extent that socialist production advances.

Unlike capitalist production, socialist production (that is, production for use) demands *conscious* organization of the economy so that it will function harmoniously. It is that consideration and it alone that requires of the new revolutionary regime the nationalization, sooner or later, of all the means of production and exchange. And it is this centralization of the means of production that makes possible, to an ever-increasing degree, the harmonious planning of production and distribution. Planning, in turn, implies the ability to determine what is produced, how much of each product is produced, and how it is distributed to the members of the community (limited only by the level of the available produc-

tive forces)—to determine these things consciously, in contrast to capitalism which produces according to the dictates of the blindly-operating market and distributes according to glaring class inequalities.

Now, what assurance is there that the masses, who have made the revolution in order to establish a socialist economy, will be the main beneficiaries of the planned decisions that are taken and executed? (We say, cautiously, "main" and not sole beneficiaries, for obviously, in the first stage of the new society the economy will necessarily be encumbered by "parasitic" specialists, military households and bureaucrats.) Only one assurance: that the decisions on what and how much is produced and how it is distributed are taken by the masses themselves, concretely, through their freely and easily elected—and just as freely and easily recallable—representatives. Otherwise, there is no assurance whatever that those who make the decisions on how the economy shall be organized will make them in conformity with the economic principles of socialism, or principles that are socialist in type, socialist in direction. In other words, the economic structure that replaces capitalism can be socialist (socialistic) *only* if the new revolutionary regime (the state) is in the hands of the workers, only if the working class takes and retains political power. For, once capitalist ownership is destroyed, all economic decisions are necessarily political decisions—that is, decisions made by the state which now has *all* the economy and all the economic power in its hands. And if the working class then does not have political power, it has no power at all.

HERE WE COME TO ANOTHER BASIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO SOCIAL

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

systems, and not their similarity, as Deutscher says. It relates to the question of *how* social power is exercised in each case. The bourgeoisie's power over society rests fundamentally upon its ownership of property (the means of production and exchange). That ownership determines, in Marx's excellent phrase, its mastery over the conditions of production, and therefore over society as a whole. Any state, any political power, which preserves capitalist property, is a bourgeois state, is indeed the "guardian and trustee" of the social power of the bourgeoisie. This holds for the state of Napoleon, Bismarck, Roosevelt, Ramsay Macdonald and Hitler. Deutscher understands that well enough, for he writes that "when the Nazi façade was blown away, the structure that revealed itself to the eyes of the world was the same as it had been before Hitler, with its big industrialists, its Krupps and Thyssens, its Junkers, its middle classes, its *Grossbauers*, its farm laborers and its industrial workers." The social power of the bourgeoisie was and remains its property ownership, its economic power.

It is exactly the other way around with the proletariat! It is not a property-owning class and it cannot be—not under capitalism, not under the revolutionary regime that separates capitalism from socialism, and certainly not under socialism itself, which knows neither property nor proletariat. The revolution which expropriates the bourgeoisie does not turn its property over to the workers (this worker or group of workers now owns a steel mill; that one a railroad; the other a bank, etc.). That would indeed be a revolution-for-nothing, for it would merely create a new type of capitalist, property-owning class. No, the revolution nationalizes, immedi-

ately or gradually, all property, turns it over to the new regime, the revolutionary state power. That is what happened in Russia in 1917, when the revolution was carried out "from below" (the "old Bolshevik" method). Every politically - educated person knows that it was a socialist revolution, that it raised the proletariat to the position of ruling class, that it abolished capitalist property and established socialist (socialistic) property in its place.

In that case, wherein lies the *fundamental* difference between that revolution and those carried out "from above" by Stalin throughout the Balkans and the Baltic? The bourgeoisie was expropriated, politically as well as economically, its property was nationalized and turned over to the new state power. According to Deutscher, there is no basic difference, no class difference, so to say. Just as Napoleon carried the bourgeois revolution to Poland, so Stalin carried the socialist revolution all the way to Germany. The "orthodox" (Oof!) Trotskyists are reluctantly but irresistibly drawing closer to the same monstrous conclusion. Their embarrassment over Deutscher is due entirely to the fact that he has anticipated them.

Yet there is a difference and it is fundamental. The *Communist Manifesto stresses* (and how much more emphatically should we stress it in our time?) "that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy." It is not just some new political power in general that will socialistically expropriate the bourgeoisie, but the new proletarian power. As if in anticipation of present controversies, Marx underscores the point, at the beginning and at the end: "The proletariat will use *its po-*

litical supremacy, to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state"—what state? to make sure he is understood, Marx adds: "i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class." The test of this "formula" for the socialist revolution (to say nothing of a dozen other tests) was passed precisely by the Bolshevik revolution.

Nothing of the sort happens in the case of the Stalinist "socialist revolution," the revolution "from above." The proletariat is never allowed to come within miles of "political supremacy." What the new state "wrests" first of all, and not very gradually, either, are all the political and economic rights of the proletariat, reducing it to economic and political slavery. The difference between the revolution "from below" and the revolution "from above" is not at all a mere matter of difference in "method" but one of social, class nature. It might be compared to the difference between cropping a dog "from the front" and "from behind." By one "method," the tail is cut off, and the dog, according to some fanciers, is healthier and handsomer; but if the other "method" were employed and his head were cut off, we would not have a "bureaucratically-degenerated dog" but a dead one. Like all comparisons, this one too has its limitations: Stalinism does not cut off the head of the socialist revolution only because it does not even allow that revolution to grow a head.

Yet Stalin, while depriving the proletariat of all political power, did maintain state property in Russia, did extend it vastly, and did convert capitalist property into state property in Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. Because the Bolshevik revolution established state property,

and Napoleon's extension of bourgeois property seems to lend itself to analogy, Stalin becomes, to Deutscher, the representative of those rulers who, "on the whole, use their power to consolidate most of the economic and social conquests of the revolution," and even to extend these revolutionary conquests at home and abroad. The formula, alas, is originally that of Trotsky, who wrote that the Russian workers "see in it [the Stalinist bureaucracy] the watchman for the time being of a certain part of their own conquests." If that is true, so much the worse for the Russian workers; but in any case it does not reduce the magnitude of the error.

By what it says and implies, this formula tells us that the state is socialistic (a proletarian state) because the economy is nationalized, statified. The nature of the state is determined by the property form. That is indubitably true in all societies where private property exists. But it is radically false when applied to a society where the state owns the property. The exact opposite is then true, that is, the nature of the economy is determined by the nature of the state! That it is necessary to argue this ABC of Marxism and of evident social reality today, is one of the indications of the sorry state of the movement.

THE THEORY THAT THE ECONOMY is socialistic simply because the state owns it was originated by Stalinism. It was needed by Stalinism to help achieve its counter-revolution. It constitutes to this day the quintessential theoretical basis for its worldwide mystification. As early as 1925, almost coincidental, significantly enough, with the launching of the theory of "socialism in one country," the Stalinists began to put forth, cautiously

but unmistakably, the theory that Deutscher has so uncritically taken for granted. As cautiously as the one but not so uncritically as the other, the then Leningrad Opposition (Zinoviev and Kamenev) took issue with the theory and warned against it. Kamenev's speech on the question of the nature of the economy in Russia, delivered at the 14th party congress toward the end of 1925, is therefore of prime interest:

Do we perhaps doubt that our factories are enterprises of a "consistently-socialist type"? No! But we ask: Why did Lenin say that our enterprises are "enterprises of a consistently-socialist type"? Why didn't he say directly that they are *genuinely socialist* enterprises?

What does this mean: enterprises of a consistently-socialist type? It means that these enterprises are *essentially socialistic* enterprises. They are socialist in what are called *property-relations*. The factories belong to the proletarian state, that is, to the organized working class. . . .

The correct conception of our state industry consists in this, that our state enterprises are really enterprises of a consistently socialist type, inasmuch as they represent the property of the worker's state, but that they are far from being complete socialist enterprises because the mutual relations of the people engaged in them, the organization of labor, the form of the labor wage, the work for the market, represent no elements of an unfolded socialist economy.

At this point, it is worth noting, the congress minutes report an interruption from one of the hostile Stalinist delegates: "You have discovered America!" In those early days, the Stalinists did not dare challenge, directly and openly, the simple ABC ideas Kamenev was expounding. His ideas are clear. The property, the economy, can be considered socialist-in-type (not even socialist, but as yet only socialist-in-type) only because "they represent the property of the workers' state," only because "the factories belong to the proletarian state,

that is, to the organized working class." The character of the economy is determined by the character of the political power, the state!

The Stalinists needed the very opposite theory in order to cover up and justify their destruction of the political power of the working class and *therewith* of the workers' state. Where Kamenev, and all other Marxists, declared that the property is socialist only because it is owned by a workers' state, "that is, the organized working class" in power—the Stalinists declared the state is socialist simply because it owns the property. This theory is now canonized as constitutional law in all Stalinist lands and all arguments against it are promptly and thoroughly refuted by the GPU.

The theory is a Stalinist invention from start to finish. The finest-toothed comb drawn through all the writings of every Bolshevik leader—Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev—will not find so much as a phrase to sustain it. Until Stalin turned the Marxian view upside-down, every one of the Marxists, without exception, repeated literally thousands of times that because the state is in the hands of the proletariat, *therefore* the economy is proletarian (socialist-in-type). They never argued that because the economy is in the hands of the state, *therefore* the state is proletarian—never!

How could they? The proletariat, not similar to the bourgeoisie but in contrast to it, establishes, asserts and maintains its social power only when it gets and holds political power. As the bourgeoisie is nothing without its economic power, its ownership of property, so the proletariat is nothing without its political power. Only political power can give it economic power, the power to determine the "conditions of production." This was



always understood by Marxists, not only by Trotsky as well but by him first and foremost. In different ways he always repeated what he wrote, for example, in 1928: "The socialist character of our state industry... is determined and secured in a decisive measure by the role of the party, the voluntary internal cohesion of the proletarian vanguard, the conscious discipline of the administrators, trade-union functionaries, members of the shop nuclei, etc. . . . the question reduces itself to the conscious cohesiveness of the proletarian vanguard. . . ." In a word, the nature of the economy is determined by the nature of the political power. In the Thirties, however, it became plain that while the proletariat of Russia had lost all political power and even the possibility of reforming the Stalinist regime, the latter had not introduced capitalism (as Trotsky erroneously predicted it would). Only then did Trotsky find himself impelled to reverse himself completely. He then argued that the fact that the state continued to own the property determined its character as a workers' state. It was not to be found in any of his preceding writings, not so much as a hint of it. It was to be found in the doctrines of Stalinism. That's where it still is; that's where it belongs. For socialists to adopt it would be to capitulate theoretically to Stalinism, which consistency would demand be extended to a political capitulation. In this case, capitulation means guaranteeing the triumph of a new tyranny, the abandonment of the "battle of democracy" which is won when the proletariat is raised to political supremacy.

DEUTSCHER'S THEORY, or rather his adoption and adaptation of Stalin's, leads him to downright apologetics

for the new tyranny—all very objectively put, to be sure, for there seems no doubt about his personal antipathy toward the abominations of the regime.

There is, first of all, the law of revolutions which Deutscher sets forth, as we have quoted it above. It is superficial; it is false and misleading. Certainly all the old revolutions and their leaders made promises to the masses that they did not fulfill. But that is a "law" of all *bourgeois* revolutions and is absolutely characteristic of them. Bourgeois revolutions are made under the sign of *ideologies*, using that term strictly in the sense in which the early Marx used it, namely as a synonym for *false consciousness* or as we would say after Freud, for *rationalization*. They *think* and say they are fighting for Freedom. "They" includes, as Marx wrote, not only men like Danton, Robespierre, St. Just and Napoleon, "the heroes as well as the parties," but even "the masses of the old French Revolution." But no matter what they think or what they say or what they do, the revolution does not and *cannot* go beyond the "task of their time: the emancipation and the establishment of modern bourgeois society." At bottom, all that Freedom can mean in the bourgeois revolution is... freedom of trade.

That's why the bourgeois revolutions could not keep their promises to the masses, why they often had to establish the most dictatorial governments over and against the masses in the post-revolutionary period. But since Deutscher has tried the impossible task of formulating a law of all revolutions, when he might have known that every different social revolution develops according to different laws, the most important fact has escaped his attention: *the bourgeois*

*revolutions did fulfill their promises to the bourgeoisie.* The plebian masses were crushed after such revolutions, but that was only in the nature of the revolution: while it may have been made by them, it was not and could not have been made for them. It was made for the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie prospered under it. Which is why it deserves the not-at-all-dishonorable name, bourgeois revolution!

Deutscher, however, gives Stalin's overturns the distinctly honorable name, *socialist revolution*, and adds with a refined shrug, if the masses suffered all sorts of horrors, cruelties and oppressions after this revolution, if the promises made to them were not kept, why, "this has been common to all great revolutions so far." *Preposterous* conclusion: while the bourgeois revolution keeps its promises to the bourgeoisie for whom it is made, the socialist revolution does not keep its promises to the masses for whom it is made. *Correct* conclusion: the Stalinist revolution is not a socialist revolution in any sense and therefore is not intended to make good its promises to the masses; it is a revolution of the totalitarian bureaucracy and it most decidedly does keep its promises to this bureaucracy!

There is, in the second place, Deutscher's weird justification of the "follies and the cruelties" of Stalin's "second revolution," the industrialization of Russia. We have listened with sheer amazement, in recent times, to the same justification on the lips of British socialists who are not abashed at abusing the name of Trotsky by assuming it. Now we see it in print under Deutscher's signature. Stalin's "follies and cruelties" we read, "inevitably recall those of England's industrial revolution, as Karl Marx de-

scribed them in *Das Kapital*." He continues:

The analogies are as numerous as they are striking. In the closing chapters of the first volume of his work, Marx depicts the "primitive accumulation" of capital (or the "previous accumulation," as Adam Smith called it), the first violent processes by which one social class accumulated in its hands the means of production, while other classes were being deprived of their land and means of livelihood and reduced to the status of wage-earners. The process which, in the Thirties, took place in Russia might be called the "primitive accumulation" of socialism in one country. . . .

In spite of its "blood and dirt," the English industrial revolution—Marx did not dispute this—marked a tremendous progress in the history of mankind. It opened a new and not unhopeful epoch of civilization. Stalin's industrial revolution can claim the same merit.

The comparison is so microscopically close to being an outrage as to be indistinguishable from one, and it shows how Deutscher has literally lost his bearings.

The period of the old Industrial Revolution was a brutal one, but a harsh social task faced society and it had to be performed. By whom? The feudal aristocracy could not perform it; the foetus of a proletariat was not yet able to perform it. There was left only the young, lusty, callous bourgeoisie. It proceeded to concentrate property and capital in its hands in sufficient quantity to develop the forces of production on a vast scale and a breath-taking pace. Who suffered the hideous cruelties and horrors of this accumulation? The little people—small peasants, the yeomanry, tradesfolk, the artisans and their social kith and kin. Who were the beneficiaries of these horrors? The bourgeoisie. Moral indignation apart, the process unfolded as it had to unfold, given the times, given the class relationships. It was a question of the primitive *capitalist* accumulation.

Accumulation is a need of all societies, the socialist included. Indeed, fundamentally the problem of a socialist accumulation was the economic rock on which the ship of state of the Russian Revolution foundered (a subject that requires the special study that it merits). The problem was not unknown to the leaders of the revolution. They debated it often and warmly. In the early Twenties, Preobrazhensky devoted a special work to the subject, which soon evoked a violent controversy. He pointed out that in the past, every social order achieved its particular accumulation at the expense of ("by exploiting") earlier and inferior economic forms. Therefore, continued Preobrazhensky:

The more economically backward, the more petty-bourgeois, the more agricultural is the country that is passing over to a socialist organization of production, the slighter the heritage that the proletariat receives for the fund of its socialist accumulation at the time of the social revolution—the more the socialist accumulation will have to base itself upon the exploitation of the pre-socialist economic forms and the lighter will be the specific gravity of the accumulation derived from its own basis of production, that is, the less will this accumulation be based upon the surplus product of the worker in socialist industry. (*The Basic Law of Socialist Accumulation*, in the *Herald of the Communist Academy*, 1924.)

Although the Trotskyist Opposition, of which Preobrazhensky was a prominent leader, did not endorse his views, the Stalinists let loose a hue and cry against Preobrazhensky that echoed for years. In his restrained way, Stalin denounced these views because they would "undermine the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry" and shatter the dictatorship of the proletariat—not less—for Preobrazhensky's views so easily lent themselves to the interpretation that the peasantry as a whole had to

be exploited to build up the fund for socialist accumulation.

But what if someone had merely hinted, in the most delicate way, the *socialist* accumulation fund would have to be built up not only by exploiting the peasantry, which is not, properly speaking, a socialist class, but also the proletariat, which is *the* socialist class; and that the *socialist* accumulation would have to proceed along the same barbarous lines as the primitive capitalist accumulation in England? If he were not hooted out of sight as a crude defamer of socialism, it would only be because everybody else would have been stricken with dumbfounded silence.

That Stalin's "second revolution" did start a process "by which one social class accumulated in its hands the means of production," and along the lines of the primitive capitalist accumulation, is absolutely true. But his accumulation, like the English, was directed against and paid for by the popular masses. It had nothing in common with socialism or socialist accumulation. It was not the "second revolution"; it was the counter-revolution.

"Marx did not dispute this," Deutscher reminds us. He did not dispute that the industrial revolution "marked tremendous progress in the history of mankind," but only for the reason given above: there was no other class but the bourgeoisie to carry it out and it carried it out in the class way characteristic of it. To have looked for the proletariat to carry out the old industrial revolution, was *utopian*, because whatever proletariat existed then in England or Europe was utterly incapable of performing the mission which therefore fell to the bourgeoisie.

IT ONLY REMAINS TO ASK: is it like-

wise utopian to expect the present proletariat to carry out the modern revolution for the socialist reconstruction of society? Or, since capitalism today is moribund and cannot be reinvigorated by man or god, must the work of dispatching it be left to a social force that puts in its place the most obscene mockery of socialism and social progress ever devised by man?

Deutscher gives no direct answer, to be sure. But implicit in his theory, in his whole analysis, is an answer in the affirmative, even if it is accompanied by shuddering resignation.

He writes movingly about those tragic figures, the great captains of the revolution, who were paraded through the prisoner's dock of the Moscow Trials by a new ruling class installed in the "second revolution." He explains—rightly, on the whole, we think—what brought these once indomitable revolutionists from recantation to capitulation and capitulation to recantation until they finally allowed themselves to be used for the nightmarish indignities of the Trials. Deutscher's appraisal of the revolutionary capitulators is noteworthy:

Throughout they had been oppressed by the insoluble conflict between their horror of Stalin's methods of government and their basic solidarity with the social regime which had become identified with Stalin's rule.

Insoluble conflict! Right. But especially right if we understand that all of them had abandoned any belief in the possibility of a proletarian revolutionary movement independent of Stalinism. That only removed the last barrier to an already indicated capitulation. They believed that the Stalinist regime represented at bottom a socialist or proletarian state, and horror over its methods could not eliminate the feeling that it was the re-

gime of their class and by that sign also their own. So long as they thought, as Trotsky also did for a long time, that Stalinism represented a return to capitalism, they fought it openly and vigorously. They were wrong in that analysis and Stalin was not long in proving them wrong. When it became perfectly clear that Stalinism mercilessly crushed capitalism wherever he had the power to do so, that he preserved and extended the realm of statified property, they simply equated his anti-capitalism with the defense of socialism. Their "basic solidarity with the social regime which had become identified with Stalin's rule" decided, if it did not guarantee, their capitulation to Stalinism. And really, from the standpoint of Deutscher's analysis, why not? The German bourgeoisie may not have been enthusiastic over all the methods of Bismarck, of Wilhelm II, and later of Hitler. But they were "in basic solidarity with the social regime which had become identified," successively, with those three names. They never fought these regimes; they never rebelled against them, except, perhaps, for an inconsequential handful of bourgeois and military plotters against Hitler. In their way, they were certainly right: "It is our regime, the regime of our class."

"In his exile," writes Deutscher, after the words we quoted above, "Trotsky, too, wrestled with the dilemma, without bending his knees." True. We do not believe that Trotsky would ever have capitulated to Stalinism, and that not only because of his unsurpassable personal qualities as a revolutionist. To the extent that he shared the fatal theory that Stalinist Russia is a workers' state and that the Stalinist bureaucracy is still a sort of watchman over some of the conquests of the revolution, the same

must be said of him as is said of Deutscher; the course of most of his followers since his death bears witness to this. But everything within limits. In the first place, Trotsky introduced a radically modifying "amendment" to his theory, in a small but increasingly invaluable section of his ten-years-ago polemic against us which has proved so much more durable than those remaining sections which should be mercifully consigned to the oblivion of archives. The amendment did neither less nor more than allow that events might prove that the Stalinist "workers' state" was only a new class system of totalitarian collectivist exploitation, the state of neo-barbarism. In the second place, he replied unhesitatingly and confidently in the affirmative to the key question he posed there: "Will objective historical necessity in the long run cut a path for itself in the consciousness of the vanguard of the working class?"

These views, despite his internally-contradictory theory about Stalinist Russia, enabled Trotsky to remain the active and dreaded mortal enemy of Stalinism. Because he could write that the one and only decisive standpoint for the revolutionist was the enhancement of "the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accom-

plishing new ones," he remained the greatest contemporary champion of the proletarian socialist revolution, that "revolution from below" which alone is socialist. It is these views that mark the chasm between their upholders, on the one side, and those who, out of despair or panic or premature fatigue, have retired from the struggle for socialism or gone over to an enemy camp.

Let them go. But those still resolved to carry on the fight must rid themselves and all others of the last trace of the view that, in some way, in some degree, the Stalinist neo-barbarism represents a socialist society. The view is disseminated, for different reasons but with similar results, by both the bourgeois and the Stalinist enemies of socialism. It has become the curse of our time. Of that, Deutscher's book is only another and saddening proof. Its value in the fight against Stalinism can only be to startle some people into thinking and rethinking the problem of Stalinism and seeing it for what it is. For it is a problem about which we can say with Jean Paul: "*Wenn Ihr Eure Augen nicht braucht, um zu sehen, so werdet Ihr sie brauchen, um zu weinen*"—If you do not use your eyes to see with, you will need them to weep with.

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# The Assassin and His Crime

Pages from the Diary of Victor Serge—VI

## The Tomb of Coyoacan

JULY 21, 1945. TWO VISITS to Natalia, whom I had not seen for a long time. Again I received the impression of overwhelming sadness which I had carried away at the time of my first visits, and which made me call Trotsky's house "The Tomb of Coyoacan." Natalia is the guardian of the Tomb, the indefatigable and resolute mourner for at least a hundred thousand admirable people.

Leaving the road I followed the banks of a muddy river along an abandoned cemetery. Big trees here and there resist the dryness and the heat of the sun. Old stone bridge, heavy vaulted arch. The Avenida Vienna is broad, incandescent, with few residents. On a one-story house a cardboard sign whose red letters danced: "Animals of All Sorts Gelded."

The house of the Old Man remains the same fortress with gray, loop-holed walls and iron door (but at the time of the murder attempt by S. [Siquieros—Mexican painter and Stalinist] neither these loopholes nor this existed...). The garden is opulent with vegetation, cactus and palm trees surrounding a little monument in gray concrete: monument bearing the hammer and sickle—and flagstaff. The rabbit hutches with which the Old Man occupied himself are empty and neglected. Sunlight, sunlight everywhere, butterflies in flight, a heat crackle in the calmness, the silence.

Natalia has aged only a little. I do not know how old she is, around sixty, perhaps, but she is completely white-haired, very thin, was clad in a black and white cotton dress, and she held

a light, black shawl closely around her shoulders. Her hands are strong; strength remains in them. Her broad face, with her rather firmly cut chin, also denotes a former vigor. Her hazel eyes readily mist over with tears, her voice trembles.

We had not seen each other for more than a year because of my disagreement with the Trotskyist party. She greeted me affectionately—and we did not go over those stupid incidents again.

It is so strange for there to be only two survivors of such a great historic catastrophe—it is so maddening, and poignant and devastating that, I believe, we both had the same sensation of a struggle against an immense destruction.

In the room filled with shelves of books I saw only books of by-gone days, books which have been destroyed, whose authors have been destroyed, books of a generation that overturned the world—Preobrazhensky's *Modern Economy*, L. D.'s *How the Revolution Was Armed*, and recent magazines, *Novy Mir*, *Oktiabr*, which, under these faithful titles, betray everything...

We spoke of current Soviet literature, which writes apologetics for the worst czars, like Ivan the Terrible, and the generals of Nicholas II—total denial of revolutionary ideology and complete domestication of the writer. Then we spoke of well-known faces, faces of the dead, of the shot, of those who disappeared in jail...

Natalia informed me that the torment of Walter Held had finally been cleared up. He was a young German (named Eppe), a naturalized Norwegian, who was one of the secretaries

of the Old Man in Norway (along with Erwin Wolf, assassinated in Barcelona); he committed the insanely rash act of leaving for the U. S. via Russia and disappeared with his wife and child during the trip. It is known that he shared the cell of Heinrich Ehrlich<sup>1</sup> at Kuibishev—and probably ended up shot in a cellar like Ehrlich. Eppe-Held had demonstrated the falsity of Piatakov's confession by conducting an investigation, together with the Norwegian authorities, into the planes which had landed at Oslo during that period. (And Piatakov had confessed to that alleged flight only to proclaim the falsity of the trial himself. . . .) In two hours, a hundred or so faces of the tortured appeared before us. I left, bearing with me a crushing solitude—but by which I did not feel myself crushed. That solitude engendered in me a hardening stronger than everything.

Tomb. The ideas of the revolution are dead. The hammer and sickle have become emblems of assassination and despotism. The victories of the civil war are dead, the heroism of the revolution is covered with lies. The intellectual works are destroyed—unknown by the world. The men, women and children who made that history are dead. The Old Man was killed in a nearby room. The press is closed to us. Publishers put our books under lock and key.

An American scientific institute forbids Natalia access to L. D.'s archives, confided to the care of a university. For years no direct news has come out of Russia to us. N. does not know what has become of the grandchildren of L. D., who were with Alexandra Lvovna Bronstein<sup>2</sup> and Maria Lvovna Sokolovskaya. A. L. B. and M. L. S. were deported in '34; A. L. B. wrote that she was in a little glacial village

—absolutely alone. Natalia thinks that she must have died soon afterward for lack of medical care.

We talked about agents-provocateurs and about assassins: the latter survive. The Old Man's assassin is in good health in the *Penitenciaría*, buys pictures, studies, dresses in the latest fashion. The two Sobolevitch brothers ("Lithuanians": Sobolevicius)<sup>3</sup> were in Paris, until the fall of Paris, it seems. (Roman Well and the "Sen-in" who visited me in Moscow in 1932 in order to betray me.)

## Jacson

July 3, 1946. Young and likable, Manuel Zamorano Hernandez, having come to me to ask for an interview for the socialist press of Chile, told me about his visit to the *Penitenciaría de Mexico*, where he met Jacson-Mornard. M. Z. H. visited the prison in the company of the secretary of the administration, Fara (or Farra) and a gentleman wearing glasses, well dressed, who spoke very familiarly to the official, and whom he took for an official himself. Then, when he asked to see Trotsky's assassin, the man said: "So servidor" [at your service]. . . . Jacson-Mornard accompanied them even to the women's prison, where a prisoner came up to him, explained her wants and received 20 pesos from him; J.-M. had a well-filled wallet. The doctor, Esther Chapa, openly exhibited the most ardent sympathy for J.-M. The position of J.-M. in the prison is completely privileged; he walks around freely, exercises great influence, enjoys real comfort. The impression of the visitor was that J.-M. could escape at any time. The administration says that "he makes himself very useful through

2. Trotsky's first wife.

3. Early leaders of the German Trotskyist movement who were at the time GPU agents or later became agents.

his cultural work among the prisoners."

J.-M. gives the impression of a vigorous man with great self-possession, filled with a feeling of his own importance, vigilant and cynical.

He spoke freely of his crime although he knew he was in the presence of a socialist. Maintained (1) that he was a Belgian general-staff officer; (2) that he had killed Trotsky during the course of a discussion, having been insulted and offended by L. T.; (3) that L. T. had proposed his leaving for China to form a Trotskyist military group and that he had refused; (4) that he had carried the Alpine stick with him because, the handle having been broken in the course of a trip, he counted on going to have it repaired after having left L. T.'s place. (These are new versions in contradiction with the facts and his statements during questioning.) He lies with facility and does not seem to fear contradicting himself.

Beneath his external calmness and cynicism a hypertension is visible. The visitor said: "Obviously a neurotic with great self-possession."

In the administration offices there was a supply of the magazine *Cultura Sovietica* used to propagandize in the prison.

Postscript:

Bartoli and Augustin S. Puertolas thought that they recognized in J. a person named Mercader (or Mercadet), a Catalan Communist. The mother of M. was in Russia; he had a scar on one arm (J. also, it seems). A policeman of Catalan origin was said to have affirmed that shortly after his arrest J. spoke Catalan in his confusion (indirect testimony, doubtful).

Dr. Q. says that J. spoke Spanish badly and learned it during his ex-

amination. "We watched his progress."

Dr. Q. thinks J. could be Balkan. I said: "Perhaps Caucasian or from the Middle East, given the type." Possible. This is also the opinion of M. and A. Rosmer. Dr. G. thinks that J. probably knows Russian. Took a "lie detector" test, he was shown a message in Russian, of such a nature as to move him (his mother). The detector didn't register any strong emotion. [For Jacson's identity, see Gorkin book reviewed in this issue.—Ed.]

[We interrupt the sequence of the diary at this point in order to unite two sections on Jacson. A long section on Kravchenko comes at this point. It will appear in our next issue as the concluding installment. We have not altered the numbering of the footnotes, hence there is a break in the numerical sequence for the Kravchenko section.]

## The Assassin

August 6, 1947. Lecumberri Prison (La *Penitenciaría*) has the classic appearance of all those which were constructed at the end of the last century. It reminded me of Saint-Gilles in Brussels and of the jail in Liege. Broad, two-story, yellow front with crenelated walls and towers. In front a vast, empty square, lots of trees. People vegetating. Sloppy guards were reading newspapers and sitting in chairs in the side entrances. Central porte-cochère; after crossing an antechamber you immediately enter the office of the director. It is only a step or two from the sidewalk. Careless guarding.

The office is roomy, neglected. Dirty doors and walls. Couch, desk.

A young woman was present when I was shown in. I had seen her arrive from the street. Of average height, chubby and muscular, well-shaped. Flashily dressed, stylishly enough in

1. The well-known leader of the Polish Bund.

her fashion. The elegance of French non-commissioned officers' wives. Light green silk suit, pretty green, open-work shoes with high heels, harlequin sun glasses with green frames. It was not sunshining at 9 in the morning, however. The glasses were a precaution, against whom or what? She was no longer wearing them, she was reading a newspaper. Thirty to 35 years old, been around a great deal. Not at all Mexican in type. (She even made me think of a typical Russian, with her broad cheekbones and her light complexion.) Brown hair, rather dark. Broad face; thin, straight nose, broad at the base. The strongly accentuated planes of her face, the vulgar lower portion, revealing the wear and tear of life. Her eyes were long, narrow, the pupils coffee-color, very dark. Pencilled eyebrows. Rouged. Strong, well cared-for hands, short fingers, the nails discreetly painted with natural polish. Roquelia Mendoza Buen-Abad, Mexican; the name, Abad, indicates a Syrian origin. All that is perhaps false.

Jacson-Mornard came in, walking rapidly. He experienced a shock on seeing me but mastered himself instantaneously. Tall, very well built, strong, supple—even athletic. Thick, athletic neck; powerful, well-formed head. A being with animal vitality. Glasses, a look deliberately evasive, sometimes hard and revealing. His features are sharp, fleshy, strong. Handsome man, on the whole, powerful nose, a mouth both small and full, wilful. The cleft in his chin very marked, the chin prominent and full. Squarish, narrow face. Thick hair, somewhat curly, dark brown. Very well dressed: brown leather jacket of expensive brown suede. Beneath it a stylish khaki silk sport shirt. Trousers of khaki gabardine, neatly pressed; yellow shoes with excellent soles. Self-

assurance and physical well-being in his whole appearance.

I tried to establish his type. Not Jewish. Or Russian. Or Belgian, French or usual Spanish type. I was thrown off the track; I proceeded by elimination, but in vain. I thought of types that I knew slightly: Balkan, Turk, Caucasian, Arab, Syrian. Finally, Syrian, Arab, Turk seemed the most appropriate to me; they are found also in the Caucasus. Not a single exact index.

It seemed to me that they were visibly startled and embarrassed by my presence, although I pretended to be busy with a folder open in front of me. Their anxiety was visible at intervals. She acted cheerful, spoke animatedly, put her hand on his knees. He grasped her hands affectionately. Several times, however, they looked at me as if they were accidentally looking my way. Was he acquainted with photographs of me?

Looked at directly, his face revealed a constant twitching, insufficiently dominated by a constant effort of the will. The creases along his jaw gave him an evil aspect. Once we looked at each other at length. He has eyes shadowed by a massive arch of eyebrows. Brown pupils, almost black. His glance is one of terrible concentration, darkness, nightmare, and of defensive attack. The look of a hunted but strong man. He is said to be proud, full of self-assurance, contemptuous. I see him hunted, evil, dangerous. I observed that his girl friend had *the same look* but in more neutral tones. Her whole face revealed tension, self-mastery, an aggressive defense. . . . Why? She is not at all a minor Mexican governmental employee who fell for a prisoner, she is a strong woman who is consciously fulfilling a dangerous mission. A dangerous woman. I thought that on that

very evening she would forward her report giving a detailed description of me. Vis-à-vis J. she perhaps sincerely plays her role. In watching her byplay I nevertheless thought of the professionals, whose worn and made-up face, pink complexion, large, pointed, mobile mouth she possesses. Almost pretty when she laughed. Common.

It seems that she had accompanied her sister who was visiting a prisoner named Crispi, in this way she met J., they fell in love with each other. All that could have been staged, her identity can be false. In any case she has the absolute confidence of the secret apparatus. For many years Jacson received his meals from the kitchen of his lawyer Medellin Ostos! now he receives them from his "wife." Roquelia lives (Puente Alvarado, II-?) with her mother or mother-in-law Mrs. Crispi, who does the cooking. A young girl brings the meals. R. says that J. is extremely absentminded: "To the point of not seeing the salt on the table. . . ." That is conceivable. . . . She is dressed well above the means of a minor employee; often changes her clothes, always, in coming, wears sunglasses whose frames are the same color as her clothes. I recognized that sign. Well paid. Recently worked in the Federal District (where the Stalinist A. C. is an important official; our communist slanderer in *Popular* in '41); lately, following the changes made in J's regimen, she has been detached to work in the union of government employees, probably controlled by the communists. It should be noted that the secretary of the prison, José Fara, is also of Syrian origin (pro-communist).

Jacson: a strong brute with practical intelligence. Nothing at all of the intellectual. Thick. Dense. The secret service non-commissioned officer type. He lives in a nightmare knowing that

the service will protect him without fail up to the very moment that it engineers his escape—*disappearance*, or up to the moment it has him killed in prison in order to suppress an embarrassing witness. His sole possible way out lies in a complete betrayal, but to attempt that under poor conditions would be suicide. He can ask for a parole in 3 years. Depends upon the political situation. An unidentified prisoner, secret agent of a totalitarian power—can he be paroled? Putting him at liberty with the cooperation of the secret service, furthermore, would mean his disappearance. He knows and weighs all this ceaselessly. I am told that he is afraid of two prisoners quartered in the same section of the jail as he is: the influential "Diablo" Huitron who has committed a whole series of crimes and Pancho Pistolas, a henchman. . . . He knows that the secret service, if the decision is made to liquidate him, must remain beyond suspicion.

In 1939-1940 poor Sylvia was only his instrument. He knows that today Roquelia is doubtlessly only an instrument in relation to himself.

VICTOR SERGE

(Translated and annotated  
by James M. Fenwick)

## Correspondence

### Issues in Dispute

Dear Comrades:

Permit me space for a few comments on R. Fahan's "The Politics of Incineration" appearing in the March-April issue.

It seems to me that the existence and effects of the Russian totalitarian empire are not really integrated in Fahan's thinking. This totalitarian empire makes it impossible to project any plan against the A and H bombs or against war on a world-wide basis—unless it be the false products emanating from Russia, i.e., the "peace" petition. People know this—no, they feel it in their bones. Thus they ask,

for instance, what good it would do if western scientists took a principled position against giving their talents to the production of A and H bombs when they cannot get the cooperation of the scientists behind the iron curtain; when such Russian scientists who made the slightest move to respond would soon be dispatched to meet their ancestors. People do not act from motives of moral rectitude when there is a military problem involving physical existence itself. To defy the powers that they conceive may give them some protection—and they hope for some protection even in an atom war—defiance must have a chance to arise also in the enemy country. Fahan's purely moral approach is inadequate.

In effect Fahan writes off "the people" when he retires into the charmed circle of those he considers politically and humanly qualified to align themselves as absolutely and at all times opposed to the use of the H-bomb. True, he has widened the circle to include not only independent Socialists, but also pacifists and radicals "who have not become Social-Democrats." But this is still to be isolated from the people.

In his attitude on the H-bomb Fahan poses a point not easy of solution. He asserts his conviction that Socialists must say that a Socialist society "even if locked in struggle with a capitalist or Stalinist enemy" would not use the H-bomb. Suppose that a counter-revolutionary state thus armed were attacking a Socialist state. Should the Socialist state submit to annihilation of itself and its people by the H-bombs of the counter-revolutionary state? Or would the Socialist state, after making every human and even super-human effort to appeal to the peoples of the counter-revolutionary state and to the peoples of the world to stop the attack, have to do this basically immoral thing, namely, use mass-annihilating weapons in a desperate effort at self-defense? At any rate, it would be for the people of the Socialist state to decide what they would want to do—not for us a priori.

In offering his slogans, Fahan again comes up against the lack of internationalism in the world, though he does not recognize his problem. He says: "The major criterion for such proposals is simply this: do they direct the masses of people against the TWO power blocs that threaten human incineration? If they

do, then they are desirable, regardless of their limitations, their 'impracticability' or their departure from 'traditional' Socialist slogans."

But when Fahan gets down to cases he talks ONLY about demands on the U. S. government. He includes also Europe and the European masses. However, the sixty-four dollar question is how to take into account Russia and its masses, Russia's satellites and their masses? Any proposals or slogans against war presuppose the kind of civil liberties which do not exist in the second of "the two power blocs." Therefore, the proposals and slogans could have only unilateral application, thus freezing the hopes of the peoples of the first of "the two power blocs."

Without meaning any offense to Fahan, it strikes me that there is too much of moral heroics, let me say, in the main tenor of his remarks—"let it be said that there are some men who, in the sea of blood, did not acquiesce." Perhaps there is something still to be done other than preserve our moral rectitude, important as this is.

There being no potent Socialist revolutionary forces in the world today, where can be found other elements to bestir themselves in anti-war action? The answer of course is in the trade union movements and also in the Social-Democratic masses of Europe. But these elements will not accept any plan which, because of the nature of the Russian dictatorship and of the iron curtain, would have to be unilateral.

*The pivotal problem is to reach the people behind the iron curtain. Should not organized labor and the Social Democracy of the western world exert themselves to solve this problem?*

While criticising, I do not think Socialists oppose the propaganda programs of the west against the Russian government, since there is here a political potential beyond the purposes of the western governments. However, organized labor and the Social-Democratic masses may *independently* be able to perform a really great historic task in reaching out to the Russian people. This could only be done completely on their own, using their own resources in money, human talents and ideas, to build that necessary bridge between the working peoples of the two opposing camps. Appeals could be made for joint actions in the interest

of peace. Assurances of solidarity and support from the people of the west could be given. The technical means for communicating such ideas can be evolved. The working people of the west, acting independently of their governments, would be an example to the Russian people, encouraging them to act against their own government. This, it seems to me, is the great need, namely, the bridge between the working people on both sides of the iron curtain.

To be sure such an effort may fail, especially since time is running out. Yet it is unthinkable that the powerful labor organizations of the west should be stricken with palsy and remain paralyzed while humanity-destroying World War III creeps up on us. Will organized labor do something? This is the question—not, I regret, simply our immortal souls, though these should undoubtedly be kept intact.

SUSAN GREEN

New York City, July 6, 1950.

With the best will in the world, I do not quite see the purpose of Susan Green's letter. Her general views on the war question have since been expressed in *Labor Action* and answered there; the present letter, a fragmentary expression of those views, makes little sense unless one is previously aware of them. However, a few fractional remarks:

(1) I do not see why Susan Green writes with such polemical vigor about her proposal that the western labor movements try to communicate with the workers under Stalin's dominion. Certainly, there is no reason to suppose that I or any other socialist oppose such efforts—though we might well disagree with some of the things that would be said in such broadcasts.

(2) Her argument that it is difficult to pose demands that can be acted upon only in the West, is true. But the problem: what follows from this difficulty? That the socialist movement should cease raising such demands? Then, it might as well close shop. Wherever there remains the possibility for free expression, socialists must express their views in full; which means to call an imperialist war an imperialist war. That this is difficult is hardly news.

(3) It is true that I posed the socialist position on war in moral terms, but that does not mean I posed it *merely* in moral terms, as Susan Green implies.

(4) But all this is minor by-play. Susan Green wants a basic change in the movement's war position. She has a perfect right to propose such a change, and those who disagree have as great a right to answer her. Both have already been done in *Labor Action*. Her present letter adds nothing to the presentation of her views, and I feel no need to add anything, at the moment, to their refutation.

R. FAHAN

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

### *Anatomy of Murder*

MURDER IN MEXICO by Salazar and Gorkin. Secker and Warburg, London, 1950. \$2.50.

TEN YEARS after the assassination of Trotsky an account of that tragic event written by Leandro A. Sanchez Salazar in collaboration with Julian Gorkin has finally appeared in English. Salazar was the Mexican police officer in charge of the investigation of the two attempts upon Trotsky's life, Gorkin is a former leader of the POUM.

The belated appearance of the book is political in origin. "Circumstances due

to the war have delayed the publication of this book for several years," says Gorkin. "We were in the course of preparing it when the rupture of the Hitler-Stalin Pact and the invasion of Russia by the German Army occurred. Stalin thus became, in spite of himself, an ally of the democratic governments, and Russia one of the principal factors in the fight against Nazi militarism. I was given to understand by those in high places that the publication of the book was not opportune." It is a useful, small reminder of the role played by the democratic capitalist countries in creating the Stalinist monster.

The book is the story of the police investigations into the two attempts made upon Trotsky's life in 1940—the first one led by the Stalinist painter and GPU agent Siqueiros, and the second by Jacson, which ended in Trotsky's death.

With one major and one minor exception there is little new material in the book. The major exception consists of the facts adduced to argue the theory that Robert Sheldon Harte, believed by Trotsky to have been a loyal secretary and guard, was in reality a GPU agent. The evidence is impressive. The minor exception is the almost certain establishment of the identity of Jacson. He is believed to be the son of Caridad Mercader, a woman born in Catalonia but who has lived for extended periods in France, Belgium, and Russia. She has involved almost her whole family in GPU work. (See Serge diary in this issue.—Ed.)

The book is valuable in revealing the nature and extent of the power of the GPU and of its control of the world communist parties. If there could have been legitimate doubt in the radical movements in 1940, the ten years that have elapsed since the assassination of Trotsky have depressingly confirmed what our tendency contended in 1940: that what apparently remained of proletarian policy in the actions of the Kremlin was, in the context of the whole, solely demagoguery serving the interests of the Russian bureaucracy, which increasingly achieved its external ends by military violence and preserves them internally by the violence of the GPU. In retrospect the circumstances surrounding the assassination of Trotsky take on a more typical character than many in the revolutionary movement may have been inclined to accept at the time.

Gorkin pointedly describes the emergence of the new, automaton type in the Stalinist epoch, a type which is created all over the world wherever Stalinism gains a foothold:

“Such men are explosives in human form—explosives more terrible than those which were discovered during the last war, for they pass for human beings and are quite unsuspected by the rest of the world. They form, in any case, the most dangerous political arm of which Moscow disposes in this tragic epoch. They are the messengers of death, as mysterious and as threatening as death itself. The victim is pointed out to them and

they fall upon him. Humanity will be threatened as long as such men exist, blind agents of a power and organization which can dispose as it pleases of all which life and death hold most sacred. The future of man is threatened. And moral values, dignity, truth, right, justice, freedom—simple bourgeois prejudices, according to Stalinism—all are threatened. It is not a question of simple intellectual juggling or flights of fancy, but one of the most tragic realities of our time.

Such types, with one degree of variation or another, occupied numerous posts in the Mexican government and actively participated in the attempts against Trotsky. They hid Siqueiros from the law, others were approached for police uniforms to use in the first assassination attempt, the secretary of the penitentiary was a Stalinist. Members of the Chilean diplomatic staff were Stalinists—and eventually got Siqueiros scot-free out of Mexico. Members of the Mexican CP did everything including prostituting themselves in the literal sense in closing the trap on Trotsky. And nine-tenths of it was done in the name of a social myth—Russia, the Workers' State.

The assassination of Trotsky was possible because the resources of a whole state were brought to bear upon him. Gorkin estimates that the assassination ultimately cost \$600,000—a price which Stalin assuredly considers a cheap one. Yet, for all of this, it was crudely done and crudely motivated. The only interesting element, in one respect, is that the Stalinist versions of the murder could be so easily imposed upon the followers of the CP and upon others not politically committed.

One of the most chilling scenes—for this reviewer, at least—concerns the preparations for the first murder attempt when Siqueiros' gunmen were trying on the uniforms which helped gain them entry into the Trotsky household. One of the participants is talking:

“‘On Siqueiros' orders, we tried on the uniforms. The one intended for me fitted me very well. Pujol put on an Army lieutenant's uniform, the others policemen's uniforms. We laughed and joked as though it were a feast day. . . .

“‘Towards two o'clock Siqueiros came back wearing a major's military uniform; he did not tell us where he had put it on and we did not ask him. He

wore a raincoat, glasses and a false mustache. We greeted him with great bursts of laughter. Turning around a little he asked us: ‘How does it suit me?’ We replied in chorus: ‘Very well.’ Then we went out into the street, in uniform and well-armed.’” The attempted machine-gunning of one of the most gifted men of our times followed in a few minutes.

The story, of course, is an unfinished one. Among other things, the threads which lead to New York, to Europe, and to Russia have yet remained to be traced. It would indeed be interesting to know the full story of the activities of GPU bodies like Jack Stachel, Alex Bittelman, Eugene Dennis, and several score others, including the reprehensible Earl Browder and the sanctimonious Louis Budenz.

Yet out of this bloody tale of the actions of debased men and women emerges an intimation of the glory and promise of 1917—of Trotsky master of the political moment to the very end, and of Natalia, his selfless wife and co-thinker. Her statement describing the day of the assassination, which forms a chapter of the book, is an almost unbearably moving document. We can only hope that she will commit her memoirs to paper. They would form an irreplaceable record of one of the most ennobling and tragic events in modern history—the rise and decline of the revolutionary socialist movement in Russia. J.M.F.

## Stalinism Examined

A COMMUNIST PARTY IN ACTION.

By A. Rossi. Translated from the French. Yale University Press. 267 pp. \$3.00.

This study of Rossi is a disappointment, both in form and content. Published originally in French (*Physiology of the French Communist Party*), its publication now in English will not have added much to the growing literature on the sociology of Stalinism. Physiology is supposedly a study of the functional processes of a living organism, but the author fails to earn the pretentious title he has given his book.

The author, a former leader of the Italian Communist Party, has gone over ideologically and politically to Social Democracy (French SFIO), and writes from the viewpoint of anti-Bolshevism and an apparently extensive admiration

of the late Leon Blum. The Popular Front epoch of France (1936-39), whose objective, according to Rossi, was the integration of the French masses into national life, marked the last great effort of French revolutionary movements to set the nation on a progressive path. It failed because of the blindness of the bourgeoisie, Stalinist equivocation and party routinism. Then began the great war, with the revival of French Stalinism. It is this period with which Rossi is concerned.

His analysis of the French Communist Party is restricted to the period between mid-June, 1940, and the end of December, 1941. It is based upon a minute study (carried to pedantic lengths and often annoyingly repetitious) of newspapers, brochures, tracts, leaflets, documents, etc., issued by the French Stalinists during this period when the party underwent a crucial turn from a position of “defeatism,” as understood in the Stalinist manner, to one of “resistance and defensism,” occasioned by the Hitler attack on Russia (June, 1941), again conceived in the Stalinist way. Rossi informs us that he is not writing a history of the party, but that as a sociologist he is presenting a cross-section of the “communist world,” to consider its structure and “physiology.” In his promising introduction, Rossi tells us that “Communism is a complete world, a living and complex world which one must study like any specific ‘society’ . . .” This world possesses its own laws, its “physiology,” its specific reactions. Rossi has chosen his point of concentration (1940-41) only as a springboard for penetrating deeper into the party's doctrinal roots, policy, psychology, etc. In a burst of enthusiasm for his own work, he informs us that he is only doing what sociologists and anthropologists do for primitive societies, objectively, scientifically and profoundly. Alas, Rossi has spoken too quickly and his achievement falls impressively short of his promise. We have here a routine and academic description of French Stalinism; it is not physiology, nor even comparative anatomy. It is abstract anatomy, the detailing of the organisms of a dead body.

It must be noted, however, that Rossi has assembled invaluable material not only on the structure and functioning of the party, but also on the technique of

"changing the party line," and the imposition of party will on the blind membership. Furthermore, much of the documentary evidence included in this volume (particularly in the lengthy appendices) contain overwhelming evidence of the Stalinist policy of collaboration with the Nazi conquerors of France in the earliest phase of the war. Some of the documents, such as those related to the party's effort to resume publication of the then suppressed *L'Humanité*, are fascinating in their evidence of Stalinist cynicism, subservience before the Nazis and flexibility in principle.

Yet even here one important and essential fact must be noted, and this is characteristically ignored by Rossi. That is, the uniqueness and specific nature of Stalinism, which distinguishes it from its rivals and all other tendencies seeking state power. The attempt to resume publication of a legal *L'Humanité* failed because the Nazis demanded one price which the Stalinists refused to pay: removal of the hammer-and-sickle symbol, and a change of name.

Even though all readers would have known this was the party publication, they refused this demand of the German occupation forces because to the party the name and symbol are both traditions of the party's goal: power and control in the country. It is significant in this respect to note that in the early days of defeat, the party seriously expected that it would quickly arrive in power, thanks to the general disrepute in which both the bourgeoisie and socialists of France were held.

While the documentation provides rich sources of material for further and future studies, the author is unqualified politically to handle his own material, or to draw any worthwhile conclusions from them. His own point of view is a vague humanitarian socialism which he associates with the French socialist movement from its utopian, Jaurèsian and Blumian days. All sectors and classes of French society must be assimilated into a new national community based upon the progressive and creative role of each. The Communist Party, however, represents an element which cannot be digested; Rossi employs the well known "foreign-nationalist party" utilized by Leon Blum to describe the Stalinists. But this ambiguous term is weak since it does not indicate the functional

relationship existing between French Stalinism's foreign (Russian) ties, and its national (internal) program and activity, the goal of which is power in France as part of a world-wide Stalinist form of society.

Let us give some examples of Rossi's superficial approach and incorrect physiology. In discussing the Stalinist "road to power," Rossi, who treats of French Stalinism in terms of the Russian Bolshevik Party, states the goal is the traditional "dictatorship of the proletariat." The Stalinist manipulation of words (people, popular democracy, etc.) is merely sleight-of-hand for the time-honored concept of Marxism, and has no other objective than deceit. We submit that such an approach not only indicates Rossi's unacquaintance with this Marxist concept but, more important, indicates his incapacity to penetrate the field of Stalinist sociology. Stalinism does employ new terms, to which it attaches new meanings; this is true, but these semantic changes have sociological significance and point to new objectives and goals having nothing in common with historic Marxism.

It is clear that Rossi's approach insists upon operating within the framework of anti-Bolshevism and anti-revolutionary Marxism in precisely the same terms as orthodox Social Democracy approached these problems. Rossi is thus only a superficial Kautsky, at best, and lacks the training and vast historic knowledge of his master.

The truth is that much of Rossi's polemics have already been written for him by Kautsky, Abramovich and others, with the qualification that these authors, in any case, directed their attack against the properly delineated enemy. This is why Rossi's work seems to miss fire constantly. To cite several other instances, Rossi describes the subordinate character of the party's conspiratorial and clandestine existence, emphasizing the dominant factor of its links with the mass movement which it constantly seeks to strengthen through its agitation and propaganda. This perfectly valid point, however, leads us to the far more serious problem involved in Stalinist sociology, namely, how does the party retain and strengthen its mass links despite numerous betrayals, shifts in party line (and Rossi himself admits how the party retained its full cadre

strength despite the two fantastic shifts made in the period that he covers). Rossi does not even pose this question, let alone suggest a response.

Furthermore, in describing the fierce and fanatic loyalty of the party membership, Rossi draws that vulgar and lifeless analogy with ecclesiastical organizations and religion. This issue, one of social and historic psychology, is closely related to the objectives and potentialities of Stalinism, but Rossi cannot see the special features of the movement he misunderstands and is therefore obliged to fall back upon wornout patterns.

In his chapter headed "A New Kind of Party," he concludes that the party has produced a "new kind of Frenchman," hitherto unknown in the history of that country. Pointing out that France's revolutionary movement has always emphasized the individualistic, dramatic and improvising side of activity, Rossi raises the interesting question of why the land of Babeuf, Lamartine and Jaurès now contains within itself a hard core of Stalinist cadres, led by such unrevolutionary French types as Thorez, Duclos et al. The reader will search this book in vain for any response.

Valuable as it may be for primary and secondary source material on a highly important phase of French Stalinist history, and thus capable of enhancing our political understanding of Stalinism, this book does not rise above description. The sociology of Stalinism is a field crying out for Marxist study and interpretation.

HENRY JUDD

## The German Soldier

BEYOND DEFEAT. By Hans Werner Richter. G. P. Putnam. 312 pp. \$3.

This novel by a young German who served in Hitler's army has already been reviewed in the general press in a routine and uncomprehending manner; no one has so much as remarked on its significance as a document from the undersides of Germany.

As a novel, the book is not very impressive: like a great many young European writers, Richter affects the manner of Hemingway, terse, clipped, journalistic, which is quite inadequate to the intensely dramatic material about which

he writes. The law of combined development works here with a neatly ironic twist: the writers of harrowed Europe copy the style of the crude and sensational Americans in whom they see—falsely, I think—a "virility" no longer indigenous to European culture. Too often the result of this style is a brutal treatment of brutality, a false assumption that to depict a disgusting situation the writer must adopt as his own the emotional qualities of that situation. Richter's book, like the recent novels of many of the Italian and French writers, suffers from this fallacy.

But its importance, however, is not as a novel; its importance is as a document. Richter was at one time a minor functionary of the German Communist Party, then became some sort of independent socialist. The leading character of *Beyond Defeat*, obviously a facsimile of Richter himself, is a German socialist caught in the Nazi army. After the war Richter published a paper in Western Germany which the occupation authorities suppressed. Though the precise nature of his political views is unknown to me, I would venture to suggest that the fact of its suppression for criticizing the authorities indicates that, at the least, his paper was—shall we say?—interesting.

The novel itself begins with several routine battle scenes at Cassino. Pfc Guehler, the central character, persuades his buddies to surrender, for the U. S. barrage is intolerable and only death can result from continued resistance. Once the group reaches U. S. hands, the novel becomes an extremely interesting report of a German socialist's experience.

When Guehler-Richter is questioned by U. S. intelligence officers, he is willing to discuss the politics of the war, to estimate the morale of the German soldiers—but refuses to give away positions of the Germany army. To do that, he says, would be to bring about the murder of his army comrades; and though he desires the defeat of the Nazi army he does not intend to make himself an agent of its military opponent. This kind of reasoning quite escapes the U. S. intelligence officer and Guehler goes off to a prison camp in America.

From here on there are a number of quite dramatic descriptions of the internal struggle between German Nazi and anti-Nazi soldiers. In the U. S. camp the



Nazis rule through terror; the older prisoners of the Africa Korps are still firm in their Nazi ideology. But the newer captives are beginning to doubt. Guehler and his friends suffer from terror; they get no help at all from the U. S. authorities who think of Germans either as Nazis or, if anti-Nazis, as traitors to their country; and they finally decide to form an anti-Nazi underground to convince their fellow soldiers of their views. It is particularly interesting that when Guehler and his few friends have a chance to go off to a segregated camp for anti-Nazi prisoners they refuse: they believe it necessary to remain with the other soldiers and quietly, patiently talk to them.

Were it not tinged with an occasional

streak of German nationalism, the outlook of Pfc Guehler would be completely what one would hope for from a German socialist. As it is, the book is still valuable: it makes some fine political discriminations in tactical approaches to the war, it does not divide German soldiers into simplistic categories but treats them in terms of a gradual political reorientation, and it is written from what is obviously first-hand knowledge. Socialists will want to read this book; and it is something of a pity, as well as a stroke of historical irony, that one's main complaint is that Richter's novel lacks tenderness and expressiveness, is too behavioristic and "tough"—that is, too "American."

R. FAHAN

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